

**GMB**

**CONGRESS 2011**

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**SIS. MARY TURNER MBE  
(President)  
(In the Chair)**

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Held in:

**The Brighton Centre,  
Brighton**

on:

**Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> June 2011  
Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> June 2011  
Tuesday, 7<sup>th</sup> June 2011  
and  
Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2011**

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**PROCEEDINGS  
DAY FOUR  
(Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2011)**

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## FOURTH DAY'S PROCEEDINGS

WEDNESDAY, 8<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2011

### MORNING SESSION

*(Congress assembled at 9.30 a.m.)*

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning, Congress. Will Congress come to order, please? I have just a couple of announcements. First of all, thanks to Birmingham Region and GMB Scotland for such a good evening last night. I hope you all enjoyed it. I also confirm, Congress, that the collection taken on behalf of Maureen Malone, the Luton Branch, raised £652 and we doubled that to £1,400. Maureen is up there, and Simon, and she would like to thank you all.

As you can see someone very special has joined me on the platform. Could I introduce to you Monica Smith, National Secretary of GMB Retired Members Association? Monica, will you please address Congress. *(Applause)*

### **ADDRESS TO CONGRESS BY MONICA SMITH, NATIONAL SECRETARY OF THE GMB RETIRED MEMBERS ASSOCIATION**

SIS. M. SMITH (GMB Retired Members Association): President, Congress, it is always a privilege to be invited to the rostrum to bring you up to date on the activities of the RMA. Some of our young and new delegates will be scratching their heads and saying, "Who are the RMA," so can I just explain? We are the GMB Retired Members Association and I am proud to be the National Secretary. I am responsible for all correspondence informing members of meetings, rallies, marches, and anything that has to do with the raising of the profile of the GMB. I can assure you, colleagues, it is a very busy part of the GMB. We have our ground rules, called the Retired Members Constitution. Our National Committee meet four times. Regional Committees could possibly differ. In January each year all retired members in their own region are invited to attend a general meeting to voice their opinions and form policies. The GMB have a strong voice at the National Pensions Convention and also at the Pensioners Parliament, which is being held in Blackpool next week. The RMA now have a voice on the National Equalities Forum. Before we were just on the sidelines but now we are firmly on the agenda. March 26<sup>th</sup> 2011, the March and Rally against government cuts, the RMA were there proudly walking with the Retired Members banner.

Colleagues, that is just a brief introduction to what the RMA is involved in on behalf of our members in the GMB. I could go on and on about the RMA but, colleagues, I do not want to push my luck. I must say the RMA could not do the things they get involved in without the full support of the GMB union. We are going from strength to strength with the help of the Regional Coordinators and our National Coordinator, Jerry Nelson; with his advice and a hundred percent commitment we will go forward. It is nice to have the full support of our General Secretary, Paul Kenny, and it is always a pleasure to have our National President, Mary Turner, to chair our annual conference. Some of our members can get a bit out of hand once the adrenalin gets going but Mary is there with a firm hand. You see, colleagues, you cannot buy

experience, you have to live it and I can assure Congress the RMA is not all about zimmer frames, walking sticks, or bus passes, it is about our members – *(Applause)* – young and old having a quality of life they justly deserve. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Monica. You are not all about walking sticks but you hit me over the head with them sometimes. Anyway, I look forward to doing it tomorrow.

Congress, I have just a couple of announcements. Number one, we are a little bit behind but not very much, though. I am banning Mario from the stage! *(Laughter)* That is the first warning. I have forgiven Vic. Now can I move to Motion 11 to be moved by Midland Region, Motion 12 London Region, Motion 13 Long Service Awards. I will be calling the votes on these motions after the representation motions. Then to follow on, Motion 28 to be moved by London and Motion 29 Yorkshire Region, and then I will be calling Jerry Nelson on 11, 12, 13, 28, and 29.

## **UNION ORGANISATION GENERAL**

### **RETIRED MEMBERS SECTION – NAME CHANGE MOTION 11**

#### **11. RETIRED MEMBERS SECTION – NAME CHANGE**

This Congress calls upon the GMB to change the name of the Retired Members Association to the 'Active Retired Members Association'. This is to recognise and reflect the important role that our retired but very active colleagues play within the GMB and the wider Trade Union Movement.

HULL NO.1 BRANCH  
*Midland & East Coast Region*

*(Referred)*

BRO. N. WARE (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I have the privilege to be a member of Hull No. 1 Branch, a branch that is known locally for its fighting and campaigning history, a branch with a pedigree of defending workers in struggle both in public and private industry. This history is due in no small part to the role played by our retired members, retired members that have time that working activists because of the confines of their work simply do not have, retired members that have knowledge and experience that age brings and that they can share with our new, more inexperienced members. To reflect this vital role that our older members play within our great trade union, Congress, we are asking you to support a change in the name from the Retired Members Association to that of The Active Retired Members Association. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Seconder?

BRO. S. ALLINSON (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, and visitors, one definition of retired is "to end one's working life". I suppose that is true enough but I know our retired members do not just stop there. Yes, it is true they may not be doing the same job they have done and what they have been paid for but I do know from the experience of my own branch that they remain steadfast in their activists' convictions:

worthy brothers and sisters indeed. Throughout their working lives they have dealt with all manner of injustices ranging from protecting terms and conditions from erosion, health and safety neglect, and a whole range of equality issues, and bully bosses, to name but a few. Our retired members took on these fights to provide a safer, better future for us all. But then they take on other relevant fights, pensions (or deferred wages, you may say) heating allowances, care and dignity. I could go on. Our retired members campaign, they leaflet, petition, and moreover they march. They bring a wealth of life experiences. They remain active within this great union. This motion asks for a simple name change to reflect all that our retired brothers and sisters do for us but also this change will let them know how much we appreciate their efforts. Please support. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Shane.

## **RMA MOTION 12**

### **12. RMA**

This Congress supports the RMA in its campaigning for a better State Pension and Social Care Provision, Congress is asked to insist that every issue of all National/Regional GMB magazines have a page dedicated to the activities of the RMA.

MILTON KEYNES CITY BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. J. HIOM (London): Many branches across the country are organised and run by retired members of the RMA. Because of them the GMB obtains news on the activities of their branch thus making a contribution to the information coming from the Regional Offices. Much of the news in the magazines deals with the sterling work of our union officers and our reps. However, behind all this information there are retired members campaigning on issues not related to employment but related to national issues, issues that we will confront when we retire. Year on year RMA members are campaigning for higher state pension, for free nursing care, free national travel, etc. They lobby MPs on many issues, including privatisation in the NHS, and they campaign against the cuts. They are delegates to the National Pensions Convention. Along with other union work they are active in pension associations, organising committees, lobbying other councillors in their towns and districts demanding a better deal for retired people, news and information that a union regional magazine should be letting our members know about. I am therefore asking Congress to rule that each regional magazine has a page dealing with the work of our RMA members, information that would be helpful to others. President, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jim. Secunder? Billy, that will be a first, to do as I tell you. Good morning.

BRO. M. AKBAR (London): I feel this motion is important for the GMB to continue the legacy that our leaders have left for us to follow. Congress, by agreeing the concept of this motion we are protecting our future. I feel we would like the GMB to make sure that we show the way forward to the other trade unions to provide protection and care when the retired members need it most. They must not be

forgotten for the services they have provided to set out the way for us. Some of them have spent more time with the trade union than any other things they normally do. They have left an important mark on our history and they should be remembered. As a result we owe it to them by providing them a page in the regional magazines for their services. I call on this Congress to support unanimously this motion and make sure that the most important people are not forgotten. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mo.

## **LONG SERVICE AWARDS MOTION 13**

### **13. LONG SERVICE AWARDS**

This Congress seeks for an automatic Long Service award system to recognise all long service members.

Congress says by introducing this system all members within the GMB would receive this honourable award.

EAST DEREHAM BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Referred)*

SIS. J. SMITH (London): Congress, as I have travelled around I have heard many members enquiring about long service awards, recognising the service our members have given to the GMB. Congress, on seeking automatic long service awards all our membership details are already on the database so it should not cause too many problems. Congress, as the resolution states, by introducing this system all our members would receive this honourable award and that would be consistent for every member within our GMB, a very proud union. I move. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder?

BRO. A. LAW (London): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) I am seconding this long service award motion. I believe it is a great achievement to reach this milestone of being a member of the GMB for 25 years. For any member to get this award it is an honour and fills you with pride. It recognises passion for people and loyalty to the GMB over the 25 years. To make sure our members receive an award a regional programme should be put in place through our IT systems. This would identify people reaching the milestone in good time for things to be put in place. They could then be presented with the certificate in a professional and organised manner. This happens in my place of work through an IT programme which highlights 15, 20, 30, and 40 years' service. It makes an individual proud to be recognised without being prompted. It also makes this union good at looking after its members. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Alan. Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? Those speaking for? That voice again, I will identify you soon. Those speaking against?

SIS. A. MURPHY (North West & Irish): I am a National Equalities Forum member representing retired members. I am speaking in support of Motion 12. My grandma always used to say to me, knowledge is power. The RMA do a great deal to promote issues of vital importance to retired members. I do not think it is too much to ask for just one page to be set aside in every national and regional GMB magazine to promote and advertise these activities and issues. If we do not do this, how are we going to let everyone know what is happening and how important our issues are to every member of the GMB? Information is power. This way it will be more power to the elbow of the older member, more power to the people. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Angela. Those against? Why did you sit there? Tommy, you are going to get a fine. *(Call from the floor)* You are not up here, though; and no liberties. Keep your hanky in your pocket! No excuses.

BRO. B. HUGHES (Northern): Worthy President, Congress, opposing Motion 11. I only hope the mover and the seconder, Neil and Shane, accept the advice in the spirit that it is going to be given. The RMA, as Congress knows, spent many, many hours writing up a new constitution and during that time there was never any hint or indication to change the name of the RMA. Secondly, we need a change of name like we need a hole in the head. Financially, it would not be any good for the RMA. We are just starting to get on our feet. Most importantly, and thirdly, the RMA in the future will be coming to Congress and asking Congress to endorse the RMA as a section in its own right belonging to the GMB. *(Applause)* First of all, Congress, what the RMA has to do is show responsibility and credibility. Now, Neil and Shane, is not the time to do that. Could I also add that when you become a member of the GMB you automatically become an active member. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, worthy president. Congress, I will be taking the votes, as I said, after the representation and accountability section. Motion 28, to be moved by London Region.

## **UNION ORGANISATION REPRESENTATION & ACCOUNTABILITY**

### **RMA MOTION 28**

#### **28. RMA**

This Congress calls on the CEC to investigate for the RMA to be allocated a seat on the Regional Council, Regional Committee and Congress in the same manner as reserved seats within the structure of the GMB.

EAST DEREHAM BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Lost)*

SIS. J. SMITH (London): Congress, over the years various sections have been formed and are written in the rule book enabling the same equality rights on elections, have a seat on the Regional Committees, Regional Councils, CEC, etc. This is all in the rule book. Congress, where is the same equality rights for the RMA? There are

none. I know the CEC is going to ask you to oppose as we have many active members who can speak on RMA but, Congress, where do you see or read about the RMA: you do not, whether it be in any circular or CEC minutes we all receive. Congress, the RMA is not just a talking shop, nor is the RMA a second-class activist. We just want and say to the CEC, we request the same equality rights as other sections written into the rule book. Do not just oppose this motion. I plead, yes, plead with you and the CEC to take reference back to allow a full investigation, which I know cannot happen today, tomorrow, or even next week, and such investigation to be reported back to next year's Congress. A seat is not something just to sit on. This can be expanded giving a status, the same equality voice within Regional Councils, Regional Committees, and recognition within the rule book. Congress, please support and the call for reference back be accepted by the CEC. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jan. Secunder?

BRO. M. AKBAR (London): This motion is very simple and straightforward. It is the foundation of the trade union to have equal and fair treatment for all. I am a member of the National Equalities Forum where we promote equality through inclusion at all levels. Why should we be any different with the retired members? Their experience should be used to guide our union in the way forward by giving them the opportunity to be a part of the wider decision-making unit of the GMB, the Regional Councils, the committees, and the other Congress units. I call on the CEC to support this motion and investigate wherever they may need it by giving our retired members the voice and the respect they deserve, after all we would not be here where we are today without their experience and expertise. I second. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Mo. Motion 29, Involvement of Retired Members, Yorkshire Region to move.

## **INVOLVEMENT OF RETIRED MEMBERS MOTION 29**

### **29. INVOLVEMENT OF RETIRED MEMBERS**

This Congress agrees to look at how retired members can remain active within the union including possible rule changes to allow active involvement for lifetime retired members.

YORKSHIRE COAL STAFF BRANCH  
*Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region*

*(Referred)*

BRO. I. KEMP (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): President, Congress, this union quite rightly opposes workers being thrown on the scrapheap simply as a result of the passing of Anno Domini yet we have a wealth of talent and experience out there of members who are retired. Surely it is not beyond the rhyme and reason of this union to tap into all that knowledge that comes with age. By supporting this motion you are creating a win-win situation. Retired members, many of whom have been literally dumped by their employers, are given a purpose and new lease of life that activism brings and those of us who are slightly younger can use all that our retired members can bring. As I said only the other week in my local, I have been through college, I

have been to university, yet everything I know I learnt from those who went through the university of life. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

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

*The motion was formally seconded.*

THE PRESIDENT: Anyone wish to come in on the debate? All right, Jim, I have found you. Come on, Angela. I have been to SpecSavers since last night!

SIS. A. MURPHY (North West & Irish): I am a member of the National Equalities Forum representing the retired members, and speaking in support of Motion 28. The issues affecting retired members will affect you all in the future however near or far that may be. By allocating a special seat on Regional Council, Regional Committee, and Congress, these issues can be raised quickly, efficiently, and effectively. By raising the profile of RMA issues they can be dealt with and hopefully nipped in the bud early. At present there is not a separate voice for RMA issues. This strand has only just been brought to the fore with the National Equalities Forum so it is clear it has been a forgotten issue up until now. To redress this issue the allocation of a seat would be the ideal. I know there are older members on these committees but they may have other agendas, pensions, winter fuel allowances, and the abolition of the cheque, just some of the important issues for the RMA. How many times are these spoken about at Regional Council, Regional Committee, and even Congress? I believe the CEC is to oppose this motion but I urge you to support this. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Angela. Anyone else? Anyone wish to speak against or for?

BRO. J. KANE (Northern): If you bear with me I will put an alternative on this. I have Parkinson's Disease. I had to medically retire. I have been a member of the GMB since 1974. I was elected shop steward in 1978. I led the trade union at Sellafield for 13 years. I have travelled and seen the world with the union: fantastic. I am very impressed with the 38% of new delegates we have; they are doing a wonderful job. Where do I fit in this? Where am I? I am not old enough to be retired. I am medically retired. I have Parkinson's Disease. It does not affect my brain. Sometimes it affects my personality; I have a bit of a personality disorder but that is life. This needs to be looked at with a view to taking all members of the GMB, not just those who are 65 and retired, those who have conditions, to go and look at it.

I will say, friends and colleagues, while I am here that this will probably be my last Congress. For those who do not know Parkinson's it is a debilitating illness which gets progressively worse; there is no cure. Do not get me wrong, it does not bother me. That is life. You play the hand you are dealt with. People are worse off than me. I look at the local newspaper, pick it up and look at the obituary column on page 2, they are worse than I am. It never really worries or affects me but I wanted to take the opportunity to thank everybody. The GMB has been a life to me. It has shaped me the way I am. It is funny how life goes a full circle. When I was leading the campaign for the nuclear industry I was never at home, I missed my kids growing up, and I used to go home and they would say, "Has Uncle Frank come back?" Now,



and it shows how life moves in a circle, my wife actually works for the GMB. She is a secretary in the Whitehaven office, and I have finished. Never close any doors but when you look at this motion and you debate the motion please take account of those who have had to finish through medical reasons. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, John. I call Jerry Nelson on Motions 11, 12, 13, 28, and 29, please.

BRO. J. NELSON (National Organising Team): Congress, the CEC is asking for you to refer Motions 11, 13 and 29, and support Motion 12 with a qualification, and oppose Motion 28. I hope you are all concentrating because, obviously, there has been a fairly good debate and some key issues have been raised, and some strong feelings expressed by the delegates coming to the rostrum this morning.

Let's move first to Motion 11, a name change proposed by the Midland & East Coast, Neil, from the Hull No. 1 Branch, and Shane. It is asking for the RMA to change its name to the Active Retired Members Association, or ARMA as the abbreviated version would read. What you have to understand is that the RMA already is very active. Every member of that RMA National Committee is extremely active in all the work that they do on behalf of the GMB and the regions that they hail from. You have seen Billy Hughes this week, one of the key members of the National Committee. With people like Billy Hughes, very well backed up by Monica Smith who you also saw this morning giving her report as National Secretary, you can see we are well blessed with some good key activists, active activists. We do not think that it is for Congress itself to tell the RMA section, which is what they are aiming for, to change its name. We are asking for Congress to allow this motion to be referred to the RMA itself. It has its meeting tomorrow, the conference is here, and will be chaired by our president, Mary. We ask that Congress agrees to refer this issue to them and let them decide if they feel a name change is appropriate.

Motion 12 talks about the magazines, national publications, regional publications, having a page in every single issue of every magazine that goes out, having a page dedicated to RMA issues. Colleagues, let me tell you, and I am going to support this motion with a qualification, we do accept the need to communicate better on behalf of RMA issues at every level within the organisation. Lots and lots of information could be supplied and we could fill a book of information regarding RMA activities, but it will not be fair or appropriate at this point in time to insist or Congress insist that it is a rule cast in stone that every edition should carry a page for RMA issues. There are going to be occasions, particularly this year when we have many, many industrial fights on our hands protecting our working members in public service in particular from cuts, and the economic climate, where we may want to forego our space in any magazine or publication for the key issues at any point in time so it would not be right to cast this in stone. All we are saying is that we support the principle of having a dedicated page, but with that qualification, that it may not always be possible as we may want to withdraw and allow space for other more key issues that affect our members. We are asking for support for that motion with that qualification.

Motion 13, long service awards, the speakers moving the motion are asking Congress to investigate and what we are asking is that you refer this motion so that it can be reviewed. It has been 20 years since the long service awards were discussed in any

detail. A reference back and a good debate at the appropriate committees, either the SMT and the CEC, and any other appropriate committee or sub-committee of the CEC, will be the best way forward and we are asking that Congress agree that that is referred on this occasion for that investigation to take place.

Motion 28, the CEC is asking that we oppose this motion and I say to Jan and Mo, and other colleagues supporting this, it is obvious to anyone sat in this hall, or has sat in this hall for many years, that retired members are not under-represented. They are not under-represented at all. There is absolutely no need for reserved seats. We have made the bigger and more inclusive Congress and this year is the first of those, much more inclusive, more delegates than ever before, and more retired members than ever before in this hall. We see no real need for any reserved seats. There is a long-term objective, and it has been hinted at by Billy Hughes when he got up to speak, that the long-term objective of the RMA is to be a recognised section within the rule book. At this point in time we would ask that you oppose this motion and allow the RMA to become better organised, able to communicate better, before we move to having Congress making a decision on this particular issue. We are asking you to oppose that.

Motion 29, involvement of retired members from the Yorkshire Region, Ian, good friend of mine, it was not really clear what the motion meant. Like one of the delegates said when he came to the rostrum, every member of the RMA is an active member. They are all campaigning on issues that affect you at work and for the older and retired members in every walk of life. Again, we would ask you to refer this to the RMA so that we can continue the work that we have already started. There is a lot of work going on behind the scenes and will increase during the back end of this year. I have a personal objective to get the regions better coordinated with myself at national level in terms of RMA activities. Things will improve and continue to improve. That is all we are asking you to do, allow that to be referred to allow the work to continue.

To sum up, Congress, the CEC is asking Congress to agree to refer Motions 11, 13, and 29, support Motion 12 regarding magazines with the qualification that I set out, and oppose 28.

While I am here, President, may I just make an announcement which is not to do with the motions? This is just to give you an example of the work that is going on. I am asking colleagues that are here today, if they can, if at all possible, to get behind the campaign that is being organised on behalf of international solidarity with one of our sister unions from the USA, and the demonstration is going to be outside the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Portman Square, just off Oxford Street, on 21<sup>st</sup> July. The campaign is in support of the low-paid workers within the hotel industry that are owned by the Hyatt Group. If anyone is around on 21<sup>st</sup> July in Central London, or can make it there for the 21<sup>st</sup>, we will be extremely pleased to see you in support of our sister union in the USA. That is one of the examples. There have been many more occasions where the RMA have been involved in those activities. Okay.

THE PRESIDENT: Jerry, can I go through those: the CEC is asking for reference. Midland Region, do you accept reference back? (*Agreed*) Yes. Congress agree? (*Agreed*) Thank you. London Region, long service awards, do you accept reference

back? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Congress agree? (*Agreed*) Motion 29, does Yorkshire Region accept reference back? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Congress agree? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Motion 12, London Region, do you accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. All those in favour please show? Anyone against? That is carried. I now move to Motion 28, the CEC, after great deliberation and I promise you that because I chair it every year, is asking you to oppose this. Does London Region wish to reply? Come along, Jan.

SIS. J. SMITH (London): Congress, I ask you and I plead with you not to accept the recommendation. Within what I said to you earlier I asked for reference back. I know we are a section. Jerry says we need to communicate better but we can only communicate better and get to know each other better by having a seat. I know the word “seat” is the operative word. If you are on a Regional Council it is a seat. If you are on a Regional Committee it is a seat. I ask that you support. We have done it before. We have put our hearts where we believe. I know the RMA is going from strength to strength. All I am asking is that we be recognised and bring the section forward so we have a seat on the Regional Councils and everywhere else in the same manner as other seats are formed. Please oppose the recommendation that we oppose this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Jan, do you have a seat on the Regional Council in London?

SIS. J. SMITH: Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I am just asking. Okay. Can I now put it to the vote? The CEC is asking you to oppose. All those in favour please show? Those against? That is lost.

*Motion 11 was REFERRED.*

*Motion 13 was REFERRED.*

*Motion 29 was REFERRED.*

*Motion 12 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 28 was LOST.*

THE PRESIDENT: The lambs are in again. Can we now move to the next part of the business, Congress. I just have two announcements before I call the next point. Birmingham & West Midlands Region, unclaimed prizes for last night, yellow tickets 361 to 365, Orange tickets 156 to 160, Orange tickets 166 to 170. If you have those tickets, please see Joe over there; he has your gifts. I think they are large cheques! That will make them look, Joe.

Congress, at lunch time today there will be a bucket collection and it is the President’s bucket collection, not for me but for the Jimmy Knapp Cancer Fund, which as you know we support every year. Please give generously. We will take cheques, and mortgages. It is for an extremely good cause. It is for trade union members to help them and their families. Thank you.

Can we now move to the next part of the business and could I ask Richard Ascough to move his report. Richard?

## REGIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT: SOUTHERN REGION (Pages 144-156)

### SOUTHERN REGION

#### 1. MEMBERSHIP AND RECRUITMENT

<b>FINANCIAL MEMBERSHIP</b>	84,219
Section Financial Membership (by each Section):	
COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION	24,858
MANUFACTURING SECTION	8,423
PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION	5,0938
Grade 1 members	4,9942
Grade 2 members	27,242
Retired, Reduced Rate & Others	7,035
Male Membership	39,021
Female Membership	45,198
Total number recruited 1.1.2010 – 31.12.2010	11,750
Increase/Decrease 1.1.2010 – 31.12.2010	1,989
Membership on Check-off	50,261
Membership on Direct Debit	27,157

2010 was a year of extreme mixed fortunes for the Region. On the positive side, despite the economic challenges, the Region once again had a good year in terms of enrolment and growth. Over the course of the year the Region grew by just under 2000 members and enrolled over the year 11,750 members. Although this was down on the previous two years, in light of the Government cut-backs, particularly in Public Services, this was still a very creditable result. The Region's contribution income was above budget and its expenditure was below budget.

On the negative side, the Region was rocked by a crisis involving some full time officers who were branch secretaries. The ensuing Inquiry resulted in five officers leaving the Union. A further two officers also left during the course of the year for reasons not connected with the financial investigation.

Despite the difficulties that the above created and with the reduced officer force, the Region did bounce back; to illustrate this, the January's enrolment figures this year are the third best in the Region in the last ten years. This is testimony to the hard work by the majority of officers and staff.

#### **Recruitment Targets and Campaigns**

The Region continued to focus on a number of national and regional targets. Once again there were very successful campaigns in schools. The Organising Team focussing on different counties in conjunction with area teams. In previous years, the national target of Southern Cross had produced somewhat disappointing results, but following a re-focussing of the campaign with advice from other Regions who had carried out successful campaigns in Southern Cross, fruits of this exercise were beginning to bear fruit.

The Region uses consultations on pay, TUPE transfer, etc., to focus on organising, with the officer responsible working in conjunction with the Organising Team and the Branch. Particularly successful recruitment took place in Veolia and SECAMB as a result of these exercises. As a result of the integration of ASU members into the Region, there was considerable growth across the Ambulance Service.

### **South West Area**

2010 has been a difficult time for the South West as for the rest of the UK and is still emerging from the deep recession stretching back over two and a half years. However, this also presented many opportunities for the area team to exploit as vulnerability of the labour market and the fall in confidence of workers and consequently our members, has led to a greater desire for people to join and get organised within the GMB.

Membership growth has been maintained across the Area using the continued strategy of focusing officers and lay activists on dedicated campaigns where workplaces have been mapped and assessed in accordance with GMB@work. These campaigns have been often executed in conjunction with the Regional Organising Team such as school based recruitment campaigns in Cornwall, Devon, Somerset and Wiltshire, using the issue of the creation of a National Body for school support staff.

Nicholas and Harris in Salisbury has seen a rapid growth in membership largely due to the efforts of our Project Workers who have been successful in combining ESOL and other Union Learning funded projects to attract a large number of migrant Polish members into membership of the GMB, recruiting new layers of activists who in turn become active within their branches. Equal Pay in Swindon BC has also been a very lucrative issue to recruit mainly school based support staff, which is ongoing.

Other notable organising successes have been achieved in Devon County Council in relation to the proposed failed transfer of the workforce to a private social care provider for elderly residential care, as well as pursuing campaigns for our members employed by Mimonsa Healthcare and Care First around forced changes in terms and conditions of employment.

The Area team continue to pursue recruitment opportunities within a number of contractors aligned to local government across the area such as Interoute, Enterprise and Balfour Beatty.

### **South Coast and Thames Valley**

During 2010 new GMB branches were set up, allowing a sharper focus within particular areas/authorities. A Slough Borough Council branch with a determined local leadership was established in order to cement and grow GMB organisation in the town. Additional facilities and a new GMB office were established and good links developed with the town's GMB sponsored MP and local labour councillors.

A single branch was established for Bracknell Forest and Wokingham Borough Council and a Regional Organising Team led recruitment exercise took place, which improved membership.

GMB also established a branch to solely represent members employed at the Heatherwood and Wexham Park NHS Foundation Trust. A new shop stewards committee was established which had to deal with an NHS Trust which was effectively bankrupt. GMB also resisted attempted poaching by the IDU (a non-TUC union), who has been seeking to establish a toe hold in the Trust.

Other local authorities such as Hampshire County Council also saw organising activities which led to modest membership growth. Elsewhere the Dorset County Council branch was at the forefront of efforts to combat public expenditure cuts. In October the branch hosted the biggest political event in Dorchester for many years at the Corn Exchange. This event was part of an ongoing campaign across the county to protect public services.

Local Government contractors, such as Biffa, Verdant and Veolia have been targeted in collaboration with National Office and the Organising Team.

Officers in the Thames Valley and Fareham areas are also responsible for activity in the commercial services, such as ASDA, DHL and the security industry. Recruitment and organising exercises in these employers continue throughout the year. Companies such as DHL and many in the security industry

have changed during the course of the recession with job losses, buy-out and de-mergers. Wherever possible, GMB has sought to capitalise on this uncertainty to improve organisation

GMB has also been active on Gatwick Airport. A change of ownership of the airport itself, continued changes in areas such as baggage handling, aircraft and airport servicing, waste and security have also led to increased membership.

### **London and South East Area**

This area was the one worst affected by the departure of officers but three new officers and an overall reorganisation of the area is beginning to show that the area has recovered from these difficulties.

The Team has made successes in Veolia in London Borough of Richmond, Surrey County Council, Royal Borough of Kingston and Elmbridge Council. Overall there has been continued growth in public services across the London Boroughs in the South East counties.

The Schools Campaign is continuing to grow in membership terms and also with Contractors in public services. The area has been engaged in all Academy consultation processes with a view to organising every school as individual workplaces.

The GMB Regional profile in the NHS and Ambulance Service has shown good recruitment and organisation. As indicated above, this was particularly as a result of the integration of the ASU membership into the Region but has also centred around significant campaigns, such as the one which involved a transfer to Savoy and proposed changes to terms and conditions in SECAMB

### **Overview of Region's Economic and Employment Situation**

As mentioned in the opening paragraphs of this section, the Region continues to buck the serious economic situation in both terms of enrolment and growth. Although of course there have been some job losses, these have been more than matched by significant enrolment. The Region's manufacturing base was decimated in previous recessions in the 80s and 90s. There would have been a major impact on our shipbuilding and repair membership if the aircraft carrier contract had been cancelled but fortunately, this has not happened.

It is too early yet to say what effect the NHS 'reforms' will have on the Region's membership. The Region has already prepared to send in organising teams as a result of TUPE transfers within PCT's.

## **2. GENERAL ORGANISATION**

Regional Senior Organisers	3
Membership Development Officers	2
Regional Organisers	22
Organising Officers	3
No. of Branches	100
New Branches	9
Branch Equality Officers	21
Branch Youth Officers	10

## **3. BENEFITS**

Dispute	£6,130
Total Disablement	NIL
Working Accident	£1,708
Occupational Fatal Accident	NIL
Non-occupational Fatal Accident	£1,100

Funeral	£25,675
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#### 4. JOURNALS AND PUBLICITY

There were two issues of the Region/National magazine Vision in 2010.

The Region has continued to be involved in a number of high profile campaigns.

#### 5. LEGAL SERVICES

Thompsons solicitors have continued to be the principal provider of employment and personal injury services. In addition though, the Region use for some branches Simpson Millar, and also continue with medical negligence claims with Bolt Burdon & Kemp. Criminal cases are dealt with by Andrews Angel and a limited number of libel/slander claims through Russell Jones & Walker.

##### (a) Occupational Accidents and Diseases (including Criminal Injuries)

Applications for Legal Assistance	Legal Assistance Granted
572	536

Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Court	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
244	200	1	£2,108,422	£2000	£2,110,422
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2010		997			

##### (b) Employment Tribunals (notified to Legal Department)

Claims supported by Union	126
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Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Tribunal	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
84	30	1	£372,993	12 £207,080	£580,073
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2010		109			

##### (c) Other Employment Law Cases

Supported by Union	Unsuccessful	Damages / Compensation	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2010
91	5	£845,441	47

##### (d) Social Security Cases

Supported by Union	Successful	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2010
14	7	7

#### 6. EQUALITY & INCLUSION

The Southern Region's Equality Forum is now well established with Bi-Monthly meetings. The Forum is very active right throughout the Region and there are now several initiatives and events that the Forum either organise or are involved in.

For example, we now have an Equalities facebook website and this has been extremely beneficial for helping activists to network and keep in contact with each other and share experiences and information.

We have now run several successful Mandatory Equalities courses, Part 1 and Part 2 in which all GMB activists have to attend as part of their training. This has resulted in Branches and Workplaces now being more active and up to date with the Equalities agenda and this has certainly benefited our members.

In conjunction with the National Organising UMF project we have also organised a Community Leaders course for Vulnerable Workers based on encouraging young Polish men to become community sports leaders and have connected this to the Polish Club in Southampton. We are hoping that this will lead to more Community Leaders courses to help us develop our organising and equalities agenda within the GMB and the wider community.

We have now organised our third Regional Equalities Conference with the theme of Fighting the Cuts, this has been a huge success as lots of new young activists have come forward as a result of the Forum's activities in helping to develop Young Members. Our Young Members Officer, Rachel Verdin, has successfully developed a whole series of networking meetings and we plan to organise a whole series of training days for Young Members on how to get involved in the GMB.

The Conference had lots of pro-active discussion about how to build campaigns against the cuts, with the emphasis on how to build relations with community groups and build the GMB's organising agenda

We have been involved in several Pride events in the Region including, Brighton Pride, Thanet, Plymouth and Exeter to name but a few. These events enable us to raise the GMB agenda and the profile of equality within the union and wider community. We have also produced an equality leaflet for the Region to enable us to get the message out to our activists and members.

We continue to carry out excellent work with our Migrant Workers strategy, and have now trained several migrant worker activists on our [GMB@WORK](#) programme. Our training programme in terms of ESOL has gone from strength to strength as we continue to help our migrant workers members with their language skills.

We are pleased with the development and progress of our Regional Equality Forum and the good work that is being carried out. We are not complacent and are aware that much more can be done, but we are confident that we will continue to make progress in terms of the equalities agenda.

## 7. TRAINING

(a) GMB Activists Basic Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
2-Day GMB@Work	19	149	65	214	428
5-Day Induction for New Reps Part 1	11	95	36	131	655
5-Day Induction for New Reps Part 2	9	68	33	101	505
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>446</b>	<b>1588</b>



<b>(b) GMB Activists Courses</b>					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
5-Day Union Learning Reps	3	21	9	30	150
5-Day Union Learning Reps F/On	1	-	10	10	50
5-Day Accompanying Reps	3	19	4	23	115
5-Day Introduction to Employment Law	1	7	3	10	50
5-Day Advanced Employment Law	1	5	3	8	40
3-Day Stress at Work	1	9	2	11	33
5-Day Grievances & Disciplinarys	1	14	3	17	85
5-Day Equalities Part 1	2	14	10	24	120
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>643</b>

<b>(c) Health &amp; Safety Courses</b>					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
5-Day Health & Safety Part 1	8	73	22	95	475
5-Day Health & Safety Part 2	2	28	3	31	155
5-Day Advanced H&S Part 3	2	26	4	30	150
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>780</b>

<b>(d) TUC Courses</b>					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
3-Day Employment Law for Officers	1	2	-	2	6
1-Day/Week/10wks Union Reps Stage 1	1	2	1	3	30
1-Day/Week/10wks Health & Safety Stg 1	1	1	-	1	10
1-Day/Week/10wks Health & Safety Stg 2	1	6	1	7	70
1-Day Green Workplace Reps	1	1	-	1	1
3-Day Discussion Leaders	1	1	-	1	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>120</b>

<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>541</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>3131</b>
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## **8. HEALTH & SAFETY**

The Region continues to have a very pro-active agenda in terms of our support for Health and Safety. We have two mandatory Health and Safety courses which all activists have to attend. We have also been able to run in-house Health and Safety courses in major workplaces, in particular in Portsmouth Dockyard and Falmouth. These have been hugely successful and we are now looking to build on more training with other employers in terms of in-house courses.

We have also done some good work with a Health and Safety Inspector who was responsible for working with migrant workers and again this has helped us to promote health and safety to migrant

workers, but also encouraged them to become active in the GMB. We are also running a Stress at Work course for our activists, who as a result of the cuts, are experiencing more and more issues of stress in the workplace.

There are a number of issues that we continue to be very active in supporting our members:

- 1) The Working Time Directive
- 2) Personal Protective Equipment
- 3) Stress
- 4) Accidents at Work.

Overall, our officers and activists have certainly indicated a big increase in health and safety problems at work and this has had a big impact on our members well being. We have approached this by encouraging and developing a pro-active approach as opposed to waiting for things to happen. We will continue to push health and safety as an organising tool for our members as well as ensuring that they are safe at work.

## **9. POLITICAL**

As a result of the general election, the GMB lost supported MPs in Hove, Hastings & Rye, Dover and Thanet South. With strong support from the Region, we hung on in Sadiq Khan's constituency of Tooting, which was a main target of the Tories. We also put in significant support in Plymouth Moor View where we retained the seat.

In the local authorities the Region will be principally targeting Brighton and Plymouth in 2011.

### **Conclusion**

Despite a number of difficulties, some of these self made by the financial problems referred to at the beginning, but some due to the economic and political situation, the Region has maintained its strong position and all the indications are that it has started 2011 strongly and ready to face the difficulties ahead.

*(Adopted)*

**BRO. R. ASCOUGH (Regional Secretary, Southern Region):** Madam President, Congress, in formally moving my statement I also want to make a personal statement. On March 25<sup>th</sup> this year I was 60. At the end of this year I will have completed 33 years service with this union, the first 10 of which was with APEX and in fact I am the last APEX officer who was an officer at the time of the amalgamation in 1989. The rest of the time has been with the GMB in the Southern Region. When the retirement age was changed from 60 to 65, I did indicate to a small number of people that I would probably go in 2012 but I recently informed the General Secretary that I intended this to be my last Congress and I will go the early part of next year. It was brought home to me the other day that it was perhaps time to go when I tied with Harry Donaldson as being not at the top of the league on the eye candy of Regional Secretaries. I thought that was probably time to go.

Also, two things this week have brought home to me how long I have really been around. When Vince Cable mentioned the Bullock Report I thought I was probably one of the only people in the hall who still has a Bullock Report. As a 26-year old shop steward I was in the newly formed British Airways and I was on the first British Airways Trade Union Executive and we met with the Board of British Airways, British Aerospace, Rolls Royce, and the then Secretary of State for Industry, Albert

Booth, to talk about aircraft procurement. We really thought the next step was a seat on the Board of British Airways but then some little event happened in May 1979 and the rest is history, and industrial democracy is as far away as it ever was.

It was also brought home to me on Sunday when I chaired the Mrs. Desai/Grunwick event. As an APEX activist in the 1970s I was on the picket line and remember very well the events. I was appointed as an organiser just at the time that that dispute came to an end.

I have spent nearly seven years, it will be over seven years, as Regional Secretary and I am very proud of a number of achievements. When I was appointed I think it is fair to say I was not expected to get it. One candidate, whose name I cannot mention in this hall because it is just too much of an insult, so thought he had got the job he went round telling everybody he was the next Regional Secretary. When he did not get it, after a failed coup against me, he then left, set up a scab union, and took about 3,000 of our members in the AA, helped and abetted by the AA itself.

We did not just lie down at that, we used the opportunity to clear out a lot of dead wood and over the years we have consistently built our membership. It is a record of growth, I think, second to none. In terms of enrolment it is always in the top two and we have rebuilt the membership where it now stands in real terms more than it was when this treacherous act took place. Also, we did not lie down, we decided to fight the AA, and as a result of that campaign we initiated the private equity campaign which then became global. It was one of the biggest campaigns this union has been involved in and I was there when the camel was there outside the church. It was only a small number of us and I am afraid to say the camel has since deceased. It was a great campaign.

I think it is fair to say that my SMT colleagues perhaps find me a little eccentric, particularly what they think of my odd taste in ties, and I have another one on show today, and my even odder taste in music. I have always strived to serve this union to the best of my ability and I think it is something, whether you are a shop steward, a Regional Secretary, or a General Secretary, you should remember, that it is not a right to serve our membership, it is a privilege. Thank you for your friendship. Thank you for your comradeship over the years.

One last point, I do not intend to go out to pasture and be idle. I know with racehorses they put you out to stud but I do not suppose that is going to happen, but there you are. (*Laughter*) I cannot give any further details at the moment but I am in discussions with the Labour Party. I hope to be taking up some sort of senior role there. For a long time I felt that both New Labour and old Labour just did not understand our agenda, did not understand employment law, did not understand the need for a trade union freedom bill, and I hope to play my part in that. Once again, thank you very much for your support and your comradeship. Goodbye. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Richard, can I say on behalf of Congress we wish you well and I will be seeing more of you, it will not be goodbye, but I would also like to add our best wishes to Nicky who has played a big part as well in the trade union Movement; without her support you could not do it, so our best wishes to Nicky. Thank you.

I now move to your pages, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156? Any comments? Agree to accept the report? (*Agreed*) Thank you.

*The Regional Secretary's Report: Southern Region (pages 144-156) was ADOPTED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. I now move to the next section, section 5, Commercial Services Section, page 59-73 and can I call on Gary Smith to move his report. Gary? Formally. Thank you.

## COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION (Pages 59-73)

### COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION

#### COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION

##### Section National Committee

Kevin Flanagan (President)	North West & Irish Region
Malcolm Sage (Vice President)	Midlands & East Coast Region
Brian Adams	Birmingham & West Midlands Region
Dave Clements	Southern Region
Kevin Crummey	Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region
Elaine Daley	Birmingham & West Midlands Region
Roy Dunnett	London Region
Gwyn Evans	South Western Region
Jean Foster	Southern Region
Peter Kane	Northern Region
Kath Manning	Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region
Cathleen Murphy	GMB Scotland
Benjamin Rankin	GMB Scotland
Lena Sharp	London Region
Kathleen Slater	Midlands & East Coast Region
Catherine Sutton	North West & Irish Region

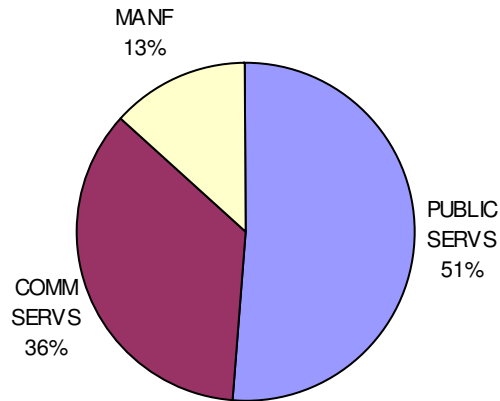
##### Section National Officers

Gary Smith (National Secretary)  
Jude Brimble  
Mick Rix

##### Introduction

The Commercial Services Section membership stood at 164,925 in December 2009 and had risen to 165,868 by December 2010. This net increase of 943 members represented a membership growth of 0.6% for the Section, during a year which saw a slight decline in GMB membership overall of 0.1%. The Section's percentage share of GMB's total financial membership is 27%.

A total of 25,464 new members were recruited to the Section in the 12 months ending in December 2010, from a total of 71,667 new GMB members recruited during this period. The graph below shows that this represented 36% of the total number of new members recruited by GMB.



**GMB Sectional recruitment: 2010**

The Commercial Services Section's work throughout 2010 continued to contribute fully towards the GMB@work organising agenda. Workplace organisation has been developed in many of the Section's key industries and companies, most notably in security, retail and energy, building upon the GMB@work initial training or follow-up courses which took place in 2009. The Section's recruitment and organisation achievements during 2010 are a reflection of the tremendous efforts of our shop stewards, who remained committed and focused on growing and organising their membership, despite the difficult industrial and economic conditions.

Progress reports for the Section's key industries have kept the Section National Committee and Senior Management Team fully informed of the measures taken at national, regional and workplace level to ensure the Union vigorously pursues our organising and recruitment objectives within these industries. These reports to the Sectional National Committee have also incorporated information on the steps taken to action the motions which were carried or referred at GMB Congress and the Commercial Services Section Conference in 2010. A full report on the 2010 Section Conference was also made to the Central Executive Council (CEC).

### **ASDA Stores**

Since the last Congress we have continued to make steady progress on membership growth in ASDA Stores. Despite the lack of proper access and the weaknesses in the Stores Agreement, the numbers of new recruits in Stores is above that of ASDA Distribution almost every month. This is a testament to the perseverance of our activists in Stores.

Last year the company committed to improving its engagement with GMB through the listening process around pay. This was obviously an attempt to signal the company's desire to improve relations. Unfortunately, the outcome of the pay listening process did not in any way meet our members' aspirations. We did put in a formal pay submission to the company based on the feedback that we received from shop stewards and members (as per 2010 Section Conference Motion CS1: Sick Pay). However, ASDA imposed a 2% increase in Stores and failed to deal with the other items which we tabled, or the concerns that we have about changes to night pay which were previously implemented by the company.

As a result, we surveyed Stores members and sought their opinions about the credibility of the pay listening process. The feedback from our members did not make easy reading for ASDA management. Our members made it very clear, in large numbers, that they have no faith in the pay listening process and, ultimately, in the current Colleague Circle arrangements where pay is discussed. It is also clear from the feedback from our membership that morale in many areas is low due to the way that people are being managed. We have repeatedly presented this challenge to the company. Hopefully, the feedback that we have had from members will assist as we try to strengthen the industrial relations processes within Stores moving forward.

A priority for GMB remains the need to secure a new agreement in Stores, which will allow us to build our membership and develop our shop steward networks for the benefit of ASDA Stores workers. At the time of writing, the night pay issue is subject to an ongoing national grievance. The working arrangements over Christmas and the redesignation of bank holidays were not managed at all well by ASDA either. The communication was poor and the inequity in the company policy on working arrangements over the Christmas and New Year holiday period caused considerable upset. Again, at the time of writing, this is still subject to an ongoing national grievance. We are seeking both improved consultation and negotiation around future Christmas and New Year holiday arrangements and also rewards which are fairer across all Stores.

At the time of compiling this report the National Organising Department are assisting with negotiations on an improved communication process for new Stores access. The National Organising Department has also been very helpful in ensuring that we will get access to what were Netto stores, for recruitment purposes, once they are fully converted over to ASDA Stores.

We have always understood that securing a positive deal in ASDA Distribution would be important in securing confidence with the company to progress and improve our relationship in Stores. Our ASDA Stores workers will continue to be a priority for us this year.

### **ASDA Distribution**

Our membership in ASDA Distribution has continued to grow, along with the number of sites where we have secured GMB recognition. Membership grew by 9.3% in the twelve months to December 2010. This was a tremendous effort by the shop stewards and officers involved.

Aside from our organising work in Distribution, a lot of our time and energy has been focused on national bargaining over pay and conditions. Last year, the company finally agreed to hold national pay talks in Distribution for the first time. ASDA management said themselves that this was “an historic moment”.

However, it seemed to take the company longer than they had originally anticipated to secure a mandate over the national negotiations. The recent acquisition of Netto by ASDA also meant that management were, for a period of time, distracted.

We did manage to secure an interim pay offer of 2% and £300, which was accepted by our members. The £300 was only payable on unionised sites. This was seen as a real success by our members on the unionised sites. The company has committed to finalising the negotiations in the first quarter of 2011. At the time of writing we are engaged in those negotiations. There are also two sites ready to go to a recognition ballot, which is very positive news and demonstrates that we are continuing to build the membership.

### **Wilkinson Stores**

There is no doubt that the economic crisis has had implications for Wilkinson Stores, in common with many other retailers. The company has continued to restructure and implement change and this has kept our shop stewards very busy.

There was a detailed survey of members' opinion prior to submitting the pay claim in 2010. The negotiations this year were particularly difficult with the toughest discussions over pay that our shop stewards could remember for some years. The company's starting point was to consider a pay freeze. This was rejected out of hand. The first formal offer from the company was also rejected overwhelming by our membership. We believe that the company was surprised at the size of the rejection. Eventually, we managed to secure a 2% pay increase that was accepted by the membership. Great credit goes to the convenors and shop stewards who pushed so hard to secure anything for our members.

Our membership in Wilkinson Stores has grown again in 2010, building on the very good year that we had in 2009. Membership growth of 9% was achieved during 2010. Moving forward in Wilkinson we will be trying to build upon the current agreements and industrial relations structures. We had hoped to achieve more on this in 2010, but most of our focus was taken up with the difficult pay negotiations. However, we also need to be mindful that over the past few years we have managed to secure jobs, pay rises and membership growth under our current agreements.

There is no doubt that the company will continue to look at changes in the operation of the business to try to make it more efficient. This will have significant implications for our members and it will no doubt continue to keep our shop stewards and convenors very busy.

## **Energy**

As outlined in previous Congress Reports, energy continues to be one of the most dominant issues facing society. It is likely to be so for a generation or more. GMB's participation in the TUC Clean Coal Task Group, the TUC Annual Climate Change Conference and the Ofgem Gas Distribution Price Review process (RIIO-GD1) has given us the opportunity to continue to press the Union's agenda on energy. Our policy remains that the country needs a balanced energy policy utilising renewables, nuclear, clean coal and gas. We have also continued to argue that sensible planning legislation is needed which, whilst giving local communities a say, also considers the pressing need for the development and deployment of all the technologies that are desperately required to ensure the lights are kept on.

No organisation has been more outspoken on the need for secure, sustainable and, crucially, affordable sources of energy. In accordance with 2010 motions Composite 15, 158, CS12 and CS14 (from Congress and the Section Conference), GMB policy has been expressed in correspondence, submissions on consultation documents and face-to-face meetings with Ministers and Ofgem.

GMB has continually questioned energy market failure, particularly when it comes to the wholesale price of gas. The development of new technology and new fields coming on-stream means that there is a plentiful supply of gas in the world. We have questioned Government and Ofgem as to why the benefit of these new sources of gas has not had a positive impact for UK consumers. It seems that speculation is a major factor in the failure of gas markets. As yet neither Ofgem nor Government has had the courage to tackle the issue, although Ofgem has raised the prospect of a single national company to deal with the purchase of gas. This is a signal that our message on prices is having an effect.

Motion CS8 of 2010, referred by the Section Conference, called for Government to use fiscal mechanisms to change energy companies into domestic energy service companies and encourage reduced energy consumption. The Tory-led coalition's laissez-faire approach towards energy, disguised under a pale 'green' veneer, indicates that such intervention is unlikely to occur. This is a Government whose idea of encouraging reduced energy consumption is to refuse help with energy bills to those who are suffering from a terminal illness.

Motion CS15, calling for the establishment of an Energy Sub Section Forum, was also referred by the 2010 Section Conference. This proposal has been given very serious consideration, to evaluate the costs and benefits to the Union of establishing such a forum. At the time of writing, the consultation with senior GMB representatives throughout the industry has been inconclusive. Whilst there are some issues of common concern (the Ofgem attack on pensions in the gas and electricity distribution sectors, for example), opinion is divided about what such a forum would achieve in terms of GMB@Work and developing our membership across the sector. Bringing responsibility for E.ON and EDF into National Office may mean that we re-visit this in due course. However, we must be mindful of not simply re-creating the former Energy & Utilities Section Conference.

## **The Gas Industry**

GMB is the only trade union which has been invited to sit on the Ofgem RIIO-GD1 Price Review Forum. The RIIO-GD1 price review process will determine the cost of gas distribution, transmission and

electricity transmission prices for an eight year period. This is a complex issue which has implications not only for prices, but also for investment in training, jobs and safety.

One of our major concerns over the past year has been the threat to the future of the gas industry. The Government's Committee on Climate Change, Ofgem (and arguably even the HSE) see the future as being almost exclusively about clean electricity. As GMB pointed out at the TUC Climate Change Conference and repeatedly on Ofgem's RIIO-GD1 Forum, moving from a situation where most UK homes use gas for cooking and heating to one where we are dependent on electricity will not be simple. Apart from the cost of changing appliances for households moving from gas to clean electricity, a kW of electricity is already three or four times the price of a kW of gas. This is before the costs of the massive investment in the electricity infrastructure are passed onto the consumer.

GMB is aware that burning gas does have environmental consequences, although far less than other fossil fuels. Apart from the jobs of tens of thousands of GMB members employed in the gas industry, we have argued that the full social impact of a move to clean electricity has not been fully understood or considered. GMB will continue to press the argument that gas has a big part to play in the energy mix and that we need further investment in fuel-efficient gas appliances and the insulation of homes to tackle CO emissions. The Tory-led Government's decision to reduce the Warm Front Programme was nothing short of a scandal, undermining efforts to tackle climate change whilst disadvantaging the poorest in society.

We have been involved in a vigorous debate with both Ofgem and the HSE over future investment in the gas mains replacement programme. HSE and Ofgem are undertaking a joint review of the mains replacement programme (MRP). In our view, Ofgem would like to see investment in the gas infrastructure cut, partly because they mistakenly see it as a fuel of the past. Our campaigning work in defence of the MRP has exposed real weaknesses in the case put forward for cutting the programme. Cutting the MRP will jeopardise safety, lead to more gas escapes and increase the risk of explosions, and will be bad for the environment. During this winter we have had a record number of gas escapes, and apart from the danger this poses, methane does have greenhouse gas properties.

The high levels of gas escapes this winter has exposed the fact that there is insufficient skilled labour available to deal with a cold winter. We believe Ofgem has played a major part in failing to ensure companies focus on safety and the public interest, as highlighted in motion CS10 at the 2010 Section Conference. Following public representations by GMB and Parliamentary pressure initiated by GMB MPs, Ofgem did convene a meeting of the gas distribution companies, the HSE and GMB to discuss safety provision. The HSE has given an assurance that they will remind the gas distribution companies of their legal obligations to consult with GMB safety representatives. On safety issues, Ofgem has also told the companies that they are duty bound to consult with GMB as stakeholders, aside from their obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act. The failure of companies to properly engage GMB was a major issue in safety standards being undermined in the winter of 2010/2011. This was a point touched upon by the referred motion CS9 at the 2010 Section Conference.

GMB remains the only union that has continued to challenge Ofgem over pensions (Motion CS11, 2010 Section Conference). At the time of writing, Ofgem has engaged the Government's Actuaries Department to undertake a costly and unnecessary review of pensions in the regulated gas and electricity sectors. GMB has been highly critical of this in public and our campaign has received media coverage. Ofgem's role as a regulator, which was the subject of Motion CS10 at the 2010 Section Conference, is currently under review by the Government.

### **British Gas Industrials**

The early part of 2010 was very difficult in terms of relations with British Gas. However, with a change in senior management and a change in culture and approach to the trade union nationally, industrial action was averted and we commenced some very difficult discussions with the company. The business took a more mature approach to relations and gave us some stark statistics on the decline of the CHC (Central Heating Cares) part of the business. Competition, which is often cheaper and invariably non-



unionised, was hitting British Gas very hard. Significantly, one of the main competitors is the AA, who (as we know) are hostile to GMB.

The Company argued that they required a new position to differentiate them from the competition. After many weeks of difficult negotiations we concluded a deal which was accepted by nearly two-thirds of the members with a 90% turnout. This was a two year deal (2010: 3% backdated to 1st April 2010; 2011: 2% from 1st April 2011). One of the most difficult changes was an increase to a 45 hour working week for three months of winter, whilst in the summer months the working week reduces to 28 hours to compensate. Given how cold it had been this winter, our members have found the 45 hour week particularly tough.

At the time of writing we are about to conduct a joint review of winter working arrangements and with the support of the shop stewards we hope that we can come up with something better next year. However, given the flexibility demands in this increasingly competitive environment it is likely to remain tough. Relations with British Gas are now more far more positive, but the challenge for the business will be to ensure that all our members, at every level of the company, experience a positive working culture.

In CHI (Central Heating Installation) the changes to working practices implemented by the company in 2009 and 2010 means that it remains tough for our members. The company has informed us that their volumes have been good, not least because of the previous Labour Government's Boiler Scrappage Scheme. Profitability in CHI is not great and the shop stewards have done an excellent job in the pay negotiations, securing a deal similar to that for the CHC Engineers, but with a pensionable supplement which means that it is arguable that the CHI settlement was actually better.

#### **British Gas Staff**

We have continued to make steady progress on British Gas Staff membership levels. The shops stewards and activists deserve great credit for their work. We have seen significant breakthroughs in our membership in areas such as Uddingston in Scotland and at Oldbury, whilst we have consolidated our position at sites such as Leicester. Pay settlements for British Gas Staff under their formula are coming out around 2.2%. At the time of writing a similar offer will be put to our Service Manager membership. By Congress 2011 we hope to have secured a number of new recognition agreements with developing parts of the business, which is an indication of the positive way in which relations have progressed since last year.

#### **National Grid Staff**

Our members covered by staff collective bargaining decisively rejected taking industrial action over pay in a consultative ballot. The three other unions covered by this set of negotiations voted to take limited industrial action. A revised offer is likely to be accepted by all unions.

We did successfully settle a long running dispute affecting our members who work in gas transmission, a group known as PMC. Our members voted to accept a one-off non-consolidated payment of £1,000.

The staff side of National Grid will continue to endure restructuring and cuts in headcount. The Northampton site is likely to close this year. There will be no compulsory job losses but, particularly for those working on the gas side of National Grid, the times ahead will not be easy.

Our Gas Managers Association (GMA) membership is likely to continue to shrink, as a result of a reduction in the number of posts. A successful pensions seminar was run, supported by the National Pensions Department, to assist with recruitment into the GMA.

The challenge in the year ahead will be to refocus our efforts to organise staff within National Grid. Membership density amongst these staff remains low, but the constant process of change at least gives us a platform to build on. The closure of the Newcastle office had an impact on our membership levels and morale. However, the time is right to step up our organising efforts and begin the rebuilding process.

### **National Grid Industrials**

Our members were covered by a three-year pay deal. However, we had the right to re-open talks in the third year because the rate of inflation remains high, and have taken that opportunity. These talks are currently underway.

The company has introduced a new work management system known as GDFO. So far, the system has been a hugely expensive failure. We have continually reminded management that their failure to consult GMB before they embarked on GDFO contributed hugely to the problems that they are experiencing.

Management sought to link the re-opening of the pay talks to harmonising working practices as part of the GDFO recovery plan.

After some difficult negotiations a revised pay offer, which will mean limited changes to working practices, is due to go to shop stewards and members. The deal is likely to include £2,000 non-consolidated cash payments and a 3% pay increase consolidated from June 2012. As part of any deal, the company has also committed to establishing and seeing through a number of working groups, which are designed to address some of the longstanding grievances and issues of concern to our members.

The national GMB side has been increasingly frustrated at the lack of proper attention the company has paid to our members' concerns. We believe that there are serious issues with the management culture in some areas. This may finally be properly addressed, which will be a positive development for our members.

Given the shortages of skilled labour which have been exposed over the past two winters, coupled with the shortcomings of the contractors, we are also pushing the company hard on employing more direct labour. The BP Gulf of Mexico disaster was a further reminder of the dangers of over reliance on sub-contracting. At the time of writing, it seems we may finally be winning the argument. We may now have the opportunity to start reversing the trend of over-reliance upon sub-contractors which has been a feature of much of the industry for a generation. This would be good for safety, for the workers involved and for membership development.

### **The Electricity Industry**

The RIIO-T1 price review process has serious implications for the electricity industry. We have used this platform to argue the case for adequate investment in the electricity infrastructure and to ensure that investment in safety remains a priority. All the work we have carried out on an energy policy around renewables, carbon capture and storage, as well as new nuclear, is relevant to our members in electricity. The arguments around electricity have been more straightforward than with gas because there is a general consensus about the need to invest in "clean electricity".

Whilst our members in the electricity sector have different pension arrangements than their colleagues in gas, and there is also primary legislation in place which covered pensions around the time of privatisation, the Ofgem review of pensions in the regulated energy sector (referred to under 'Gas' above) remains a serious threat. Our campaigning work on pensions is important to both our gas and electricity membership.

### **The Nuclear Industry**

With the argument for new nuclear largely won, our work has concentrated on lobbying over funding for decommissioning and supporting the Northern Region's work around making a case for the future of Sellafield. Flat funding for decommissioning has been guaranteed by the Government. This was very important in terms of safety and nuclear clean-up. With most other public sector budgets being slashed, this was a very significant win. It will secure jobs and investment in the nuclear industry for the next few years.

Both at national and regional level, we have been pressing the case for a new fuel manufacturing plant and investment in recycling fuel at Sellafield. At the time of writing, and after many years lobbying, it seems a new fuel plant may be built. This will allow us to put the plutonium on the site to a social use, i.e. making electricity rather than being treated as a waste product. In addition, the issue of recycling of nuclear fuel is again being debated in earnest. This opens up real possibilities for the future of the site.

This summer will see the first work start at Hinckley Point in preparation for the building of a new power station. At National Office, the responsibility for nuclear has now transferred to colleagues in the Manufacturing Section, to ensure that GMB is strategically positioned to benefit from new-build in the engineering construction sector.

### **British Energy / EDF**

To enable better organisation to be developed, a meeting took place early in 2010 with all the senior stewards from the different companies within EDF. A future programme of GMB activity and meetings was agreed.

The pay negotiations were relatively trouble free in 2010. There was a dip in the company's financial fortunes and the sale of the networks division was also a sign that EDF had to reduce its debt. The pay offer from the company was for a 2% increase in salary and flow-through items effective from 1st July 2010, and a further 1% increase in salary and flow-through items effective from 1st January 2011. This was agreed and accepted by the membership.

### **Magnox**

The decision has been taken by Government to merge Magnox North and Magnox South. This is a reversal of the previous policy when Magnox split into two parts. Whatever the merits of this decision, Magnox will be completed as one entity. We have managed to secure the full-time Convener position for GMB as part of the merger process between Magnox North and Magnox South.

### **The Security Industry**

GMB remains the only union with any credibility, influence and significant membership levels within the security sector. At present cut-throat competition for contracts within CVIT and static guarding is driving almost constant change. The major companies are all losing contracts to each other, and gaining others to replace them by tendering the lowest bids. This 'race to the bottom' is often a consequence of the Governments austerity cuts impacting upon private sector workers.

The perpetual TUPE transferring of employees between companies represents a challenge to GMB, but also provides an opportunity to communicate the message to affected employees that union membership is an essential protection. In line with Motion CS7 (TUPE Regulation and Restructuring Process) carried at the 2010 Section Conference, we have developed an effective system between GMB National Office and Regions on TUPE transfers. This is to ensure that not only do we organise around this issue, but also that we are actively involved in ensuring that employers engage in meaningful consultation, so that the principles and protection of TUPE are not undermined.

In the last year we have effectively seen revenue being 'stripped' out of the industry, which has also resulted in companies trying to squeeze both on pay and terms & conditions, as a way of protecting their 'bottom line'. Many GMB members are also now working strictly to 'contracted' hours, which has hit members hard, as there has long been a culture of 'additional hours' to boost pay in what is still largely a low-pay sector.

In addition, we are seeing companies growing by acquisition in an effort to remain within the UK market. VSG (Vision Security Group) has recently been acquired by Compass, and Securitas has recently acquired both Chubb and Reliance. Consolidation within the industry now means that 45% of the market is occupied by the five top companies.

However, although we are witnessing contraction of the workforce across the industry, traditional guarding still offers massive membership potential from within the existing workforce across the key companies where GMB is recognised. To reflect this situation, we have continued with an approach to consolidate members across the industry from the existing employees and to develop recruitment strategies linked to industrial issues.

New recognition agreements have been signed with VSG and Wilson James for their strategic contract areas. Whilst there is more work to be done to secure agreements across the entire operation within these companies, these agreements do provide a platform for GMB to organise and grow in the future.

### **GMB SafeGuard Campaign**

On 1<sup>st</sup> March 2010 the GMB SafeGuard campaign was launched at the House of Commons. The launch was very well attended by GMB activists, shop stewards, Commercial Services Section National Committee members, senior managers from the most important Security companies and many GMB MPs. Key speakers included the Labour Government's Minister for Crime Reduction and the GMB General Secretary. Powerful stories were recounted by a number of GMB members who had been victims of vicious assaults and whose experiences had initiated the campaign.

The GMB SafeGuard Charter was signed by all industry stakeholders and discussions are now underway with a number of companies to introduce or improve Sick Pay Schemes and in particular Injury on Duty. As a result of our campaign, discussions have taken place with the Security Industry Authority (SIA) to develop a new standard within the industry around reducing crime and violence and what employers need to do to better look after employees who are subjected to violent attacks. The campaign is still very much membership-led, and at the time of writing arrangements are underway to develop a National GMB SafeGuard Group that will bring together key activists from a number of companies to push the campaign forward.

### **The Security Industry Authority (SIA)**

As part of the 'bonfire of Quangos' the Government has announced it is scrapping the SIA. However, following much lobbying by GMB and the reputable parts of the Security Industry there will now be no changes until after the 2012 Olympics.

At the time of writing, the Government has asked the SIA to establish a strategic review body on which GMB has secured a seat (as the only trade union to be represented). GMB will be looking to build momentum around this issue and to engage with security workers to ensure that our members have a voice about how their industry should be regulated and licensed in the future.

In accordance with Motion CS5 (Minimum Standards in the Private Security Industry) carried at the 2010 Section Conference, discussions started last year with the SIA to try and establish national minimum employment standards for the industry. Unfortunately, progress on this has been somewhat thwarted, given the situation with the SIA described above. However, discussions and engagement through Skills for Security and the British Security Industry Association (BSIA) are on-going, particularly around sick pay provision, training, and assignment rates.

### **G4S Secure Solutions**

Secure Solutions remains the largest sector of G4S, currently employing just over 20,000 security officers across eight divisions. The workforce are spread across some 5,000+ sites. Work has continued to successfully develop collective bargaining structures, with a significant breakthrough being achieved to finally establish a full National Negotiating Committee (NNC) to cover all areas of the business. This new NNC will overarch the contract level negotiations and give GMB representatives a more meaningful structure to negotiate directly with the senior executive group within Secure Solutions.

Work continues in Regional Security, where our biggest challenges lie in terms of organising and delivering full pay negotiating arrangements. However, slow but sure progress is being made to ensure more GMB members are having a say about their terms, conditions and pay. At the time of writing a

new G4S/GMB 'engagement policy' had been agreed which will for the first time provide for two GMB National Convenor roles to come onstream in April 2011. As part of these discussions, the issue of third party pressure has been and is still being pursued (in line with 2010 Section Conference Motion CS6: Third Party Pressure). Some progress has been made in relation to G4S adopting a much more robust approach with key customers who wish to remove employees from site.

National negotiations have now been completed to introduce a national sick pay scheme, which will provide basic provision for nine months before increasing in benefits. This is a significant development, as national sick pay schemes are a rarity in the guarding division, and is a testament to the work that GMB shop stewards have done in pushing the aims of the SafeGuard campaign. Our organising strategy now needs to ensure that the success of our negotiations is vigorously followed up by increased recruitment and membership growth throughout Secure Solutions. Improvements to the Injury on Duty Scheme have also been secured and at the time of writing further talks were due to introduce further improvements.

In regard to national pay negotiations within Secure Solutions, the Trillium contract saw the second part of a two-year deal implemented which delivered a further 0.5% on top of the previous 2%. Negotiations during 2010 have focused on the merging of the contract; which brings the national job centre portfolio under one provider. This makes this G4S Government contract the largest in the security sector, with some 1100 employees TUPE transferring from Securitas to G4S at the end of 2010. During the months running up to this transfer, National office undertook to map out the transferring employees on a site-by-site basis as part of our organising strategy within G4S. Whilst new members were recruited in some areas, we did not get the traction needed to make best use of this opportunity. At the time of writing pay negotiations were about to begin. GMB shop stewards are aiming to bring together the entire workforce of some 3,500 under one pay and grading structure and to use this as a recruitment tool going forward.

Other national pay negotiations within Secure Solutions resulted in the following outcomes:- Monitoring and Response: a one-year deal for 2011 resulted in a pay increase of 2.2% which was rejected by members; negotiations to secure an improved offer are still under discussion at the time of writing. The RBS contract, which employs some 900 workers, recently advised that G4S intended to impose a pay freeze; again negotiations continue to find an improved offer. The Olympics site voted in December 2010 to reject the company's offer and an improved offer was secured for 2.2% which members voted overwhelmingly to accept. At the time of writing, negotiations on the IBM contract were about to begin, again with the company indicating a possible pay freeze.

The loss of contracts within G4S Aviation has continued through 2010, with the Liverpool John Lennon Airport contract transferring to Securitas. As a result of this continuing trend, G4S Aviation is no longer a stand-alone business and has now been repositioned to come under the umbrella of G4S Secure Solutions.

### **G4S Care and Justice**

GMB continues to be the lead union in this division following the acquisition by G4S of GSL. The integration of the two companies is now complete and GMB are represented in prisons, court services, inter-prisons transport, police custody suites, electronic monitoring and children's services. At the time of writing, discussions have just commenced to extend the National Recognition Agreement across the three prisons to cover the 'banded' staff, encompassing clerical, admin and support workers.

Within the private prisons, the last year of a three-year deal of 12% has been honoured delivering a further 3% in 2010. During recent months we have seen many changes to working conditions and rosters as the company responds to the Government's cuts, and at the time of writing we are awaiting an announcement from G4S as to the impact the Government austerity cuts will have across the private prison estate within G4S during 2011. The Government's review of Justice Services has also resulted in the abandonment of the proposed new build programme for the 'large' prisons put in place by the previous Labour Government.

In Court Services and Inter Prisons Transport (IPT), our members have faced a particularly difficult year in 2010. Again, we have seen the effects of Government spending cuts with protracted and difficult negotiations taking place over the last eight months in Courts Services, with the company trying to make cuts to our members' sick pay scheme. After lengthy negotiations, an offer was made of 2.2% with no strings attached, backdated to August 2010. Our members were balloted and voted overwhelmingly to accept this offer.

IPT settled in January 2011 on an April 2010 anniversary date. Members voted to accept 2% from April 2010 and a further 1% from January 2011. The G4S IPT contract has now been terminated by the Government, as they seek to reduce costs and impose cuts to services. The IPT service will be integrated into the wider courts services contract which is currently out to tender.

GMB members have been facing a very uncertain future in both of these areas and, regardless of who wins the future contract this year, it is clear that Government cuts are likely to have a negative impact on jobs. Additionally, the Government undertook a public consultation in 2010 to close over fifty courts across the country. This closure programme will come on-stream during 2011, resulting in possible job losses throughout the courts sector. During the last six months or so GMB has been actively working with G4S to mitigate future job losses by putting in place a job-freeze ahead of the closure programme.

#### **G4S Cash and Valuables in Transit (CVIT)**

GMB continues to work closely with G4S on the high profile campaign about attacks on security personnel in the CVIT Sector. New training methods have been introduced for operational employees and this, together with the continuing development in technology, has helped to bring the number of attacks down in recent months. GMB continues to participate in the Home Office roundtable meetings, which the Tory-led Government has agreed to continue as part of the strategy to deal with attacks. We also play an active part in the sub-groups that link into those talks and the wider discussions that continue with the British Banking Association and the British Retail Consortium.

The first compensation/welfare scheme ever set up in G4S continues to go from strength to strength and continues to have strong support from members, who contribute directly to the scheme. Following the rule changes that took place in 2010, we have been able to award compensation to more GMB members who have suffered attacks, but not necessarily sustained 'life changing' injuries.

National pay negotiations in 2010 were again protracted and difficult, taking place over 4 months. A 20-month deal was negotiated, which effectively brings the future pay anniversary date to January. The pay deal which was secured represented a 4.5% increase on all basic rates and a one-off lump sum payment of £150. Members voted overwhelmingly to accept the offer. The next pay anniversary date will be 1<sup>st</sup> January 2012.

National pay talks were also held for the Clerical and Admin Grades within G4S Cash Services, which resulted in one-year deal on a 3% increase effective from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2011. Members voted to accept the offer. Agreement has also been reached to now bring this group of workers into the main Cash Services negotiating body and to align future pay talks under one umbrella.

The NNC reps have recently undertaken a mapping exercise within the cash centres and amongst the clerical grades across the business, where significant potential still exists to consolidate membership, and this work will be taken forward in 2011 by the NNC reps.

#### **Loomis**

The company's plans to introduce one person working on ATM work were abandoned, following an overwhelming vote by GMB members against such a move, after a number of trials had taken place in depots. This was a fantastic result for GMB members, who were put under significant pressure to agree these controversial changes to working practices. It is certain that if these changes had come about they would also have been introduced across the whole CVIT industry and would have resulted in significant job losses.

During 2010 Loomis continued to lose contracts and as a result further depot closures took place. Fortunately on the GMB sites we managed to secure alternative employment in neighbouring depots, thus avoiding any significant job losses.

The pay negotiations during 2010 started from the premise of a pay freeze and as a consequence of this negotiations became protracted. The company's offer was overwhelmingly rejected, and a much improved offer was achieved after several months of negotiation. This represented 7.5% over a two-year period, coupled with improvements to holiday entitlements. Members voted overwhelmingly to accept the offer which was due in October 2010.

### **Securitas**

Over the last twelve months we have remained focused within Securitas on developing our shop stewards network and establishing collective bargaining. Unfortunately, the limited progress that had been made has been stalled by the loss of the Telereal contract to G4S. This represented a significant proportion of the Securitas business, and was where the majority of its employees were based. As a consequence, we have seen the acquisition of Chubb and Reliance as Securitas make a bid to hold onto and grow its UK base. At the time of writing, early discussions are due to take place about how the three businesses will merge as one company during 2011. Our key aim will be to secure a national recognition agreement across the entire business, covering some 18,000 employees. These acquisitions now put Securitas on a par with G4S in terms of its size within the guarding sector.

### **Security Plus**

The key challenges in Security Plus during 2010 have been around pay and job security. Members received a 1.5% increase in January 2010; a further improvement on Injury on Duty was secured later in the year. The company withdrew from talks to introduce a sick pay scheme during 2010. This will be revisited again during 2011. Members in Security Plus remain working to 'guaranteed' contracted hours, which has seen pay reduce for many members. At the time of writing, members had voted to reject a 2.25% pay increase and discussions were ongoing to try and secure an improved offer. All but one depot now has a GMB shop steward in place and a new National Negotiating Committee has now been agreed.

### **Vision Security Group (VSG)**

Following a TUPE transfer in January 2010 from G4S to VSG for the Lloyds Banking Group contract, a national recognition agreement has been secured for this contract, which covers some 900+ workers. GMB activity has focused around building the membership and getting shop stewards into place. GMB membership has been steadily growing from a very low point at the transfer stage and a network of reps is now in place together with a national negotiating structure. Since the transfer, a complete restructuring exercise has taken place which has unfortunately resulted in a number of site closures and job losses.

### **Parcelpoint (PPL) YODEL (Formerly DHL Domestic)**

In early 2010, Barclay Brothers acquired the DHL Express UK domestic business. Over 4,000 people were subsequently TUPE transferred to a new company called Parcelpoint (PPL). Barclay Brothers own the former Littlewoods Direct company Reality, and the HDN parcel company, where GMB is recognised too.

PPL and HDN then entered into talks with the trades unions to seek integration of the two companies. To achieve this a Joint National Agreement was agreed. This also sought to look at negotiating new terms and conditions. However, changes at senior management level in the company have put these negotiations on hold.

The company also announced that from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011 the PPL and HDN companies will begin trading under a new combined brand called Yodel. This brand is already being rolled out.

The company faces an uphill struggle in the domestic market, due in part to massive competition (the UK market is the most competitive in Europe, and the fourth largest market globally). The vast increase in internet shopping has brought a huge increase in small home-delivered volumes, as opposed to bulk business delivery volumes to the high street. This is leading towards further casualisation of employment in the sector for the last mile drop (as small, single, light packages delivered to homes are very costly, as opposed to bulk delivery to the high street, retail parks or homes). As a result of security of employment fears for our members, we have managed to negotiate a number of agreements with the company which include an "alternative to redundancy agreement", and "maximising the utilisation of directly-employed Labour".

Protecting members' employment has been a priority in the last year. Due to company restructurings, around 350 posts have been reduced. However, the majority of these losses could have been avoided, if the alternative to redundancy agreement had been enacted. This provides for those employees seeking reduced hours worked, and the company would have agreed to pay employees 1.5 times weeks per year, plus a 15% lump sum of their salary. In some respects, regions and local reps did not fully appreciate this agreement and what was at stake, and this allowed members and some reps to take advantage of the "voluntary severance" terms instead.

Vital lessons have been learned. This company will be restructuring further, with Sort Centre closures, and the creation of new Sort Centres, and with further restructurings of its network. This could impact on a further 300+ members' jobs. Briefings are taking place with officers and local reps, with the emphasis placed firmly on the protection of GMB unionised jobs, finding GMB members alternative employment with the company, and also ensuring that non-union employees are approached and recruited to join the GMB. The last thing that we will be dealing with at the company is redundancy - agency labour must go first.

The company entered into an agreement with Vertex whereby all customer relations staff at the Omega House call centre in Salford were to TUPE transfer to Vertex. All agreements, union recognition and all jobs were guaranteed. We were faced with two issues: fight the transfer, or negotiate an acceptable agreement. North West & Irish Region entered into a major consultation exercise with the membership and our members decided of their own accord that they wanted to transfer under TUPE. This transfer has now taken place.

The annual negotiations on pay and conditions were still underway as this report went to print. Other negotiations taking place with the company are a review of the PRS bonus agreement for couriers, along with a new bank holiday working agreement, and a new Joint Accord that will cover all terms and conditions for all employees.

### **DHL Freight ECO**

The company started the year badly by failing to pay the agreed 2010 pay increase that was deferred from 2009. A major consultation ballot of the members took place, coupled with a GMB bulletin which caused major embarrassment to the company when circulated throughout DHL ECO and the Domestic companies. The credibility of the company management team was further dented when GMB obtained an email that showed the company management had paid themselves bonuses, whilst claiming they took a pay freeze. They agreed to pay our members a pay increase of 3% plus a further non-pensionable rise of 1.25%, coupled with a further uplift in overtime premiums of 1.5%. The members were consulted and an overwhelming majority agreed to accept the offer.

During the summer of 2010 PPL / YODEL decided to take the ECO operation back in house, and end its third-party relationship with DHL Freight ECO, and gave notice to the company to TUPE transfer all members into PPL / YODEL from 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010. This brought together the former Domestic and Linehaul operations that were created by Securicor Omega, after 8 years of being separate operations.



Prior to the TUPE transfer taking place, it was agreed that the NNC reps would be merged into a new representative structure within PPL / YODEL. At the time of compiling this report the pay negotiations for the former DHL Freight ECO, now employees of PPL / YODEL, were underway.

### **DHL Freight Connect**

In the early part of the year DHL Freight Connect again suffered financial losses. However, these were not as great as in previous years. At Coalville, an issue of short-time working for our members, which was aggravated by management allowing agency working, almost caused a serious industrial relations situation. The joint intervention of the National Officer and the Managing Director of DHL Freight resulted in the drivers and warehouse staff being put back on full-time working.

The pay negotiations resulted in an offer of 2.75% on basic rates and associated allowances. An allowance was also negotiated for AD2 trained drivers. An overwhelming majority of members agreed to accept the offer.

Efforts have been made to increase membership and membership activity. In recent months the national stewards have increased their visibility amongst members, with tours of depots being undertaken, assisted by officers. Targeted bulletins have also been increased, aimed at encouraging more people to join GMB and increase the number of shop stewards at depots.

### **Wincanton AP – Bulk and Cylinders Drivers Contracts**

Last year's report stated that various issues had culminated in potential industrial unrest within this company. It was believed that our reps were being targeted, and that certain agreements were being deliberately broken. As a result of the settlement of the potential dispute, an inquiry was held by a panel of senior personnel from other businesses of Wincanton, and a GMB regional organiser. The results of the inquiry are yet to be published. However, it is notable that whilst this inquiry has been conducted the behaviour of the company towards our stewards has steadily improved.

The negotiations for the 2010 pay round were arduous, but eventually concluded in the best award achieved for this sector, with an increase on all rates and linked allowances of 3.5%, equivalent to 4.7% in real terms, for a one year, no-strings deal.

### **3663 / BidVest Logistics**

Due to the financial difficulties of this company, its parent owners BidVest decided to review its European operations and businesses. This resulted in 3663 Logistics splitting away from 3663 Wholesale Divisions in the UK and forming a new business, BidVest Logistics, with 5 depots at Taunton, Hoddesdon, Banbury, Royton and Larbet.

As a result we reluctantly agreed to alter the National NJC agreement to introduce two separate bargaining units, one for 3663 and one for BidVest Logistics. These will sit under an overarching NJC body. This allows a senior steward from GMB, whichever business they come from, to sit on both the company bargaining units.

A consultation exercise has been launched with members and stewards, supported by bulletins to depots and direct mailshots to members, seeking members' views on items for the 2011 pay anniversary. A timeline of monthly activity has been agreed with regions in the run-up to the pay anniversary, to aid recruitment of new members and identify new stewards, to help rebuild our workplace organisation.

### **Professional Drivers**

In late 2010, responsibility for the professional drivers was transferred from the Organising Department to the Commercial Services Section. Nominations are currently being sought from participating regions for regional delegates to sit on the National Organising Committee, which will report to the Commercial Services Section National Committee.

In accordance with Motion CS2 (Licensing of Taxi and Private Hire Vehicles) carried at the 2010 Section Conference, GMB submitted written evidence in December 2010 to the House of Commons Transport Committee Inquiry into Issues Relating to the Licensing of Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles.

As a result of this written submission, the Transport Committee invited GMB to give oral evidence to them on licensing standards and other matters. Our evidence not only highlighted the poor and inconsistent standards of some authorities, but also gave graphic and detailed examples of failures of the current licensing system. This included one licensing authority which had licensed up to 700 drivers, only 140 of whom worked within that geographical area. The authority, based in the far north of England, had licensed taxis as far as Devon and South Wales, where no vehicle or driver checks could be made. At the time of writing, the Transport Committee Inquiry is still underway.

### **The Aviation Sector**

Prior to the 2010 general election, the Tories stated that they were against the proposals for a third runway for Heathrow, and new runways at Stansted and Gatwick airports. However, in recent months, Tory back-benchers have been applying pressure to the Government to do a U-turn and reverse this policy.

GMB clearly recognises that there are issues with CO2 emissions and noise pollution in aviation. However, we have been encouraging the better companies (usually unionised) in the industry towards meeting European and national targets to reduce emissions.

Due to the downturn in the economy and the ash-cloud situation in 2010, the carriers have applied pressure on their third-party ground handlers to reduce costs. This has again caused a further reduction in jobs. Certain (non-unionised) ground handlers are now operating at dangerous service levels, resulting in accidents and short-cuts in safety amongst their employees, in order to retain contracts in this very competitive environment. This has brought about a race to the bottom, with TUPE transfers taking place monthly at various airports.

In accordance with GMB policy, the Section continued to oppose the Government's plans to introduce compulsory ID cards for aviation workers. It is pleasing to report that the Government initially drop its plans to make ID cards compulsory for airside aviation workers, and subsequently abandoned the ID card scheme completely.

### **British Airways (BA)**

Due to the downturn in the economy, cumulative losses of close to £1billion were amassed by BA. The company's cash-burn situation resulted in many scaremongering stories. It was pleasing to note that the company reported that it had made a profit again. However, this was due to a number of factors, including the shedding of thousands of jobs. But set against the backdrop of strikes by cabin crew, and the ash-cloud situation, perhaps profits could have been higher.

The company has also concluded its merger with Iberia, and entered into a new Transatlantic partnership with American Airlines. Although synergies will be made over a number of years, the resulting effect overall will ensure that the UK will retain an international carrier for many years to come.

In 2010 the BA pension schemes reported huge deficits. Negotiations to address this culminated in an agreement being reached with the trades unions, which was backed by the trustees, and eventually the pensions' regulator. However the Tory-led ConDem coalition announcement on the "indexation factor" for inflation-protecting pension rises, will mean that the schemes from 2011 will introduce the CPI measure rather than the RPI factor. This will result in over £750m in savings to the company's future funding of the scheme. Despite direct mailshots to them on this issue, there appears to be little appetite from members to challenge potential cuts in future pension payouts.

BA's industrial relations record in the last couple of years has left a lot to be desired, and has dragged the company through the media mire. However, our stewards and members in the A scales at Terminal

5 retained their discipline, and used their negotiating skills to eventually enable deals to be brokered, after nearly two years. Our members agreed by a massive majority to these deals. As a result, the major losses that were proposed have been revised. Our stewards' negotiating skills have been recognised by an increase in new members, and our membership levels are now close to the level they were in the early part of 2009, when the company decided it needed to shed thousands of jobs. It is noticeable that other unions have lost membership, with one union in particular losing over three thousand members.

Our stewards continue to self-organise themselves to a high standard. We have increased the number of new stewards at Gatwick. Both our terminals branches at Gatwick and Heathrow now have good websites, and use twitter communications for our members. Our senior stewards at Gatwick, Heathrow and the Head Office functions have recently agreed new membership recruitment targets for 2011. To support these efforts, we will continue to directly mailshot members from time to time, with topical member information, whilst also encouraging them to help recruit the non-unionised membership in BA.

### **BMI**

BMI, which is the UK's second-largest premium carrier, is now owned by Lufthansa. For many years, BMI has made some significant financial losses. A new CEO has now taken over at BMI, and as a result, meetings with the CEO and HR Director have increased. Against a backdrop of further losses, the company asked to pay the agreed pay award of 4.57% from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011. The company indicated they wished to negotiate concessions to allow this to happen. As a result, the negotiating team obtained further enhanced travel concessions and enhanced baggage scheme payments rising from 15% to 20%. Further increases included a supplement payment of £200 in January 2011.

Overall during the last two years, whilst we have accepted a pay deferral, we have obtained further benefits for our members which have been in excess of a 7% value. One of our sister unions has decided not to go down this route, and instead is taking the company to court. The company withdrew any further offers to that union as a result of their actions. GMB members were balloted and accepted the revised offer by a massive majority.

BMI are continuing to develop a closer relationship nationally with GMB. As a result of various negotiations during the year, the company also agreed to a commitment not to outsource jobs, and to actively seek to pull work into the company from Lufthansa and other Star Alliance companies.

### **Servisair**

As a result of the new national recognition agreement reached with the company, a new GMB NNC was elected. In 2008, GMB struggled to maintain two stewards nationally in Servisair. We now have 33. However, our membership and shop steward levels at some airports, in certain regions, need to be improved, if we are not to be subject to further membership attacks and encroachment by a sister union in the aviation sector.

The company also agreed to reverse a long-standing agreement whereby GMB is not allowed to recruit at Gatwick within Servisair's front and back of house operations. This was mainly due to the company honouring an agreement reached with APEX and TGWU, which denied GMB (formerly APEX) recognition and recruitment rights at Gatwick, apart from within the lounges it operates.

The 2010 pay claim was negotiated against a backdrop of a biting and crippling recession for the company, coupled with the ash-cloud situation, which shut down UK airspace and nearly bankrupted the company altogether. A two-year deal was negotiated with 2% being awarded in year one for 2010 on basic and shift pay, and 3.5% for year two in 2011 on basic and shift pay. It has been agreed to set up Joint Working Parties on a number of issues which can bring benefits to members in terms of harmonising terms and conditions. The arrangements for discussions to commence on potential new harmonised conditions were being finalised as this report went to print.

### **Thompsons**

Thompsons has undergone a number of restructurings in recent years, mainly due to the acquisition of other TU legal service providers such as LLW, Thornleys, Rowley Ashworth and Whittles. Whittles have

been now merged and integrated into Thompsons, and the members accepted the harmonised Thompsons' terms and conditions. LLW and Thornleys (now all GMB members) are currently negotiating an offer through the Thompsons' NNC on their terms and conditions with the object of harmonising onto the Thompsons' package.

Thompsons has raised an issue with the NNC concerning changes in members' Contracts of Employment, seeking their agreement to a restrictive covenant. The NNC and the membership have refused this change to their contracts. The proposal from the firm has caused much angst amongst members and local reps. Despite the unpopularity of the proposal, the NNC did offer the firm the opportunity for joint meetings in the Thompsons' offices so that they could do a presentation to members on why they required a restrictive covenant. The firm has not agreed to this approach, and the matter is currently in abeyance.

Thompsons has also proposed that they convert the firm from a partnership to a limited liability partnership (LLP). This has not been an uncommon approach in law firms of a similar size. The members have been consulted on this matter.

There has been a problem in recent years because the firm has, during the bad weather, made staff either make up missed time on their return to work, take the time unpaid, or use annual leave to substitute these days. Our representations to the company to treat this matter on a case-by-case basis have fallen on deaf ears, and many local reps have started to refer to the actions of the firm's management on this matter as those of a "scrooge employer". It is hoped that over time a more sensible policy will be introduced which is fair, consistent and treats each matter on a case-by-case basis.

The 2010 pay negotiations with the firm were long and arduous. The firm refused to supply any financial information to the NNC in accordance with legislation and the ACAS Code of Practice. Many months were wasted whilst an application was made to the CAC for a ruling on this matter. Through this process, the firm came to an agreement to supply this information, which then enabled a pay claim to be formulated and submitted for negotiations.

The firm's negotiating team made an original offer in a most contrite manner, and said they were putting it in writing as a full and final offer, and that no negotiations would take place. As a result, the local reps were consulted, and a consultative ballot of members took place. Members voted by a vast majority to reject the offer, and by a massive majority also voted to take industrial action. This brought the firm back to the negotiating table where they moved substantially on their position from a full and final offer to a position of making further various offers. A settlement was finally reached after members voted by a large majority to accept the revised pay offer.

### **The Water Industry**

Arising from the 2009 GMB Water Industry Conference, a National Water Stewards Combine was established, with elected delegates from all regions. These meet quarterly, based around the work programme set by the stewards' conference, on issues ranging from industrial matters, contracting out, and membership density within the various companies. As part of the drive to ensure we have good union density, it was agreed at the final meeting in the last quarter of 2010 to map the different companies in the water sector. The aim of this is to assist growth and increase membership density within the direct-employed workforce within the water companies, and to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses amongst our membership employed by the contractors.

The 2010 Section Conference carried Motion CS4 (A Socially Owned Water Industry) and the national stewards combine consulted with their members and the companies in the industry and reported a very favourable response in terms of carrying out the main intentions of the motion. Since then, meetings have taken place with David Hall and Emanuel Lobina from the Public Services International Research Unit (PSIRU) based at Greenwich University. The PSIRU has produced reports containing a "who's who?" for the water industry, detailing their profits and parent owners, which provided evidence that the majority of private water companies in England had huge debts, acquired mainly through acquisition by

their private equity owners. For instance, Macquarie, owners of Thames Water, created £8bn worth of debt in acquiring the company. In 2009-10, the water companies collectively made operating profits of over £3.5bn.

The national stewards combine also helped to host a delegation of employers and unions from the Hungarian Water Industry, where dialogue and in-depth presentations were shared on the effects of privatisation of the water services in the English regions. The national stewards combine intends to produce campaign literature and help to establish a broad-based campaign on returning the water industry to a socially owned model, based on a municipal control basis, which is the model which formerly created this great industry in the UK and across Europe.

*(Adopted)*

*The report was formally moved.*

THE PRESIDENT: Pages 59, 60, 61, 62. I do not believe it.

BRO. G. HARVEY (Birmingham & West Midlands): Morning. Sober as well, really. Gary, I would just like to know if there is anything happening with the rumours on the stopping of the final salary pension scheme for the gas industrial workers. You must be doing something right for them because in the past you used to have gas workers queuing up both sides of this rostrum to play hell with the officers, as all of us up here remember. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I was there. Page 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, and 73?

BRO. R. POLE (London): I wish to query the absence of any reference to trade union political staff in the Commercial Services Report. We are the recognised union for many workers employed by unions and, whisper it quietly, sometimes unions are regrettably not the best practice employers with their staff, our members. My question is, has nothing happened at all over the last 12 months? If so, it would be nice to know if nothing had happened just to show that we are not forgotten about. Also, are there any proposals to follow up the successful TUPS GMB reps meeting that was held a couple of years ago, which everyone who attended thought was well worthwhile? Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Dick. Anyone else? Another voice, another Jim? Gary?

BRO. G. SMITH (National Secretary, Commercial Services Section): Taking up the point about TUPS, first of all, Commercial Services is a huge section representing a wide and varied number of industries. We do not get a report or detailed report about every industry or every group of workers every year. Obviously, we have the section conferences and TUPS will be well represented at that next year. I am happy to speak to the National Officer responsible and maybe putting something together in terms of the TU shop stewards but I know a lot of work is going on, both nationally and regionally, in the TUPS area. Thanks for the comment, colleague, and we will perhaps talk about that later on.

In terms of British Gas, no, there is no plan to close the final salary pension scheme. The British Gas shop stewards are here today, all the regional shop stewards will be in attendance today. The company do want to make changes to the pension scheme. There will be some difficult negotiations but, as I said to the shop stewards this morning, by no means should the company believe this is a done deal. This is going to be a very hard set of negotiations and the company know if they get it wrong what the outcome will be. Thank you, President. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gary. Okay, Dick? Colleagues, can I just say something before I move on? I would like to say thank you to our guests up in the balcony who have been there all week dedicated and listening, and also visitors from branches. Well done. I think you deserve a round of applause. (*Applause*)

Can I now move to Industrial & Economic Policy, Motion 104, to be moved by the North West & Irish Region, ASDA Stores, Motion 111, SIA Licence, Southern Region, Motion 105, Investment in the Gas Industry, North West & Irish Region, Motion 106, Recruitment of Apprentices, North West & Irish Region, Motion 107, Carbon Capture and Sequestration, Yorkshire Region, Motion 113, Northern Ireland Water, North West & Irish Region.

## **INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY COMMERCIAL SERVICES**

### **ASDA STORES MOTION 104**

#### **104. ASDA STORES**

This Congress recognises the loyalty shown by Asda members over past years despite very few gains being achieved for them, particularly in stores.

The last 3 years have seen substantial difficulties being faced by this membership despite the Union's efforts to prioritise this group as a National recruitment target.

Congress also recognises recent changes in National responsibilities both within the GMB and Asda and hopes it heralds a more positive working arrangement.

To that end Congress calls on the National Officer to establish a structure including Senior Stewards and Officers to commence joint working/training with Regional Managers in order to create a positive industrial relations working practice.

B16 BRANCH  
*North West & Irish Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. B. HOMER (North West & Irish): Since this motion was submitted there have been several changes within both our own structures and ASDA's. A number of changes in personnel does seem, albeit very slightly, to have the makings of a more mature and a more constructive industrial relationship and whilst as always the devil is in the detail of these things the North West & Irish Region's activists tentatively welcome any move, however small, away from what we have had to endure for, in effect, a generation. God, how old does that make us all feel? There has to be significant and sustained progress, particularly in a local area jointly working with

management, if we are ever to achieve a genuine working relationship based on mutual trust and respect, which has been sadly lacking and often with very good reason. North West & Irish Region welcomes Mick Rix as a National Officer and looks forward to a new and positive way of working. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks very much, Bridget. Seconder?

SIS. M. DOCKERY (North West & Irish): Congress, the changes in approach, for example, access to ex-Netto employees and the trial of access to 50 existing stores in four of the regions, may well be a turning point. Congress should be very aware that these jobs exist because they are exported. That does not mean however that the workforce will be exploited and of course in the current climate there will be sticking points in the industrial relations but GMB owe it to the core membership, that quite frankly has had a dreadful time over the past few years, to do whatever they can to protect and secure them going forward. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Margaret. Motion 111.

## **SIA LICENCE MOTION 111**

### **111. SIA LICENCE**

Congress we are against any proposal by the present Government to remove the SIA licence for the Security Industry.

S15 SECURITY BRANCH  
*Southern Region*

(*Carried*)

BRO. D. GIGG (Southern): First-time speaker. (*Applause*) The GMB fought long and hard to get regulation and licence introduced into the security industry and the only union prepared to do so. The Security Industry Authority was established in 2003 under the terms of the Private Security Act 2001, and under the previous Labour government, yet within months of the ConDem Coalition coming into power the SIA found itself on the bonfire of the quangos along with a lot of other important organisations. I am proud to say that the GMB has again lobbied hard to get the SIA off the bonfire. It is now simmering along waiting to be transformed. This Government may not know what to do with the security industry but it is a good job GMB members know what they are doing. What GMB members in the security industry want is independent regulation, one licence not multiple licences to work, high-quality training and standards, decent pay and conditions, and safe working environments. We also know what we do not want. We do not want a return to the cowboys operating in the industry taking quick profits at the expense of vulnerable workers. We do not want a return to where organised criminals run security companies and violent thugs run the doors of pubs and clubs across the country. We do not want our pay and conditions going backwards. Finally, we do not want the employers running the regulation. We now have to win the campaign to make sure we get licensing that means something to the workers and to the public, fit for purpose, affordable, and meaningful. The public need to know that they are safe and that security workers are fit and proper people doing their job. Congress, we call upon the GMB to continue its campaign and win the argument. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Secunder? Formally. Thank you very much, Richard. Richard, that is a fine! Poor delegate. Carry on.

BRO. K. NKONDE (Southern): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. When the SIA licence was introduced it improved the image of the security industry. The security officers had something to hold on to. Before that the industry was indeed a high dive for all undesirable characters, as you know all the cowboys were trying to run that industry. Congress, we are against any proposal by this Government to remove this SIA licence for the security industry. Please support. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, colleague, and I apologise. Richard, you owe him a drink.

## **INVESTMENT IN THE GAS INDUSTRY MOTION 105**

### **105. INVESTMENT IN THE GAS INDUSTRY**

This Congress calls on the British Government to invest in the infrastructure of the Gas Industry to maintain standards of service and safety. Our pensions and conditions depend on the high quality of service we provide to our consumers and this can only be retained with investment.

L34 BRANCH  
*North West & Irish Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. M. ALDRIDGE (North West & Irish): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Thank you. Without continued and consistent investment there would be a drastic deterioration of the mostly metallic gas pipes which remain underground and the more likelihood of the pipe scratching and failing causing uncontrolled leakage, and obviously this is not a good situation. It can be highly dangerous due to the risk of fire and explosions. We also now cover the National Grid. We pride ourselves on a good safety culture and a good safety record. A lot of this is down to the high quality of the training we receive, the professionalism and quality of the workforce most of whom are GMB members.

At the moment we are partway through a massive undertaking of gas mains replacement work throughout the length and breadth of the country. This has been forecast to be 30 years' worth of work. It has been whispered by the regulator that he wants to rein back this programme of replacement and reduce investment in this area of our operations. In my opinion, this would be a catastrophic mistake of the highest proportion. We need to insist that investment is maintained at the current level so the infrastructure of the gas network is renewed and maintained. We also provide the emergency service which responds in all weathers 24 hours a day 365 days a year. This service also requires adequate funding to maintain the quality of the service. The request for investment comes as a double-edged sword. Firstly, it would ensure the safety to the general public and industry; secondly, there is an environmental issue attached to it; not everybody knows that national gas methane is 20 times more harmful to the environment than carbon dioxide, therefore the less gas leaking from the network the less damage to the environment, i.e. global warming. If the regulator



allows us to continue with replacement over the coming years, this would give us a fully renewed gas pipe infrastructure across the country. This would in turn protect jobs and pensions, it would encourage recruitment into the gas industry, and would maintain the quality of the workforce and the quality of the service to the customer. I move that investment in the gas industry is maintained into the future by both the regulatory bodies and the Government. I would ask the GMB as a major union within the gas industry to support this motion. Thank you, Congress. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mike. Well done. Secunder?

BRO. T. LARKIN (North West & Irish): Madam President, Congress, I am from Manchester, not from Liverpool! *(Laughter)* Before I start can I just ask as a pensioner in British Gas that we do maintain the British Gas pension? Congress, this motion arises amid the fear that the regulator may pull back at the level of investment required to continue the gas mains replacement programme. The replacement programme was implemented with HSE concern about the infrastructure following several major gas explosions at Larkhall, Dundee, Putney, and Rutherglen. These resulted in the deaths of 19 members of the public. At that time, it was planned to take 30 years to complete this task. The gas industry is a relatively safe one, despite what I have just said, and let us keep it that way by calling for continued investment, not less. Please support the motion. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Tony.

## **RECRUITMENT OF APPRENTICES MOTION 106**

### **106. RECRUITMENT OF APPRENTICES**

This Congress calls on the CEC/Government to review the national structure of the Gas Industry, i.e. the age profile of the current workforce, and the need to recruit apprentices to retain the standards of service and consumer and public safety against the background of a highly trained, highly skilled and highly paid workforce. Quick fix contractors are not the answer to the workload.

L34 BRANCH  
*North West & Irish Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. M. ALDRIDGE (North West & Irish): Morning, Congress, President. I would like to talk to you today about the demise of apprenticeships, particularly in the gas industry and the effect this is having on the age profile at National Grid where I work, and also the detrimental effect this has on employment amongst today's young people. At this point I can only refer to my current employer, National Grid, when talking about the average age of employees.

Currently, in the three manual processes which make up part of the overall people working in the industry, the numbers are as follows: replace and repair (that is the guys you see out digging the roads) the average age is 52, the emergency services (that is the fellows who work in your house) the average is 54, network services (the people who maintain the valves in the gas holders) the average age is 55. As you can see, the age profile within our company is quite high and over the next 10 to 15 years

there are going to be a lot of retirements taking place. The question I would ask of our company is who is going to replace these people? Currently, when the members retire, whether early or at full term, on a decent pension we have contractors knocking at the door to take them back on, to go into the industry they have just left. I am not saying they do not have the right to work or to seek gainful employment and I am by no means being ageist, but where is the national progression, where is the transfer of knowledge and experience, and how can this positively affect and reduce the age profile of the workforce at National Grid?

I work in a company with shareholders to answer to, where productivity, costs savings, and meeting the competition is paramount. How can we do this with an ever-ageing workforce all the time; eventually we will slow down with age and break down through years of hard work. What we need is an influx of younger people into our workforce, with the strength and vitality and a hunger and willingness to learn and move forward to meet the demands of the future. Unfortunately, I work for a company that states it has a commitment to its own direct workforce model but it only takes on about 50 apprentices a year.

Another recruitment stream is a contractor workforce from our European neighbours where many are in the same age bracket as me and others. Bearing in mind this type of recruitment is set against a backdrop of 20% youth unemployment a total jobless figure of 974,000 16-24 year olds, the highest number since they started recording it in 1992, can we sustain these levels of unemployment among our youth? This is a question we as a trade union should be asking both our industry leaders and our government. In the late 1970s I was lucky enough to get myself a job. A lot of my friends were not so lucky. We only need to look back to those days to see how employment affected our society with young people in particular being affected. There was economic deprivation, social deprivation, social unrest, and ultimately the riots. Youth unemployment was partly blamed, wrongly in my opinion, for what happened back then. Can we afford to revisit those troubled times? We need to look to the future. We need to include the youth of today in that future, our sons and daughters, brothers and sister, who deserve a chance to do what we have done, to work for a living, earn a decent wage, and to be an integral part of the future of our society.

I consider myself lucky to work for a company in an industry that has been a good employer, with good pay, pensions, terms and conditions. I feel these should now be passed on in time to our younger people through direct labour apprenticeships within National Grid and the gas industry and by doing so we will be promoting a long-term secure future and jobs for our youth. It would also help to reduce the age profile within our industries, relieving the pressure on the older generations to perform at levels which are sometimes beyond their capabilities. As a GMB member I therefore move the trade union should support direct labour recruitment into the gas industry, including more apprenticeships, and to fight the contractor model which undermines pay, terms and conditions, and our pensions. Finally, Congress, I would like to thank you for giving me the time to speak and table my motion. I hope you will support it moving forwards and give it your blessing and backing. Thank you, Congress.  
*(Applause)*

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

BRO. T. LARKIN (North West & Irish): When I left National Grid eight years ago after 30 years of service the age profile was in the mid to late 40s. Today the average age is 53, so I am told. We have heard a lot over the last few days about unemployment amongst our young people but they are the lifeblood and the future of any industry and they are needed to ensure continuity. In the 1980s Thatcher destroyed a generation of young people condemned to a life without work. Many of today's ills stem from that era. With this Coalition we face another lost generation. The need for apprenticeships in industry, particularly the safety-critical gas industry with its ageing workforce is overwhelming. Please support the motion. I second.  
*(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Tony. Motion 107, Yorkshire Region to move.

## **CARBON CAPTURE & SEQUESTRATION (CCS) MOTION 107**

### **107. CARBON CAPTURE & SEQUESTRATION (CCS)**

This Congress recognises the need for the new build gas power stations (as is the case for coal) to incorporate at least CCS – ready infrastructure.

YORKSHIRE COAL STAFFS BRANCH  
*Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. R. KNOWLES (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, for the last two centuries the UK has been at the vanguard of engineering and manufacturing technology. The wealth of our country has come from both the skills of our workers and the cheap and plentiful energy that we are fortunate to be provided with. Our mineworkers have provided us with coal, gas workers and workers on the oil rigs have provided us with gas and oil, but it has become clear that the exploitation of these fossil fuels is damaging our planet. The uses of the fossil fuels are releasing tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. This increase in emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> is probably causing the global warming. There are opinions that reject this hypothesis but the majority of scientific opinion believes that this is a fact. Humanity's very existence on this planet may depend on the process of global warming being reversed.

Carbon capture and storage technologies, or CCS as they are known, remove carbon dioxide from flue gases and sequester or store it in the geological formation under the North Sea. The Government under the Kyoto protocols agreed to reduce emissions of major greenhouse gases by 12.5% from targets set in 1990. CCS would go a long way to achieving these goals. Whether we like it or not we are going to burn a lot of coal and gas. UK industry can lead the way in CCS but the Government must act to support the transition from traditional fossil fuel power production. The previous Labour government showed enthusiasm for this technology. Let's hope that the ConDem government realise that it is in the national interest to provide support for new commercial ventures in this form of power production. There are those who doubt that the problem exists but the weight of evidence is compelling. We have seen weather patterns in this country become erratic. Winters have become warmer but

also unpredictable with unusual variations from hot to cold and then back again. They have been so cold that a once in a thousand years event happens every couple of years all over the world. Flash flooding has become an almost annual event in many cases with very tragic events. The costs of repairs and clean-ups have, as estimated by the Association of British Insurers, cost more than £3bn.

In 2009, David Miliband, the then Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, stated that the Government will be supporting the development of CCS in new power stations. Will this Government do the same? Wind power and nuclear power production have their place but clean coal power along with CCS can meet our energy needs. There are many who want to rush to nuclear with the exclusion of all other forms of power production. Nuclear power is not the only solution as the timescale for the building of safe nuclear power stations is incredibly slow. This country still has hundreds of years of coal reserves — mind you, there are no miners — but our oil and gas supplies will soon run out. This country cannot be in the position of having to rely on Russia and other countries for energy security. If we invest now with government finance and state development this new technology will enable us to meet our CO<sub>2</sub> obligations and give us control over energy demands for centuries to come. Many newly skilled jobs will be created to counteract the mess the bankers have created, with sustained employment for generations to come. I call upon this Congress to support the investment of government and private money into the development of carbon capture and storage. This issue is so important for so many, making the right policy decision is absolutely crucial for all of us and all our futures. I move. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Rita, Happy Birthday. It is Rita's birthday today. Well done. (*Applause*) Can we now move to the seconder?

BRO. J. JACKSON (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): No longer a Congress virgin! Carbon capture and sequestration, or CCS for short, is now a must as we go forward. Reliance on gas and oil is no longer a viable option. Since these technologies are still under development and not proven, we should recognise that CCS will not have any significant effect on curbing carbon output for at least another 20 years. Developing and scaling CCS technologies will be expensive and require government funding. CCS will also face similar challenges as other forms of electricity generation such as sites for waste disposal of CO<sub>2</sub> and the inevitable safety issues. It is therefore vital for government funding now if we are to protect the future for our families moving forward. The Labour government showed enthusiasm for this technology. Let's hope this Coalition does too. I second Motion 107. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. I now move to Motion 113, Northern Ireland Water.

## **NORTHERN IRELAND WATER CRISIS MOTION 113**

### **113. NORTHERN IRELAND WATER CRISIS**

This Congress calls upon the Northern Ireland Assembly to bring Northern Ireland Water back into full public ownership.

Congress is appalled over Northern Ireland Water's shambolic handling of the water crisis which resulted in 45,000 homes and business being without water in Belfast and surrounding towns after pipes burst during the freezing weather and subsequent thaw before Christmas.

The buck stops with Northern Ireland Water. It is a Government owned company, but it has its own Board and the Chief Executive is beholden to the Board, so Northern Ireland Water is quite distinct in that it isn't run by the Government, but nonetheless is owned by the Government.

D86 BRANCH  
*North West & Irish Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. J. DONLEY (North West & Irish): A sudden thaw following weeks of freezing temperatures crippled much of Northern Ireland's water and sewage system over the Christmas period. Hundreds of water mains burst along with thousands of industrial and domestic water pipes leading to a collapse in water supply. Up to 45,000 homes were left without water and running water for days on end, and 450,000 people were affected by interruption to their main supply at some time during the incident. The GMB has been vindicated in warning this type of fiasco would occur as a result of the creation of Northern Ireland Water in 2007.

The appalling images for almost three weeks of thousands of people, young and old, filling water bottles at standpipes in the bitter cold were scandalous. Northern Ireland Water emergency supplies of bottled water soon ran out due to the huge scale of the crisis. The situation became so critical that the Assembly Executive had to request the Scottish Assembly Executive to ship 160,000 litres of water with 200,000 litres in reserve to Northern Ireland. Meanwhile, Northern Ireland Water's public information system collapsed, desperate householders attempting to cope for days without water, or leaks, or both, found the company's website crashed due to the volume of traffic and "engaged" tones from the company's helplines. Customers craved information and in many cases did not get it. Less than one percent of the 403,000 calls made at the peak of the crisis on 20<sup>th</sup> December were answered and Northern Ireland Water failed to request immediate support from centres on mainland Britain through its mutual aid pact with Water UK.

NI Water's major incident plan during the incident exposed the lack of corporate ownership and consumer focus. It had not learned lessons from the 2009 and 2010 freeze and thaw. A low priority had also been given to customer service initiatives. The fundamental shortfall in customer communication stemmed from a lack of ownership and knowledge of the outsource call centre operations. The Consumer Council in a damning report criticised NI Water's major incident plan; it said it was neither adequate nor fit for purpose. It said it had been requesting a copy of the plan since 2007 but it never received one.

There has been a deluge of excuses for the causes of the crisis. The Northern Ireland Secretary, Tory Owen Paterson, attempted to link this crisis to the need for water charges. These are ideologically driven. Disgracefully, Paterson said England and Wales did not experience the catastrophe, but the UK water service is run privately. What Paterson did not say was immediately prior to the privatisation of the water service in the UK in 1989 Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher invested £6.6bn of

taxpayers' money (known as the "green dowry") to write off debts and invest into the new infrastructure for the dilapidated UK water service. This investment never reached Northern Ireland, although we part-paid for the investment in Britain.

PPP works did not achieve their contracted maximum daily output during the crisis. There were also water quality failures concerning aluminium PVC levels to PPP works. These have been reported to the DWI for investigation. The political post-mortem of the water crisis is still continuing. Assembly minister, Conor Murphy, appointed the utility regulator to carry out an inquiry but the regulator will not bring these swindlers to heel as it is a toothless organisation. They are only there to give the illusion of accountability. The UK regulator is the buffer and public relations face of NI Water and other privatised electricity and gas companies, and part-funded by NI Water.

Poor management performance coupled with ineffective public information led to NI Water's Chief Executive, Laurence MacKenzie being forced to resign. The revelation that Mr. MacKenzie was being paid £250,000 salary has also exposed the double standards of the bosses who demanded the rest of us have a reasonable wage restraint, and what did Mr. MacKenzie get for a shambolic handling of a crisis, £100,000 payment for resigning. This is an absolute disgrace. If our members in NI Water performed as MacKenzie did during the crisis, the only payment they would be receiving would be from the dole.

This Congress calls upon Northern Ireland Assembly to put in place plans to bring NI Water back into the heart of public services, delivered by a body clearly within the public service controls and standards, that it is not set up to introduce separate water charges for households and that it is not set up to be privatised. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder?

BRO. P. BOYLAN (North West & Irish): All-night drinker, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* President, Congress, during the time of crisis NI Water flatly refused to use all internal resources. NI Water employees were left sitting at home, some of whom were on standby agreements. The bosses were taking the Michael. NI Water employs 537 frontline staff. They stated publicly that they had 500 staff on the ground during the crisis. When questioned on this they were very coy about giving straight answers. Trade union reps were inundated with questions as to why water service members were not called in to work during the crisis as they watched media reports of firemen, council workers, and private contractors provide a service they are employed to do under the community emergency action plan. Managers sold us down the river and led us a merry dance. Was NI Water over-stretched, outsourced, or merely watching its pennies as it implied and allowed other agencies to fill its role: no, we do not have a migraine and we do not blame any other agency workers. The question which has to be asked is: was this failure allowed to happen in order to pave the way for private ownership of a public asset. I would like to thank the Scottish Region, the scousers, and Paul McCarthy for getting me up here. Please support. *(Applause/Cheers)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Well done, anyway. Ignore them all. Congress, can I say unless there is a burning desire to get up on any of those resolutions, I will call Dana Bruno from the CEC. Good morning, Dana.

SIS. D. BRUNO (CEC, Public Services): President, Congress, we are supporting Motion 106 with a qualification. Congress, Motion 106 quite rightly calls for action to recruit apprentices into the gas industry. Apprentices are particularly important to the gas industry, which has a high number of workers approaching retirement age. Their skills will be lost and the gas industry must not be tempted to turn to contractors to replace them. Apprentices must be recruited and trained to retain high standards of safety and customer service. The industry will also need more skilled and well-trained employees to deal with the rollout of smart meters over the next decade so the motion is right to call for action now to avoid any last-minute quick fix involving contractors. The CEC qualification is that the motion calls for the Government to be involved in a review of the gas industry. We believe this review should be undertaken with employers in the industry. In fact, GMB is already talking to British Gas about the need to expand its apprenticeship programme, which is widely recognised as one of the best. Our aim will always be to persuade British Gas and other companies to use direct labour over contractors, to recruit young people and equip them with the skills they need. Congress, please support Motion 106 with the qualification I have set out. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dana. Does North West & Irish Region accept the qualification? Yes, Mary? (*Agreed*) Thank you. I now put Motions 104, 111, 105, 106, 107, and 113 to the vote. We are supporting all, and 106 with that qualification. All those in favour please show? Anyone against? They are all carried.

*Motion 104 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 111 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 105 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 106 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 107 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 113 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, can I go back? I did not ask Congress if they could accept the Commercial Services Report, moved by Gary Smith. Do you accept the report? (*Agreed*) Thank you very much indeed.

*The Commercial Services Section Report (Pages 59-73) was ADOPTED.*

THE PRESIDENT: I now move on to section 7, Fuel and Energy prices, Motion 238, and then Motion 239, Support to Communities. Can I remind you all that there are two microphones so that if the mover gets up at one end and the seconder on the other, we will be well away and save time.

## **SOCIAL POLICY: GENERAL**

### **FUEL AND ENERGY PRICES MOTION 238**

### **238. FUEL AND ENERGY PRICES**

This Congress calls upon the GMB to campaign on behalf of the membership, especially those who drive for a living, to persuade the Government to examine the increasing cost of fuel and its negative impacts on the economy and livelihoods of our members.

We believe that the Government should restrict the amount of duty that is levied on fuel and that regulation is needed to control the way in which fuel companies price this essential product.

The relentless rises in gas, oil and electricity are impacting heavily upon the livelihoods of our members. We call for greater scrutiny and investigatory powers into the way the utility companies price their products and the profit levels they are achieving. This is to ensure that the general public are not being forced to shoulder an unfair share of the increased costs and if the prices are justified.

The relentless increase in fuel prices and utility charges, without appropriate scrutiny and the effective means to control prices within the industry, will lead to increased fuel poverty. These price increases are causing hardship and an increased burden is being levied on many sectors of society unable to increase their income to meet these costs.

Q22 BRANCH  
*North West & Irish Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. D. FLANAGAN (North West & Irish): Congress, 12 months ago we paid £10 less for a full tank of fuel in an average car. The price of fuel peaked as the cost of Brent crude oil rose above \$125 a barrel. Since then crude has fallen by \$10 yet wholesale petrol has remained at the same level. The relentless rise in gas, oil, and electricity is impacting heavily on the livelihoods of our members. We call for greater scrutiny and investigatory powers into the way utility companies price their products and the profit levels they are achieving. In doing this we can be confident our members are not shouldering an unfair share of the cost and that prices are justified. Pensions, wages, and benefits, cannot be kept in line with the rises in the cost of electricity and gas. These increases are causing hardship. An increased burden is being levied on many sectors of society unable to increase their income to meet costs.

Congress, I call upon you to campaign on behalf of our membership, especially those who drive for a living, to persuade the Government to examine the increasing cost of fuel and energy, its negative impact on the economy, and the livelihoods of our members. Employers are increasingly passing the cost of these rises back to us. Why should we have to pay? Hot off the press this morning, Scottish Power has announced they have been forced to up energy prices by over £200 a year in the last 12 months. Further to this they say gas is set to rise by a further 10% and electricity by a further 19% over the next 12 months. I read before I came up here today on the rostrum the BBC have announced this morning dual fuel customers will see a 48p per day increase over the next 12 months. It is disgusting. One fact that Scottish Power do not share with us is that wholesale gas prices are still lower than three years ago during the financial crisis. These warnings have today been published by Scottish Power, a Spanish-owned company who announced £800m profit last year. How did they cope? I would suggest they invest this money in Horlicks because they are going to need some help getting to sleep at night. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*



THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dave. Secunder?

SIS. M. GREGG (North West & Irish): President, delegates, last year I moved a motion on the effect of fuel prices and in the winter months how fuel costs exacerbate conditions for families living with fuel poverty, that is, families spending more than 10% of their income on fuel to heat their homes. Now again this year, and this morning, we have seen the price of the oil and gas, and electricity, rocketing yet the caring government is reducing the winter payments introduced by Labour. Haulage companies are trying to keep their businesses open and their staff employed, but they have reduced their travel. They have adopted more fuel efficient driving techniques and changed their vehicles to more fuel efficient models. Employers have had hours reduced and they have dealt with changes to secure jobs. Companies are now warning that the astronomical prices for petrol and diesel are impacting on and affecting customer confidence. This does not help the economy. There is still no person who has the power to control and curb the pricing, and the Government receive 71% per litre of the price of petrol, over 52% of this on petrol duty and the rest VAT. So, are they going to do anything? Putting in place a mechanism, for example a fuel duty stabiliser, would ensure an automatic freeze on fuel duty increases and reduction in duty to match any increases in VAT revenues from higher pump prices which the Conservative Government promised when in opposition. There is a lack of an open and transparent fair pricing policy. This leads to companies being able to set unfair high prices; even though they have bought fuel at a low price they still set high charges. In a region like Northern Ireland and the North West prices of fuel are amongst the highest, as also is families in poverty, families strapped for cash, stretching their income and worrying if they can afford to heat their homes. The situation needs to be changed. If it does not, the big society will be a society of increased unemployment queues, more families in crisis, more elderly dying because of not being able to heat their homes, and a big scrap yard full of haulage vehicles and buses. We need action now. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Margaret. Motion 239.

Thank you, Margaret. Motion 239.

## **SUPPORT TO COMMUNITIES MOTION 239**

### **239. SUPPORT TO COMMUNITIES**

This Congress calls on the Coalition Government to provide support to communities and businesses by introducing energy price incentives. Such a move would help the whole economy to move forward in a time of the worst economic conditions for decades and would enable energy companies to keep in touch with their customers; some of whom are the most vulnerable in society and show that government is not wedded to the free market. Congress calls on the Labour Party to make energy policy and pricing a key part of its Internal Policy Review.

NPOWER BRANCH  
*Northern Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. S. MCGEE JOHNSON (Northern): Congress, we all know that the privatisation of utilities has been a disaster for the consumer. The only people who have benefited are the companies who provide us with the gas and electric. Thatcher hailed privatisation; it was going to make the UK a nation of shareholders that would share in the wealth. It was also going to bring costs down to us the consumer. Did it do either of those things? Of course it did not. In a few short years 95% of shares in utility companies went back into the hands of the few, the big corporations and the big pension funds, not in the hands of you and I. A reduction in price: well, what reduction?

Congress, as you all know the Labour Government introduced measures designed to help vulnerable people with energy consumption, including price. This needs to happen constantly as we face the fact that energy consumption is an everyday essential. It should not be left to the market. Currently, it is a cartel. We need energy prices to help the vulnerable in our communities as well as businesses that face going under. Congress, if this Tory-led Coalition does not get that, we need the Labour Party to get it and show our people that we put communities at the heart of an industry policy. Congress, please support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Sharon. Well done. Secunder?

BRO. J. FOLEY (Northern): First-time delegate and speaker. *(Applause)* Congress, I formally second. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much indeed. Does anyone have a burning desire to come in? No? Oh, dear, is it burning? Not Mario, is it? I will then be moving to Composite 7, Motion 109, and Motion 112.

BRO. P. SOPER (Midland & East Coast Region): It is a burning desire. Twenty thousand pensioners die of cold and cold-related diseases during the winter months and what has the Government done about it? They have cut the heating allowance. Every MP in the Houses of Parliament must fight to reinstate this pre-budget heating allowance or more and more pensioners are going to die. I joined this union not to get a certificate. I have been in the union 46 years and I joined this union because it is a caring union. If there is anybody caring out here — we have to look after the pensioners. I support the motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. We should be forcing the Government to bring it back, renationalise it. It is ours and it should belong to us. Can I now ask you to vote on Motions 238 and 239? The CEC is supporting. All those in favour please show? Anyone against, if you dare? Thank you very much indeed.

*Motion 238 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 239 was CARRIED.*

## **INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: COMMERCIAL SERVICES**

### **PRIVATE HIRE AND HACKNEY CARRIAGE INDUSTRY COMPOSITE 7**

*(Covering Motions 108 and 110)*

108. HACKNEY CARRIAGE, UNEMPLOYMENT AND LICENSING (*London Region*)  
110. EMERGENCY CALLS HACKNEY CARRIAGES (*London Region*)

### **PRIVATE HIRE AND HACKNEY CARRIAGE INDUSTRY**

This Congress notes that owing to the unemployment caused by the bankers casino activities, exacerbated by the wrong headed policy of draconian cutbacks by the ConDem government, tens if not hundreds of thousands are flooding into the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Industry on a national basis.

Owing to fundamentally weak and flawed regulations within the industry brought about by free market ideology, the ease with which people can obtain a licence means:-

1. There are increasing numbers in the industry who cannot undertake basic communication, calculating and driving duties. Topographical testing and communication skill levels are frequently appalling. Councils have little or no concern for the viability of this extremely important aspect of the public transport infrastructure.
2. Members of the travelling public and drivers are coming under increasing health and safety risks, many drivers work 80 plus hours a week and are in a continuous state of tiredness. Vast numbers of these drivers gave contracts to transport the young, elderly and infirm, naturally their tiredness presents an appalling risk to other road users.
3. Professional drivers who can do the job properly are being driven out of the industry, repossession and bankruptcy are rife. Drivers in some parts of Essex have resorted to living in caravans and one driver to our knowledge lives in his vehicle. Tory dogma on market forces is creating a situation of grave danger to the public and is literally life destroying for those working in it.

This Congress demands a full public enquiry into the misbehaviour of the police nationwide in continuously declining to attend emergency calls by Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers. 13 have been murdered on the job in the last 15 months drink and drink fuelled scum obviously worry not about being apprehended.

Clearly drivers safety matters little to the police but they always manage to turn out in force to attack demonstrators, sometimes resulting in demonstrator's deaths. Surely a situation needing the most stringent investigation

Congress therefore instructs the National Union to highlight these issues publicly and to raise the issue in the Labour Party with the objective of developing a policy that can eliminate these dangers once a Labour Government is returned to office.

*(Carried)*

BRO. T. FLANAGAN (London): I intend to be brief on this because I do not think there is too much complication about it. If you have a look at Composite 7 it makes the argument, it is quite clear; just read it through and you will see what we are asking for. We want to stop people living in caravans, living in their vehicles, and driving 80-100 hours a week and being a perpetual danger to everyone. Drink-driving is very dangerous, tired driving is twice as dangerous. It has to be addressed. I actually went to see Mr. McNulty once with Paul here and we had a row about excessive working

hours; we got nowhere. I then saw Rosie Winterton; got nowhere. So, we are plugging it up again. The next motion is 109 where we are saying that all the unions involved —

THE PRESIDENT: Terry, are you moving 109 as well?

BRO. T. FLANAGAN (London): Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: Can you finish the first one and then I will call the seconder.

BRO. T. FLANAGAN (London): Right. I have moved Composite 7. I will leave it at that.

THE PRESIDENT: Stay where you are. Does the seconder wish to speak? Formally? Thank you.

*The Composite was formally seconded.*

THE PRESIDENT: Now you can go on, Terry. *(Laughter/Applause)*

## **HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE INDUSTRY MOTION 109**

### **109. HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE INDUSTRY**

This Congress recognises the ridiculousness of the current legislation for Hackney Carriage and the Private Hire Industry.

Congress instructs that other Unions involved in these industries should be approached with the intention of setting up a joint working party to formulate legislation suitable for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Referred)*

BRO. T. FLANAGAN (London): I bought Citrine's book yesterday but I will pass it on to Mary, I think. Motion 109, unions involved in this transport industry — the Bridlington agreement is dead. Perhaps it is a good thing. Perhaps it is not. I do not know. Quite clearly, there are major issues within these industries. I am saying we should get together. The CEC have some reservations about it. I accept those reservations. I formally move. *(Applause)*

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

*The motion was formally seconded.*

## **COMPETITION RULES – FERRY INDUSTRY MOTION 112**

### **112. COMPETITION RULES - FERRY INDUSTRY**

Congress instructs the General Secretary, in conjunction with our political department, Brussels office, MP's % MEP's, to lobby for change to UK and European competition rules. Congress

notes the lack of democratic process and the existence of highly paid bureaucrats, legislating on demanding competition rules, while enjoying relative 'cosy existence'. Current demanding competition rules, in many industries, lead to such severe competition, that it is impossible for companies to return profits sufficient for a sustainable on-going business. Congress notes that this is particularly significant in the Ferry Industry, where capital investment cost is very high and good revenue streams must exist to justify and support such investment outlay. Competition rules must be relaxed to allow re-organisation and rationalisation to allow the development of sustainable businesses. In regard to competition within the Ferry industry, a much wider approach must be taken to recognise the full extent of all forms of competition and the dynamic of the industry. Congress further wishes to see a review of Marco Polo and Highways of the Seas policies, providing, for example, subsidy to new 'start up' business, which allows new entrants, that can cause serious issues for established business, already struggling with over capacity and ever higher fuel cost. Congress wishes to see a stricter enforcement of rules relating to unfair competition in the UK and Europe. Congress is concerned by the dominant influence of the Channel Tunnel/Eurotunnel, while being a technically bankrupt business and is also concerned by the continuing subsidies being paid to Seafrance while in administration. Congress recognises the vital importance of a successful Ferry industry as a trade artery and safe mover of people and goods. Congress wishes the GMB leadership to campaign on behalf of the Ferry Industry, especially in view of the high cost of building and maintaining ships and the ever increasing fuel cost.

X23 DOVER FERRIES BRANCH  
*Southern Region*

*(Referred)*

BRO. P. GOODACRE (Southern): Unfashionable and unglamorous the ferry network between Britain and the Continent remains a vital artery in the free movement of goods and services. Maintaining this network is a capital intensive business requiring massive investment. This in turn requires stable market conditions and steady revenue streams. As with many industries, the recent economic crisis and rising fuel prices have had a dire impact on the market. However, there are a number of other impediments to achieving a profitable and sustainable ferry business, a business able to support decent terms and conditions and job security to its employees. A notable impediment is stiff European competition rules which restrict reorganisation and rationalisation of operators. Along with relaxation of these rules this motion calls for a re-evaluation of European Union Marco Polo and Highway of the Seas policies which effectively subsidise new entrants into the market. Experience demonstrates that these start-ups do not create jobs but jeopardise them in undermining existing businesses. Typically, we see companies such as Botchhit & Scarper high speed ferries pocket the subsidy, undermine the market for a couple of years, and then vanish. Let's not forget low-cost models are very often built on low-cost terms and conditions. In contrast to this market ready tooth and claw we see Eurotunnel on the short-sea market. This is effectively a bankrupt business. The small shareholders all lost their money and the banks took control. They do not have to pay off their debts. As I said, small investors lost their money and it is in a position to undermine short-sea rates on the Dover-Calais route. Similarly, we see another insolvent business, Sea France, whose parent company is SNCF, which is a state-owned rail French operator, again effectively a bankrupt business. SNCF continually recapitalise this business. That is a subsidy. It is blatantly unfair to competitors of Sea France and very much to the detriment of firms employing UK workers in the sector. This motion asks the GMB to examine these issues and lobby on behalf of the

ferry industry at a national and EU level. Congress, please support this motion. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder? Formally. Thank you very much, Richard.

*The motion was formally seconded.*

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? No? Thank you, Jim. I hope you pass a resolution to get that control. I know who it is, don't worry. I was putting it incognito. I now ask Evelyn Martin from the CEC to speak on Composite 7 and Motions 109 and 112. Evelyn, stop talking to yourself!

SIS. E. MARTIN (CEC, Public Services): That is the best person to talk to, then you don't get an answer back and never repeat what you say. Oh, dear, here we go.

We are supporting Composite 7 with a qualification and ask you to refer Motion 109 and 112. Congress, Composite 7 calls for action on a very serious issue, the police failure to respond to emergency calls from a taxi driver under attack is scandalous. Thirteen drivers murdered. It is a clear indication of that. The CEC qualification is that it is very difficult to achieve the full public inquiry called for in the motion. There has also been 40 full public inquiries held in the last 20 years and they cost millions of pounds. They are only conducted after a sustained period of pressure or because of widespread public concern. GMB will take up this cause but we must not overlook how rare it is for a full public inquiry to take place.

Congress, the CEC is asking you to refer Motion 109 to the new national organising committee for the taxi and private hire industry. This is a proper body consisting of regional activists within the industry to decide how to progress a union campaign for better legislation.

Turning to Motion 112, the CEC is seeking referral to allow the wide range of complex issues covered by the motion to be fully investigated. There is no doubt that the future of the ferry industry is of enormous importance. Competition rules impact upon local communities, like Dover, and on the UK ability to operate successfully within the international transport market. For that reason the CEC needs to call upon expert advice on the motion demands. We need to identify the best measure to support the ferry industry and develop the political support to achieve them. Referral would allow the CEC to do justice to a vital important issue for our members in the ferry industry.

Therefore, Congress, please support Composite 7 with the qualification as I have set out, and please refer Motions 109 and 112 for the reason that is given. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Evelyn. Does London Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Can I put that to the vote? All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

*Composite Motion 7 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 109, Terry I did hear you say reference but I will have to put it to the region. Does London Region accept reference? (*Agreed*) Does Southern Region accept reference on 112?

BRO. P. GOODACRE (Southern): Good morning, again. Yes, I will accept the reference. The qualification has been quite expanded so I am quite happy to accept that. However, I would just like to say these issues have been kicking around for years and it is getting quite urgent now. In the branch I represent we have good organisation. The GMB members are employees stuck in the middle of this. We would like this motion looked into as urgently as possible but I will accept the referral.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Congress, agree to accept reference on 109 and 112? (*Agreed*) Thank you very much indeed.

*Motion 109 was REFERRED.*

*Motion 112 was REFERRED.*

THE PRESIDENT: We will now be calling Motions 235, 236, and 237.

## **SOCIAL POLICY: GENERAL**

### **ABOLITION OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ON MEDICATIONS MOTION 235**

#### **235. ABOLITION OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ON MEDICATIONS**

This Congress notes that in many countries of the world people are lacking basic vital needs such as universal medical health care. Many medications are unaffordable and people are condemned to die as a result.

For many diseases such as HIV, new molecules were discovered due to the efforts of public research funding. The pharmaceutical industry has become one of the most powerful in the world by buying the medication's copyright and by commercialising them.

The cost of medical treatment for the most serious diseases such as cancer and HIV is prohibitive in countries where there is no social security and is an important burden for the well functioning of our welfare system and the pharmaceutical industry has always refused to justify the high cost of these treatments. Our lives are more important than their profits.

Congress calls for the abolition of intellectual property on medications.

LONDON ENTERTAINMENT & IUSW BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Referred)*

BRO. T. SCHAFFAUSER (London): Comrades, I am president of the London Entertainment Branch which organises sex workers and other entertainment workers. About one year ago I was contacted by sex workers in Congo. We tried to find other activists in the world to subscribe collectively to have mutual insurance. They live in a region in war and they are often victims of sexual violence from the army or the

police. As a result many of them have become HI positive. One solution is to gather money to help them but we cannot find enough money for this kind of treatment and delivery. Another way to look at the problem is to question the cause of why such medications are so expensive as the majority of people living with HIV around the world cannot afford them. The pharmaceutical industry is one of the most powerful in the world. Nothing justifies the high cost of this treatment because they did not have to invest money into research. All the molecules found to fight HIV were found from public research. The drug companies only buy the copyright to produce them and make great profits. The only reason to justify the high cost is personal profit. Some countries from the global south have tried to find solutions to provide treatment to their people. In India some companies produce generics but the Indian government has been under great pressure from the EU and US administration for producing this medication illegally. Western countries, different western industries, do not care about the consequences in terms of lives. The Brazilian government is also under pressure because it buys generics from India and can therefore provide free treatment for all Brazilian people living with HIV, but if the production of generics has to stop many people will be deprived of medication. Generics save lives and copyrights kill. Even in our own country many medications are still unaffordable, some are not reimbursed by the NHS because they are considered to be for comfort and not vital need, but we have to tell our government and the pharmaceutical industry that our health and our wellbeing is a vital need. Instead of cutting the NHS we could save money by buying cheaper treatments. I have little knowledge of the HIV field but the problem does not concern HIV medication only. Dott will give after me more examples regarding cancer. This problem concerns the serious pathologies because companies can maintain the copyright on medication for at least a 10-year period. This means that the most recent treatments, which are also the most efficient, are the most expensive. I hope you all understand the problem and that you agree with me that on such vital needs we should change the law to impose the right of the people's health before the law of the market. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Thierry. Seconder?

SIS. D. PETERSON (London): My fellow delegate highlighted the plight of poor countries of the world and their lack of gaining lifesaving medication due to the exorbitant costs laid down by the monopoly of pharmaceutical companies and I endorse them in this. I do not know if any of you saw a programme on the news the other night but a spokesman from GlaxoSmithKline stated on national TV news that medication they sent for children — and I am sorry, I did not quite catch what it was — in poor overseas countries is usually charged at £30 per shot and they had reduced this to £1.50 a shot. They also had the gall to say that they were doing this at a non-profit price but he also said they would not be suffering a loss by charging £1.50 instead of £30, and he repeated they would not be suffering a loss. I rest my case on that one. However, even in the UK where we supposedly have a welfare state and a National Health Service there are medicines that could be prolonging the lives of terminal sufferers. Much money is spent on research of these drugs. A lot of people give charity to cancer research. There is a lengthy process that the drugs have to go through to be licensed, usually about a year or so. Then it goes to NICE, a very unfortunate name indeed. That takes a length of time when they weigh up how long it will prolong life and if they will decide to allow the drug to be prescribed. This



cannot be right. Congress, we ask that the calls for the abolition of intellectual property on medication be stopped. I second. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dott. Mover of 236.

## **DRUG DEPENDENCY REDUCTION MOTION 236**

### **236. DRUG DEPENDENCY REDUCTION**

This GMB Congress notes that in countries that have decriminalised drugs like Portugal the number of people addicted to injecting drugs has actually decreased as people are more likely to access help from services helping them with their addiction as they do not feel stigmatised or at risk of arrest and imprisonment.

This Conference recognises that the criminalisation of drugs hinders policies that look to help people who are addicted, or have a drug habit and reduces people's access to the health service.

Congress believes that better information on drug safety and access to prevention materials in order to avoid contaminations of hepatitis and HIV is essential in the education of drug users and reduces the spread of such diseases.

GMB Congress therefore resolves to:

- a) Research both the positive and negative impacts of the decriminalisation of drugs in countries where this has happened and report to Congress 2012.
- b) Sign the Vienna declaration launched at the 2010 Global Aids Conference, calling for a scientific approach to drug policies instead of ideology.

GMB@PCS BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. H. PURCELL (London): Colleagues, the world needs a new approach to dealing with illicit drugs. The primary international response to the health and social harms posed by drug use has involved a global war on drugs aimed at reducing the availability and use of illegal drugs through legislation and law enforcement. This approach is not working and we desperately need a change. Why is it not working? The fact is illicit drugs remain readily available worldwide. Over the last 30 years drug prices have steadily fallen while drug purity continues to increase. The illicit market is now estimated to be worth an annual value of £200bn. The fact is the over-reliance on enforcement has resulted in overwhelmingly negative health and social consequences. Organised crime has flourished, as has the violence associated with it. HIV continues to spread amongst injection drug users. It is estimated a significant percentage of all HIV cases are caused by injecting drugs. Crisis reigns in criminal justice systems with a record number of incarceration rates in numerous countries negatively impacting on the social functioning of entire communities. In the UK it is estimated that drug offences and secondary drug related offences are directly responsible for over half of the prison population. The fact is the enforcement approach has had a disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable in our societies, including women and children, lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans communities, and black and minority ethnic groups. For example, in the US one in nine African American males in the age group 20-34 is jailed on any given day primarily as a result

of drug law enforcement. In the UK where black, Asian, and minority women make up 4% of the population, 31% of female prisoners are from this group. So what can we do to help and influence change? In the wake of the 2010 International AIDS Conference in Vienna the international scientific community called for an acknowledgement of the limitations and harm of drug criminalisation and for drug policy reform to remove barriers to effective HIV prevention, treatment, and cure. An alternative was proposed, one which incorporates the use of scientific and evidence-based research into the formulation of illicit drug policies in order to improve community health and safety. Thus, the Vienna Declaration was drafted to encapsulate and encourage this approach. It was drafted through an extensive consultation process involving global leaders in medicine, public policy, and public health. The declaration acknowledges that basing drug policies on scientific evidence will not eliminate drug use or the problems stemming from drug injection. However, redirecting policies towards evidence-based approaches that respect, protect, and fulfil human rights, has the potential to reduce harm deriving from current policies and would allow for the redistribution of vast financial resources towards where they are needed the most.

In summary, this motion is not demanding a blanket de-criminalisation of illicit drugs; it is about acknowledging that the most vulnerable in our society need our support to improve their situations. They are not criminals, they are our sisters and brothers who have a right to proper healthcare and access to the medicines they need. Congress, let's campaign for the alternative, let's make sure the most vulnerable get our support, let's fight for social justice, and let's make a start by signing the Vienna Declaration. Congress, I urge you to support the motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Helen. Secunder?

BRO. T. SCHAFFAUSER (London): Comrades, I second this motion but I wish this motion would go further and call for the decriminalisation of drug use. This motion is not about that. This motion is about calling the GMB to research on the positive and negative impact of drug laws. My concern is health and all current laws accentuate too much on repression and not enough on health, prevention, and harm reduction. I have been a drug user since I was a teenager. I have experimented with all sorts of products but thanks to my involvement within the HIV movement I have been informed about how to reduce the risk and thankfully I have always avoided addiction and the health related problems. Not everyone has had the same chance and drug laws can represent a double punishment. In addition to the pain of dependency, you can suffer the pain of imprisonment. Drug laws are used mostly against working class people, black and ethnic minorities, and young people. It does not stop people using them, like the prohibition of alcohol would not stop you from drinking. The law paradoxically encourages crime. In the USA during the 1920s Al Capone and the Mafia made a fortune with the prohibition of alcohol which also caused dramatic health problems such as people becoming blind. In 2006, four women were murdered in Ipswich; they were all suffering from drug dependency and had to work on the streets to support their habit. Because of the laws on drugs and sex work they could not trust the police so were forced to work in remote areas and never contacted them for help. Drug laws are used to blame the victims for the crimes they suffer instead of protecting them. It is not because they were drug users but it is what happened to them. Some of my friends have been jailed because of drug laws but I know they are

not bad people. I am not a bad person. I am not a criminal. We are your comrades and we should not be criminalised. Please let us have a closer look and research the consequences of the law and open the debate about how to fight most efficiently drug dependency, and not the people who suffer from it. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Thierry. Mover of 237?

**CENTRAL EUROPEAN TIME  
MOTION 237**

**237. CENTRAL EUROPEAN TIME**

Congress supports the UK move to Central European Time (CET) and will positively respond in regard to any consultation re any potential change. If the political process moves to a possible trial period for a 1 Hour time change, the GMB will support this position. The wish is to align UK time with our main partners in Europe such as France and Germany. The proposal will be to operate on the current GMT in Autumn / Winter, to GMT + 1 and with BST in Spring / Summer, to BST + 1. The GMB believes there is pros and cons for such a move, but on balance, there is now compelling arguments, in the wider interest, to effect such a move.

X23 DOVER FERRIES BRANCH  
Southern Region

*(Referred)*

BRO. P. GOODACRE (Southern): Congress, no doubt you are aware of recent proposals to bring UK time forward by one hour on the so-called Central European time. This would align us with our central partners in Europe, such as Germany and France. This motion recognises there are a number of commercial, economic, and practical advantages to this measure and requests that the GMB responds positively to any proposals or trials on this matter. I move. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Secunder? Formally. Thank you.

*The motion was formally seconded.*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I now call on Linda Clarke, on behalf of the CEC, to reply to Motions 235, 236, and 237. Linda.

SIS. L. CLARKE (CEC, Public Services): Malcolm, Congress, we are seeking referral of Motions 235 and 237, and supporting Motion 236 with a qualification. On Motion 235 the Trade Related aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) were introduced as part of a general agreement on tariffs and trade at the end of the 1994 multilateral trade negotiations. TRIPS is administered by the World Trade Organisation of which the UK is a member. The application of TRIPS in the production of medications is controversial because it is included in negotiations for a free trade agreement between the European Union and India. India exports genetic drugs to more than 200 countries in an industry that provides 500,000 jobs on the subcontinent. The issue of free trade agreements and intellectual property rights needs careful consideration. Therefore, we recommend that the Congress agrees to refer it to the CEC Political European and International Committee for further deliberation.

On Motion 236 we are in favour of information and education to raise the awareness of the dangers and effects of drugs but we would want to look further into decriminalisation. The qualification is that the Vienna Declaration calls for science-based drugs policies but many other programmes of action contained in this declaration require additional investigation.

Motion 237 asks for support for the proposal for the UK to move to Central European time. This would put the clocks on an hour in winter and a further hour in summer giving lighter nights but darker mornings. There are conflicting views on the proposal. A trial was held between 1968 and 1971 and opponents, particularly in Scotland, highlighted the increased number of road accidents in the morning, especially involving children walking to school. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, a supporter of moving CET, claimed that the reduced number of accidents in the evening meant that overall 2,500 deaths and serious injuries were saved during the trial period. Similar conflicting arguments are put forward today. Given that we now live in a 24-hour society the effects may now be different; we simply do not know. Therefore, the CEC recommends that the impact and effects of such changes on jobs and lives of the GMB members across all our regions and sections needs to be examined and taken into account.

Congress, therefore, I ask you to refer Motions 235 and 237, and support Motion 236 with the qualification set out. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Linda. Does London Region accept reference on Motion 235? (*Agreed*) Does London Region accept the qualification on Motion 236? (*Agreed*) Does Southern Region accept reference on Motion 237? (*Agreed*) Colleagues, then the CEC is supporting all these three motions. I will now put them to the vote. All those in favour of Motions 235, 236, and 237? (*Further speaker*)

THE PRESIDENT: Another charge for Andy!

A DELEGATE: Thank you, first of all, for permission to enter this debate. It is specifically on Motion 235, the intellectual property rights. I accept that you want to seek reference on this but to seek reference back and to research further that which has already been stated and is known to be fact by many in this hall will actually allow inaction by the GMB at a time when a desperate need exists to remove the intellectual property rights now. This motion is about saving lives and prolonging them now as well as in the future, and not prolonging the over-pricing. Sadly, I have to say to Congress that missed by this specific motion the same criteria also applies to multiple sclerosis and to other conditions. It would have been nice to think that we could today actually have just simply voted for this and let the union do something about it. It is absolutely scandalous. Vice President, thank you for the opportunity to join the debate. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I go back to the vote. The CEC is supporting all these motions. I will call out the motions now, Motion 235, 236, and 237, all those in favour? Anyone against? They are carried.

*Motion 235 was REFERRED.*

*Motion 236 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 237 was REFERRED.*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Malcolm. Congress, can we now move to Emergency Motion 6, Syrian Regime, to be moved by GMB Scotland.

**SYRIAN REGIME  
EMERGENCY MOTION 6**

**CONGRESS 2011**

**EMERGENCY MOTION NO. 6**

**SYRIAN REGIME EMERGENCY MOTION**

THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT ARE DESPERATELY TRYING TO HOLD ON TO POWER THROUGH MURDER, INTIMIDATION AND PROPAGANDA ON STATE TV.

THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE OF SYRIA IS A RIGHT TO FORM A DEMOCRATICALLY ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNMENT.

ON THE 6<sup>TH</sup> OF JUNE THE GOVERNMENT VOWED TO RETALIATE AFTER CLAIMING THAT PROTESTERS KILLED POLICE AND SECURITY. A POPULAR BLOGGER, AMINA ARRAF, HAS BEEN KIDNAPPED.

AMINA'S BLOG "A GAY GIRL IN DAMASCUS" HAS CAPTURED THE IMAGINATION OF THE PROTEST MOVEMENT AND SPOKE OUT AGAINST THE SYRIAN REGIME. HER FAMILY DOES NOT KNOW WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO HER. TO DATE OVER 10,000 PEOPLE HAVE BEEN DETAINED BY THE AUTHORITIES.

CONGRESS, WE MUST STAND IN SOLIDARITY WITH OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN SYRIA AND THE MIDDLE EAST AS THEY FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY.

THE RIGHT TO PROTEST, THE RIGHT TO FORM A GOVERNMENT ARE NOT LUXURIES BUT A FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHT.

CONGRESS THIS MOTION IS CALLING ON THE GMB TO LOBBY THE FOREIGN SECRETARY AND YOUR LOCAL MP'S TO HIGHLIGHT THE PLIGHT OF THE SYRIAN PEOPLE AS THEY CONTINUE TO FACE OPPRESSION FROM THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT.

**GLASGOW GENERAL (APEX)  
GMB Scotland**

*(Carried)*

SIS. S. MOTHERWELL (GMB Scotland): Congress, the violence in the Syrian region is escalating as the government attempt to cling on to power and deny the Syrian people their fundamental rights. Congress, this motion is about highlighting the plight of the Syrian people as the government remains hell-bent on stopping protestors calling for an end to Bashar al Assad's rule. The tactics of the Syrian government to silence the protestors include disinformation, intimidation, detention, and violence. Reports this morning confirm that the Syrian government's threats to retaliate after claiming protestors killed police and security personnel have been realised. Human rights activists in Damascus said 59 civilians have been killed in last night's clash in the North West. Congress, to date human rights groups say that over 10,000 people have been detained by the authority since protests started in mid-March. The Syrian regime claimed that protestors had killed police and security personnel. These claims have not been verified and are part of the Syrian government's attempt to blame peaceful protestors for the violence. A popular blogger, Amina Abdallah, has been reported kidnapped. Her blog, *A Gay Girl in Damascus*, has captured the imagination of the protest movement and gained her activists in Syria support across the world. She has criticized the regime and has been a leading voice to the struggles in Syria. A lesbian feminist anti-government protestor she became more and more exacerbated by the government crackdown and recently posted that they must go, they must go. Her friend reported in her blog earlier this week that she had been kidnapped by three armed men. Her family are not sure who took her or who to ask to get her back. Fears are that she has been deported. Supporters across the world have set up an online petition calling for her release. The Free Amina page on Facebook has over 8,000 followers so far. Congress, we must lend support to Amina's family and friends. We must stand in solidarity with her brothers and sisters in Syria and highlight the atrocities of the Syrian regime and stop them from silencing the voice and the will of the Syrian people like Amina. Congress, this motion is calling on the GMB to lobby the Foreign Secretary and local MPs to highlight the plight of the Syrian people's oppression from the Syrian regime and as Amina Abdallah exercised her human rights and said, if we want to live in a free country, we must begin by living as though we are already in a free country. Please support. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Secunder? Formally. Thank you.

*The Emergency Motion was formally seconded.*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Anyone wish to come in on the debate? No. The CEC is supporting the Emergency Motion. All those in favour please — sorry. Sorry, Ron, it was not intentional. Can I call on Ron to give a qualification?

BRO. R. WAUGH (CEC, Manufacturing): Congress, the CEC is supporting Emergency Motion 6 with a qualification. GMB is utterly appalled at the murder and repression of unarmed pro-democracy civilian protestors in Syria. However, the qualification on this motion is that the motion's reference to the Middle East in paragraph 5 is too wide-ranging. GMB should not give some organisations whose agenda is unclear our blanket support. This applies, for example, to certain groups involved in the armed conflicts in Libya and Yemen. GMB would also not lend support to any foreign government or multinational corporation wading into these conflicts in pursuit of their own interests. We would certainly not lend our support to

the bombing of civilians and we would also certainly not support the carve-up of oil fields by the big oil companies. Please support Emergency Motion 6 with that qualification. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Ron. Does Scotland accept the qualification? Yes? Thank you. All those in favour please show? Anyone against? That is carried. Thank you.

*Emergency Motion 6 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now move to item 11, International. I will be calling Composite 22, Motions 272 on Colombia, 273 on Workers' Rights, 274 UN Security Council, 275, Support for Sex Workers' Unionisation at an International Level, 276, GMB and the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, 277, Torture and Rendition, and 278 Return of Historical Artefacts.

## **INTERNATIONAL**

### **BURMA CAMPAIGN**

#### **COMPOSITE 22**

*(Covering Motions 270 and 271)*

270. BURMA (*Northern Region*)

271. AFFILIATION TO BURMA CAMPAIGN (*Southern Region*)

### **BURMA CAMPAIGN**

This Congress notes with concern reports of widespread manipulation of advance votes during the recent Burmese elections, boycotted by the National League for Democracy. Congress believes that this is yet another blow to the prospects for democracy in Burma and dismissed this election as no more than a sham to reinforce the ruling regime's power. Congress urges the Government to make further representations for the immediate and unconditional release of more than 2,200 prisoners of conscience currently detained in Burma.

Conference notes that despite a landslide election victory in 1990 for Aung San Suu Kyi and her party 'the National League for Democracy (NLD)', the military junta in Burma continues to refuse to recognise the results of that election. Instead she has spent the vast majority of the last 20 years under house arrest whilst human rights abuses are widespread and torture is institutionalised.

Rape, murder, torture, detention without trial and forced labour are rife in Burma. Freedom of expression is forbidden and surveillance is endemic, the junta has passed legislation to imprison individuals for up to 20 years for opposing government policies.

We are calling for a co-ordinated union campaign to increase pressure on UK companies to sever any ties with Burma. Burma Campaign UK wrote to leading retailers to see if they have any trade links within the country, several companies refused to acknowledge the campaign including Animal, Bay Trading and Lillywhites. UK insurance company Lloyds of London refuse to cease insuring the Burmese government claiming it was anti competitive; their money is supporting these human rights abuses. Barclays Bank has agreed to pay fines for breaching

sanctions against Burma. Foreign financial services are assisting the Burmese government to loot the national resources.

We call on the Congress to condemn the fake elections that will be held in November 2010 set to be held under deeply oppressive conditions designed to perpetuate military rule.

We believe that the GMB should affiliate to the Burma Campaign UK to fully participate in efforts to bring freedom and human rights to the people of Burma.

*(Carried)*

**BRO. K. GREENAWAY (Southern):** First-time delegate, first-time speaker.

*(Applause)* I would just like to start by saying I am a young activist. I am quite proud of the young activists that have turned up to Congress and their contributions so far. I am going to be quick. Burma had an election in 1990. The National League of Democracy won 80% of the seats but this was not accepted by the ruling military of the time. Since the 1990 election the leader of the National League for Democracy, a Nobel Peace Prize winner, Aung San Suu Kyi, has spent over 15 years under house arrest being released for the third time in November 2010. There is endemic human rights failures in Burma, widespread use of forced labour, one million people have been forced from their homes, over 2,000 political prisoners kept in appalling conditions with reports of widespread torture, prolific use of child soldiers, reports of rape being used as a weapon against women and children of ethnic minorities, high child mortality rates with 10% of babies born in Burma not living beyond their fifth birthday, and taking that into consideration Burma spends just short of 50% of their national budget on the military. In 2003, the military dictatorship gave a road map for democracy. This is a sham democracy. There were elections in 2010 and these were sham as well. The National League for Democracy was not allowed to run in them. There were lots of democracy campaigners harassed with allegations of intimidation. It is not really painting a picture of a country moving towards democracy. What this motion is urging you to support is for us to affiliate to the Burma Campaign UK so that we can help them to highlight the issues in Burma and we can all learn a lot more about this. I urge you to support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:** Thank you, Keir, well done. Formally, worthy chairman?

*The motion was formally seconded.*

## **COLOMBIA MOTION 272**

### **272. COLOMBIA**

Despite the election of the new Colombian President, Juan Manuel Santos, who came into office in August 2010 with promises of improvements to the dire human rights situation, attacks and threats against Trade Unionists and other human rights defenders have continued at the same tragically high rate since his inauguration allied with continuing impunity from prosecution (in over 98% of the cases in which a trade unionist is killed in Colombia, nobody is brought to justice). Congress calls on the CEC to write to MPs and MEPs calling on them to not to support the EU-Colombia Free Trade Agreement without a clear set of human rights benchmarks and to contact the Colombian Government to state their resolve to continue to actively oppose any



such trade deal until we see real and meaningful progress to end the violence and attacks faced by trade unionists and other human rights defenders.

B59 BRUSSELS BRANCH  
*Southern Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. A. NEWMAN (Southern): Congress, we already have a policy about Colombia so this is something new. The European Union a few weeks ago initialled a draft free trade agreement with Colombia which will improve European trade with that country, despite the most appalling human rights almost anywhere in the world. Only last year, in 2010, 52 trade unionists were murdered in Colombia. In some cases people are murdered in their place of work by paramilitaries who go in and shoot people in front of their colleagues. In 98% of cases there is no prosecution or investigation, nobody is ever held to account for this. To give you some indication of what human rights are like in Colombia, on March 22<sup>nd</sup> a judge was murdered and the reason she was murdered is that she was the investigating judge in the case of a 14-year old girl who was raped and murdered, her two younger brothers were murdered, and their bodies dumped outside an army base. She was investigating whether the army was responsible. She was shot dead and the investigation has stopped. That is what Colombia is like. Although this has been initialled, the process is that the treaty has been initialled but it needs to be ratified by the European Parliament. This motion is calling for GMB to write to British MEPs and MPs and ask them to oppose the ratification of that treaty, but as activists we can also go back to our branches, and as citizens we can also act as individuals and write to our MPs and write to our MEPs and say this scandalous situation where we are improving our trade relations with a country like this cannot be acceptable. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Secunder? Formally. I can tell you that I will raise it with Glenis Willmott myself at the NEC of the Labour Party. *(Applause)*

*The motion was formally seconded.*

## **WORKERS' RIGHTS MOTION 273**

### **273. WORKERS' RIGHTS**

This Congress welcomes the publication of the International Trade Union Confederation's (ITUC) annual survey of trade union rights, which documents a dramatic increase in the number of trade unionists murdered last year. Congress notes that there were 101 killings, an increase of 30 per cent over the previous year and further notes that this invaluable report records an extensive list of violations suffered by trade unionists struggling to defend workers' interests in 140 countries. Congress supports the view that the survey shows that the majority of the world's workers still lack effective protection of their rights to organise trade unions and bargain collectively, which is a major factor in the long-term increase in economic inequality within and between countries, and that inadequate incomes for much of the world's workforce helped cause the global economic crisis and are making it much harder to put the economy on a path of sustainable growth.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY LA BRANCH  
*Northern Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. G. MAYFIELD (Northern): In the current circumstance, it would be natural to look at domestic issues as a focal point for our campaigns. However, the International TUC's Annual Survey of trade union rights has documented a dramatic increase in the number of trade unionists murdered in 2009 with 101 killings, an increase of 30% over the previous year. The survey also revealed a growing pressure on workers around the globe as the economic crisis deepens. Of the 101 murdered 48 were killed in Colombia, 16 in Guatemala, 12 in Honduras, six in Mexico, six in Bangladesh, four in Brazil, 3 in the Dominican Republic, 3 in the Philippines, one in India, one in Iraq, and one in Nigeria. Congress, 22 of the Colombian trade unionists who were killed were senior trade union leaders, and five were women. As the onslaught of previous years continues the rising violence elsewhere followed a trend developing in recent years. Congress, if we do not recognise that workers' rights around the world are important, as the saying goes, it may well be us next in the firing line. Trade union brother and sisterhood should have no boundaries. Please support. I move. *(Applause)*

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

*The motion was formally seconded.*

## **UN SECURITY COUNCIL MOTION 274**

### **274. UN SECURITY COUNCIL**

This Congress calls for a fundamental review of the UN Security Council to reflect a changed geo-political world view; to include emerging economies and reflect a much changed world order.

MPO LOCAL AUTHORITY BRANCH  
*Northern Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. M. EBDEN (Northern): Congress, when the UN was first set up there was a different world order. The powers that formed the Security Council were able to balance the forces in a very dangerous world. There has been a war a year since the Second World War. Congress, we may not have been involved in them all but the fact is there is a danger to us all from the conflicts across the world. There are countries that have grown incredibly in the last 20 years. There has been a change in how decisions are made. These changes have brought about even bigger changes in world politics. For example, India and Brazil have grown at a rate that is much faster than Western Europe. Once countries go past being a less developed one, there is no turning back. Congress, it is the United Nations and the Security Council reflecting on the major changes that have happened in the world economy over the past 20 years. We need to review how the Security Council is made up. This has been brought into focus by the Blair and Bush doctrines of intervening in other countries. Unless we do this we are storing up problems for ourselves. Please support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Thanks, Michael. Secunder? Formally. Thank you, worthy president.

SIS. M. CARTER (Northern): First-time delegate and speaker. (*Applause*) Seconding Motion 274, UN Security Council. Formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I will not shoot you now, Billy.

**SUPPORT FOR SEX WORKERS' UNIONISATION AT AN INTERNATIONAL LEVEL  
MOTION 275**

**275. SUPPORT FOR SEX WORKERS' UNIONISATION AT AN INTERNATIONAL LEVEL**

This Congress notes that sex workers are said to be the oldest profession but we are also among the youngest unionised workers. Thanks to GMB, sex workers have the right to join a trade union in the UK since 2004. Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states "everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests" but in most countries around the world, sex workers are still denied this right.

As Trade Unionists we know the solution to exploitation and abuses within any industry is the promotion of full human, civil and labour rights for those working within it. We call for sex workers' entitlement to these rights to be recognised and respected within the union movement.

Congress calls for the support of sex workers' unionisation within the international Labour Movement.

LONDON ENTERTAINMENT & IUSW BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. T. SCHAFFAUSER (London): Comrades, I am President of the GMB London Entertainment Branch, which organises sex workers and other entertainment workers. I want to start by saying that I am proud to be a GMB member. I am proud because my grandparents were trade unionists. My parents are trade unionists. Thanks to the GMB I am a trade unionist too. (*Applause*) I am proud because GMB will remain in history for being the first and so far the only trade union to organise sex workers in the UK since 2004. However, in many countries sex workers are still deprived of the right to join a trade union and are excluded from the labour Movement. Some might think that sex work is not proper work and that we should not be organised in trade unions. Some people say that sex work is not a choice but exploitation. In my view, all work is exploitation. (*Applause*) We all have to work to earn a living. We all have to work to earn a living to pay for education or to support our family. Often people ask me whether or not I chose to do sex work and I answer that I never chose to do any work in my life. (*Laughter*) I have only taken decisions to do one job rather than one other. We do not ask other workers if they really love their job or not, we just accept them within the labour Movement because they are our comrades. Sex workers need trade unions because a trade union is the only thing we have to fight violence and exploitation. Thanks to GMB we have been able to better organise and to access political spheres which were previously forbidden. We have been able to work with the police and since January this year the ACPO, the UK police, publicly agreed that sex workers should be decriminalised. Thanks to GMB we are less and less considered like social misfits and we are more and more seen at peace within the

labour Movement as respected trade unionists. We do not want charity, we want rights, and one of the basic human rights recognised by international treaties is to join a trade union. Karl Marx said that prostitution is only a specific expression of the general prostitution of the worker. Maybe the nature of our work is different but we are part of the same class. Sex workers are part of the working class. GMB is an example for our brothers and sisters abroad who do not have a trade union and they need our solidarity. Please, comrades, vote for this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks very much, Thierry. Secunder? Is it formally? Thank you.

*The motion was formally seconded.*

## **GMB AND THE PALESTINE SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN MOTION 276**

### **276. GMB AND THE PALESTINE SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN**

This Congress applauds the stand taken by GMB in seconding the historic Composite Motion 18 on Palestine at the last TUC Congress.

Paragraph 6 of that motion instructed the Central Executive Council to “work closely with the Palestine Solidarity Campaign to actively encourage affiliates, employers and pension funds to disinvest from, and boycott goods of, companies who profit from illegal settlements, the Occupation and the construction of the Wall”.

Given the continued occupation of Palestinian land and the construction of more illegal settlements thereon since the passing of the motion, Congress believes that much stronger action to increase political and economic pressure on the State of Israel is required and that this Union should take a lead in driving forward the disinvestment and boycott initiatives called for in the above paragraph.

One of the companies which continues to profit from the occupation and the servicing of the illegal settlements, and in which this union has significant numbers of members, is Veolia. In this country and others around the world, Veolia has lost substantial contracts at local government level not just because its bids have been undercut by other companies but also because of co-ordinated lobbying the pressure groups to highlight its business links and investments in such projects as the Jerusalem Light Railway and bus routes which connect Israeli territory to the illegal settlements, and waste disposal contracts and facilities which aid the establishment of such illegal settlements on Palestinian land. Not only are our members made indirectly complicit in illegal activities (as defined by the Geneva Convention on Human Rights), but their job security is ultimately undermined by Veolia’s vulnerability to exclusion from contracts. It is therefore in the interests of our members that the company ceases such dubious business practices and stops giving succour to colonialist occupation.

Congress therefore instructs the CEC to seek the support of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign in the co-ordination of a campaign to make public the activities of Veolia in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories and to encourage the company to disinvest from activities which run counter to this Union’s commitments to justice for Palestinians in the TUC motion.

NORWICH GENERAL BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. K. ROWLEY (London): President, brothers and sisters, mindful of the fact that I have never used the phrase “worthy president”, do not speak with a North East accent, and I am at least 20 years too young, I do not want to risk the red light if I can possibly help it, so please look at the text of the motion in your booklets because I have cut this speech to the bone; also, please bear in mind that arguments presented here are in no way meant to justify the provision of public services by private sector companies. I believe in the return of such services to municipal and national control. I think my political instincts were aroused by two childhood experiences. The first was meeting the children of Hungarian asylum seekers at school in the late 1950s after the Soviet suppression of the 1956 Hungarian uprising. The second was seeing a TV documentary about the Nazi concentration camps in the early 1960s. The empathy and disgust I felt helped form a gut understanding of injustice and a loathing for bullies. These instincts made me a trade unionist and latterly a supporter of the Palestinian struggle for justice and nationhood.

Last year’s Congress was addressed by Mark Baxendale, the industrial relations manager of Veolia UK. At the fringe meeting immediately after his speech I asked him about the company’s business activities in Israel and Palestine. The essence of the question I asked can be gleaned from paragraph 4 of the text in front of you. As Branch Secretary of GMB Norwich General Branch, I had two concerns: firstly, our members who worked for Veolia and, second, our branch affiliation to the PSC. Mr. Baxendale was unable to respond to the question and asked me to put it in writing. He passed this communication on to Jean-Dominique Mallet, the CEO of Veolia Environnement in France. Over the next few months we had an intensive back and forth correspondence and I copied everything to the GMB National Office. This correspondence was interrupted by the passing of Composite 18 at TUC Congress. I felt especially proud that Paul Kenny had seconded that composite. In the New Year I attended the PSC AGM as a delegate for my GMB branch and as an individual member with two distinct responsibilities. When the subject of the boycott divestment and sanctions campaign was raised, I followed GMB policy and argued against calls for affiliates to take actions that could jeopardise jobs and alienate our members, and that calls for specific BDS actions had to be referred to individual trade unions for debate and decision. I was mindful of the fact that recognition agreements require significant restraint. This motion is the result of such restraint and careful deliberation at branch level. I believe that Veolia has already recognised the folly of its involvement in the Jerusalem light railway and is trying to sell its 5% operational stake to an Israeli company. However, its other transport and waste management interests continue to bolster the illegal settlements on the occupied Palestinian lands. I am the GMB delegate on the TUAC PSC Committee and could help coordinate the campaign of persuasion called for in the motion. The pressure of the BDS movement will not die down. It is here to stay. It is working and Veolia is losing a lot of money in lost contracts.

On April 20<sup>th</sup>, the Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions issued a statement which further underlines its support for BDS. At that time, a UK trade union delegation was visiting Palestine and its report concluded thus, and I am nearly finished: “There will be no just and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians until Israel’s behaviour changes and the human and civil rights of Palestinians are respected. Following the most recent collapse of negotiations Palestinian civil society is increasingly speaking with one voice and is now calling for a concerted

international BDS campaign as the most effective way of maximising pressure for Israel to change its behaviour. It is therefore incumbent on trade unions outside of Israel to maximise their efforts in supporting the BDS campaign in order to bring a just and lasting peace to the region.” Brothers and sisters, I urge you to support this motion. It is responsible and reasonable. Free Palestine! (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Keith. Secunder?

BRO. N. MANNAN (London): President, Congress, I applaud Congress for the stand taken by the GMB in seconding Composition Motion 18 at the last TUC Congress. The CEC was instructed to work closely with the Palestine Solidarity Campaign to actively encourage affiliates, employers, and pension funds, to disinvest and boycott goods from companies who profit from the illegal settlements in occupied Palestine. I am not going into the history of Israel’s bloody and immoral occupation of Palestine and the 44-year long conflict but I would like to bring to your attention that people of Palestine are suffering as we speak whilst in their own country under Israel’s occupation. As I speak, Israeli settlers are constructing illegal homes in Palestine land. The mover mentioned that companies such as Veolia are profiting from servicing these illegal settlements. In June 2009, after losing £7bn in contracts during its involvement in the occupation Veolia announced it would withdraw from the light rail project. However, Veolia till today remains involved in other activities supporting the occupation. There are many UK and foreign companies that are profiting from or supporting the illegal occupation of Palestine and the development of illegal settlements. This is typical of capitalist nations and the motive for their actions is based solely on interest and greed. In London the Church of England voted for the disinvestment of Anglican Church funds from the companies profiting from Israel’s illegal occupation of Palestinian territories. The main target of Anglican action is the US company, Caterpillar Inc., which has supplied diggers and bulldozers, used by Israel to demolish Palestinian homes. I believe much stronger action is required to increase political and economical pressure on the State of Israel and the GMB should support and take a lead in driving forward the disinvestment and boycotting of these capitalist companies that profit from the construction of illegal settlements. Congress, I therefore ask the CEC to seek the support of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign in making public the activities of such companies as Veolia and Casvilla in Israel. I therefore support the motion. (*Applause*)

## **TORTURE AND RENDITION MOTION 277**

### **277. TORTURE AND RENDITION**

This Congress calls on the UK Coalition Government and the Labour Party to give an unequivocal commitment that it will never use torture, condone torture or allow rendition or torture in any of its jurisdiction or territories. Congress believes that the use of torture is fundamentally against the Geneva Convention and undermines a free society when that society’s Governments are perceived to have condoned it in the past.

SUNDERLAND CITY LA BRANCH  
*Northern Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. G. MURRAY (Northern): Congress, the Twin Towers atrocity changed civilised society and the instincts of any reasonable person was heartfelt sympathy for the victims and their families. Nevertheless, the glib way that American politicians justified their disregard for the Geneva Convention proved that if a democracy can cross the line of basic decency, then in the long run we will all lose. Congress, the use of water boarding as a means of torture is abhorrent to anyone. The kidnapping of suspects and flying them around the world under the radar, and falsifying plane logs, should mean that anyone who orders or carries out atrocities, including politicians, should be subject to international law. Comrades, if politicians in this country knew about torture and rendition and said nothing, then they should be ashamed and held accountable. There is no defence for breaking the Geneva Convention. Congress, you do not export democracy and advance its cause by torturing people. You do not export democracy by kidnapping and flouting international law. Congress, unless the Government reasserts total commitment to the Geneva Convention they will always be vulnerable to the charge that they just want to impose our values and that they are not serious about resolving conflict and understanding cultures from around the world. I urge your support. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Secunder? Formally. Thank you, Billy.

*The motion was formally seconded.*

## **RETURN OF HISTORICAL ARTEFACTS MOTION 278**

### **278. RETURN OF HISTORICAL ARTEFACTS**

This Congress believes the theft of artwork and historical artefacts is a crime against humanity. The plundering of galleries and museums by Nazi Germany is, quite rightly, universally condemned. However, many museums throughout the world, particularly in Europe, continue to hold items obtained via dubious means. They often take a chauvinistic and patronising attitude and use spurious legal arguments to justify not returning these items to their country of origin. Examples include the Parthenon Friezes (aka Elgin Marbles) in the British Museum and the Bust of Nefertiti in Berlin's Neuse Museum.

Congress calls on museums to work with UNESCO in order to return artefacts of cultural importance to their country of origin. Where items are of genuine importance to more than one country, (e.g. the Rosetta Stone), we call for multi-national ownership, under the supervision of UNESCO.

PARKGATE BRANCH  
*Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region*

*(Referred)*

BRO. I. KEMP (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): President, Congress, with the world in turmoil this motion seems a bit incongruous. After all, in the great scheme of things what does it matter where museum pieces, that you are probably never going to see, are kept. What if the symbols of our union's history, and I do not mean our General Secretary but our banners, were kept in some foreign museum? That is what this motion is about, the recognition of the importance of and restoration of other people's history and culture. The museums of mainly Northern European cities are full of artefacts obtained through illegal chicanery, like the so-called Elgin Marbles,

or via out-and-out theft. For example, most of the Chinese items in French museums and also what you see on the Antiques Roadshow came from the 1860 looting of the Summer Palace in Beijing. The arguments used to justify the retention of such pieces reflect a condescending and patronising attitude. It is claimed Greece, Egypt, or wherever, is unable to look after them properly, after whatever racist pejorative you can fit in. Until relatively recently the British Museum subjected priceless objects to London's dirt and grime whilst in Athens they have a brand new state of the art museum. In Egypt during the anti-Mubarak demonstrations it was the protestors, not the police, that protected the Cairo museum from looters. Surely that is proof that they are worthy custodians of their own heritage.

I am conscious of the dangers of using anachronistic arguments to condemn the actions of past generations but the plain fact is these items are not ours. The rightful owners want them back. We all know that the Tories hate UNESCO but that is the only organisation we can use to return and ensure that these historical items are properly looked after. That is one of the reasons why it was set up and why Britain joined it. I know there are instances where a country has a genuine claim to a piece, for example and admittedly it is a bad example but it is the one people know, the Rosetta Stone. I know there is a really strong case for returning it to Egypt but it also has a certain amount of significance to Britain and France. In cases such as these let UNESCO supervise multinational ownership allowing rotational displays in each country. I imagine the tourist revenue generated in each country under such an arrangement surely makes economic sense.

Whilst it is more a case of doing the right thing for the wrong reason, mainly for one-upmanship rather than for advancing knowledge, Britain amongst other countries can take pride in the saving of historical items. It is now time to move on. It is time for Britain and other countries, and their museums, to right past wrongs. It is time to give historically and culturally important items back. Congress, support this motion, demolish this bastion of cultural snobbery, arrogance, and imperialism, and give other nations their history back. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ian. Do we have a seconder? Formally. Thank you very much.

*The motion was formally seconded.*

THE PRESIDENT: While Richard Ascough for the CEC is coming to the platform, could I inform Congress that I intend to take Motions 96, 97, 99 and 100, Employment Rights, which was carried over from Tuesday. Is that agreed? (*Agreed*) Thank you.

BRO. R. ASCOUGH (Regional Secretary, Southern Region): I feel a bit like somebody at a bus stop, you wait all conference to speak and two opportunities come along right after each other. Anyway, as a Congress last-time speaker we are supporting Composite 22 and Motion 274, each with a qualification, Motion 276 with a statement, and seeking referral for Motion 278.

Composite 22 asks for GMB to urge government to make representations for the release of political prisoners in Burma and we can work with the Burma Campaign



and support it through donations. However, we cannot condemn elections to be held in November 2010 for obvious reasons.

Motion 274 calls for a review of the UN Security Council. While we agree with the sentiment, realistically we do not have much influence to bring this about.

Turning to Motion 276, GMB is already doing much of what the Motion asks for. The union is represented on the Trade Union Advisory Council of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign by the Secretary of the branch that tabled the motion. Judging by past experience, he will undoubtedly continue vigorously to represent our interests.

With regard to Veolia, on April 27<sup>th</sup> GMB officials met with senior management of the company to express disapproval of their involvement with the Jerusalem light rail project. Veolia advised that they were withdrawing from it as soon as possible. We are, though, mindful that we have 2,000 members employed by Veolia across the UK so would support this motion with the statement that our approach needs to be balanced with a degree of prudence to protect the interests of our members.

We are seeking to refer Motion 278 on the return of historical artefacts because this is not a clear-cut matter. The UK is a signatory to the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the means of prohibiting and preventing the illicit import, export, and transfer of ownership of cultural property but it is not retroactive. Consequently, the example of the Elgin Marbles quoted in the motion is outside the jurisdiction of the convention. I would, though, just say as an aside I did visit Athens about three weeks ago and I did visit the new museum there, which is absolutely excellent and does rather defy the old British Museum argument that they did not have anywhere worthy to put it. The motion does not specify which museums it wants to work with UNESCO but even if it applies solely to UK museums it is calling for the return of artefacts without heed to the circumstances of their presence here.

Although I am not specifically responding about Colombia I just wanted to say very briefly that I did have the opportunity of visiting Colombia in 2007 and it does remain the most dangerous place in the world for trade unionists, and this is a very important motion.

In summary, Congress, please support Composite 22 with the qualification, 274 with the qualification, 276 with the statement, and agree to refer 278. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Richard. Can I ask Southern Region if they accept the qualification? *(Agreed)* Thank you. Can I ask Northern Region if you accept the qualification? *(Agreed)* Thank you. Can I ask London Region if you accept the statement? *(Agreed)* Thank you very much. Can I ask Yorkshire Region if you accept reference back? *(Agreed)* You do. Does Congress agree that? Thank you very much. In that case I will put 22, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, and 277 to the vote, all those in favour please show? Thank you and I thank Scotland for their help.

*Composite Motion 22 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 272 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 273 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 274 was CARRIED.*  
*Motion 275 was CARRIED.*  
*Motion 276 was CARRIED.*  
*Motion 277 was CARRIED.*  
*Motion 278 was REFERRED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I will be taking those others after Bert Schouwenburg, the International Officer, has spoken. Where are you, Bert? That's a £40 fine for you and if you are not down here in 20 seconds it will be £50.

### **ADDRESS TO CONGRESS BY BERT SCHOUWENBURG, GMB INTERNATIONAL OFFICER**

BRO. B. SCHOUWENBURG: Mary, thank you very much. I am speaking to the document you should have in your Congress wallets, which is a proposal for future joint action with our NGO partners, Banana Link. The objectives of the proposal are to provide a sustainable funding base for GMB international solidarity activities with trade unions in the Latin American Agricultural Sector, especially those in the banana and pineapple industries, and to enable branches to engage at a variety of levels in those activities. For ten years now GMB has worked within Banana Link's union-to-union programme building solidarity along the supply chain and supporting trade unions grouped within COLSIBA, the Spanish acronym for a confederation operating across several Latin American republics and developing a particularly close relationship with Costa Rican union, SITRAP.

Why should we be involved in international solidarity and why bananas? Haven't we got enough to do here? The fact of the matter is that we as trade unionists are fighting a veritable war against a pernicious capitalist system that puts profit before people, makes a virtue out of greed, and is exploiting working people the world over. On the front line of this war are workers and trade unions in plantation agriculture on the Continent of America and enduring appalling working conditions and poverty wages to supply our supermarkets with cheap food. Those supermarkets, Tesco, Asda, Sainsbury's, all of them without exception use their purchasing power to force down the price they pay for pineapples and bananas and make huge profits in the process.

Tesco, for example, makes a clear profit of £1m per week on the sale of bananas, most of which come from Latin America. The outgoing Chief Executive Officer, Terry Leahy, who by the way when Tesco opened stores in the United States firstly involved themselves in union-busting activities there, was paid over £4.5m last year in pay and bonuses, meanwhile in Costa Rica workers have seen their wages halved in real terms since the 1980s, their jobs outsourced to even lower paid contractors, and permanent positions replaced by casualisation and fixed-term contracts.

If that were not bad enough, some workers have paid the ultimate price. At the end of last month, on May 26<sup>th</sup>, Joel Hernandez Godoy, an executive member of Guatemalan trade union, SITRAVI, was intercepted, shot and killed, by an assassin on his way to work. The previous month, on April 11<sup>th</sup>, another SITRAVI official, Oscar Gonzales, was murdered, his body riddled by 35 bullets; and let's not forget a great friend of GMB, Carlos Arguedas. Carlos was a health, safety, and environment officer for the Costa Rican union, SITRAP, and he died on New Year's Eve at the age of 62 after an

illness that was almost certainly triggered by exposure to the pesticide nemagon, a chemical that had previously made him sterile and which has been responsible for the deaths of tens of thousands of workers on banana farms in America, Asia, and Africa. Disgracefully, multinational companies like Del Monte continue to use nemagon even after they have been told by the manufacturers of the chemical that it was too dangerous to deploy.

During a long career in the service of the labour Movement in Costa Rica, Carlos was arrested over 20 times, his only crime being that he was a trade union leader fighting for his members. Carlos had become a high profile environmentalist and campaigned on behalf of people whose communities and lives have been ruined by the explosive growth of pineapple plantations that has left water supplies contaminated, animals poisoned, and the forests destroyed. At the time of his death and without a hint of irony, the pineapple growers of Costa Rica had taken Carlos to court for bringing the industry into disrepute. Carlos Arguedas was known to several people in this hall and was a genuine working class hero.

When GMB branches have been asked to support Carlos's erstwhile colleagues they have responded positively. Over £3,000 was raised for Allan Hernandez, another SITRAP activist and Del Monte employee. Allan was a religious man. When he went to church one Sunday with his family, came back home and found that his house had been burnt down. Del Monte's offer of assistance was to sack him for his trade union activities. £1,000 was collected for Pablo Lopez, a Nicaraguan who was also sacked because of his recruitment activities for SITRAP on one plantation and since this report was written he has been sacked again, this time by Del Monte, and blacklisted as well. He will probably never be able to work in Costa Rica again and faces an uncertain future.

The branches' generosity is of course most welcome but what we need is a regular income stream, hence this proposal. The detailed proposals are contained in the paper and I am not going to go into them now but, in summary, all we are asking for is a minimum commitment from branches of £8.25 a month for our new solidarity fund. That does not mean, by the way, that branches cannot support other causes, of course not, but our joint endeavours with Banana Link have become a cornerstone of what we might call our foreign policy. This initiative is supported by the General Secretary and the senior management team of GMB. I would ask you to buy into it too. Either send an email to Jacqui Mackay at Banana Link, and you should have a smaller leaflet which has her details at the bottom, or sign up at the Banana Link stall which is in the exhibition area; alternatively, you can come and see us at the international fringe meeting at lunchtime.

In conclusion, comrades, I urge you to support this proposal to help us in our struggle for economic and social justice. I do not want to live in a world where trade unionists are killed for standing up for members' rights and where workers are treated like slaves. I am sure that you do not either. So, sign up and help our comrades on the front line in Latin America. Another world is possible. Let's play our part in creating it. Thank you for listening. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Does Congress agree to accept the recommendations? (*Agreed*)  
Thank you very much.

*The recommendations were ADOPTED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, before I call the next group of resolutions, I just have a couple of announcements to make. The Anti-Academies Alliance Conference 2011 is at TUC Congress House, Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> June, 10.30 to 4.00 p.m.

You should have picked up some Zoe's Place baby hospice leaflets. When you go back to your branches would you please take it to them and see if you can affiliate and send a donation. As you know, we have always supported Zoe's Place at this Congress. Thank you very much.

Would you please go to the stall for your disabled workers cooperative raffle and collect your prizes. You can still order products. The winning numbers will be on the screen and I can inform you that the York Disabled Workers Co-Op raised £1,472 on their raffle and have taken orders to be delivered of £2,000-plus. The CEC have decided we will make that £2,000 for the raffle. (*Applause*) Thank you.

## **EMPLOYMENT POLICY: RIGHTS AT WORK**

### **NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE MOTION 96**

#### **96. NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE**

This Congress notes that the National Minimum Wage has increasingly been seen, over the last five years, as a ceiling on wage rates rather than a floor and calls on the Coalition Government to ensure that there is a substantial increase in the National Minimum Wage so that the rate becomes a disincentive for those employers who fail to effectively reward their workers. Congress, also, calls on the Labour Party to commit itself to such a shift in policy as part of its policy review.

NORTH CUMBRIA GENERAL BRANCH  
*Northern Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. E. JEFFREY (Northern): Congress, the National Minimum Wage was one of the most important laws of the last Labour government. We know in the 1980s and 1990s after the Tories abolished wage councils there was a sweatshop culture in the UK. Workers, mainly female, worked for £1 an hour, sometimes less. Workers took several jobs just to make ends meet. The Tories topped up wages by family credit. The only people gaining out of that were the fat cat employers. The National Minimum Wage was meant to put a stop to that, to provide a floor for wage rates. Congress, that was great at the time but is now 13 years ago since the legislation came in. During those 13 years the rate has gone from £3.60 per hour for the main rate to £6.08 per hour coming into force in October. However, since 1998 we know that in workplaces up and down this country the minimum wage has become a ceiling, not a floor, in many workplaces. Look at Southern Cross. They are using the minimum wage to set pay rates and in the process ignoring that it is their failed business model that is the problem.

Congress, companies are using broad banding to start workers on the minimum wage and effectively it takes years to hit the top of the pay grade. It is worse under TUPE as employers seek to set different rates for new starters. Congress, the answer is a much higher National Minimum Wage. We want workers to be paid a proper national rate for the job where shareholders and top executives should not be the only winners. The Labour Party must commit to a much bigger National Minimum Wage. I move. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Elizabeth. Do we have a seconder? Formally. Thank you, worthy chairman. Ooh, Tommy! That is £40.

*The motion was formally seconded.*

## **BOGUS SELF-EMPLOYMENT MOTION 97**

### **97. BOGUS SELF-EMPLOYMENT**

This Congress welcomes the launch of the Daily Mirror's campaign, Gizza Proper Job, opposing false self-employment. Congress notes that, according to Professor Mark Harvey of Essex University, false self-employment in the construction industry alone costs the Exchequer at least £1.7 billion per annum. Congress further notes that workers forced to operate as falsely self-employed are denied even the most basic employment rights such as holiday pay, can be sacked at a moment's notice, do not have pensions and are denied other benefits. Congress considers that false self-employment also leads to an increase in workplace fatalities and accidents and that such exploitation of workers should not be tolerated in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Congress calls on the Coalition government to introduce measures to abolish false self-employment and ensure that all affected workers receive full employment.

SOUTH SHIELDS NO 2 BRANCH  
*Northern Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. G. MANUEL (Northern): Congress, although this was discussed at last year's Congress, it is still going on and it is getting worse. Bogus self-employment, as we all know, is widespread across all industrial sectors and in every region of the UK. Surveys in the construction industry alone revealed that almost 50% of workers in the construction industry were effectively on bogus self-employment schemes. Also, these estimated that bogus self-employment in construction alone was costing the Exchequer over £5bn every year in lost taxes. Now, that is equivalent to 20 brand new hospitals.

Congress, as the Tory-led Coalition Government set about scrapping the deficit in this parliament and a deficit in communities across the UK, I wonder if they will give any consideration to outlawing bogus employment. Oh, no, Congress, we all know that what they are doing is cutting benefits, cutting public sector pay, and they are destroying public sector pensions. It is the poor who are paying for the bankers' recession whilst their mates, the so-called captains of industry, will be allowed to continue to avoid tax and National Insurance and will be allowed to continue to exploit working people.

On holiday pay, sick pay, redundancy rights, you can bet bosses get the lot but you will enjoy none of these if you are the countless people unfairly classified as self-employed. Enough is enough. It is time to stop exploitation and tax avoidance. It is time to regulate properly self-employment. Congress, I urge you to support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. All is forgiven, Graham. Is there a seconder? Formally. Thank you, Billy.

*The motion was formally seconded.*

## **ARMISTICE DAY – A PUBLIC HOLIDAY MOTION 99**

### **99. ARMISTICE DAY – A PUBLIC HOLIDAY**

This Congress calls for the recognition of the 11<sup>th</sup> November each year to be declared a public holiday.

We call upon the CEC to campaign on behalf of our members, with whichever Government in power, that by the 11<sup>th</sup> hour of the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month 2018, this demand for the rightful recognition of dignity is recognized throughout this land, in celebration of, not merely a centenary, but of the right of all free workers to take the time out with pay to remember that we are only here because of the selfless sacrifice of so many others.

We call therefore for the time to remember.

SCUNTHORPE DISTRICT & APEX BRANCH  
*Midland & East Coast Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. K. GUEST (Midland & East Coast): President, many delegates at Brighton this week will be aware of the Conservative Government's fondness for a Trafalgar Day as means of creating a public holiday. This Congress also believes that the need exists for a public holiday for our overworked and underpaid GMB workers but believes that a more appropriate reason, time and date, will in future serve to enable all to remember the many and not just Horatio Nelson, covered as he has been for most of the years since his statue was erected with pigeon droppings.

President, as this motion suggests in its printing within this week's agenda, this country will in a few years' time celebrate the centenary of the Armistice which brought to an end the First World War. Congress, my granddad, who recently died at 92 years old – *(emotionally upset)* - was plagued by nightmares all his life. My granddad received seven medals during World War Two. He was one of the first to enter Belsen to bury the poor souls, men, women, and children, into communal graves. My granddad told how the smell was so bad he had to soak a scarf in petrol to put over his face. My granddad, along with all other war heroes of any generation should get the respect they deserve.

Congress therefore believes that the time is right to join other countries in Europe in remembering those who sacrificed their lives by their valour so that we can live in peace today. We believe that the need exists for the recognition of the importance of

11<sup>th</sup> November, whichever day it falls upon, as a public holiday in remembrance so that we can emphasise to future generations by education that we are only living today the lives that we lead by the sacrifice of others, not therefore one world war but two, not just two world wars, but more recent conflicts in the Falkland Islands, Iraq, and now Afghanistan where we have lost too many young lives in the last few weeks.

When the trumpet sounds on the 11<sup>th</sup> hour of the 11th day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month at the Centenary in 2018 GMB members, young and old, must have a legal recognition for a time to remember. Sorry. (*Emotionally upset*) Congress, the Midland & East Coast Region ask you to see it in your hearts to remember as well by voting for Motion 99. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Karen, and do not ever apologise. (*Standing ovation*) Thank you, Karen, very well done. Is there a seconder?

SIS. C. CLARKSON (Midland & East Coast): Congress, the need exists for a moving day within the calendar year in emphasis of the sheer importance to us all of 11<sup>th</sup> November. No public holiday currently exists between August Bank Holiday and Christmas as the days go shorter and our members get less time off than practically every other member state in Europe. If we are to continue to remember and to educate future generations, then the GMB must signify our demands made here in Brighton this week to whichever government. In the months and years to come, as already stated by the mover of this motion, when the Centenary is reached the rights of the living and those who live after us must be enshrined in law, in stone, in granite, as hard and safe as the Cenotaph erected in memory all those years ago, lest we ever forget that we and those who follow us must never be allowed to forget, nor no government be allowed to water down off Cape Trafalgar our rights of remembrance. They are already doing enough damage; now let's have no more of it. Vote for Motion 99. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Carol.

## **A LIVING WAGE FOR ALL MOTION 100**

### **100. A LIVING WAGE FOR ALL**

This Congress moves that the minimum wage needs to be replaced by a living wage. Every worker should earn enough to provide their family with the essentials of life and, therefore, be lifted out of working poverty.

The minimum wage is simply not enough to live on and is not a fair reward for work. What is urgently needed is a living wage for all.

EUROTEC BRANCH  
Midland & East Coast Region

(*Carried*)

BRO. M. SHORT (Midland & East Coast Region): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) President, Congress, this Congress moves that the minimum wage must be replaced by a living wage that is index-linked. Every worker should earn enough to provide for families, dependants, and the essentials of life and not fall

into the poverty trap. He or she should not have to worry about the price of electric, gas, food, increases in VAT, also rent and mortgage repayments. All they are asking for is a living wage for all workers. Let's have it index-linked to the Members of Parliament, that way we will always get an increase. All we want is a living wage. Please support this. I hope that was okay. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Miles. Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? A seconder, sorry, I am going ahead of myself. Ah, I wouldn't have done that to you for the world.

SIS. L. PETERS (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, a living wage is not something one should have to ask for. It is our right to be able to provide for our families and pay bills. It is the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year for the Living Wage Campaign. This campaign is a coalition of unions, investors, philanthropists, and religious leaders. They say workers should be paid a minimum of £7.20 an hour outside London and £7.85 within the capital. On 1<sup>st</sup> October, the minimum wage will go up to £6.08 an hour. This is still a sum £2,200 a year less than the Living Wage Campaign consider a fair minimum. The employers and the bankers demand their inflated salaries and their big fat bonuses and look at the mess they got us into, and we the taxpayers are paying for that with the loss of our jobs and degradation of our standard of living. As it is, the rich aim to send their children to university because they can but the workers cannot afford the tuition fees. The rich continue to be the ruling class at the expense of the poor who are still not able to compete in our so-called fair world, or fair society. The class divide remains as wide today as it was in Victorian times but this is the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the well off cannot expect to have their lifestyle subsidised by those they consider menial. We do the work and without us this country would grind to a halt. We are working class and that is something to be proud of. It is high time that people were paid a living wage. Please support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Lone. Lone, I enjoyed your company on 26<sup>th</sup> March. Any speakers wish to come in on the debate?

BRO. D. HENRY (North West & Irish): Having been going for the last 35 years to Europe, Armistice Day should be recognised and never forgotten. We have the most decorated soldier in Liverpool, with 2VCs and the Military Cross; that is the most decorated soldier in the First World War. If you have been over there, it is a national holiday, 11<sup>th</sup> November, so why the hell can't we have it? You have to see the mass slaughter that went on, 99,000, 60,000, that is the sort of thing and that is why we want to prevent war. When I was a child the buses stopped, or the trams stopped, and we all stood in school at 11 o'clock. It should be absolutely engrained in our young members now. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I call Paul Wheatley for the CEC on Motions 96 and 99. Paul.

BRO. P. WHEATLEY (CEC, Manufacturing): President, Congress, the CEC is supporting both these motions with minor qualifications. On Motion 96 longstanding GMB policy is that the National Minimum Wage is £7.00. We give annual evidence to the Low Pay Commission and press them to increase the rate of a living wage.



This year the Commission recommended an increase of 2.5% and the Coalition Government actually agreed that £6.08 is still short of a living wage, and we continue to campaign for improvements. The qualification that we will also be pressing is that the Labour Party commits itself to a National Living Wage in their policy review.

On Motion 99, Armistice Day, GMB policy is to campaign for additional bank holidays. This motion is very relevant because the Department of Culture, Media & Sports recently launched a pre-consultation on bank holidays. That closes this week, on 9<sup>th</sup> June. May Day is a traditional British celebration dating back centuries but the Tories hate its association with International Labour Day and are asking the public to suggest alternative dates for bank holidays. They are suggesting replacing May Day with national days, St. George's Day in England, St. David's Day in Wales, or perhaps a Trafalgar Day in October. A Tory minister himself said, there is strong support for an extra public holiday as the UK has the stingiest allocation in Europe. Our response will be to stop tinkering. We will not accept any new bank holidays at the expense of existing ones. If William and Kate can have a bank holiday, why not working men and women, but it must be a paid holiday. We will put forward powerful argument for Armistice Day in our response and may we suggest that our members get onto the Department of Culture, Media & Sport web page and give them your views on eradicating May Day. Congress, please support Motions 96 and 99 with those qualifications. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Does Northern Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Does Midland Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you very much. Can I now put 96, 97, 99, and 100, to the vote, please? All those in favour? Anyone against? They are carried.

*Motion 96 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 97 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 99 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 100 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, can we take the next item? It is important to some members in our union that this individual gets away, the reason being that George, as CEC representative, has to get back to Brent to try and stop the closure in the Scrutiny Committee tonight of children's mental homes in Brent, and the elderly, and also to ask the council what their responsibility is for the Southern Cross Homes that we have in our borough. That is the reason I am asking you to be patient on this. Can I ask the movers of Motions 59, 60, 61, and 62 to please come forward?

## **EMPLOYMENT POLICY: HEALTH, SAFETY & ENVIRONMENT**

### **WORK RELATED MENTAL ILLNESS**

#### **MOTION 59**

##### **59. WORK RELATED MENTAL ILLNESS**

This Congress views with concern the increased levels of mental illness amongst the UK's workers. Work related psychiatric illness has become a hugely serious chronic problem affecting our members.

Congress instructs the CEC to campaign on behalf of GMB members for better awareness and safeguards in the workplace.

MANSFIELD CENTRAL BRANCH  
*Midland & East Coast Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. D. JOBSON (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, mental illness in the workplace is on the increase and it has been for many years. More and more of the UK workers are suffering from work related stress and a range of mental and physical conditions that are associated with it. The mental symptoms of stress can range from sleeplessness and listlessness to clinical depression and suicide. The physical effects can range from appetite loss through to heart damage and stroke. HSE research from back in 2001 discovered that approximately five million workers in the UK experience stress with half a million who felt it had made them ill. In 2003 after a survey by the Samaritans they stated, people's jobs are the single biggest cause of stress. Eight to 10 years on from these reports the situation has not improved and it looks set to get worse. A recent poll of working adults found that more than one in four workers is more stressed now than they had been a year ago. A workplace with a lot of stress may suffer from high absenteeism, higher risk of accidents, industrial relations problems, reduced motivation, and a high labour turnover. I am sure many of us in this hall today feel ill-equipped to adequately support our members other than with sympathy and using the mostly poor and draconian policies that are available. I want us all to help remove the leprosy type stigma attached to mental illness by campaigning and tackling the workplaces, just as we do on any health and safety issue. Believe me, this is the modern workplace cancer. The debilitating effects cause life-changing conditions not just for the sufferer but for everyone connected to them. "Stress is nothing more than a socially acceptable form of mental illness," that is a quote by Richard Carlson, a psychotherapist. I say stress should not be seen as acceptable, it is a serious illness which if not dealt with develops into an acute problem that can affect any worker in the UK. We call upon the CEC to help us campaign on behalf of our members for increased awareness and safeguards in every workplace. I move. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David. Secunder?

BRO. D. BREARLEY (Midland & East Coast): Madam President, Congress, although mental health problems account for the second biggest cause of sickness and absence at work, awareness and understanding of mental health problems is extremely poor and most senior managers do not believe mental health problems affect their workforce. Mental health remains a taboo subject and employees often choose to put on a brave face at work concealing their distress. This mixture of denial and bad management means that mental health problems cost business an estimated £26bn a year which with better mental health and wellbeing interventions could be slashed by a third saving the industry up to £8bn a year. MIND's Chief Executive, Paul Farmer, said: "77% of employers surveyed estimated that 5% or fewer of their employees would have mental health problems in their entire lifetime. Only one in six were able to pinpoint the range of its impact. Work related stress is costing us £26bn to 70 million lost working days per year. Increased violence from victims was always towards family members or close associates. The chance of a person with mental health problems attacking a complete stranger is very low. There are plenty of facts

and figures in the coverage of the financial crisis but they pay little attention to the cost of the mental health and wellbeing that financial difficulties generate. The EU March 2011 Conference promoting health and wellbeing in workplaces concluded: “Promotion of a European Community strategy on safety and health in the workplace with an increased focus on health promotion and the specific area of mental health in the workplace is a priority.” I second the motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much.

**MEDICAL FIT NOTE  
MOTION 60**

**60. MEDICAL FIT NOTE**

This Congress believes the implementation of the ‘Fit Note’ enabling some of our members to return to work on ‘light duties’ appears to be ignored by some managers who then try and dismiss our members on the grounds of incapability. At a regional level there is an increase in the number of employers targeting employees off on long term sickness, to dismiss rather than consider reasonable adjustments either, on a short or long term basis. Congress is of the view that this is as a direct link to the budget cuts and employers looking at ways of cutting redundancy costs.

Congress believes this information should be collated on a national level to name and shame those employers who are dismissing staff in this manner.

MID GLAMORGAN C&T BRANCH  
*South Western Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. K. JENKINS (South Western): President, Congress, the statement of fitness for work, the fit note, came into effect on April 6<sup>th</sup> 2010. The fit note replaces the sick note, also known as the medical certificate or doctors’ note. The difference with the fit note is that the GP can advise of ways to help you to return to work. There are tick boxes for a number of suggestions: a phased return on a part-time basis, a temporary alteration to working hours, performing different duties, or receiving assistance to do your job, for example, and avoid heavy lifting if you have back pain. Therefore, the purpose of the fit note is for you and your employer to agree on how you can return to your job, what support you will receive, and how long the support will last. This support makes a great deal of sense so why are some of our members finding themselves being put through a capability procedure and facing dismissal when the GP is proposing reasonable adjustments.

My colleague yesterday gave an example of how individuals with stress-related illness are being treated but the region has other examples where workers are being given first and second level sanctions and dismissal threats following sickness or injury. These threats can quickly become a reality. Many longstanding employees with good previous sickness records cannot understand why they have been subjected to a number of stressful meetings with HR and management, this trauma being further compounded by the threat of losing their livelihood. A number of councils, but there could be other employers, see fit notes as a quick fix to sickness levels rather than an opportunity to encourage a worker to remain in paid employment. Therefore, this Congress calls on the CEC to set up a national database to record instances of abuse

of fit notes. This would not only highlight the extent of the problem but the information captured could be used to name and shame employers guilty of such deplorable conduct. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Secunder? Formally. Thank you very much.

*The motion was formally seconded.*

## **COMPULSORY TRAFFIC LIGHT FOOD LABELLING MOTION 61**

### **61. COMPULSORY TRAFFIC LIGHT FOOD LABELLING**

This Congress is concerned about the high levels of fat, sugar and salt that continue to be used by the food processing industry, and of the resultant increases in dietary related disease and rising levels of obesity. Congress calls on the European Parliament to make front of pack traffic light signpost labelling compulsory on all processed food packaging.

Studies show that consumers find the current food labelling systems confusing, and favours the introduction of standardised labelling to assist them in choosing foods that are of the healthier options.

Congress calls on the European Parliament and UK Government to reject intense lobbying from the food industry and to accept that the current voluntary code of practice is failing to protect the health of consumers and is putting avoidable burdens on scarce NHS resources.

HULL FOOD & GENERAL BRANCH  
*Midland & East Coast Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. T. OWEN (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, this Congress is concerned about high levels of fat, sugar, and salt that continues to be used by the food processing industry resulting in increases in dietary related diseases and rising levels of obesity. Studies show that current food labelling systems are confusing and favour the introduction of a standardised labelling format allowing the consumer to make an informed choice. Food manufacturers spend millions on designing packaging and promoting their products but their only objective is to glamorise the product and make it more appealing to the consumer. On the other hand, packaging for tobacco products is designed to highlight the dangers of its contents and not to promote it and make it more appealing to the consumer. The same goes for the alcohol industry, as I can speak from experience and probably most of you can, in their vain attempt to promote responsible and moderate consumption, so why not the food industry.

I have heard over the last couple of days how important it is we tackle obesity and other related dietary diseases to reduce the burden on an embattled NHS. Congress calls upon the European and UK parliaments to reject lobbying from the food industry. The voluntary code of practice is failing to protect the consumer's health and is not allowing them to make a more informed choice. I move. *(Applause)*

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

SIS. S. ORTEGA (Midland & East Coast): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) Thank you. President, Congress, simplification of food labelling with traffic lights makes understanding easier for everyone, especially those who may have limitations with the English language in our multicultural society. It would also make it easier for people with learning disabilities or the elderly with failing sight to more easily identify healthy food. Strokes, heart disease, diabetes, high cholesterol and blood pressure, and even some cancers may be attributed in part to poor diet. Poor diet kills approximately 70,000 people every year. Poor diet costs the economy £10bn, £7.7bn of which is for NHS treatment. Obesity is also a major health concern often resulting in the now commonplace stomach stapling operations for obese patients, which are very costly, and any savings made to the NHS with reduction to the needs of this procedure could well benefit other patients on operation waiting lists. Educating people towards a greater awareness of healthy eating with the aim of reducing obesity and other health issues is vital. We therefore need a clearer, easier to understand food labelling system and if traffic light food labelling helps in any way towards achieving improved health, then this system of labelling should be made compulsory. I therefore ask Congress to support this motion. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Shona.

## **FREE CANCER SCREENING FOR ALL MOTION 62**

### **62. FREE CANCER SCREENING FOR ALL**

This Congress calls for this Government to make available free cancer screening for all. The GMB calls on this Government to make funding available for a programme to be put in place for early detection on all cancers.

STOCKTON NO 3 ENGINEERING BRANCH  
*Northern Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. P. SAWDON (Northern): Congress, the base of any cancer screening is simply to look for the cancer before the person has any symptoms. I know that the treatment of this dreadful disease has improved over time. However, there is no silver bullet in terms of an overall cure that has yet to be found. Each cancer can be treated in a different way and the life expectancy and the survival rate are improving but more needs to be done. Free cancer screening for all would help in our aim to help prevent the onset of the disease in the first place. There are different kinds of screening tests. It is recognised by experts that screening tests have risk and some can cause serious problems. In some cases there are false test results which lead to further stress and anxiety. Congress, it is a fact that finding some cancers early will help the survival rates and many types of cancer recoveries depend on the stage of diagnosis. The number of deaths from cancer is low today and this could be due to screening tests and better treatment. I recognise that screening tests must be effective, safe, and tolerable and I recognise that there has to be at least low rates of false results. Free cancer screening across the population would be a major policy commitment. However, the need to improve this country's treatment of this disease is a price worth paying and an opportunity that we cannot afford to ignore. Please support. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Seconder? Formally. Thank you, Bill.

*The motion was formally seconded.*

THE PRESIDENT: Anyone wish to come in on the debate?

BRO. P. BRESLIN (GMB Scotland): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) This is another example of NHS management abusing our occupational health policies. I have a friend and a long-time member who two years ago contracted cancer of the bladder. He fought it and I am glad to say he won the fight. Back then he had the support and help from occupational health, with counselling and structured back-to-work help. Sadly, he is undergoing further tests and investigations but occupational health has now changed. He has been called in for attendance meetings with the threat of disciplinary action. At the meeting when management were challenged about disciplinary action they said unfortunate wording but insisted he contact occupational health for a consultation by phone. This, we are told, is for management to formalise and record their help. Our member has an oncology surgeon, his own GP is supporting this, so what possible good can a telephone call do for him? When HR management were challenged they made it clear that if he declined he would still be referred. Where has the help, support, and understanding gone for our ill and vulnerable workers? The truth is NHS management will try and get rid of him through their unfit for work policies. Occupational health policy was once a great tool for getting the sick and vulnerable back in full-time and useful work. It is now a large weapon used by the NHS and the HR management to kill off the sick and vulnerable as a cost-cutting exercise. We must stop this now and help our workers back to a working environment and not an unemployed one. The NHS is supposed to help the sick and vulnerable, not penalise them. This is just the start. I urge Congress to act now and support Motion 60. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Pat. Well done. Dott, very short.

SIS. D. PETERSON (London): I do not know the number but it is the fit note thing! If you want to name and shame you can put Veolia at the top of your list. The doctors say they can come back on light duties, they say they do not have them; they put them back on the sick, and then they have them for sick review, and most of these are for industrial injuries; and then they get rid of them. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dott. I call George Fraser, CEC, on Motion 60 and 62. George.

BRO. G. FRASER (CEC, Public Services): I am speaking to Motions 60 and 62, and I am grateful for your patience in letting me get away this afternoon. President, Congress, the CEC is supporting Motion 60 with a qualification and Motion 62 also with a qualification. With regard to Motion 60 the CEC recognises that the fit note is not understood by many employers and many doctors. It is a source of great frustration for many GMB members and stewards. It was designed to reduce sickness absence in the UK but has in fact increased the number of days lost to sickness. Statistics show that two-thirds of employers do not think the fit note has been beneficial. The reason many doctors do not understand the fit note is quite simply

down to a lack of explanation and training. Congress, the CEC supports the motion but with the qualification that it would be impractical to collect information from every employer with GMB membership due to the sheer number of employers and members involved. The CEC does, however, support a more general campaign aimed at ensuring that fit notes are correctly understood by doctors and employers and also correctly implemented.

Moving to Motion 62, the CEC supports the principle of universal access to free screening programmes to prevent cancers or ensure early diagnosis and treatment. It is a long-established principle that prevention is better than cure. The cancer screening programmes of England are nationally coordinated and provide breast, cervical, and bowel cancer screening. However, colleagues, in the current political climate even with the recent U-turn on cancer networks it is unlikely, if not impossible, that we could persuade this Government to expand screening given its agenda to destroy the NHS. Any expansion of one service would be to the detriment of others. Therefore, colleagues, the qualification is for the GMB to lobby for safeguards on existing screening and an expansion of services where possible, but not for universal screening at this time. Congress, please support Motions 60 and 62 with these qualifications. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: George, thank you very much and good luck this afternoon. Does South Western Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you, Sheila. Northern Region, do you accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you very much. Can I put 59, 60, 61, and 62 to the vote? All those in favour please show? Anyone against? They are carried.

*Motion 59 was CARRIED.*  
*Motion 60 was CARRIED.*  
*Motion 61 was CARRIED.*  
*Motion 62 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, thank you ever so much for your patience. Could you be back in your seats at 10 past 2, sharp. Thank you.

*Congress adjourned.*

## **AFTERNOON SESSION**

*Congress reassembled at 2.10 p.m.*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you. It is 10 past 2. First of all, could I please extend a message of solidarity to Oakley Hall workers, who are on stand 21 in the exhibition area? Please support them.

We go straight into item 1, which is the Employment Policy, Health, Safety & Environment.

## **EMPLOYMENT POLICY: HEALTH, SAFETY & ENVIRONMENT**

### **ENVIRONMENT**

#### **MOTION 63**

##### **63. ENVIRONMENT**

This Congress calls upon the CEC to set up a working party with a view to make better use of green technology, this will reduce the Union's impact on the environment by significantly reducing its carbon footprint.

Plans for improvements should be submitted to all GMB regions by the end of 2012. Improvements should be measurable, audited and published annually.

LEEDS WORKS DEPARTMENT BRANCH  
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire *Region*

*(Referred)*

BRO. C. GILL (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): We are all aware of the threats facing the world because of carelessness in the past. We have witnessed the destruction of our natural species and habitats but we have a real opportunity to avoid the worst excesses of climate change. We need to think about our children's future and their children, too. This motion calls upon the CEC to set up a working party in order to make full use of green technology in order to reduce the GMB's impact on the environment. Okay, we are a powerful organisation but we are not the largest employer and some people may say that whatever we do, if it is done in isolation, will not make any difference. We are not in isolation. Many public and private organisations have national green policies in place governing all their workplaces and employees, and it is surprising that the GMB does not have a national policy in place. I do not believe that I will have any problem convincing you, colleagues, of the need to change, to think environmentally friendly, to think green, to make the world a safer place for new generations and to ensure that we have a policy in place that we can be proud of.

This motion calls on the working party to put in place plans for improvements to be submitted to the GMB regions by the end of 2012. This is a realistic time-scale because we want this to be a realistic working policy adopted by all areas of the union in order to ensure that we do make the necessary changes and do not just pay lip service. We call on the CEC to measure, audit, and publish their results on an annual basis. If you support this motion, the working party will be charged with formulating green policies that will reduce our organisation's carbon footprint. I do not want to second-guess what these policies will be but there are a number of obvious areas for improvement. More than half of the carbon emissions are work-related so there is plenty to change in the way we work. By promoting employee awareness through engagement and training, and the formation of a joint working environmental committee, these initiatives can have a significant benefit for our organisation.

Simple everyday best practice: switch off the computer equipment when it is not in use. If your workplace is too hot, turn down the heating system, do not open the windows. Make sure that radiators are not obstructed when it is cold. Check that lighting is necessary in the daytime. The TUC state that 80% of the UK's lighting energy is used at work. Adopt a green travel plan. Recycle, re-use, and reduce our



waste. You can even reduce the amount of water that we use in the workplace through simple adjustments to taps and toilets. Do we print paper unnecessarily? How often do we read an email and then print it off for no good reason apart from the habit of a hard copy; meanwhile, another tree hits the forest floor.

Congress, if you adopt this motion the working party will fill in all the details in relation to the points that I have referred to allowing the GMB to make its contribution to a greener world. Colleagues, Congress, it is your family's future. Please support the motion. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: A seconder? Formally. Thank you.

*The motion was formally seconded.*

**WASTE RECYCLING  
COMPOSITE 2  
(Covering Motions 64, 65, 66)**

- 64. PROGRESS IN RECYCLING (*Midland & East Coast Region*)
- 65. WASTE RECYCLING (*Northern Region*)
- 66. PLASTIC WASTE RECYCLING (*Northern Region*)

**WASTE RECYCLING**

This Congress recognises the progress made in the recycling of re-usable materials in recent years, but now further understands that it is the time to evolve from simple avoidance of the landfill tax to the effective use of these valuable materials.

This Congress calls for a much greater focus on waste recycling within the business community, so that raw materials are not wasted, businesses realise their corporate social responsibilities, the green economy is enhanced and that new manufacturing jobs are created within the UK.

This Congress calls on the Government to enable the creation of more waste recycling facilities within the UK for recycling plastics.

- Congress believes:
- it to be a scandal that in large parts of the UK it is cheaper for councils and businesses to send plastic recyclates to Germany and China, to be made into recyclable commodities, than adopt more plastic recycling facilities within the UK.
- that this policy would increase business demand, enable more plastic recycling and give a much needed boost to skills and employment.

*(Carried)*

BRO. T. HUNTER (Northern): Congress, latest European Union figures show us that our recycling rate is lower than all our European counterparts. It also shows that in spite of lower prices the majority that is sent to recycle by both households and businesses is recycled. According to some within the recycling industry markets are open and recycling is still worth a considerable amount to the UK economy. Figures show that recycling efforts have reduced emissions of carbon dioxide by 30 million

tonnes over the last five years. This is equivalent to removing one-third of all cars from the roads for a year.

Congress, we must remember that, on the one hand, we have members employed in the manufacture and distribution of packaging materials but we also want to ensure that in the recycling industry sustainable jobs are created. In the UK businesses have always lagged behind households in waste recycling. If households can sort recycling at source, so can businesses. Congress, it is a sad reflection on the UK that until recently waste plastics were shipped to Germany or China, made into recycled goods, and then sold back to the UK. Talk about this country putting its head in the sand and losing an opportunity to create demand and work. Congress, the plastics 20/20 tolerance was founded in 2009 by the UK plastics industry with the aim of engaging the public in a nationwide debate about the use, re-use, and disposal of plastics. It is a relatively impotent industry and needs help. Congress, recycling complements and not replaces weekly bin collections, can provide jobs, cost reduction, and a greener planet. It will help our members, our communities, and our environment. It should be grasped by government and industry alike. Please support. I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tom. Midland Region?

BRO. M. WRIGHT (Midland & East Coast): Congress, Mick Wright, commonly known as George Clooney and his twin but he now seems to have changed into Brad Pitt, so we cannot do a double act.

You will remember me from Plymouth when I came up here with my shopping bag, which I still have and my wife still sends me out with it, and also the oak tree. I told you from little acorns you get big oaks, and it is growing; I have it in my back yard and it is growing. Let's get down to something more serious, the waste that is being created in this country. It costs for ten tonne of waste £540 to go into landfill plus all the transportation bills, and most of this could be recycled. It also costs 40% less to recycle plastic and glass than it does to use new materials to get the same thing. We must get the political parties to respond and to act more aggressively, and that we set up more recycling plants in this country rather than send it abroad. Also, manufacturers and stores that use materials that are not recyclable should be fined for it. We get stuff coming from China, from all over the world, but mainly now we get most of our things from China, and to get rid of it there should be a tariff on the material that is not recyclable. We must recycle more materials and this will also help create more jobs for people in this country. Please support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Motion 67, Northern.

## **COASTAL AREAS MOTION 67**

### **67. COASTAL AREAS**

This Congress calls on the Government to ensure that all coastal areas of the UK are equipped with the necessary flood and coastal protection mechanisms to guard against erosion and other devastating aspects of climate change in the UK.

*(Carried)*

BRO. J. KANE (Northern): As a trade unionist before I move this motion, and at the risk of wrath from my union, I do not think I made myself quite clear this morning. I want this union of ours, the GMB, to run an awareness campaign on Parkinson's disease. It is now linked to chemicals and pesticides. I would like to ask the members if they agree with me. We can use the voting system. Then I will move on to that. It means a lot to me, personally. I have done a lot for this union and I think we have a lot of people with this condition, a lot of people that are going down that road. We will discuss that later. I have put the proposal, honourable President.

Moving back to the motion, lots of disasters in the UK and around the world have highlighted the lack of adequate defences and have led to misery for millions, recognising the fact that the UK is an island with over 1,300 miles of coast. In recent years we have had to deal with instances of flooding that have torn communities apart; water, electricity, food supplies, have all gone down. Cumbria has suffered more than most. We had floods in Carlisle, Cocklemouth, Workington, with bridges down. We had people die: a police officer died on the bridge. Our Labour government commissioned a special report by a renowned engineer, Sir Michael Pitt. His quote at the time was that the flood defence should be given the same priority as terrorism or as a flu pandemic. He also stated that all local authorities in the UK should map out their coastal defences. We know that work is under way and I know now that scientists are saying it is not to do with global warming, but there is a strong feeling that it is to do with global warming; there is a strong feeling of some undercurrent.

The Environment Council has responsibility for operating and maintaining the coastal defences in the UK, £20bn worth of defences in the UK. They reckon and estimate to save £3.5m a year in property damage and factory damage that could be eroded, lost to flood damage. However, this Conservative Government are cutting the cost of it. That is going to leave many families with fears that there are no defences, coast erosion is going to occur, and flooding, we are going to lose properties, and we are going to lose businesses. What we want is a commitment to spend more money on coastal defences to protect our families and our communities. I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Seconder? Formally. Thank you very much.

*The motion was formally seconded.*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I now call on Lorraine Parker, CEC, to speak on Motions 63 and 67, please.

SIS. L. PARKER (CEC, Public Services): Vice President, Congress, the CEC is supporting Motion 67 but with the qualification that I am about to give. Congress, climate change and the erosion of Britain's coastlines are issues of great concern to the CEC. Currently, 17% of the UK coastline is suffering from erosion, a figure that is increasing as climate change continues to take effect. The impact on communities, businesses, food supply, and tourists, from coastal erosion is severe. Damages caused

by coastal erosion currently costs the UK £15m a year, a figure projected to rise to £125m per year by 2018. Legal responsibility for the UK coastline is shared between DEFRA and coastal councils. Previously policy had been centred round the general principles of protection and defence but since 2009 DEFRA has adopted principles of risk management and adaptation. In practice this means that resources are directed where the greatest need is for deployment. In England this is 30% of the coastline, 23% in Wales, 20% in Northern Ireland, and 12% in Scotland. Congress, the CEC supports the principle of total coastal protection but we lack the knowledge and expertise within the GMB to assess what is the best method of protecting the UK coastline. The qualification is, therefore, that the CEC will seek expert opinion as to whether such a policy is desirable and sustainable. This must be seen to be good in practice before the beginning of any campaigning activity. Congress, the CEC asks you to support the motion with the qualification I have just outlined.

THE VICE PRESIDENT; Does Yorkshire Region accept reference back on Motion 63? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Northern Region, do you accept qualification for Motion 67? (*Agreed*) Thank you. I will now call on the vote for Motion 63, Composite 2, and Motion 67. The CEC is now supporting all these three motions. All those in favour please show? Any against? They are carried.

*Motion 63 was REFERRED.*

*Composite 2 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 67 was CARRIED.*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I will now go on to Emergency Motion, 5, Proposed Incinerator for Kings Lynn, under the name of the London Region.

### **PROPOSED INCINERATOR FOR KINGS LYNN EMERGENCY MOTION 5**

#### **CONGRESS 2011**

#### **EMERGENCY MOTION NO. 5**

#### **PROPOSED INCINERATOR FOR KING'S LYNN**

CONGRESS NOTES THAT IN A LEAKED DECISION IN MID FEBRUARY 2011, NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL IGNORED THE WISHES OF 93% OF THE PUBLIC WHO REJECTED THE PROPOSAL TO BUILD AN INCINERATOR IN KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK.

CONGRESS DEPLORES THE CONTEMPTUOUS WAY IN WHICH NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL HAVE TREATED THE WISHES OF THE RESIDENTS OF KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK WHICH IS NOT ONLY UNDEMOCRATIC BUT FURTHER HIGHLIGHTS THE HYPOCRISY OF CAMERON'S BIG SOCIETY AND CLAIMS TO LOCALISM, PROVES YET AGAIN THAT WE ARE NOT "ALL IN THIS TOGETHER".

CONGRESS WE ASK THE CEC TO SUPPORT THIS MOTION AND ENLIST THE SUPPORT OF ALL LABOUR MP'S ESPECIALLY SPONSORED MP'S TO

BRING PRESSURE ON THE GOVERNMENT THROUGH VARIOUS COMMITTEES SUCH AS THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE, TO HONOUR THE DECISION OF THE ELECTORATE OF KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK TO INVESTIGATE THE POTENTIAL MISAPPROPRIATION OF PUBLIC MONEY FOR THE REFERENDUM AND TO INVESTIGATE THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ON THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.

**KING'S LYNN NO. 1 BRANCH**  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. A. LAW (London): This Emergency Motion is against the building of an incinerator in Kings Lynn, Norfolk. According to the Independent in December 2010 Kings Lynn in Norfolk is one of 80 incinerator plants planned to be built across the UK. The incinerators are very attractive to councils for two reasons.

Firstly, in 1996 the Government introduced a landfill tax. It was then in the 2007 budget that the landfill tax was sharply increased. By 2010/11 it had been increased to £48 per tonne. By 2014 and 2015 it is planned to be £72 per tonne. Secondly, in 2007 the Treasury set aside £26bn for PFI credits for waste treatment projects. PFI is short for Private Finance Initiatives. Private companies build waste treatment projects such as incinerators and then charge the councils for burning the waste.

The incinerator industry often promotes incinerators having zero emissions. The truth is that all incinerators contaminate. The most advanced incinerators emit thousands of pollutants and contaminate our air, soil, and waters. Identified emissions include heavy metals and volatile organic compounds such as dioxins and furans. Even the small amount of toxins can be bad for your health and for the environment. Known admissions are not the only cause for concern. There are many unidentified emissions. Known health impacts of dioxins include diabetes, IQ loss, birth defects, immune system damage, and behavioural disorders.

The borough councillors in West Norfolk have condemned the county council for signing a £600m deal with a waste incinerator consortium. Residents in Kings Lynn and the borough council have rejected the incinerator plan for Kings Lynn, which was agreed by the county council on March 7<sup>th</sup> this year. Even the borough council had a special meeting and said the Government should look at this case. The borough council released a statement saying that this is undemocratic.

In a recent poll nine out of every 10 people who voted opposed the construction of a municipal waste mass burner incinerator here in Kings Lynn. It is said the borough council deplors the decision taken by the cabinet of Norfolk County Council to approve the contract for its construction. Norfolk County Council also chose to ignore 65,500 local people who voted against the incinerator so, therefore, we ask Congress to ask our sponsored MPs to put pressure on the Norfolk County Council so they can stick their incinerator elsewhere. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Seconder?

SIS. D. KENNETT (London): I am supporting Emergency Motion 5 against the proposed building of this incinerator in West Norfolk. This Congress deplores the decision of Norfolk County Council's leak to the public in mid-February to ignore a referendum decision by 93% of the public rejecting the proposal to build an incinerator. These people said no. Who is to be held accountable for the £50m — and I said £50m — wasted on that referendum? Norfolk County Council has already spent £2.2m on two new recycling centres. This proposed incinerator will make them redundant along with 19 others in the region, thus creating job losses. £169m for this project is coming from PFI. I am told PFI is private funding initiative. Private — private — this money is coming from the public's pocket. Are we sure the PFI does not mean "pilfering Fagan's idea" — you have to pick the public's pocket as often as you can.

The contempt with which Norfolk County Council has treated the residents of West Norfolk is not only undemocratic but highlights the hypocrisy of David Cameron's big society. To quote Henry Belling, the Tory MP for West Norfolk, "It's a very dark day for democracy. I'm very angry. I don't think 62,000 people in West Norfolk will take this lying down." Indeed a dark day for democracy, a dark day for the health of the people in West Norfolk. These incinerators spew out millions of particulates and cacogenic toxins into the atmosphere. Surely, this is an offence against the Environmental Act 1990.

Congress, we ask the CEC to support this motion and enlist the help of all Labour MPs to bring pressure on the Government and honour the decision of the electorate, or what will be next, election results ignored? Dictatorship here we come. Congress, please support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, the CEC is supporting Emergency Motion 5. I will put it now to the vote. All those in favour? Any against? Sorry.

BRO. R. REEVES (Southern): Take heart. This happened in Surrey. The project was abandoned in favour of more recycling and an anaerobic digester to create methane gas from organic rubbish to use as fuels as a result of public protest. Keep fighting. (*Applause*)

BRO. G. HARVEY (Birmingham & West Midlands): I just want to say that in Shrewsbury we have already had this problem where Veolia lost an application to build an incinerator and a Conservative council is subsidising them to the tune of £1m with an appeal to get it built again. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No one else? All those in favour please show? Any against? That is carried. Thank you.

*Emergency Motion 5 was CARRIED.*

## **EMPLOYMENT POLICY: HEALTH, SAFETY & ENVIRONMENT**

### **EMPLOYMENT AND HEALTH & SAFETY REGULATIONS COMPOSITE 1**

*(Covering Motions 51 and 52)*

51. H & S AT WORK CUTS (*London Region*)  
52. EMPLOYMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY REGULATIONS (*London Region*)

### **EMPLOYMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY REGULATIONS**

This Congress is aware that the focus of the Tory led government's attack on working people is on wages, services and benefits. It should not be forgotten that cuts to both central and local government will result in fewer workplace inspections and reduced prosecutions.

This Congress seeks:

- to retain the existing Employment and Health and Safety Regulations
- and prevention of the deregulation proposal.

Congress pledges the GMB to lead the campaign that ensures workplaces become safer and not more dangerous during this Parliament.

*(Carried)*

A DELEGATE: Moving this composite we should remember why many workers join trade unions such as GMB. Regulations already exist to protect us at work but it is often down to the GMB safety reps to make sure that these are followed. That is not to say we do not ignore any attack on these safety laws as this alone lets many employers think that they can get away with doing even less. However, this really is the same old Tory Party in government. They persist in presiding over a failing economy and offering up a morsel to the employers, many of whom do not follow the rules properly anyway. What are those promises: that they will ease burdens on businesses and they will cut red tape, and that will improve their business? What a load of rubbish.

Everyone knows that good health and safety at work is good for business with a safer, happier, more content and productive work force. Whatever the cost to any business after serious injury or death at work it is often the smallest cost of the total involved. What about the cost to the individual worker in pain and suffering and possibly of never working again? What about the cost to society of hospitalisation, benefit, disability, adjustment, and even compensation? The HSE estimate that these costs far outweigh the cost to the employer by up to ten times. This motion is not dealing with some theoretical proposal but on the reality of not coming home safely after a day's work or coming in an ambulance unable to work again. GMB has a proud tradition as a campaigning trade union. We cannot sit back and let these attacks on our rights to go unchallenged. Please support this composite. *(Applause)*

SIS. J. SMITH (London): Some of you present here today may not be aware of the proposals that our so-called caring government have around health and safety at work. That would not be surprising as there are a lot of other attacks on the most vulnerable in society and it is easy to get confused in the scale of things.

For clarification, the incoming Prime Minister asked a retired lord, Lord Young, to report on a proposal to simplify health and safety legislation. Last autumn he produced a report which can only be described as laughable. However, the Prime Minister accepted all his recommendations and described it as helping to reduce the burdens on business. There is the introduction of the idea of online risk assessment

for low hazard workplaces such as offices, retail premises, schools, even where there is violence, RSI, and asbestosis exposure issues in these sectors. This was followed by the comprehensive spending review and the budget which took 35% out of the Health & Safety Executive who inspect workplaces and investigate accidents and death. This is on top of the 28% cut to the local authorities and the unknown effect this will have on the environmental health officers who cover these areas that the Health & Safety Executives do not. As part of the budget announcements the minister responsible, Chris Grayling, announced a reduction in workplace inspections by up to a third and effectively taking some industry out of inspection altogether, and there is a review on the guidance and codes of practice which help inform the H&S regulation.

This is a blatant attack on all working people and it does not matter if you work in an office, as a security guard, on a building site, or in Asda, in manufacturing, in fact anywhere GMB has members this is an attack on you, your family, and your colleagues. Congress, in asking you to support this motion we say to the two Cs: we did not vote to die at our workplaces. Please support. *(Applause)*

## **HEALTH & SAFETY MOTION 53**

### **53. HEALTH & SAFETY**

This Congress calls on the Government to offer incentives to complement law enforcement in occupational health and safety, rewarding organisations for having safe and healthy workplaces.

NOTTINGHAM TEC BRANCH  
*Midland & East Coast Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. P. SOPER (Midland & East Coast): This Congress calls on the Government to offer incentives to complement — and I say complement, not replace — law enforcement in occupational health and safety. Research undertaken by the European Agency for Health & Safety at Work suggests that economic incentive schemes encouraging companies to invest in risk prevention are a cost-effective option for governments looking to cut the number of work related accidents and illnesses. Many of our colleagues in EU member states already offer various kinds of financial reward for businesses that invest in keeping our employees safe. Some of the examples of economic incentives could be state subsidies, grants, financing incentives based on tax systems or tax structures. For instance, tax breaks could be offered to employers who invest in equipment and training that is more than the minimum level requirements. Also, insurance premiums could be linked to the occupational health and Safety management systems that are in place in a company. One of the examples of an incentive scheme introduced in Germany in 2006, in the butchery sector, is a 28% cut in accidents. An expert survey by the European Agency for Safety & Health at Work among member states found that insurance premium variations were assessed by member countries as being the most suitable. I move. *(Applause)*

BRO. T. OWEN (Midland & East Coast): Vice President, Congress, as workplace organisers and safety reps we have many resources at our disposal in our continuing struggle to make our workplaces as safe as possible for our members, and the



freeloaders who also benefit from our efforts. We have one of the best support networks, if not the best, with help only a phone call or a click of a mouse away, and this belief is reinforced by being here at Congress. Some of us have employers that are quite proactive when it comes to health and safety but sadly for many it is a battle day in, day out, to get them to comply to the barest minimum standards required and, as stated many times over the last couple of days, we do not shy away from these battles.

Some say this motion may encourage employers to fix the figures. This already happens. With calls for deregulation getting louder and further cuts to the HSE budget making them a spent force, further reducing their ability to be effective in policing health and safety in the workplace, this motion could help further our cause, and it would be worth it. I second. Please support. (*Applause*)

## **ROVING SAFETY REPS MOTION 54**

### **54. ROVING SAFETY REPS**

This Congress already recognises that the premium derived from having recognised Safety Representatives is improving health and safety in many GMB workplaces. GMB also has an existing policy in supporting roving Safety Representatives.

However in the current climate following the Lord Young Review, and the cuts to both the Inspectors in the HSE and Local Authorities this Congress calls for the CEC to lead a campaign to raise the profile of Safety Reps in the workplace and to reiterate our collective policy of advocating roving Safety Reps.

GMB Safety Reps are often better informed than many of their Managers on Health and Safety issues.

Congress proposes that the campaign is initiated in the water and other utility industries which have the resources to facilitate roving Safety Reps where every day our members encounter contractors with variable safety procedures and where there exists the geographical distances to make their presence in those industries productive and viable.

THAMES GENERAL BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. D. BYRNE (London): Congress, the GMB supports the idea of roving safety reps and this is already GMB policy, so given that this motion has slipped under the radar of the Standing Orders Committee you will have to indulge me for a few minutes as I try to explain exactly what colleagues in the water industry are hoping to achieve. Problems often arise in the industry due to the geographical spread of the job to lone working and to the range of different contractors that are employed to undertake various tasks. GMB Health & Safety Representatives are often better informed than the managers when it comes to identifying potential hazards and contributing to the completion of effective and informative risk assessments. There is an opportunity in the water industry to introduce the concept of roving safety reps to act as a pilot in order to demonstrate how useful this could be across the whole industrial landscape of the UK. The proposal to use roving safety reps needs to be put on all the relevant negotiating agendas and included as part of the national pay claim.

The motion asks the CEC to instruct the GMB officers responsible for this section of the union to ensure that this happens. I move. (*Applause*)

SIS. L. GAYLE (London): Congress, do you really think that employers care about the health and safety of their workers? Do we want to see accidents in the workplace: of course not. According to the Health & Safety Executive Report for 2009/2010, 1.3 million people suffered from illnesses they believed were caused or made worse by their current or past work, and 152 workers also died. Often because of the distance of some work areas health and safety checks are not carried out on a regular basis, if at all; therefore, these workers are neglected and eventually suffer. I think these reps would make a difference. They will change the lives of people, they will cut costs, they will prevent accidents, and in some cases save lives. If we sit back and do nothing, we are heading for another accident. We must promote and support this motion. CEC, I urge you, please support. (*Applause*)

## **ASBESTOS MOTION 57**

### **57. ASBESTOS**

This Congress is concerned that the implications of the decision by the Court of Appeal on the 8<sup>th</sup> October 2010 will be that many victims of asbestos-related disease will die without the certainty that their families will be entitled to compensation. Congress agrees that it is the exposure to asbestos that can lead to the development of fatal diseases such as mesothelioma and that the trigger must, therefore, be the point of exposure and not, as challenged by the insurance industry, the point the disease develops, which can be many decades later. Congress further agrees with the High Court ruling in 2008 that the insurers who should pay compensation are those who provided cover to the employer at the time of the asbestos exposure and we note that this is the latest of many attacks by the insurance industry on compensation for working people who were negligently exposed to deadly asbestos. Congress calls on the Association of British Insurers to take action against any of its members who are challenging the established trigger that is the point of exposure and support the establishment of an Employers' Liability Insurance Bureau.

NORTH TYNE MANUFACTURING BRANCH  
*Northern Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. J. KANE (Northern): Congress, an earlier court ruling by the High Court in 2008 defined that the insurers who should pay compensation are those who provided cover to the employer at the time the disease was contracted. However, Congress, last October the Court of Appeal ruled the High Court ruling was wrong and that in some cases the employers' liability insurance is triggered not by the exposure to asbestos but how the disease progresses. This is wrong. It is obscene. This left families already suffering in total uncertainty about their right to compensation. This callous decision by the judges means that in every case the exact wording of the insurance document will be pored over looking for any opt-out clauses anywhere they can to avoid paying the rightful compensation our members deserve.

Congress, it was the GMB and Thompsons solicitors who obtained the original High Court ruling giving our members the opportunity for landmark compensation agreements. We need the uncertainty around asbestos exposure to be sorted out. We

need the original High Court ruling to be reinstated, to be covered by legislation. The insurance companies have sold their policies and are now trying every way they can to opt out of paying the compensation. Congress, the Association of British Insurers has a duty to act. They need to take action against their members who are trying to challenge the point of exposure and to give some credibility back there must be a proper liability scheme put in place that gives protection to our members and their families. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: A seconder? Formally. Thank you.

*The motion was formally seconded.*

## **BULLYING IN THE WORKPLACE MOTION 58**

### **58. BULLYING IN THE WORKPLACE**

This Congress whilst being at the forefront in the fight against bullying in the workplace, notes it is now also prevalent in the public service as well as the private sector.

We call upon Congress to make the issue of bullying a priority and adopt a hard line approach and attack the bullying at source.

The source is the Company Director, Line Management and Human Resources.

In many workplaces, taking out a grievance against a bullying management is like signing your own dismissal notice.

Also the employee's work life balance is affected owing to the knowledge they will have to go back into the same working environment on a daily basis.

SOUTHEND ON SEA BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. H. BURGESS (London): Vice President, Congress, the bullying employer has been around since the year dot and it is more prevalent or used to be more prevalent in the private sector, but now it is well enshrined in the public sector, and I feel that management are trained in this culture. I am aware that GMB is at the forefront in fighting against these bullies as indeed are other unions. Since the recession it has become more apparent and it is sticking its ugly head up once more. For example, at a local refuse company where I work, the local area where I work, a young member walking to work on the ice outside his workplace slipped over and ended up with a 2-inch cut in his head, and swelling. He went into his workplace and explained it to his manager. The manager turned round and said, "Don't worry, go and wash your head and get back to work." He said, "I feel a bit faint. I think I need some medical attention." The manager said, "You go and get medical attention and you're on a disciplinary." He went to a hospital, had medical attention, and had some time off. He phoned in and told him he was going to have a day off. He went back into work next morning to find himself on a disciplinary. It took a call from the GMB to explain the error of their ways; if he had been caught in machinery or had an accident, or a vehicle had hit him, GMB legal would have been after him. They withdrew the disciplinary.

A female member working at a local authority home on an absent review 11 days' trigger she had 14 days off in the rollover year. She was bullied by two managers and a member of HR. When she came out crying a member of staff said, "You're a member of the GMB; if you've got another meeting call the GMB in." This she did. Asked when the next meeting was she said, "In a month's time." I said, "Inform the management that we will be attending with you." She went to the next meeting. She had told HR, who in turn forgot to tell the management. I walked into the room and lo and behold there were two managers, HR and her line manager. When they saw me they all gave their apologies, walked out of the room, were very nice indeed, and actually altered her hours that she had been trying to have altered in the last two years; they suddenly agreed them.

I am sure that each and every delegate at Congress could stand up here and give evidence within their workplaces of such crimes. I have used the word before at Congress and the word is "respect". Surely managers must see if you give the workforce respect they will gain respect in return, and that will make a better working environment. I move. Thank you. (*Applause*)

BRO. M. JAMES (London): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) I am seconding this motion as I would like to see workplace bullying banished to the history books where it belongs. My support has become very passionate since I witnessed bullying at a young age in my first workplace. Since then trade unions have caused huge leaps forward but there is still a long way to go before bullying is fully stamped out. When an employee reports bullying to Human Remains — sorry, Human Resources — (*Laughter*) — they should feel confident that this is being dealt with in a sensitive and confidential manner, but is it? Sometimes the very people they are reporting this to are the ones who are behind the bullying. They are the ones who set unrealistic deadlines and targets and then pass these down the line to an already stretched and stressed workforce. In many cases these people who sit in their air-conditioned offices are divorced from reality and have no idea what a real working environment is. All they care about is pleasing the directors who earn performance bonuses on the backs of others. Employees count for nothing. Bullying at work does not just end in the workplace. It can have a negative effect on the victim's home life and ultimately affect relationships. It can cause the victim to have sleepless nights, anxiety, and stress. Taking out a grievance can indeed be like signing your own dismissal notice. We must stick together on this issue and make the modern workplace a much more pleasant place to be. We should be able to report rogue management in the safe knowledge that there will be no further repercussions and we will not be singled out when there are cuts to be made. We must continue to lobby government and make it aware of the cost to the NHS for people who are off with stress and other bullying related illnesses. I urge Congress to pass this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I now call on Brenda Fraser of the CEC to speak on Motions 53 and 58.

SIS. B. FRASER (CEC, Manufacturing): President, Congress, the CEC is supporting Motions 53 and 58 but with a qualification on each. In respect of Motion 53 the CEC is well aware of the Coalition Government's attack on health and safety, the cuts to the Health & Safety Executive's budget and the impact this has had and will have in

the future on worker protection. The CEC opposes the Government's policy and approach and we deplore the cuts that result in many more worker injuries and worker deaths. But, colleagues, whilst we support the sentiment of the motion we cannot support a bonus culture in health and safety management. There is far, far too much evidence suggesting that offering bonuses for good performance leads to under-reporting of incidents and investigations being swept under the carpet. Congress, the qualification is, therefore, that the CEC will support the introduction of new Health & Safety Executive fees for a regime which will allow inspectors to issue on the spot fines to negligent employers.

Turning now to Motion 58, the CEC recognise the awful effects of bullying in the workplace. We know that 14% of British workers, 3.5 million people, have reported that they have been bullied at work. Congress, you will be aware that there are no specific regulations to tackle bullying at work and this means that employers often ignore and do not tackle it. The CEC believe there is a pressing need to remove bullying from the workplace. Our qualification is that we broaden the campaign and aim it at all employers rather than specifically at directors or line managers. We certainly believe that a general campaign will have a stronger impact in the workplace. Congress, the CEC is supporting Motions 53 and 58 with these qualifications, and hopes Midland & East Coast Region and London Region will accept these qualifications. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does Midland Region accept the qualification?

BRO. P. SOPER (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I accept the qualification but I am not asking for a bonus to protect my employees. Like I said, it is to complement the law that is already there. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does London Region accept the qualification on Motion 58? (*Agreed*) Thank you. I now call for the vote on Composite 1, Motions 53, 54, 57, and 58. The CEC supports all these motions. All those in favour please show? Any against? They are carried.

*Composite 1 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 53 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 54 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 57 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 58 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Malcolm. Congress, as you can see Paul is not on the platform and as you know he is very, very serious, as is the union, about everything, but in particular he apologises for not being here at this very moment. The reason he is not here is because he is with the media and press outside as Southern Cross has just announced 3,000 redundancies and 200 homes closures. I am afraid I have four of those homes in Brent and that is one of the reasons that George has gone back. My view is the Government has to take responsibility for this and so have councils: you sold the homes off for profit, now you take them back. That is where he is at the moment. We know what they are up to. It is very sad for those workers and for the 31,000 elderly vulnerable individuals who are in these homes. (*Calls of "Shame."*) I agree with you totally and so does this Congress.

## **PRESENTATION OF THE DANIEL DENNIS HEALTH & SAFETY AWARDS 2011**

### **THE DANIEL DENNIS HEALTH & SAFETY AWARD 2011**

**Winner: Aubrey Thompson, North West & Irish Region**

Aubrey Thompson, North West Gas 173 Branch is involved in improving Health & Safety across British Gas, including new areas of business such as insulation and Smart Metering. He has drawn up a development plan for all safety reps. He has recruited in excess of 200 new members, and growing, by deliberately targeting new intake across the industry.

**Runner-Up: Michael Kent, Northern Region**

Michael Kent identified exposure to welding fumes, persuading his company to invest £60,000 to deal with this. Ergonomic issues were addressed by new height adjustable equipment, reducing manual handling processes. He helped establish English classes for Polish workers, better welfare facilities, regular H&S inspections and used workplace mapping for H&S issues leading to a more proactive approach from management. His branch 252 Sunderland 9 branch increased by 15 new members as a result.

THE PRESIDENT: Can we now move on? Congress, this is the fifth year that we have presented this award and we will continue to keep the memory of Daniel alive through this annual award. It gives me great pleasure to announce that the winner of the Daniel Dennis Safety Representative of the Year is Aubrey Thompson, North West & Irish Region. *(Applause)* Aubrey Thompson, North West Gas 173 Branch is involved in improving Health & Safety in British Gas, including new areas of business such as insulation and Smart Metering. He has drawn up a development plan for all safety reps. Aubrey has recruited in excess of 200 new members, and growing, by deliberately targeting new intake across the industry. *(Applause)* Aubrey, I invite you to say a few words.

BRO. A. THOMPSON (North West & Irish): Firstly, I would like to say that I am amazed to pick this up. It is very, very humbling. I would like to thank everybody who has nominated me. You cannot do things in health and safety without a lot of help and a lot of support from the people around you. I would like to thank Gary Smith and Daniel Shears, all the eight national reps within British Gas, and the 21 regional stewards, and of course all the health and safety reps as well. Without them we could not have moved anything at all. I think health and safety is one of those really important things and you have no better satisfaction than getting people home safe at the end of the day. So, keep up the good work, everybody. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

*Presentation of award amid applause.*

THE PRESIDENT: I am also pleased to announce the runner-up this year is Michael Kent, Northern Region. Michael Kent identified exposure to welding fumes and highlighted ergonomic issues. Michael has also helped establish English classes for

Polish workers, better welfare facilities, regular H&S inspections, and has used workplace mapping for health and safety issues. His branch increased by 15 new members as a result. Unfortunately, Michael is unable to be with us today and he has sent his colleague, Colin Taylor, to collect the award on his behalf. Colin?  
(Applause)

*Presentation of award amid applause.*

BRO. C. TAYLOR (Northern): I am delighted to accept this award on behalf of Michael. Not many of you know that we are like a married couple, we squabble all the time so when he found out that I had to come up here to receive an award on his behalf he said, "You'll have to say something nice about me, won't you." (Laughter) He has done an absolutely fantastic job and he deserves this. Thank you very much.  
(Applause)

### **ADDRESS TO CONGRESS BY RICHARD MOORE, FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN IN CROSSFIRE**

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Congress, you will recall that we have already taken Motions 59 to 62 before lunch. As most of you know in this hall, we have Richard Moore with us. Richard, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you back to Congress, Founder and Director of Children in Crossfire. Last year GMB Congress in Southport agreed to support Richard's work and delegates who attended last year will remember Richard's most passionate speech. We will now hear an update of the work done on NOURISH, a nurse-training project. Richard Moore, please address Congress.

RICHARD MOORE: Thank you very much, everybody. It is great to be here once again. The only Congress I was ever at was last year and this is my second, so I am delighted to be here. Before I came up onto the stage I asked Iain, is it a question and answer session and he said, no, it is not a question and answer session. I was delighted about that because one time I was in Belfast, and I know probably there are a few people here from Northern Ireland, I know — He is very quiet, unusually quiet.

THE PRESIDENT: Don't tempt them, Richard. (Cheers)

RICHARD MOORE: Now I know where you are. I was invited to speak at a school in Belfast, a very posh part of Belfast, and I will not say where the school actually was because I do not want to give it away but it was a primary school and there were about 190 students. I was invited to speak about Children in Crossfire. I spoke for about 10 minutes and in the school the primary 1s were at my feet, the primary 2s behind that, the primary 3s, right back to the primary 7s at the back wall. After I had been speaking for about 10 minutes, the principal came up and stood beside me and he said, "Well, boys and girls, have you any questions to ask Richard about his work?" This young boy in the front row stuck his hand up and he must have been a primary 1 or a primary 2, and the principal said, "Oh, Jonathan, what's your question?" I will never forget Jonathan's question till the day I die because he said, "My Daddy wears women's clothes." (Laughter) I could hear the principal breathing heavily in my left ear and afterwards walking down the corridor the principal said to me, "What did you think of little Jonathan's question?" I said, "I don't know but if I was you I would

find out.” He said, “That was my son.” (*Laughter*) I am glad there are no questions here today.

Last year when I was here I asked Paul, I asked Mary, and I asked all of you or the delegates that were here to support the work of Children in Crossfire. Children in Crossfire operates in Tanzania, Ethiopia, and the Gambia. I started Children in Crossfire 14 or 15 years ago now, 1996, and it was based on my own experience of being shot and blinded as a 10-year old boy on the streets of Northern Ireland during the Troubles in 1972. Despite the fact that I was blinded in the way that I was, I bounced back very quickly. That was because I came from a good family, a good community, and despite the poverty that existed then, and the difficulties, I still had choices and opportunities available to me. I began to realise that there were children in other parts of the world that maybe had their eyesight but did not have what I had, did not have the opportunities that I had. So, I started Children in Crossfire and, as I say, we work in Tanzania, Ethiopia, and the Gambia, with children under eight years of age on their health, education, and disability.

Last year I came here and I asked you to support a project in Ethiopia where children were dying from severe acute malnutrition. I have to say, delegates, I was amazed at the response of the GMB. They quickly got behind it, supported it, and funded it. Today, with your direct support, we have renovated a ward out there for children, a therapeutic feeding unit. It deals with children who are coming in with severe acute malnutrition. We have an outreach programme in the villages so that malnutrition can be detected earlier and the children can be taken to hospital, if necessary, or treated out there, if necessary. We also have trained nurses there, with your support. Those nurses, some of them are now already working on the ward. They help those children. You have supported the project at every level.

Last year, in 2010, there were 337 children — 337 children — diagnosed or suffering from severe acute malnutrition. In the first quarter of this year 152 have been detected. Now, it is not that it has gone up, it is just through the work and the education, and the outreach work, we have been able to get to them earlier, and even though the amount of malnutrition has gone up the death rate has gone down. It has gone down by a couple of percent. It has gone down from almost 9% to 7%, but that is down because of the support that you have given. I think there is video footage showing whilst I am speaking — I am not sure — of the actual area that you are funding and the work that you are funding. I just want to say today, first of all, on behalf of those vulnerable children in Ethiopia and the Woliso area of Ethiopia, a big thank you to you. There are people alive today and children being treated today, and if it had not have been for your support it would not be possible. Thanks very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, Birmingham held their do last night, as most of you know, and they raised £664. The region then made it up to £1,000 and we, the Executive and you, have made it £2,000, and we want to donate that money for Children in Crossfire, Richard.

RICHARD MOORE: Thank you.



THE PRESIDENT: If it saves two more lives, it is money well spent. (*Applause*)  
And here is a bottle of the holy water you like!

*Presentation amid applause.*

RICHARD MOORE: Thanks a million.

THE PRESIDENT: And your glasses, and the font to go with them! I will see you later. (*Applause*)

Brian, maybe I will correct my previous announcement, it is alleged closures of 200 homes, according to the press. I should know better; never believe what you read in the press. I think I believe everything about Southern Cross at the moment.

Anyway, can we move on now? Could I ask Paul McCarthy to move his report, pages 119-127? Formally. Thank you.

**REGIONAL SECRETARY’S REPORT: NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION  
(Pages 119-127)**

**NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION**

**1. MEMBERSHIP & RECRUITMENT**

<b>FINANCIAL MEMBERSHIP</b>	
Section Financial Membership (by each Section):	
COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION	23,863
MANUFACTURING SECTION	21,969
PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION	37,689
Grade 1 members	55,983
Grade 2 members	15,976
Retired, Reduced Rate & Others	11,562
Male Membership	47,140
Female Membership	36,381
Total number recruited 1.1.2010 – 31.12.2010	9,037
Increase/Decrease 1.1.2010 – 31.12.2010	-2,544
Membership on Check-off	51,574
Membership on Direct Debit	19,620

**Response to the Organising Agenda**

The Organising Agenda remains to be the foundation from which ways of working are conducted on the part of Officers, Staff and GMB Representatives on a day to day basis. Over the past year we have used this agenda to promote and grow the organisation wherever possible and at the same time take necessary steps to ensure a consistent approach.

Workplace mapping allows us to better understand the background to our present membership, membership of other organisations and in particular, enables us to effectively target recruitment at a local level.

It is readily understood that the key to our success comes about at the earliest stage by way of our providing initial support training to all newly appointed Representatives. Such training is carried out by

Officers at a local level who best understand the politics and issues within local workplaces which in turn helps them to best equip new representatives in taking a best approach to organising and recruitment right from the onset.

Ongoing education forms a vital part of our response. This strategy includes:

- A concentrated approach to initiating IST training regularly as described in the National Organising Agenda in group sessions.
- Offering additional support training for existing secondees and representatives, mentoring in disciplinary/grievances and recruitment/organisation techniques on the job.
- Review of development outcomes, constant support monitoring.

All the above is consistent with the GMB@Work Agenda where recruitment and consolidation are key. An example of the above can be found in Contitech which is a factory in Leigh, Lancs, producing rubber belts for the white goods industry and the motor car industry. GMB is the largest union, membership at the factory is 73 and in the past it has been difficult to find anyone to volunteer to become a union representative. However, we now have a Lay Representative who has completed the IST, been taken through the GMB@Work document and has completed the initial 10 day induction course. This has resulted from a position of poor organisation into a Lay Representative who is now confident and competent to deal with day to day issues in terms of representation etc. at the site. This has resulted in the motivation of the membership and a much improved branch organisation.

The Region continues to operate a cost effective retention programme, but we are continually looking for areas of improvement.

The Region has redesigned its website which is now far more user-friendly and the feedback from members has been positive. The website is used to promote benefits and services, most notably legal. The Region is also constantly reviewing how members can access the benefits and services we provide.

Public Services continue to be at the focal point of the Organising Agenda, whilst most Authorities have implemented single status there are still a small number that have not.

As a direct result of the Government Spending Review, the Region's Local Authorities have been hit with dramatic cuts to budgets. This has led to the announcement of large numbers of potential redundancies across the whole of the Region, as well as proposals to reduce terms and conditions.

We are now at an advanced stage in respect of outcomes on job evaluation, equal pay and single status in Northern Ireland.

The anticipated reforms of Local Government administration have not gone ahead as anticipated which effectively means that a disproportionate amount of expenditure goes on maintaining 26 Councils as opposed to the reforms which were intended to reduce that number to 11 in total and thereby providing millions of pounds in savings in administration costs.

With the advent of a ConDem Government we are now faced with some £4 billion of cuts right across all areas of Public Services. 73% of all jobs in Northern Ireland come from our Public Services; these proposed cuts will undoubtedly severely damage what would best be described, as a developing economy following the end of the troubles in recent years. We have already mounted a series of campaigns seeking to enlist public support against these appalling cuts.

The number of equal pay claims has remained relatively static, in that some claims have been settled, but a number of new claims have been lodged.

Our continued involvement in representing members in conjunction with the challenges within local government forms the main trigger for consolidation and providing for membership growth wherever

possible. We are slowly but surely working to ensure that local representatives take on the prime responsibility for ongoing recruitment in these areas.

The Region has seen growth, even in difficult areas such as DHL/G4S and Asda and this has been achieved through good organisation at local level.

The Region is pleased to report that following information received from representatives, we have gained recognition in Terumo, Knowsley and have a CAC application lodged for recognition at First Services.

2010 has once again been a difficult year for the Manufacturing Section in the Region, with many members experiencing lay-offs and closures. Examples are Cereal Partners, which is a subsidiary of Nestle, with 50 redundancies at the Bromborough site and the construction industry has been hit, with Istock Brick in St Helens closing its Roughdale site. Also because of the construction industry's problems, this has seen a downturn in the requirement for glass where there have been a number of redundancies as a result of this throughout Pilkingtons.

Our Union has embarked upon a major legal claim against B/E Aerospace in Kilkeel which is considered to be one of the largest manufacturers of airline seating in the world. The company introduced a Gainshare Bonus Scheme some 20 years ago which provided for an opportunity for the whole of the workforce to share in profits arising from the company's successes in the global marketplace. The company over the past few years has generated millions of pounds of profit but have decided to renege on payment to staff under the Gainshare Bonus Scheme. We are now getting to a fairly advanced stage in proceedings and at the time of writing this report, our lawyers remain confident about the likely outcome.

On the back of these proceedings, we have been able to reinstate membership on the part of a number of people who were previously made redundant but are now determined to form part of our legal claim.

In Northern Ireland the Engineering Construction Sector has been totally decimated as a consequence of the present economic downturn. It is fair to say that developments right across Ireland have resulted in thousands of jobs being lost and a large number of companies going under. It was hoped that a number of capital projects which were earmarked for the North of Ireland would have gone ahead; instead it would now appear the Government is unlikely to honour the 18 billion pounds which was earmarked for necessary improvements and infrastructure.

Unfortunately a number of people from this Sector have been forced to emigrate in order to secure alternative employment.

Although Commercial Services is not included with the massive cuts facing Public Services, this is one of the areas where the Government expect the Private Sector to produce the jobs to provide employment for ex-Public Service employees. However, in retail, there are more and more companies moving to part time contracts, terms & conditions are being frozen or diminished and whilst there are certainly less job losses in this sector, there is little confidence in job security.

### **Recruitment and Campaigns**

The Region's recruitment strategy continues to follow the principles and approach agreed by the National Organising Team and as laid down in GMB@Work. We have a dedicated Organising Team with all other Organisers taking part in planned recruitment consolidation activity. Some of the Organiser activity involves working in teams recruiting members within targeted employers as well as working closely with branches and workplaces for which they have responsibility. Along with the national targets, we also have a number of regional targets that mainly involve campaign or issue based consolidation and on occasion targets include carefully selected Greenfield sites. Our current targets include: Schools, Southern Cross, ASDA, G4S (and other Security).

The past year has been particularly difficult with the recession having an impact on many GMB organised workplaces and our Officers have been stretched at times protecting the jobs and terms and conditions of our members. Nevertheless we have kept our focus on our organising work and have strived to demonstrate to existing and potential members the benefits of GMB membership and effective workplace organisation. Going forward most of our activity will be targeted at the Public Sector where, even though cuts will threaten jobs, we believe there is still significant potential for growth and by targeting local authorities we can not only recruit new members, but continue to campaign to protect jobs and services.

Long term Regional Targets last year (Jan – Dec figures) were as follows:

TARGET	MEMBERS RECRUITED
Schools (Jan- July)	729
Schools (Sep – Dec)	399
Southern Cross	641
G4S Guarding	247
ASDA Stores	299
ONLINE	1,954

The Region had a complete review of its Organising Agenda at the end of 2010 to move away from stand down days that might have felt to some as a cosmetic exercise to targeted and focussed recruitment on Public Services, NHS and Manufacturing.

The Region still maintains the National targets but officers are now team focussed into specific areas. That is kept under review and if a project is not delivering then the focus will move to better utilise resources and Officer time rather than focus a large ROT Team which significantly impacts on servicing. All Officers are responsible not only for mapping existing workplaces to try to establish high membership but also to focus activists and workplace organisers on their role in the process, which has to be on recruitment.

Officers are also in target focussed teams which play to their strengths and should assist in organising the areas targeted.

Clearly, areas where we have recognition is “pushing at an open door” and should be the priority of workplace representatives, the training that they receive makes that abundantly clear to them and the regional training is aimed at creating a confident, able force of Workplace Organisers.

Examples of consolidation and recruitment are underlined in the following places:-

Veolia, which comprises 24 sites, was very successful in terms of a recruitment campaign. Bidston Recycling Centre and a company called Manpower Agency were also identified where the terms and conditions were abysmal. In the process of the site visits the GMB was able to recruit 71 Manpower and 18 Veolia staff totalling 89 new members.

Terumo is a company which makes blood filter machines and has shown an increase in the workforce/membership but the site is coming under pressure to transfer work to Slovenia.

Polyflor – GMB has recently signed a new recognition agreement for the new warehouse and distribution site in Royton - recruitment opportunities.

ASDA – the acquisition of Netto has led to the development of a new site in Warrington which should create 120-180 new jobs.

Pilkington Glass has seen an upswing of production due to the take-off of Solar Glass within Europe with much increased demand. Also an increase for Coated Glass has led to the St Helens Float Sites, Greengate and Cowley Hill, recruiting upwards of 120 employees. Recruitment has not happened for some considerable time.

In respect of consolidation the NWAS which has a total of 115 workplaces across the NW of England, is a current target for recruitment and also consolidation, as is the NHS within the Region as a whole.

Bookers Warehouse – again this is regular source of new members due to the Company weathering the storm very well whereby they are still taking people on and consolidation campaigns have also taken place with success.

At Cammell Lairds Shipyard the GMB has agreed fixed term contracts to eradicate agency workers, which has led to improved consolidation and recruitment. Similarly consolidation is taking place within Water, Utilities and Airports, especially in the latter where we have been able consolidate the membership on the back of campaigns and industrial disputes.

### **Economic and Employment Situation**

As stated above every Region will be facing massive problems and concerns as a result of the Government's savage cuts in Local Authority budgets. The Construction Industry again has been a difficult area with jobs being completed followed by run down. Further declines in the building market have come about by the cancellation of the BSF project. Also we are starting to see the initial impact of reductions within the NHS. The NWAS are currently under threat of a pay freeze and a freeze of incremental rises over the next 2 years. Therefore government assurances that front line services within the NHS would be protected are highly unlikely.

Many companies (which is no surprise) are using the current economic situation to make changes which at other times they would not contemplate doing. Within the Airport Industry the Ground Handling Operators and Airlines have over the last few years reverted to the 1970 principles of making employment a temporary arrangement for the summer season. On top of these changes they are then only offering part time contracts whilst then working the employees on full time hours. This prevents their employees from achieving full holiday or sick leave benefits/payments. Also the constant changes within these companies in terms of TUPE and redundancies are now taking place on a regular occurrence causing more concern for our members and have given the GMB many challenges.

Whilst we previously reported the likely effects of the global financial crisis and how that was likely to impact upon the economy of Northern Ireland, sadly it is now fair to say that those events have finally caught up with us.

In the early part of this report, we mentioned proposed cuts of £4 billion right across the public sector. It is estimated that this will result in a loss of something in the region of 30,000 jobs and because of the Public Sector's engagement with the Private Sector, in respect of infrastructure mainly, it is estimated that a further 15-20,000 jobs could be lost in that Sector as well.

It would appear that this Government is unlikely to honour payment of the 18 billion pounds which was set aside under the St. Andrews Agreement providing for urgent improvements to infrastructure in the Public and Private Sectors.

All in all, our members are faced with an incredibly bleak future. The fact that over 70% of jobs are provided through the Public Sector will invariably mean that the proposed cuts for Northern Ireland will have a greater impact in this part of the world to that of other parts of the U.K.

## 2. GENERAL ORGANISATION

Regional Senior Organisers	5
Membership Development Officers	1
Regional Organisers	24
Organising Officers	0
No. of Branches	221
New Branches	7
Branch Equality Officers	30
Branch Youth Officers	5

## 3. BENEFITS

Dispute	665.00
Total Disablement	Nil
Working Accident	11,541.10
Occupational Fatal Accident	4,000.00
Non-occupational Fatal Accident	Nil
Funeral	42,760.00

## 4. JOURNALS AND PUBLICITY

The Region continues to make use of the usual forms of local and national media to highlight GMB campaigns and to keep existing and prospective members informed about GMB issues and benefits. National press releases have been adapted accordingly to fit regional activity and officers in the Region have been regularly called upon to comment on local radio and television and to provide additional quotes in the local press.

Highlighting GMB activity in this way has helped to maintain the GMB profile, assisting in recruitment activity and demonstrating to our members the efforts that their union has been making on their behalf.

The Region has, on occasion, taken out advertisements in various publications including NW Labour History Journal, Morning Star, Nerve Magazine and Big Issue. The Regional Magazine, Fusion, continues to be well received by members and has been a useful vehicle reinforcing and complementing regional and national messages and campaigns. Our Asda and schools campaigns have featured prominently in the magazine as well as numerous individual stories about issues affecting GMB members and their respective workplaces. We also continuously promote our Equalities agenda with regular coverage of Regional Equality Forum matters and our annual Women's Conference.

Our regional website continues to be developed with the aim of making it more accessible to all existing and prospective members regardless of computer skills and abilities. The website is intended to compliment the national site, with a regional slant. Online joiners account for a growing proportion of regional recruitment and efforts to optimise the site so that it can be found by people looking for help with problems at work or seeking the protection of union membership continue. A growing number of links to branch and other websites have been added.

We have also recently introduced 'GMBrief', an email bulletin for activists in the Region. This bulletin will be sent out at least once per week, informing and updating members on issues affecting and of interest to GMB members. Other forms of social media are being considered for the future.

## 5. LEGAL SERVICES

- (a) Occupational Accidents and Diseases (including Criminal Injuries)

Applications for Legal Assistance	Legal Assistance Granted
1130	1130

Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Court	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
413	73	Nil	339 £1,193,495.23	1 £20,000	£1,213,495.23
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2010		2761			

(b) Employment Tribunals (notified to Legal Department)

Claims supported by Union	522
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Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Tribunal	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
324	54	9	261 £1,199,887.30		£1,199,887.30
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2010		206			

(c) Other Employment Law Cases

Supported by Union	Unsuccessful	Damages / Compensation	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2010
1970	10	£250,070.00	1,921

(d) Social Security Cases

Supported by Union	Successful	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2010
28	3	19

## 6. EQUALITY & INCLUSION

The North West Region Regional Equality Forum is now firmly established and has met on four occasions throughout 2010.

There are currently four vacancies on the Regional Equality Forum this was due to a number of reasons, sadly one of them being the loss of one of our strongest activists Edna Fallows (nee Greenwood) who passed away on the 21<sup>st</sup> July 2010.

The Regional Equality Forum currently only represents four of the equality strands and the Region has made numerous attempts to try to address this by encouraging members to come forward from black and ethnic minority groups through Branch circulars and the Regional magazine. We have not yet received the response we wished for but will continue to publicise and press branches to encourage participation from these groups.

Despite the challenges the North West Regional Equality Forum faces, it has nevertheless achieved some fantastic results to the events and campaigns it has promoted and supported throughout 2010.

The following is a summary of those achievements.

### **Strawberry Tea (Breast Cancer Care)**

The Regional Equality Forum gave a commitment to promote this worthy charity more widely and to encourage more Branch participation, in the hope that this would enable more funds to be raised. Numerous events were held throughout the Region which were enthusiastically supported by staff, officers and activists. In total we raised just over £1,000 which doubled last year's fundraising efforts.

### **Manchester Pride**

As always this is a hugely popular event throughout the LGBT community and which the North West Regional Equality Forum has supported over many years. 2010 was no exception and thanks to the generosity of our branches the Regional Equality Forum was able to participate fully by organising a stall which not only promoted our Region but also had some modest success in line with the Organising and Recruitment Equality agenda. Last year for the first time saw the Pride Festival come to Liverpool and although we did not have the resources to participate it is hoped that we will attend in 2011.

### **Regional Equality Conference**

The Region has held its second Equality Conference since the re-launch. All branches were invited to nominate a delegate and to submit a motion. The response was good with overall attendance increasing compared to the previous year.

Delegates were elected to attend the 2011 National Equalities Conference, and two regional motions were carried which will go forward to the National Equality Conference. Guest speakers this year included Simpsons Solicitors who gave a presentation on the Equality Act and Knowsley Ethnic Minority Support (KEMS) a local Charity Support Group which works with victims of Race Hate Crime within Knowsley Borough Council. A regional delegate was also elected for the NEF Regional Seat.

### **TUC Conference**

With the exception of Young Members, the Region has been represented at all TUC Conferences in 2010.

### **Women's Conference**

The Region organised its 10<sup>th</sup> Women's Conference which as in previous years is as hugely popular as ever. This Conference aim was above all to encourage women activists to come forward.

As a Region women make up 50% of all members so it is crucial that we aid women in becoming active. Over the years we have had many themes, this year's theme was to showcase the commitment and experience of our Workplace Organisers and Senior Officers.

### **International Women's Day**

Our Education Department organised a one day event to celebrate International Women's Day. Regional activists were encouraged to take a more pro active part in this year's event with many holding various workshops and speaking about their own personal experiences as Workplace Organisers.

Ethnic breakdown of the Regional Equality Forum in the North West is as follows:

White British Males	6
White British Females	8
Black British Males	2

In 2010 in Northern Ireland we continued to highlight inequality wherever it exists in the workplace and we have been successful in forcing a number of employers to introduce necessary changes which has benefited many of our members.

Our Lay Representatives continue to be the first point of contact for members with equality issues; we have developed a good network of activists in some workplaces which has had a positive response from



members. There is evidence to show that this portrays our union has been progressive and effective in bringing about these long overdue changes.

The local Equalities Forum has met throughout the year and has identified some local groups to work closely with to promote the GMB Organising Agenda within minority groups throughout Ireland.

This will help raise the profile of GMB with individuals who would not normally have access to unions until problems arise. This work will continue well into 2011 with invitations to these groups to share knowledge and experiences with the Forum.

### **Race Awareness Task Group**

We have a limited number of representatives in Northern Ireland, in respect of our Race Awareness Task Group.

We do not have specifically GMB based conferences in this part of the Region. That said, representatives would attend conferences from time to time in other parts of the U.K and on occasion, conferences organised by the ICTU.

A large number of migrant workers are employed through various independent agencies in Northern Ireland. We are presently assisting our representatives in ensuring that they understand the present consultation and implementation arrangements of the Agency Workers Directive.

The Department of Employment and Learning has published a consultation paper and impact assessments on the implementation of the European Agency Workers Directive (European Directive 2008/104/EC) in Northern Ireland. The consultation paper provides for comprehensive coverage and improvements for both agency workers and or migrant workers right across the province. It is a long awaited breakthrough which will provide major benefits for migrant workers in future.

Ethnic Breakdown of the Equality Forum in Northern Ireland is as follows:

White British female	5
Black Afro-Caribbean female	1
White British Males	5

## **7. TRAINING**

<b>(a) GMB Courses Basic Training</b>					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Introduction to GMB (10 days)	13	135	33	168	1680
GMB@WORK(2 days)	13	135	33	168	336

<b>(b) On Site Courses (please specify subjects)</b>					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Organisation For Negotiation (3 days)	1	5	3	8	24
Branch Organisation (3 days)	2	24	5	29	87
Grievance and Disciplinary (3 days)	3	26	8	34	102
Bullying & Harassment (2 days)	1	5	7	12	24
Communication/ PubSpeaking (2 days)	1	5	4	9	18

Union Learner Reps (5 days)	3	18	5	23	115
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(c) Health & Safety Courses (please specify subjects)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
H&S Risk Assessment (5)	1	6	4	10	50

(d) Other Courses (please specify subjects / weekdays/ weekends)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
International Women's Day (1)	1	3	15	18	18
Women's Conference (2 days)	1	3	40	40	80

(e) TUC (STUC & ICTU) Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Shop Steward H&S Stages I & II (10 days)	18	93	27	120	1200

## 8 HEALTH & SAFETY

The Region continues to provide support to Officers and Workplace Organisers in order to maintain and develop a strong visible organising structure within workplaces. A key part of this support includes site visits to GMB workplaces.

Site visits have included:

Terumo – The Regional Health & Safety Officer responded to Officer and Workplace Organisers' request to inspect workstations as well as other areas of concern. The visit resulted in recommendations being made to Terumo management on the need to structure and develop a robust Health & Safety culture which is underpinned by a joint union management approach to Health & Safety. Risk assessments are currently being carried out with Workplace Organisers now having an input, thus presenting GMB in a proactive way to employees at Terumo. This meets our regional organising strategy for organising within the workplace.

Rentokil - Support/advice given during site visit after Officer/Workplace Organisers' concerns regarding instances of ill health at the workplace and to discuss their concerns whether these are linked to COSHH. Advice given by Regional Health & Safety Officers as to ways in which workplace organisers can raise theirs and GMB's profile to management and members within Rentokil.

Crown Paints - Support/advice given as part of site visit regarding PPE issue. Visit included meeting both senior representative and management. The visit demonstrated GMB responding proactively to requests to deal with Health & Safety issues wherever we have members.

New initiatives - Working closely with our Workplace Organisers at Glendale Liverpool ground maintenance where we are in the process of structuring training modules for Glendale staff and management covering topics such as COSHH, incident reporting procedures and issues around plant usage and maintenance.

Consistent with the above in supporting Officers and Workplace Organisers in building the GMB Organising Agenda, the 10 day induction, apart from a challenging course programme with a strong health and safety focus, requires workplace organisers to undertake a workplace activity midway through their induction course. This activity requires them to map their workplace, specifically gender

profile/diversity, but above all to recruit new members prior to them returning for second phase of induction.

Workers Memorial Day was remembered in Manchester with the Hazards Campaign with GMB playing a leading part by helping to organise the day. The Regional Health & Safety Officer addressed the event, stressing the importance of GMB safety rep's contribution in the workplace in reducing accidents and ill health. Regional Office in Liverpool held a service at which seventy plus attended. Speakers included the Regional President and the Regional Health & Safety Officer, as well as contributions from Regional Solicitors and Liverpool City Council Leader Joe Anderson.

*(Adopted)*

*The Report was formally moved and seconded.*

THE PRESIDENT: Page 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127. Congress accept the report? *(Agreed)* Thank you.

*Regional Secretary's Report: North West & Irish Region (pages 119-127) was ADOPTED.*

### **CONGRESS LOCAL GIFT: ZOE'S PLACE, BABY'S HOSPICE**

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, the Local Gift this year is from North West & Irish Region to support a local charity called Zoe's Place. Many of you will be aware of it. This is a unique hospice caring for terminally ill babies and children up to 5 years old. There are only two of these hospices in the country, one is in Liverpool and one is in Middlesbrough. Dougie Henry will now just say a few words on the work of the hospice before we see a short video. Dougie?

BRO. D. HENRY (North West & Irish): It was 10 years ago in this same building that we first started to be involved in Zoe's Place. It was 10 years ago exactly that we heard about this Zoe's Place which had been opened a year at the time. It is very close to a big hospital called Alder Hey Hospital, which you may have heard of — famous footballers go there — and they do wonderful work. Unfortunately, for this place the children that go in there are terminally ill. When we presented cheques in our office, unfortunately, *those* two particular children have now ceased to exist. The hospice gets no income from any government, Labour or anybody else, so it all depends on the funding we get. There are six cots, or beds, and we helped last time to raise enough money to get a hydrotherapy pool which was desperate, and the children love it. You will see that in the future DVD. The difficulty about it is the funding but, fortunately, Middlesbrough now has a Zoe's Place and we hope in the near future there may be one in the Midlands. They are unique. It is only where children are not going to get better, unfortunately, so if you would like to watch the DVD, Mary, thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: I just want to tell Congress I will not be presenting the cheque to Dougie today, which will be £2,000, but the regions will be sending donations.

BRO. D. HENRY: If anybody wants to give anything individually there are a lot of people in yellow T-shirts saying, "Zoe's Place".

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, no one has done more for Zoe's Place than this man, and his region. Well done. (*Applause*)

*Video shown to Congress.*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, please take the leaflets. Do not forget them. Please contribute to Zoe's Place. There but for the grace of God go us. Please help the region, which does a magnificent job, and this union, to give comfort to the parents and the children at Zoe's Place. Thank you. (*Applause*)

## **SOCIAL POLICY: HOUSING**

### **PROVISION OF SOCIAL HOUSING 2011 MOTION 241**

#### **241. PROVISION OF SOCIAL HOUSING 2011**

This Congress accepts that the National Housing Policy is a disgrace and it instructs the CEC to organise and campaign at all levels for the following :

1. Right to buy subsidy to be controlled by a sliding repayment of this subsidy if the property is re-sold within five (5) years of purchase.
2. All long term empty properties to be compulsory purchased at a value that represents any costs that maybe required making them fit for habitation.
3. All Housing Associations or other bodies who have taken local authority housing property over taken back into Local Authority controlled.
4. A social house building programme, year on year until we exhaust the need.

Congress therefore instructs the CED to start this campaign at the end of this Congress.

W50 WELLINGTON BRANCH  
*Birmingham & West Midlands Region*

*(Referred)*

BRO. J. MOORE (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, comrades, I am sure a lot of you agree that the National Housing Policy is a disgrace and it has been one for some time, and that is exactly what this motion is all about. I will just take you through it quickly. What we are proposing to ask the CEC to campaign on is the introduction of controls to prevent abuse of the right to buy subsidy. We are asking for long-term vacant properties to be compulsorily purchased by local authorities less any costs to make them habitable. We believe housing associations should be brought back into local authority control so they can be properly scrutinised and are accountable to tenants and local people. We are also asking for a special house-building programme until we exhaust need, and that is as well as to house people, create proper jobs, proper apprenticeships, and good quality low-cost dwellings for all those who need or want them.

This motion is also about challenging the popular perceptions of the role of social housing by politicians and the media, who for a long time have sought to put them down as slum dwellings and have caused a lot of privatisation and damage to social housing across the country. Congress, I move and urge your support. Thanks very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder? Formally. Thank you very much.

*The motion was formally seconded.*

## **HOUSING MOTION 242**

### **242. HOUSING**

This Congress calls on the devolution of housing revenue and policy to the regions of the UK. Congress believes that one of the best ways to establish a proper regional policy that is run for local communities, by local communities, is to take away the power of Whitehall to run the lives of local people. Congress believes that one of the key ways to establish this principle is to decentralise housing revenue accounts to local councils, including housing receipts, so that local democratic decision-making with local accountability can help regenerate local areas.

DURHAM COUNTY LOCAL AUTHORITY BRANCH  
*Northern Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. Y. MORRIS (Northern): First-time delegate and speaker. *(Applause)*

Congress, council housing has always been the Cinderella option in housing tenure. Successive governments never trust a local authority to delivery and maintain decent housing stock. Whitehall does not trust local people. Congress, since the right to buy council houses the proceeds of council house sales and rents have gone to Whitehall in a central pot of money and Whitehall dictates the new social spending. The result was that regions lost out and money was recycled to populated areas. That is the reality of housing policy in the last 30 years. Congress, it is no wonder that young people have trouble getting a roof over their heads, no wonder that housing waiting lists are going up. What made things worse were two other factors: one, the relentless march of home ownership, and we have seen where the level of housing debts has got us; the other is the march of private and registered social landlords.

Congress, the last few years have taught us the need for council housing. Sometimes there is a need for a housing policy that is historic in nature. Congress, that time is now to bring stability to the housing market, help people starting out, and help their communities. It is vital that Whitehall devolves power and resources to the local people. Congress, we do not need big estates, but we do need politicians to be big enough to give local people a say once again over their housing needs. I move.  
*(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder? Formally. Thank you, worthy president.

*The motion was formally seconded.*

## **“RIGHT TO RENT” FOR OWNERS AND OCCUPIERS MOTION 244**

### **244. “RIGHT TO RENT” FOR OWNERS AND OCCUPIERS**

This Congress is asked to campaign for a “Right to Rent”

Owner occupiers who default on their mortgage payments through no fault of their own, and fall into mortgage arrears which may lead to eviction and homelessness, should have the right to remain in their homes under a rental agreement with the mortgage lender.

NORFOLK PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. V. THOMAS (London): I am proud to represent the people of Norwich as a Labour City Councillor. It was announced recently that 74 families in Norfolk have been saved from the plight of repossession of their property and eviction by the former Labour government's mortgage rescue scheme. In the future, mortgage interest rates will rise and additional measures now need to be instigated to protect the thousands of families up and down the country who will find themselves in this situation. A right to rent would mean that mortgage repayments will be suspended until such time as the borrower is able to restart them. Government would also need to amend the housing benefit or local housing allowance rules to enable the householder to claim benefit during this period and remain in their home. Any repossession action will be frozen and equity will remain in the property for the short term, avoiding the property being sold off at auction at a knockdown price. The redistribution of wealth always seems to go one way as the wealthy are able to add these auctioned properties to their property portfolios, often for buy to let. My heart sinks when I come across a sale by auction sign as it indicates hard-working families through no fault of their own are losing their family homes.

Why is it that time and time again the powers that be focus only on the financial cost and not the human cost? The poor continue to suffer. We are all in it together. When the bankers fell on hard times I do not recall any of them having their homes reposessed, and them being evicted. We are all familiar with the saying, "Home is where the heart is." A house is not just bricks and mortar, it is a home and homes make up our communities. Evicted families, if they are lucky, move in with family or friends, go into bed and breakfast or other rented accommodation, maybe one of those buy to let properties sold off at auction at a knockdown price. Children suffer in all of this, uprooted from their familiar family home, friends, and local community. If suitable alternative accommodation has not been found they may have to go into temporary care. If they are fortunate enough to be with their family in rented accommodation, there may be no money for carpets and curtains; if they have had to move school, no money for their new school uniform. I could go on as the detrimental effect on families and children is endless. Congress, let's end this needless chain of misery. I move. *(Applause)*

SIS. W. WHITTINGTON (London): This motion caught my attention as it is a thought that has crossed my mind many times over the years, why can't lenders turn landlord? According to the Council of Mortgage Lenders there were 36,300 repossessions in 2010. This may not be the highest levels that we have ever seen but to those who are in difficulties and losing their family home it is devastating. Shelter, the homeless charity, has received a record number of calls to its homeowner helpline from people who are facing a daily battle to manage their finances as they are being squeezed by a vicious combination of rising living costs and wage freezes. They state that the number of people who are struggling to pay their mortgage is up by 78% over the past year. With the looming probability of interest rate rises and ever-increasing

redundancies, more families will be pushed over the edge into the spiral of debt, repossession, and potential homelessness. In October last year the Government cut the rate for its support for mortgage interests for people on benefits, which includes Jobseekers Allowance from 6.08 down to 3.75 in line with the Bank of England rates but, remember, many families have mortgages on fixed rates which could be considerably higher leaving a financial gap yet again.

There may be an answer. Why can't mortgage lenders become landlords to families who through no fault of their own fall on hard times, maybe through redundancy or illness? Obviously, this would have to be well thought out and carefully set up so as not to be abused but some of the long-term benefits could be shorter waiting lists for social housing, less benefits being paid to greedy private landlords for extortionate rents, and let's not forget the personal and emotional savings that can be achieved by not uprooting children from their school and friends, not having to find new doctors and dentists and, more importantly, not having to move away from family and friends who act as support networks during these depressing and stressful times. Please support this motion, which is asking for a right to remain in your home under a rental agreement with the mortgage lender. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Wendy.

## **AFFILIATION TO THE NATIONAL LABOUR HOUSING GROUP MOTION 245**

### **245. AFFILIATION TO THE NATIONAL LABOUR HOUSING GROUP**

This Congress agrees to affiliate to and support the Socialist Society, the National Labour Housing Group which is spearheading a campaign for affordable council housing and secure tenancies.

SOLO BRANCH  
London Region

(*Referred*)

BRO. T. FLANAGAN (London): As far as I am concerned, housing is a basic human right. The last government admittedly betrayed us on that issue. One year they managed to build 2,000; back in the good old days Canvey used to build 2,000 houses in six months. What a disgrace. I was born in a council house, brought up in a prefab, and still live in a council house. I could have bought it but wouldn't. I have principles. (*Applause*) Quite clearly, the record of the last government, the Labour government, pink Tories, whatever, blue Labour, needs to be confronted. There is a group called the Labour Housing Group and to be a member of it you have to be a member of the Labour Party, quite obviously; it is the socialist society. Recently it had a meeting in the House of Commons with major players like Karen Buck, Ken Livingstone, and various others, and I could read you out its terms and conditions of membership and whatever, but I think the CEC have seen it and I am not one for reading speeches. I think you need to look at who is involved with it, people like Karen Buck, Ken Livingstone, and Islington are in it, and Gary Doolan is involved in it. It is about campaigning to actually get some council houses built in this country. Personally, I think if they built 100,000 a year they would just be starting off, but it needs to be done. Buying council houses was never an option to me and I think that we need to seriously consider affiliating to this group. As you can gather by my

garbled speech it is not my area of expertise but I am moving and highly recommend to Congress that we affiliate to this group. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Terry.

BRO. S. GAGLANI (London): Congress, the Labour Housing Group is a socialist society affiliated to the Labour Party. Now the Labour Party is in opposition so the Labour Housing Group now faces the challenge of helping the Labour Party to renew its policies in readiness for the next general election. London Housing Group has its members from councillors, housing professionals, tenants, and trade unions across the country. The Labour Housing Group has helped to develop and promote relationships between a socialist society, to lead the development of housing policy with planning, transport, education, economic regeneration, and environmental and energy policy development. Now the Labour Housing Group needs support and help from our GMB union so I request, Congress, please support this motion. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Anyone want to come in on the debate?

BRO. T. EARL (Northern): Normally, I run away when you want me to speak but I want to speak, and this is a personal thing, on 244, right to rent or to buy. Now then, I own six houses and, put my hand to my heart, I can guarantee now that every one who rents my house out are GMB members. I make sure of that. For anybody to say ruthless landlords, for my sake and the good landlords I am one of them. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Anyone else? No? Thank you. I ask David Noble of the CEC to reply on Motions 241 and 245. Thank you, David.

BRO. D. NOBLE (CEC, Public Services): The CEC is asking for reference on both Motions 241 and 245. Congress, the CEC fully understands the frustration, anger, and concern at the lack of affordable housing in Britain today. Over five million people are on waiting lists today waiting for an opportunity to have what is a basic right, the right to have a roof over your head. The effect of the Conservative Government's decisions over many years on housing and their non-action has now come home to roost. Make no mistake, Britain has a housing crisis which is not going to be helped in any way by the present Government's Localism Bill, indeed it will make it worse. Congress, the CEC asks you to refer Motion 241 because, although we fully support the sentiments, we believe the action points contained in the motion are unachievable. Whilst we fully understand the sentiment behind the motion, the stark reality is that for some people a return to local control on housing would mean they would be under the control of the Liberal Democrats or, even worse, the Tories.

The CEC would also ask you to refer Motion 245 because GMB already affiliates to defend council housing and we ask that the motion is passed to the Finance Committee to see if there is any value that could come from this proposal to affiliate to the National Labour Housing Group. Please refer Motions 241 and 245 for the reasons I have given. *(Applause)*



THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David. Does Birmingham accept reference? (Agreed) Congress agree? (Agreed) Thank you. Does London Region accept reference? (Agreed) Congress agree? (Agreed) Thank you.

*Motion 241 was REFERRED.*

*Motion 245 was REFERRED.*

THE PRESIDENT: I call the vote on 242 and 244. All those in favour please show? Anyone against? They are carried.

*Motion 242 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 244 was CARRIED.*

## **SOCIAL POLICY: TRANSPORT**

### **UNAFFORDABLE PUBLIC TRANSPORT COSTS MOTION 252**

#### **252. UNAFFORDABLE PUBLIC TRANSPORT COSTS**

This Congress is deeply concerned at the ever rising cost of public transport, and its devastating affects on many sections of the community, the low paid, pensioners, children and the unwaged, even short journeys nowadays are either a luxury or non-existent.

Congress agrees that this is a matter that needs highlighting by both the Labour Party and the TUC and also needs to be reflected in Wage Bargaining.

HENDON BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. B. BENHAM (London): In moving this resolution I base my argument on transport costs to and from and in London but all colleagues will be aware that the unacceptable high cost of public transport is a national issue. This is one area where Cameron is right by saying we are all in it together. Since Boris Johnson was elected Mayor of London single bus fares have gone up by 44% and will rise further. Tube fares have gone up by as much as 28% and some types of tickets have been withdrawn making that increase even higher. The increase in the cost of travel cards is between 13% and 25%. These massive and unnecessary increases could not have come at a worst time with job losses, short-time working, pay freezes, cuts, and the massive increase in inflation; but, colleagues, percentages do not tell the true story. In actual cash terms the extra pound or two pounds on an everyday trip to and from work, or to the shops, hurts everybody but more especially the poorest. Earlier this year the train operating companies were allowed to increase commuting fares above the rate of inflation, this despite the fact that they receive millions of pounds in subsidies from the taxpayer. At a time when unemployment is rising, the means to travel to seek and undertake work is essential but these rising costs prevent that. Season tickets from the South Coast into London cost over £5,000 and that has to be paid from your net pay, not gross.

Colleagues, this is an issue which affects every strand of society; it affects the elderly, parents, children, workers, professionally and socially. So far I have dealt with the

effects these outrageous transport costs have on people, but the effect on the environment is possibly as bad. How can we profess to get people out of cars and onto public transport when that public transport is unaffordable? We have some of the highest fares in Europe and some of the most crowded roads. This situation must be addressed by the TUC and the Labour Party as a matter of urgency and certainly before the Coalition withdraws the national bus pass provision. Congress, please support. I move. *(Applause)*

SIS. S. HURLEY (London): First-time speaker, first-time delegate. *(Applause)* President, Congress, I am seconding this motion as it affects everyone from all over the UK, including myself. As a user of National Rail and the London transport system it is vital that I make you all aware of the ever-increasing cost of public transport. Over the last three years, a massive increase of 86% has been pushed on the transport for London commuters and in the current economic climate I feel these rises are unacceptable due to the fact that we are suffering from pay freezes, wage cuts, and high unemployment. I believe that my views are shared by the Shadow Transport Minister, Maria Eagle, when she stated to the BBC in January this year that the Government may have given train companies freedom to fiddle the fare rises by reintroducing something which the Labour Government put a stop to, flexibility. National Rail season tickets have now gone up on average from 5.8% to 13% and in January 2012 the price rise formula changes to retail price index plus 3% across the network. These rises will not just affect the working public, the poor, the unemployed, but will also have an effect on the public who use support groups, like Broken Rainbow, Age Concern, and many more. I believe if we are not careful, due to the ever-growing gap between our pay and the fare increases, we could all end up walking to work just like our founder, Will Thorne, many years ago. You can now see why this Congress should warn the Labour Party and the TUC to *Mind the Gap* and promote wage bargaining with every employer. I call on Congress, please, please, help me in supporting this motion. President, Congress, I second. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: It wasn't too bad, was it, Sarah? She has been terrified since early this morning, and we have kept her waiting all day. Well done. *(Applause)*

## **APPRENTICES MOTION 253**

### **253. APPRENTICES**

This Congress notes that apprentices receive no concessionary travel unlike students and school pupils. Congress urges the Coalition Government to introduce a national scheme of concessionary travel so that apprentices are recognised as equal citizens for the purposes of concessionary travel and to enable them to afford to travel to work.

DURHAM COUNTY LOCAL AUTHORITY BRANCH  
*Northern Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. R. SPEAKMAN (Northern): Congress, the worst thing that the Tory-led Coalition Government could have done was taken away educational maintenance allowances for young people. EMAs help pay for travel to college. Recipients were students from lower income households. Congress, this Coalition is writing off young

people. Apprentices are not part of any current concessionary travel scheme, the matter is left to local determination and we know what that means. Apprentices just do not enter into the debates, they are not a priority. A system of concessionary travel for apprentices would take away the worry of travelling expenses for these workers and enable them to undergo a mixture of college and practical training.

Congress, in the current economic climate we are faced with an ailing jobs market so it is important that we support young workers in whatever way we can by including apprentices in a national scheme. This will encourage apprentices to use public transport for travel to work as well as easing the burden of travel costs for them, and by giving help with travel costs we also take some of the burden off hard-pressed families who may be struggling to pay bills and make ends meet. Let's treat apprentices like equal citizens. Please support. I move. *(Applause)*

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

*The motion was formally seconded.*

## **REDUCED CAR PARKING CHARGES IN CITY CENTRES MOTION 254**

### **254. REDUCED CAR PARKING CHARGES IN CITY CENTRES**

This Congress calls on the GMB to mount a campaign both locally and nationally for the introduction of reduced parking charges in city centres to encourage city centre shopping, particularly in large cities where there is competition from out of centre shopping centres.

SHEFFIELD LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF BRANCH  
*Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. G. WARWICK (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): One of the phenomena in recent years has been the increasing rundown appearance in many of our towns and cities. There is increasing evidence of how many towns and cities in the UK are suffering from empty shop premises. A national survey was carried out by the Local Government Association in 2009 which found that some towns have as many as 29% empty units, four out of five authorities were reporting an increase in empty properties, and high streets run the risk of becoming ghost towns unless urgent action is taken to fill empty premises. Empty shops can become hotspots for antisocial behaviour and could cause high streets to fall into a spiral of decline. High streets symbolise the times we are living in, is that not true? This and a wide range of other evidence provide a clear indication of a decline in many towns and cities. At the same time, there is an increasing number of large out-of-town shopping centres, such as the Metro Centre in Newcastle, Meadowhall in Sheffield, and the Trafford Centre in Manchester. One of the main differences between shopping in a city centre and in an out-of-town shopping centre is car parking charges. It is normal for car park fees in a city centre to be £5 for two or three hours, whereas in shopping centres it is free. The choice for many of us is obvious.

You may ask why does this matter. Trade unions are campaigning organisations who believe in equality of opportunity and social justice. Out-of-town centres are difficult

to get to by public transport and many pensioners and members on low pay without cars have to rely on city centre shopping, but as increased parking charges drive people away from city centres this leaves derelict areas with many closed units, and those that remain offer little choice to customers. As well as poor choice there is also the increasing problem of antisocial behaviour. Reduced car parking charges could change the emphasis on the choices people make, create vibrant city centres once more, and restore the quality of life in our urban centres. Surely this is a desirable objective for all of us and we would ask the GMB, the CEC, to campaign for the very objectives that I have stated, to try and rebuild city centres and towns. Thanks very much. Please support. *(Applause)*

SIS. M. TAYLOR (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, many of us will remember the days of shopping in our local towns and cities before the Americanisation of our society. Big out-of-town shopping centres with masses of free parking have decimated our town and city centres, and the lure of posh shops where a pair of jeans costs a week's wages. Local councils have stood by and allowed town and city centres to decay with many local businesses folding unable to compete with big business and the loss of customers.

Colleagues, the GMB has always been a campaigning union, fighting for the working class people, the very people who rely on their local markets and businesses supplying locally sourced produce and employing staff in the local community. Many councils see town and city centre parking as an easy funding stream without a thought of the effects of this on local pensioners and low income families who can no longer afford to park in towns for their shopping. Reduced or free car parking in town and city centres can help revive the centres and encourage people to return. The effects of this would help local businesses and allow local people to have a choice when shopping. Congress, I ask you to support this motion for reduced car parking charges for the benefit of all our members. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Maureen.

## **REDUCTION OF VAT ON PETROL AND DIESEL MOTION 256**

### **256. REDUCTION OF VAT ON PETROL AND DIESEL**

This Congress calls upon you to lobby Government to reduce the amount of VAT and Fuel Tax on petrol and diesel. The cost of travelling on public transport or even in your own car especially in rural areas has now become overly expensive to be able to travel the necessary journeys that are required for day to day work and living, let alone social use due to the excessive taxes.

BRAINTREE & BOCKING BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. D. RIGBY (London): I ask this Congress to lobby hard on this motion as it is a very emotive subject. Many people who do not have cars think that it does not affect them, but it does. Where does all their food and other produce come from? It comes via road: fuel. People travel on public transport: fuel. Smaller garages have a stranglehold on people who live in the country and charges may vary where people have to pay for fuel, hence VAT. We are being robbed. Please excuse the pun but it

is highway robbery. Even Dick Turpin wore a bloody mask, but the Government are proud to rob us. Fuel is a necessity. We all use it and need it. VAT must not be put on fuel. Congress, I urge you to support this motion. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

**BRO. D. RAWLINGS (London):** First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Madam President, Congress, petrol and diesel prices have hit a new high. VAT and tax on fuel combined with soaring inflation is hitting people in their pockets and at the pumps making the squeeze on living standards even worse. The astonishing amount of VAT and tax on petrol and diesel has created a storm with a knock-on effect that is hurting families, motorists, hauliers, and businesses across the country. Petrol and diesel costs are pushing up prices in the high street, at the supermarkets, public transport, and services across the country, making it impossible for families to see a glimpse of a healthy standard of living. Families and motorists are struggling to keep their cars on the road unable to afford to fill up their vehicles due to soaring fuel prices. The increase in VAT and the huge rise in fuel prices have tarnished the potential of small businesses, putting small businesses under huge pressures, and severely affecting key sectors needed for economic growth. Rural areas are hit harder by the soaring fuel prices, squeezing the livelihoods of families, motorists, and businesses. We need an urgent reduction of VAT on fuel to give relief to families, hauliers, businesses, and motorists across the country. It is time we got a fair deal at the pumps. It is time for action. It is time to unite together and make the Government do the right thing. Congress, I urge you to support this motion. I second. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## **ROAD BUILDING MOTION 257**

### **257. ROAD BUILDING**

This Congress urges the Coalition Government to invest more robustly and directly in landmark road-building schemes that would provide a much needed boost to regional economies and could be used in conjunction with other investment schemes that would reopen up disused railways, as well as improving cycle and walkways as a means of improving the economy and environment of the UK.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY LA BRANCH  
*Northern Region*

*(Carried)*

**BRO. C. HENWOOD (Northern):** President, Congress, a lobby against road building schemes has grown over the last decade. A combination of government policy and intensive work by those opposed to road building has put the issue further down the agenda. However, landmark road-building schemes now and again help reshape and regenerate the economy. Congress, we have thousands of people out of work because the state and the banks have pulled up the funding drawbridge. In the Northern Region we have a number of important trunk roads that definitely need upgrading. The A1 especially would need about £120m to finish off the journey from north of Newcastle to the border. Then, similarly, going west to the A69 and A66, both of these important roads need to be upgraded. The economic benefits would be formidable. Journey times would be cut. Costs would reduce. Employment and spending would rise. With road traffic competing for overcrowded land space it is

essential that upgrading the road networks is reviewed. Congress, the importance of travel also covers what we do with disused railways and the increasing number of walk and cycle ways in the UK. Congress, we have a golden opportunity to improve our economy and our environment. Let's not blow it. Please support. I move.  
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Colin. Do we have a seconder? Formally. Thank you very much.

*The motion was formally seconded.*

THE PRESIDENT: Anyone wish to come in on the debate? No? I call Cathy Murphy from the CEC to speak on Motion 254?

SIS. C. MURPHY (CEC, Commercial Services): President, Congress, speaking on Motion 254, which we are seeking to qualify as follows. Congress, the motion calls for a cut in city centre car parking charges to support businesses. The CEC broadly supports initiatives designed to aid businesses in the current economic climate. However, GMB policy is to support public transport. As such the CEC wants it recognised that initiatives to improve the provision of public transport to city centres should be top priority. However, the CEC recognises that many people rely on cars for practical reasons. There is very limited access to reliable affordable public transportation for people who live in remote or rural areas. People with limited mobility or young children find it easier to use their cars to go shopping so the CEC supports this motion with the qualification that our priority is for affordable reliable accessible public transport. The CEC also notes that many local authorities are responding to central government cuts by trying to raise more revenue through parking charges. The CEC is mindful that initiatives to reduce parking charges should not endanger vital public services or the jobs of GMB members. Congress, the CEC ask you to support the motion with the qualification I have outlined. (Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Cath. Does Yorkshire Region accept the qualification? (Agreed) Thank you very much. With that can I put 252, 253, 254, 256, and 257 to the vote? All those in favour please show? Anyone against? They are carried.

*Motion 252 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 253 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 254 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 256 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 257 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: I just have a couple of announcements. The Retired Members Association raffle raised £1,996.85. Could everyone please collect their prize from the stand? Thank you. My sincere thanks to all of you: the Jimmy Knapp Cancer Fund raised £1,052.20p. Paul has agreed to make it £2,000. It is a very worthy cause so I thank all of you. (Applause) I would like to thank Barbara, Brenda, Edna, Fran upstairs who is a visitor, and Ann, for giving up their lunch hour to do it. Thank you all very much. Colleagues, I am going to hand the chair over to my colleague while I go and collect myself.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, we now go on to item 11, Social Policy, Welfare Rights & Services.

## **SOCIAL POLICY: WELFARE RIGHTS & SERVICES**

### **OPPOSITION ON THE ATTACKS ON WELFARE MOTION 258**

#### **258. OPPOSITION ON THE ATTACKS ON WELFARE**

This Congress notes:

1. That the Conservative led government has instituted a programme of cuts to welfare benefits that total £15.9 billion.
2. That the Institute for Fiscal Studies analysis confirms that the impact of the cuts disproportionately hits those on lower incomes or who are out of work especially the proposed cuts and changes to housing benefit.
3. The government's proposal to merge all benefits into one 'universal credit'.
4. The idea of a Citizens Income, a unconditional income guaranteed by the state.

This Congress believes:

5. That the Conservative led government's proposals are ideologically motivated.
6. That the impact of the cuts to welfare will further widen the gap between rich and poor and will make some city centres no go areas for those on low incomes.
7. That rent caps and rent controls would be a fairer and more effective solution to the rising housing benefit bill.
8. That the caps imposed upon benefits are arbitrary and unfair. The caps applied will also only make a bad situation worse for many people.
9. That cuts and restrictions on benefits make the working class pay for a crisis we did not cause.
10. That any reform of our welfare system should be in the interests of societies most vulnerable and done in a way that realises the founding universal ideals of the welfare state.
11. That this government is incapable of doing is and that its 'reforms' of welfare are designed with one goal in end; to reduce expenditure with no concern for the human consequence.
12. That the proposal for a universal credit, as it is currently envisaged, should be opposed.
13. That instead a British Citizen should be provided with a guaranteed minimum citizen's income which would strengthen the welfare state and realise its founding ideals. The specifics of such a policy and its implementation would need further consideration but the principle should be supported.

This Congress resolves too:-

14. Oppose this government's efforts to dismantle the welfare state through 'reform' and cutting back welfare spending.
15. Organise opposition to this government's agenda among those most affected groups as well as supporting existing campaigns.
16. Actively campaign for the introduction of a Citizens Income

*(Referred)*

BRO. M. JACKSON (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, Labour for all their faults, which were many in their years of government, set up many schemes to improve the quality of life for many of the most vulnerable people in our society. Family Tax Credit, for example, is and was a fantastic innovation which helps families to at least have an income that allows them to live above the poverty line. Although Labour was not successful in achieving its goal of eradicating child poverty in Britain, the Family Tax Credit system went a long way to getting hundreds of thousands of our most vulnerable citizens out of poverty. Housing benefit has also helped families to have affordable housing.

Ed Balls acknowledged Labour's failure to build and provide social housing as much as it should. This has left us in a position where again the poorest people in our society have to rent privately. These private landlords often charge rents much higher than local authorities and so reducing or removing housing benefit will lead to further hardship, or in the most severe cases homelessness. Scrapping EMA of £35 per week, which supported 16-18 year olds through their early years of adult education, has led to further hardship again in the most vulnerable families in our society.

Congress, we see all this happening at the same time as our senior bankers are receiving multimillion pounds in bonuses, fat cat directors in our utility and energy companies receiving multimillion pound salaries, and our own directors and chief executives of public services, local authorities, and hospitals, earning fat cat wages. Congress, we are also about to add to the list of fat cats by allowing our GPs to control the finances in the NHS. GPs are private employers and are not governed by the rules of the rest of the NHS. Following the Labour-led changes in the GP pay structure in 2004 and 2005, it was highlighted in much of the press that these GPs became fat cats. Their salaries soared despite them not providing as good a service as prior to the restructure. Delegates, if the NHS reforms go through then not only will many NHS services be privatised, the GPs will become the bankers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Congress, please support this motion so that we place more emphasis on this Government to retain the good work that the last government did to support the most vulnerable people in our society. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Martin. Secunder? Formally. Thank you.

*The motion was formally seconded.*

## **COMPULSORY WORK PLACEMENTS MOTION 259**

### **259. COMPULSORY WORK PLACEMENTS**

This Congress instructs the Union to monitor the coalition government's proposed plan to get the long term unemployed into compulsory work placements. If necessary the GMB should be prepared to name and shame employers, private or public sector, who use this as a form of cheap labour, at the expense of real jobs, to increase profits or to limit the effects of the government spending.



*(Carried)*

SIS. A. SEALEY (London): Vice-President, first-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* The Government aims to get the long-term unemployed into compulsory work placements for two years under the guise of training. This is a strategic plan to replace experienced workers with cheap labour. Employers will no longer need to recruit, why should they? After all, they just bring in a trainee for two years and get another, and another. Congress, they have us believe that the unemployed are people who have never worked and have become dependent on the state handouts, but in actual fact most are experienced people who have worked for many years, or graduates, or like myself recently been condemned. Last week I spoke to staff at the job centre and they told me that many of them will soon be out of work because when the universal benefit comes into effect all the unemployed people who have been unemployed for a year or more will be placed on these schemes for two years, therefore reducing their staffing levels. Imagine the financial hardship and stress and strain this will place on people, especially those with families and commitments; it will reduce them to extreme poverty. Do you know that as a result of this financial sanction to cut the unemployment benefit for three months, housing and council tax benefit will also be stopped under current legislation? Tomorrow it could be you. Congress, let us monitor this shameful demolition; name, shame, and condemn the employers who administer this unjustified practice, and support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

SIS. L. GAYLE (London): Vice-President, Congress, compulsory work placement, what is it? I will you what it is. This is another demonstration of exploitation by the ConDems to create cheap labour at the expense of the working class hence widening the gap between the rich and the poor. Then, guess what, they will say unemployment figures are down under their government. CWP, the Government call it Compulsory Work Placement. I call it Con Workers Parliament. Make no mistake, this is what has been fed to employers who will see this as a *buy one, get one free*. Congress, we must condemn this devious practice and put a stop to it now. I second this motion. *(Applause)*

## **SOCIAL MOTION 260**

### **260. SOCIAL**

This Congress deplores the attack by the Government on the most vulnerable in our society. The GMB does not condone any fraud in the system of benefits but believes the radical approach being taken at present will affect our members who rely on benefits to make ends meet.

We call upon the relevant GMB bodies to lobby and campaign against proposed cuts to benefits.

R35 ROCESTER JCB BRANCH  
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

*(Carried)*

SIS. C. BARNETT (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, first-time delegate. (*Applause*) This Congress deplores the attack by the Coalition Government on the most vulnerable in our society. As usual, the politicians endeavour to extract funding from wherever. This keeps them in office or just a step away from it. If you are in opposition, then there are empires to build and in political terms it is a win-win situation but, of course, in a win-win situation there are always losers. My fear is that the losers are those who need most, the genuine cases, the unemployed, the uneducated, the elderly, the infirm or disabled. The most vulnerable in our society could well fall into this *lose-lose* category: they have no voice, they have no choice. To quote George Osborne, Chancellor: “The Government intends to realise the goal for a fair, simple, efficient tax benefit and pension system that rewards work savings and personal responsibility.” By the very nature of this quote, never mind scamming the honest man or woman down on their luck or circumstances, people could then be severely penalised or jeopardised. Forms alone tend to be complex and overwhelming making them impossible to fill out without help and assistance that is often not forthcoming. The introduction of the child tax credit, a system applauded as a major new Labour highlight applied universally regardless of income, was accepted as being beneficial to all. Now it is under threat and is being diluted in benefits. Day care charges for the needy, disabled, and elderly, are escalating from £2 a day up to £73. Domiciliary, residential, and respite care, are all being means tested resulting in £120 and upwards a week being charged, which is much too exorbitant and must come out of pensions, benefits, and savings that cannot match the charge. Then, hey-ho, the service slows down under the guise of no longer used or needed resulting in qualified, dedicated workers, and as you are aware 3,000 Southern Cross workers, losing their jobs and social isolation for the most vulnerable in our society. This service provides a vital social integration, a break for the carers, and a lifeline to rescue some from isolation for the rest of their lives. Don’t forget that filtering services out to the private sector has not always proven either economically or socially adept. Checks on private sector agencies are miniscule or non-existent, which could lead to severe deficiencies and neglect, again to the most vulnerable who have no voice and have no choice.

What we need are services for all that need them. What we require is a caring system that is not governed by income but by dignity and requirement. What we need is someone to give a damn, not test our means. What we need is care and service at the point of referral. The GMB does not condone any fraud in the system of benefits but believes that the radical approach taken at present will affect our members who rely on benefits to make ends meet. We call upon the relevant GMB bodies to lobby and campaign against proposed cuts to benefits and services. Lord Hutton, you really have something to answer for. Congress, I urge you to campaign for our services, our benefits, and our jobs. Please support. I move. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well done, Cheryl. Secunder? Is that formally seconded? Thank you.

*The motion was formally seconded.*

## **UNCLAIMED BENEFITS MOTION 261**

## 261. UNCLAIMED BENEFITS

This Congress believes that the Government departments should tell all claimants exactly what benefits to which a person is entitled to.

Each year approximately ten billion pounds is unclaimed, yet the Government is cutting benefits for the most needy. They talk about benefit fraud, when they actually fraudulently take money out of the pockets of the working men and women's pockets.

HULL HEATING WORKERS  
Midland & East Coast Region

*(Carried)*

BRO. M. MARGINI (Midland & East Coast): First-time speaker. *(Applause)* What happens to the money that is unclaimed? This is a question we need to be asking. Around £10.5bn a year goes unclaimed. Some of the benefits unclaimed are tax credit: four out of five low-paid workers without children do not collect tax credit worth at least £38 a week. Housing benefit: half of the working households that are entitled to housing benefit, worth on average £37.60 a week, do not claim. Pension credit: 1.7 million pensioners are thought not to be claiming pension credit which could boost their income by an average of £31 a week. Tax benefit: up to three million households are thought to be missing out on council tax benefit. These are just a few but more benefits go unclaimed.

Why are people not claiming their benefits? There are a number of reasons. Some are not aware of what benefits they can claim as no one actually tells them. The Government seem intentionally to make their benefit application forms confusing to simply prevent people from completing them. Many pensioners are too proud and see this as a government handout and prefer to tough it out by using their savings or just surviving on low income. A great number of people do not have a bank account which makes it difficult to pay benefits to them. So, the next question has to be, how can we change this and how can we help many vulnerable people? I am asking the GMB to lobby and campaign the Government to simplify the system as benefits are not government handouts. Congress, the taxes paid by the UK citizens is the reason this benefit exists for the good of all UK citizens. The Government talks about ending poverty and yet does not provide an adequate income due to difficulty in claiming and support. Claiming the benefits that people are entitled to it can make significant differences to the household income. Comrades, I urge you to support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

BRO. J. EVANS (Midland & East Coast): Comrades, this motion merely asks for everyone to be given advice to ensure they claim all the benefits to which they are due. We are not asking for any guidance on how to play the system; if we were, we would surely need to look no further than the House of Lords' expenses system. *(Applause)* Despite Vince Cable having tried to tell us that our economy is now 6% poorer, we have also heard this week that were the greedy bankers and large corporations to be paying their true taxes the public purse would be better off to the tune of over £100,000m. With that money there would be no reason for swingeing cuts and for spending reviews. This is where the real deficit lies. Surely, the answer is simple, everyone should pay what they owe and receive all that they are due. I ask you to support this motion. *(Applause/standing ovation)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well done, Jason.

## **HOUSING MOTION 262**

### **262. HOUSING**

This Congress agrees that we cannot overlook the fact that the previous government in all of its 13 years did not tackle the housing problem as it should have.

However, the current proposals by the Coalition Government to cap benefits will create distress for millions of people and none more so than the cap on Housing Benefit. This is an ideologically policy designed to socially engineer the landscape of the UK.

It will split families. It will remove children from schools. It will drive people away from their place of work. It will create ghettos. It will cause untold hardship. Housing charities have forecast tens of thousands of homeless but Ministers still press on with this policy. Far from being in it together, this government is proving that the most vulnerable in society are beyond their concern.

GMB will not defend those who abuse benefits but it has no truck with the right wing press who class benefit recipients as scroungers.

This union must campaign to ensure the full restoration of housing benefits.

HOME COUNTIES BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. B. DUFFIELD (London): President, Congress, social housing is a vital part of this country's infrastructure. It creates dignity, self-assurance, and commitment to take part in society. Congress, the last Labour government, despite repeated reminders from the trade union Movement in general and the GMB in particular, saw fit to their eternal shame not to address the critical shortage of social housing. They did, however, maintain a reasonable housing benefit policy to ensure decent housing could be maintained.

Then there is the Tory press, The Sun, the Daily Mail, and the Daily Telegraph, who claimed that the recipients of housing benefits are work dodgers, benefit cheats, or scroungers. Then there is Rupert Murdoch and his Cameron puppet, so Cameron must listen, as must Osborne, never mind the facts, never mind the consequences, as Murdoch says, "Sort the scroungers out and cap housing benefits." "Okay," says Dave. "As quick as you like," says George. So we get a policy with a cap on housing benefit, which will affect people on moderate, low, or no income, a definitive government policy with no mitigation or remedy for those who will suffer by it. Who benefits from the benefits? Pensioners, the disabled, carers, low income families, they suffer because of the deliberate policy of not building social homes. Only one in eight housing benefit claimants is unemployed; so much for Murdoch's claims about scroungers. The GMB will not support fraudulent claims but recognises that being unemployed most certainly does not make someone a scrounger.

Colleagues, this policy is designed to socially engineer the landscape of the United Kingdom. I remind you of the Westminster housing scandal of the early 1990s where Shirley Porter sought to gerrymander large areas of the borough to ensure electoral

success for the Tories. She fled to Israel in 1994 during a legal inquiry but she was surcharged £42m. Cameron is seeking to do this on a national scale but using Parliament to legalise it. Congress, people in work will have to move from their area and that will create unemployment and a different benefit claim. Children will be forced to move schools, leave friends, and have to restart their education. Families will eventually have to split up.

Colleagues, if you thought Thatcher's policies were evil, just look at Cameron's, there is no comparison. This policy is an ideological attack on the disadvantaged groups of society and also affects the more able who wish to make something of their life, and that of their children. Congress, when "being in it together" means the unprivileged being together in a ghetto and Cameron and Murdoch dining at the Ritz, we know something is wrong. Congress, please support. I move. (*Applause*)

BRO. M. LANCASTER (London): I am a first-time speaker and delegate to Congress. (*Applause*) Congress, we must fight the current proposal by this Coalition Government to cap housing benefit. The Department of Work & Pensions plan to use the Welfare Reform Bill to attack this vital benefit for so many. More than 670,000 council and housing association tenants will suffer as a result of having their housing benefit slashed, if it is deemed the home they live in is too large for their needs. This will not take into consideration how long they have lived in the property. Families will have to pack up and move, breaking up entire communities and splitting families, and support networks. Children will be uprooted from their places of education, and moved away from grandparents and friends. For some this could also mean moving away from another parent. Ethnic minorities and single parents will be disproportionately hit by this ruthless Coalition proposal. The long-term unemployed will also be heavily impacted by these cuts, potentially increasing social problems within our communities. The purpose of housing benefit is to prevent homelessness. These cuts go against such a purpose.

The National Housing Federation has warned that plans to push thousands of social tenants into smaller properties will backfire because of the shortage of suitable homes. Even the Department of Work & Pensions' only impact assessment admits that there is a mismatch between properties in the social sector and household sizes. Many social residents will be left with a reduction in their housing benefit with no prospect of moving to a smaller home. The Department of Work & Pensions' assessment further adds that people facing benefit cuts but unable to move to a smaller property may have to look further afield or move to the private sector. Congress, every tenant who moves to the private rental sector will cost the taxpayer even more in additional housing benefit. Why should thousands, including the most vulnerable in our big society, suffer because greedy bankers left a huge hole in our economy? Congress, I am proud to be seconding this motion. Please support it, too. Vice-President, Congress, thank you. (*Applause*)

## **CHILDREN PLACED IN CARE MOTION 265**

### **265. CHILDREN PLACED IN CARE**

This Congress is greatly concerned that thousands of children placed in care are being placed far from home, with figures being quoted that a third of 64,000 children in Local Authority care in England and Wales live outside their local area.

Not only do these long distance placements often traumatise children who are already damaged and vulnerable, the children are then open to criminality, drug abuse and sexual exploitation being so far away from their original home environment.

This Congress calls upon a closer study on why these children are being placed in areas far from their place of origin.

MID GLAMORGAN C&T BRANCH  
*South Western Region*

*(Referred)*

SIS. J. GRIFFITHS (South Western): Colleagues, this motion refers to the issue of many children who have been taken into care and placed outside their local area. This situation was highlighted at the beginning of the year in a study by several charities, such as Bernardo's, the Who Cares Trust, and Voice, who reported that a third of the 64,000 children in local authority care in England and Wales lived outside their local area. They recognise that long-distant placements often traumatise children who are already damaged and vulnerable. Thousands of children are currently being looked after in foster or children's homes hundreds of miles away from their local area. The charities are warning that these children are more vulnerable to criminality, drug abuse, and sexual exploitation. Those unfortunate children in care are often damaged from past abuse, neglect, or growing up with addicts as parents, and the shortage of local authority children's homes stems from the child abuse scandals in the 1970s and 1980s. There have been private care homes opened but often in rural locations where property is cheaper. Although the local authorities pay the private homes for the accommodation, the authorities are still responsible for the children and the social workers can struggle to maintain contact with these children if they are accommodated far away.

From April 2011 the Government has enforced a sufficiency of duty on local authorities to increase care provision for the children in their local areas. We are concerned that with the severe cuts the local authorities are going through not all councils will be able to meet the criteria and we will still see children placed outside their local area where they will lose contact with their original home environment. We agree that the CEC should refer this motion for further consideration on how effectively this new duty is being enforced and we appreciate that the new duty only came into force two months ago, but it is an issue that needs to be monitored. Colleagues, my local authority has just closed two children's homes condemning our children to a greater chance of being put in out-of-county placements. Thank you.  
*(Applause)*

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

*The motion was formally seconded.*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I now call on Dave Clements, of the CEC, to speak on Motions 258, 262, and 265. David.

BRO. D. CLEMENTS (CEC, Commercial Services): Congress, the CEC is asking you to refer Motions 258 and 265, and is supporting Motion 262 with a statement. On Motion 258, as far as we are aware a citizen's income has not previously been looked

at by the GMB. Following discussion with the TUC Social Policy Department they think it is timely to arrange a seminar on this matter. For this reason and because of the impending upheaval in the state benefit system, the CEC is asking you to refer this motion to allow further investigation.

Motion 262, Congress, clearly outlines the problems facing vulnerable people in relation to the housing crisis. The sale of council houses without a rebuild strategy has allowed unscrupulous landlords in the private sector to force up rents and the housing revenue has systematically failed to give money back to councils to invest in housing stock, despite accumulating millions of pounds in cash receipts. For tenants it means that rents are going up but instead of getting extra help tenants are threatened with benefit cuts. The Coalition cuts could put 200,000 people at risk of homelessness. Congress, GMB will continue to campaign in defence of council housing and against these cuts.

On Motion 265, a new duty was enforced on local authorities in April to increase care provision for children in their local areas. The CEC is asking you to refer this motion to allow further consideration of how effectively the new duty is being enforced. The moving branch may wish to contribute to this work.

In summary, Congress, the CEC is asking you to refer Motions 258 and 265, and the CEC is supporting Motion 262 with the statement I have given. Thank you.

*(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does Yorkshire Region accept reference back on 258? *(Agreed)* Does London Region accept the statement on Motion 262? *(Agreed)* Thank you. Does South Western Region accept reference back on Motion 265? *(Agreed)* Thank you. Then I call for the vote on 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, and 265. The CEC is accepting support on all these motions. All those in favour please show? Any against? They are all carried.

*Motion 258 was REFERRED.*

*Motion 259 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 260 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 261 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 262 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 265 was REFERRED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Malcolm. Can we now move into the next session, Social Policy: General?

## **SOCIAL POLICY: GENERAL**

### **BRITAIN'S FORESTS**

#### **COMPOSITE 20**

*(Covering Motion 227 and 228)*

227. SALE OF BRITAIN'S FORESTS *(London Region)*

228. FORESTRY SELL OFF *(South Western Region)*

## **BRITAIN'S FORESTS**

This Congress is concerned about the plans by the Government to dispose of half of the woodland overseen by the Forestry Commission by 2020; large amounts of forests would be sold. DEFRA is seeking to make massive budget savings.

It is a concern that the legislation which currently governs the treatment of 'ancient forests' such as the Forest of Dean is likely to be changed, giving private firms the right to cut down trees. These laws date back to the Magna Carta of 1215 and even some dating back further.

This Congress is totally opposed to the privatisation of the country's forests and calls on the CEC to campaign vigorously. Not only do we need to protect these ancient woodlands from private speculators, but we also need to ensure Britain's natural wildlife that inhabit these areas, many species already under threat, are protected. Once these precious areas are gone, in order to satisfy *and* excuse budget cuts, and put the hands of private ownership, these areas of natural beauty could be destroyed.

Congress calls upon the CEC to make sure a campaign is mounted against the proposals *and* fight the planned sell-off, not only to protect these areas of natural beauty for future generations. The GMB have members employed in this sector and jobs could be under threat.

*(Carried)*

BRO. I. BOUNDS (South Western): Colleagues, as this composite says, the plans by the Tory Government to sell state-owned forests in England have now been abandoned and on 17<sup>th</sup> February the Environment Minister, Caroline Spellman, announced that the consultation on the Forestry Commission was being shelved and that the Government would rethink the whole idea. Nevertheless, things are not as simple as this. The Government are still committed to reducing Defra's costs and whether the vast woodland and forestry estate in England will remain under the management of the Forestry Commission is debatable. We must recognise that the Government has the legal authority to sell up to 15% of the estate without going back to Parliament and it is possible that 100,000 acres could still be disposed of. It makes you wonder why they changed their mind. Did they think it may interfere with the local elections to be held in May? Did they think it may affect the stability of the Coalition: probably not. For whatever reason the plug was pulled, we can be sure that they will come back to it. Congress knows that this administration cannot be trusted to protect something that is not making a profit. They are more concerned about giving away the family jewels to big business, their friends, than to protect our forests and the workers who manage them. We need to keep a constant watch on government policy and the consultations that are supposed to be undertaken in order that our forests can be retained in their present state for future generations and also to protect the jobs of our members who work in this sector. I move. Thank you. *(Applause)*

SIS. C. HOLLAND (London): Firstly, I want to mention the children's homes. In Essex all our children's homes are going out and that is why all the children have to go all around the country. We are trying to fight it but it is hopeless; they are determined.

Anyway, back to my other motion. Congress, for now the Government have retracted its idea to sell Britain's forests, but for how long? It appears the



Conservatives want to get rid of everything. I should know. I am a local government worker. Our forests are now our country's asset, rich or poor the citizens of this country can use the forests. If they sell them, what open spaces do we have left? Are the parks and the country's coastline next? I am surprised by some of the Government's ideas. They want the people of this country to be fit, or fitter. Take these spaces away and what do we have left: run around our garden, if we have one, in ever-decreasing circles? I can only foresee problems. Why should we give up these spaces? What are the Tories about? It is all right for them, they can afford expensive gyms, but they are soulless places. Our country is beautiful and should be open for everybody. Everybody please go to the Twitter forestry panel at Defra.doie.gov.uk. Keep our forests public. I second this motion. (*Applause*)

## **RESTRUCTURING OF COASTGUARD AND MARITIME AGENCIES MOTION 229**

### **229. RESTRUCTURING OF COASTGUARD AND MARITIME AGENCIES**

This Congress condemns Government proposals to reduce the number of coastguard facilities by 50% which we believe will adversely affect the public's safety. We call upon all Trade Unions to condemn the cuts, as well as all GMB sponsored M.P.'s to lobby Parliament to raise this issue at the highest level.

C21 CAMBORNE BRANCH  
*Southern Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. L. MOORE (Southern): Coming from a county that is surrounded by the sea we are more aware than most of the hazards that can occur around our coastline. Drastically cutting the Coastguard Service in the name of modernisation can only result in the loss of lives. Our local coastguard station at Falmouth is the only one in the country that has trained staff to deal with the global maritime safety and distress system. The Coastguard Service has the duty of care to all British shipping no matter where they are in the world and any distress call initially comes through to Falmouth. Foreign shipping also prefers to channel Maydays through Falmouth to coordinate the rescues and pass on the details to local coastguards, be it Australia or South America. Falmouth has the largest search and rescue area in the UK covering 660,000 sq. miles and deals with up to 3,500 incidents a year. The British Coastguard Service also deals with and helps find missing people or animals that may have fallen over cliffs or were lost near the coastline, which foreign counterparts do not do. At present the station is operated 24 hours a day and has 26 trained staff. There are proposals to close the station at night and transfer the calls to as far away as Southampton, which would result in redundancies or the need to move. The remaining 10 staff would have to have changes in the shift patterns and terms and conditions of their employment. As an island nation we are dependent on the fulltime coastguards and volunteers who make our seas safe. Cheryl Murray, the South East Cornwall Conservative MP, had cause to be thankful for the Coastguard and Lifeboat Service when her husband failed to turn up on his fishing boat and was subsequently found dead on board. The GMB should urge sponsored MPs, especially the ones that have constituencies with a coastline, to put a stop to these cuts. Perhaps, David Cameron, instead of spending thousands on doing up Number 10, your Government should review the cuts that are going to cost lives. I ask Congress to support this motion. (*Applause*)

BRO. P. GOODACRE (Southern): These proposals from the Government to cut the MCA are just yet another example of their cruelty and injustice. It is also another example of their complete recklessness, incompetence, and complete disregard for safety and human life. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

### **PRIVATISATION OF ROYAL MAIL – SUPPORT FOR CWU MOTION 230**

#### **230. PRIVATISATION OF ROYAL MAIL – SUPPORT FOR CWU**

This Congress welcomes the fact that the attempts of Lord Mandelson to part privatise Royal Mail received no mandate from the Labour movement.

In the face of coalition plans to fully privatise Royal Mail the GMB recognises the need to win widespread public support for opposition to these latest proposals.

The GMB calls upon Labour MP's and all trade unions to play their part in assisting the CWU (Communication Workers' Union) in its campaign to stop privatisation of Royal Mail.

DENSO MARSTON BRANCH  
*Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. B. GOLDING (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): If we are to see into the future what a privatised mail service will bring we need look no further than Holland. Holland has four private mail companies and none of them make a profit. This is how the Dutch do it. Crates of mail are delivered to casual workers' homes where they sort them and deliver them on a set day, and it is not every day. Besides slashing the mail companies' overheads the system has the advantage from the management point of view that there is little danger of the postmen and women meeting each other to swap grievances or talk about joining a union. One Dutch post-woman described the private mail company she worked for: twice a week it drops off three or four crates of letters, magazines, and catalogues. She sorts and delivers fresh crates but during the wintertime the backlog was tough to clear. There were 62 full mail crates stacked up in her flat. How the company had not worked out that very few empty crates were coming back she could not work out. This postal worker earns about 5 euros an hour, although the legal minimum wage is between 8 and 9 euros. She has no contract, no sick pay, no pension, and no health insurance. These companies are able to offer such miserable conditions because of loopholes in the Dutch employment law. Guess who is looking at this model? Yes, Royal Mail. As a Government aide said yesterday, quoted in the FT, 40,000 jobs have to go. Why: so they can privatise it. We need to support the communication workers; yes, even when they strike, Vince. We have seen with the privatisation of the railways and utility industries that privatisation does not work and it costs more. Please support. *(Applause)*

BRO. J. SHIELD (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): It is important that today at this Congress we register our support for the CWU. This Government's main aim in the privatisation of Royal Mail is to hand over public assets to its rich friends in the City. Our "posties" deliver more mail to our front doors than they did five years ago despite falling staff numbers. Congress, it is clear that privatisation of the Royal Mail makes no sense. What they need now is a government and a management that are committed

to the long-term future of Royal Mail. The last thing they need is privatisation. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? No?

**ROYAL MAIL  
MOTION 231**

**231. ROYAL MAIL**

This Congress calls on the Royal Mail to return a Sorting Office to Liverpool.

Z15 BRANCH  
North West & Irish Region

(*Carried*)

BRO. J. BARTON (North West & Irish Region): First-time speaker, Chair, Congress. (*Applause*) Liverpool is now the only major city in the UK without its own Royal Mail sorting office. Why: because they were always at the forefront of industrial action in defending jobs and working conditions. Activists who were relocated to Warrington are already being victimised. Consider the situation last Christmas when cards were sent across Liverpool but arriving as late as January 20<sup>th</sup>. We know what relocation is about: it is an attack on the unions and as history has proved what has happened to them will happen to you tomorrow. This is the first move towards privatisation of Royal Mail. Please support this motion. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: James, I thought Toomey was back!

BRO. M. PRESHAW (London): I am an ex-postman. I was an activist on the UCW for many years. Let's not sell our Post Office service to the foreigners. It is not going to the greedy bankers in the UK; it is going to Germany and France. Please support this motion and protect the British postal worker. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Is there anyone else? Speak now.

SIS. A. McLAREN (CEC, Manufacturing): The CEC is supporting Composite 20 but wishes to qualify it as follows. As many of you remember, the request in this motion has been taken over by events. The Tory-led government's plans for selling state-owned forests in England have been abandoned for now. Following a huge public outcry the Department for Environment, Food, & Rural Affairs, or Defra to you and me, brought their consultation on selling off the forests to a premature close and also apologised for getting it wrong. This was a great result for all who had campaigned against these plans to strip our land of natural public resources and divide up the forests among the highest bidders. If only the Coalition could so easily see the folly of their ways in many of their other progressive plans. However, Defra has set up an independent panel on forestry to advise the Secretary of State on future policy direction. This panel will report in the autumn. Therefore, it would be wrong to rest on our laurels and assume that the Government is not planning any future attacks on the counties with land. With Congress backing, GMB will continue to be watchful of developments emanating from this independent panel, and from Defra, making sure that any revised recommendations do not threaten our members' jobs in that sector and that unions and workers are properly consulted. We also want to ensure that our

members and their children, and grandchildren, can look forward to a greener, healthier environment that is free to all. Congress, the CEC asks you to support the motion with the qualifications outlined. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Annie. Does South Western and London accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. With that can I move to the vote on Composite 20, Motion 229, 230, and 231? All those in favour please show? Anyone against? They are carried.

*Composite 20 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 229 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 230 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 231 was CARRIED.*

## **POLITICAL: DEMOCRACY & CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM**

### **AFFILIATION TO REPUBLIC MOTION 207**

#### **207. AFFILIATION TO REPUBLIC**

This Congress agrees to affiliate to and support the organisation Republic which spearheads the campaign for an elected head of state.

SOLO BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Referred)*

BRO. T. FLANAGAN (London): President, subjects — (*laughter*) — “subjects”, what an insult. That is only the beginning. I recognise that this is quite a volatile issue for some of our members so for this afternoon I will put the shillelaghs away. If you do not know what a shillelagh is ask an Irishman. Republic is a cross-party organisation which is appalled at the present situation in this country and determined to change it. There are so many things wrong with the present situation that it has to be dealt with. The way we can assist dealing with it is by affiliating to Republic. Some of the things that are wrong are:

The Royal Prerogative, Royal powers that allow the Prime Minister to declare war or sign treaties, amongst other things, without a vote of Parliament. I think that may have happened in Iraq, didn't it?

The Privy Council, a self-appointed body of advisers to the Monarch, mostly made up of senior politicians who can enact legislation without a vote in Parliament: some democracy we live in.

No nation that claims the value of democracy can value a system based on elitism. To be born into a post is a complete nonsense. Would we allow the General Secretary to be born into the post? No, we elect him. Mary, we elect her. We live in a democracy. This family seem to think they have the right to be born into this most powerful of posts. It is absolutely ridiculous. Republic believes that we would be much better off with a republican constitution and so, you might have gathered, do I.

Let's look at some of the things that this mob insists happens. We have an oath of allegiance, not to the country but to an individual. That oath of allegiance is extracted from the police, the armed forces, the judiciary, and MPs. I know of only one other example of people being forced to declare an oath of allegiance to an individual, that individual was Adolph Hitler. What a world.

Let's have a look at how much they cost. You cannot because Gordon Brown's last act was to remove them from the Freedom of Information Act; it now no longer applies. We believe, or Republic believes, that it probably costs in excess of £180m a year to run this mob, which is absolutely ridiculous, but they have now denied you access to the books. I wonder why the Freedom of Information Act was removed from them. I could have a few guesses. Some of the historical associations with the Nazi Party and with various racist organisations need covering up. There are documents listed with 150-year embargos on them (so you cannot read them) relating to this family's activity. What a disgrace. It might have something to do with little Harry boy who storms around the country with a Swastika on his arm. Doesn't he look like his dad, with his ginger hair! (*Applause*) No DNA test on him.

Then let's have a look at some of the others. The National Anthem, *God Save the Queen*. I would save her. She wouldn't live much longer if I got hold of her. It is the most pathetic anthem, the laughing stock of Europe: no mention of the nation, just God save an individual. No wonder it's known as *the lickspittle's dirge*.

Talking about presidents, you don't want Thatcher, you don't want Mandelson, no, you don't, but you could have had Desai from the Grunwick dispute, you could have had Tony Blair, you could have had Jack Jones, or you could have had the big fella'. I see the light is up. I think you've got the message. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Terry. Do we have a seconder? Formally. Thank you.

*The motion was formally seconded.*

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 208, Prince Andrew, global business advisor. No, it's not Terry. I made that mistake once before.

BRO. A. ROBERTS: What can I say after Mr. Flanagan?

THE PRESIDENT: You are not seconding.

BRO. A. ROBERTS: Am I not? I thought I was seconding. I am moving it then, am I? Oh, dear. Moving 208? I thought I was following Mr. Flanagan.

THE PRESIDENT: You are.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: But where is he going?

BRO. A. ROBERTS: Exactly, where is he going?

THE PRESIDENT: To the Republic!

BRO. A. ROBERTS: I am the wrong person up here, really. We should have left him up here, I think, and let him have another go.

THE PRESIDENT: Will you get on with it? Your time is up!

**PRINCE ANDREW GLOBAL BUSINESS ADVISOR  
MOTION 208**

**208. PRINCE ANDREW GLOBAL BUSINESS ADVISOR**

This Congress notes with alarm that during these times of austerity millions of pounds are being wasted in paying for Prince Andrew to swan around the globe, consorting with dictators, supposedly for the benefit of British business. Congress calls on the government to make a well-directed cut and to stop subsidising his global trips.

CAMBRIDGE 2 BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. A. ROBERTS (London): This person, Prince Andrew, his title is Roving Ambassador for British Trade, and he does not get paid. Does he? Pardon me, he does. He costs us hundreds and hundreds of thousands of pounds a year in expenses, but he does not get paid. I don't think this should carry on. I am like our man *there*, I just think it is all crap, really. Come on. We are paying for something that he is not doing. Do you know who one of his best friends is? Colonel Gadaffi he rates as one of his friends. His friends are mostly criminals, gun runners, and stuff like that, and we are supporting this. We should not be supporting this. I am not going to say too much because I know my friend behind me wants to say quite a bit, so I am just going to move it and as it is the last one I will let you off. I move. *(Applause)*

SIS. C. HOLLAND (London): Here we go again, someone else with their nose in the trough. Why is this Government allowing this greedy royal to profit from the country's meagre purse? Whilst local government workers are losing their jobs, Princess Andrew — Prince Andrew, sorry, a Freudian slip there — is creaming £14m in expenses. Why? Prince Andrew is living a life of Riley at the taxpayers' expense. These people have enough wealth of their own. If he wants to jet about the world visiting his pals, who, as Alan said and he is absolutely right, are of dubious character, how about this for an interesting thought, he can pay for it himself and if he does make money for the country, which is doubtful, maybe some remuneration could be possible. In fact, I would go as far as to say most people in the Government should take their nose out of the trough, MPs' expense are already out of control. I have it on good authority Prince Andrew has been paid in excess of £3m for his house by another person of dubious character. It is probably Gadaffi, I reckon. There seems to be a common theme running here, mixing with all the wrong people. To sum up, Prince Andrew, make money and we will give you money. As a woman among the country's budgeters, he should try it some time. Some of these people don't know what it means. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to speak on these motions?

BRO. P. GOODACRE (Southern): Good afternoon, brothers and sisters, comrades, one of the arguments, or several of the arguments I often come up against when I speak about my belief in republicanism is that the monarchy is part of our social fabric. It is part of our tradition and it is as if hundreds of years of history would cease to exist if we abolish the monarchy. We do have a long republican tradition. For a brief period we were the first republic in modern Europe. We were the first people who had the courage to hold a monarch to account. We should restore this republican tradition. We should view the intervening years since Charles Stuart Jnr's restoration as an unfortunate aberration in our history. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I now call Tim Roache to reply on Motion 207. Tim.

BRO. T. ROACHE (Regional Secretary, Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region): I drew the short straw, I think. Good afternoon, President, Congress. The CEC is asking for Motion 207 to be referred. Congress, we know that some of our members have very strong views about the abolition or replacement of the monarchy. You heard Terry and you also heard Paul just then, and personally I share their views; I would sling them all out. I probably would not even give them a job as a German cucumber tester. *(Applause)* What I am not going to do, Paul, is argue about the social fabric, but we have to be responsible and think responsibly about this.

A recent YouGov poll shows that many people in the country hold very different views, some support the monarchy and a great deal have a view neither way. Then we have to consider it from the GMB members' perspective because many of our members will agree with the sentiments of Republic who want to replace the monarchy with an elected head of state, but on the other side many members who have different views say that the monarchy should remain. The other thing that we cannot get away from is that, like it or not, the monarchy brings in millions of pounds each year in tourism, which has a knock-on effect to many GMB members' jobs. The last point in the contrary view is that many GMB members have received honours for their work on behalf of the union and which they have accepted with pride.

Earlier this year we provided branches with information and gave them the opportunity to affiliate to Republic and I have to report back to you, colleagues, that there is no evidence at all of any significant take-up. Therefore, although some individuals hold strong personal views, the CEC has no evidence of our members wanting us to campaign for an elected head of state. Terry mentioned it and I do have to come back to it, can you imagine a President Blair or a President Thatcher? That fills me with dread.

Many members will feel that in the current economic climate is it really responsible to nationally campaign for the abolition of the monarchy. I do not think many of our members would feel that that was the best use of GMB resources or time, and it would be divisive. Potentially, it would divide our members right down the middle and at a time when we are facing the fight of our lives I think we need to ensure that our members are together and united in that battle.

The CEC therefore recommends that at this stage rather than affiliate nationally we give an undertaking as soon as Congress has finished to send out to all branches details of Republic giving the arguments both for and against affiliation. It then becomes a local issue, locally debated in branches, and local decisions can be made. The CEC goes further to say that, if then the majority of GMB branches do affiliate, in the light of that evidence the CEC will recommend national affiliation. We suggest this is a much better way forward and therefore ask for reference back on Motion 207. Thank you for listening. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tim. Does London Region accept reference? Terry, speak to me: the Royal Prerogative. Don't have an argument on it. Do you accept it? *(Agreed)* Thank you. I now move to the vote. Congress, do you accept reference? *(Agreed)* Thank you. I now move to the vote on Motion 208. All those in favour please show? Those against? That is carried. Thank you.

*Motion 207 was REFERRED.*

*Motion 208 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, we are coming near to the end of Congress. I now call Paul Kenny, who will be using the handsets for the last time for our delegates' questionnaire.

#### DELEGATE QUESTIONNAIRE (ON HANDSETS)

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Turned out nice again! Okay, we hope they work. This is the last time we will ask you to use the handsets but we want to try and get some information from you while it is still fresh and lively in your mind. Okay. First slide please: Will you give a GMB Congress report to any GMB branch or group of members when you go back? 1 for yes, 2 for no. Away you go.

**Will you give a GMB Congress report to any GMB Branch or group of members?**



Yes  92.8 %

No  7.2 %

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Well done; proud of you.



The second slide: Did you receive enough help and information to enable you to take a full role in GMB Congress business? 1 for yes, 2 for no. Honest answers are what we want.

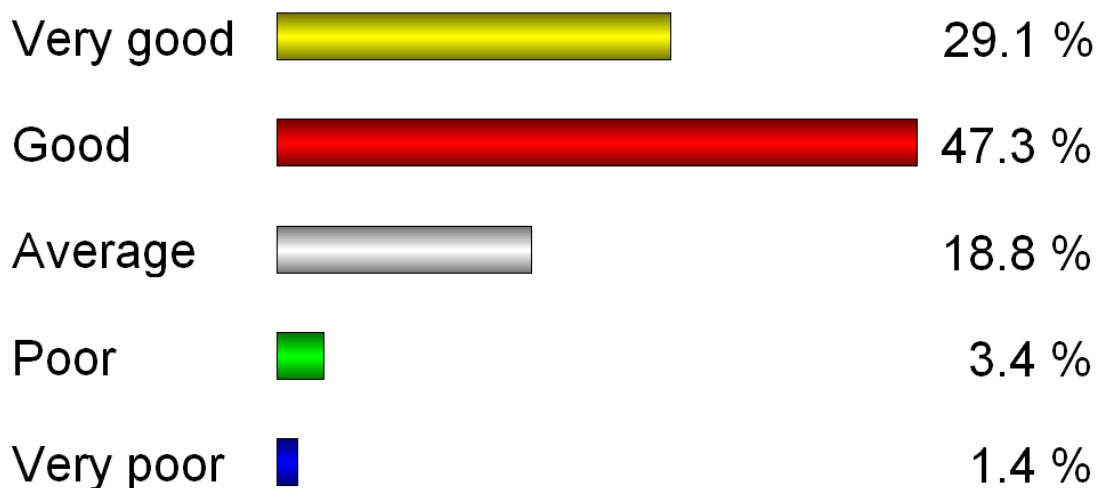
### Did you receive enough help and information to enable you to take a full role in GMB Congress business?



THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Very impressive.

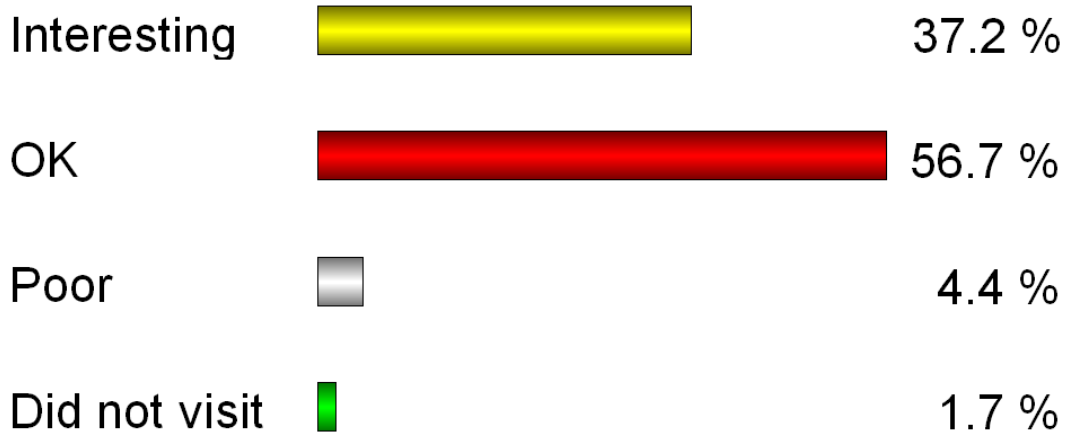
The next slide: What do you think of the GMB Congress facilities in the Main Hall, very good, good, average, poor, or very poor?

### What do you think of the GMB Congress facilities in the Main Hall?



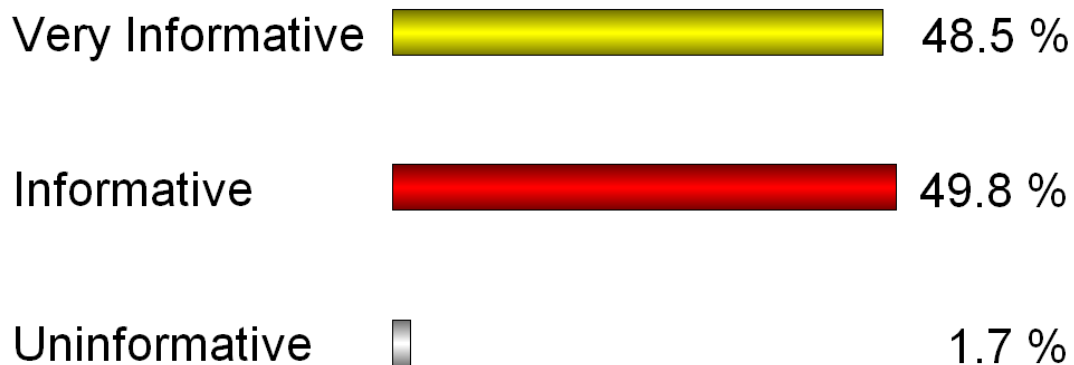
THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Next slide: What do you think of the GMB Congress exhibition areas, interesting, okay, poor, did not visit?

## What do you think of the GMB Congress Exhibition?



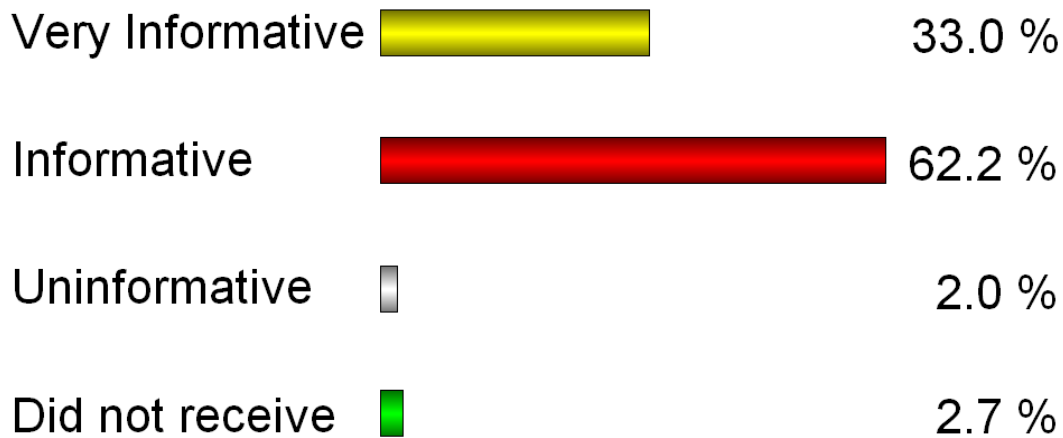
THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Nearly there; not much more. Next one please: How useful did you find the Final Agenda and Congress Guide, very informative, informative, or rubbish.

## How useful did you find the Final Agenda & Congress Guide?



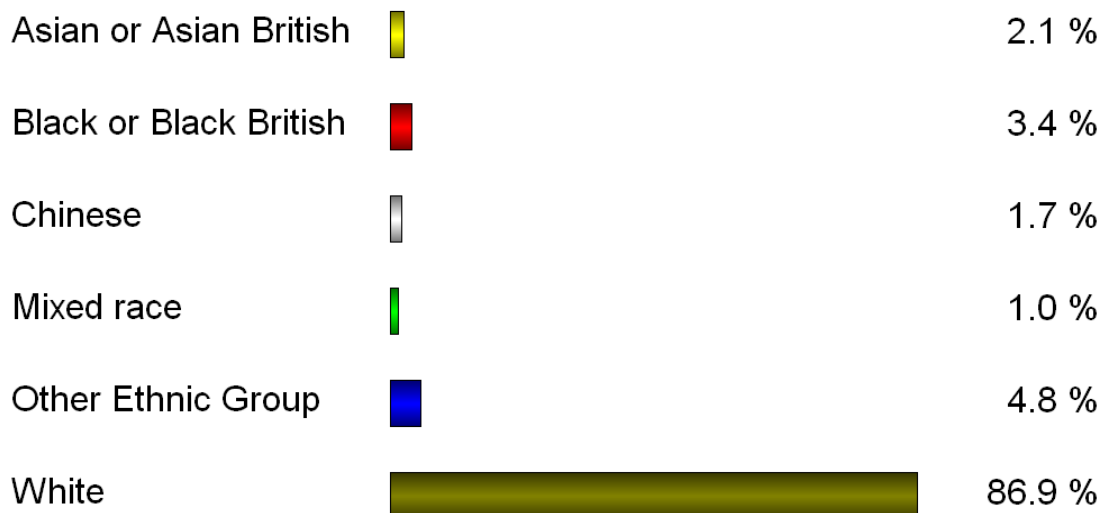
THE GENERAL SECRETARY: That is it. Here we go: How useful did you find the Congress document — that is the document everyone should have had — just trying to unravel some of the mysteries of Congress — very informative, informative, uninformative, or what is he talking about.

## How useful did you find the Congress Explained Document?



THE GENERAL SECRETARY: There is the equalities one that we lost the other day and we would now like to do: What cultural background would you describe yourself as, Asian, or Asian-British, black or black-British, Chinese, mixed race, other ethnic group, or white.

## Equalities: What cultural background would you describe yourself as?



THE GENERAL SECRETARY: That is it, thank you very much for that. We have stacks of information. I am very grateful to you. I would also like to thank Thompsons, the solicitors, who actually funded all of that. It did not look like it was going to work wonderfully well at the start of the week but thanks to the boys from T5 and the technicians who persevered, and it worked. Thanks a lot. *(Applause)*

## **ANY OTHER CONGRESS BUSINESS**

THE PRESIDENT: Any other business? Please can Regional Secretaries ensure that card voting booklets are left in the regional red trays at the end of Congress so we can recycle them next year?

Congress, before I move to the next item could I say thank you to all the delegates, I think you have been excellent and your attendance has been second to none, and also the visitors upstairs. To all the first-time speakers, you can be proud of yourselves and your regions, you did extremely well. Thank you very much indeed. (*Applause*)

## **CLOSING PROCEDURE OF CONGRESS**

THE PRESIDENT: We are now proceeding with the closing procedure of Congress which begins with the omnibus vote of thanks, this year to be given by Brian Adams, Birmingham Region. Brian.

## **OMNIBUS VOTE OF THANKS**

BRO. B. ADAMS (CEC, Commercial Services): President, Congress, it is a great honour and privilege to be giving this vote of thanks on behalf of the CEC to this the 2011 Congress.

Firstly, and very importantly, our thanks go to Mary Turner, our President, who has once again led and kept Congress in good order. (*Applause*) She has supported and helped all delegates, especially first-time delegates. Those of us who have had the privilege of knowing Mary both as a colleague and friend know how hard Mary works on behalf of the GMB. Mary represents the GMB on the Labour Party Executive and also on various other national organisations, and within the GMB she attends and chairs numerous conferences. Mary, once again a very big thank you for all you do for the GMB. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Colleagues, I felt that we must give and record our thanks to Malcolm Sage, our Vice President. (*Applause*) Malcolm not only supports Mary but also works very hard for our union. We all appreciate the work, time, effort, and support you give to the GMB, Malcolm. Thank you for all you do for us. A very big thank you, Malcolm, from us all. (*Applause*)

Now, colleagues, I want to record our thanks, our very big thanks, to our General Secretary and Treasurer, Paul Kenny, (*Applause*) a General Secretary we are all so very proud of and respect immensely; indeed, colleagues, the whole of the TU Movement has immense respect for Paul. Since becoming the General Secretary in 2005 our union has come out of the red and into the black. Paul, even during the economic recession you have been guiding the union and growing the union. You have turned this union around and we all are so proud of you, the best General Secretary in Britain. (*Applause*) Thank you, Paul, for all you do. Congress, I ask you all to show your support. Thanks once again, Paul. Thanks very much indeed. (*Applause*)

Sunday morning Congress received Mary's address and, as always, inspirational, emotive, the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

Our first invited speaker was Vaughan Gething, Welsh Assembly and GMB member. I am sure that you all agree with me Vaughan's address to Congress was brilliant and he will be an asset to the GMB in Wales; definitely someone for future greatness.

Tom Watson MP, what a fantastic story. If this was in a book, you would not believe it but it is true and shows what a demon Murdoch is. I am hoping you will not be lining his pockets by buying his awful newspapers.

On Monday Congress was presented with the CEC Special Report on the Economy, a groundbreaking document that set out how GMB believes the country should move forward, if only we could convert Cameron and Osborne.

Vince Cable came to address Congress. I have been to many Congresses and I have never seen a politician shake so much. GMB always leads the way. This Congress held a member of the Coalition Government to account for the appalling cuts to the public services, something very few working people have been able to do. We, as always, are groundbreakers. Cable came, he spoke, but he never conquered.

Maggie Hughes addressed Congress and reported her groundbreaking progress in Europe with the help of Kathleen over the previous years to ensure the victims of crime abroad are protected. What happened to her son Rob was tragic and affected the whole family. Her inspiration and determination to fight ensured a fantastic result and should feature in motivational training films.

Ed Balls also addressed Congress in the afternoon. Ed's contribution, as always, was excellent and Kevin Maguire certainly made us all laugh with his questions.

On Tuesday, I was amazed to see Andy Clarke, CEO of Asda, addressing Congress. I was pleased to hear a senior manager tell a story and show support for the working people, and also people with disabilities.

Congress, there are a number of other people who work so very hard over many, many weeks to make Congress successful. Thanks to Steve Short, Dolores O'Donoghue, Ida Clemo, Rose Conroy, and the whole of the national office team for all their hard work over the months leading up to Congress, and delivering another brilliant Congress. (*Applause*) I am already looking forward to next year.

Thanks must also go to Helen Johnson and the Standing Orders Committee for the brilliant job they do, hidden away getting fat on biscuits but getting it done. (*Applause*)

Thanks to the GMB auditors; and tellers, nothing to do but important all the same. A big thanks to the verbatim shorthand writers, non-stop work, and so important. Thank you both, Phyllis and Michael. (*Applause*)

Thanks to Congress stewards, their friendly *Good Mornings* set up the day, and thanks to those involved with all the exhibition stalls. Thanks to Pellacraft for the coffee and

tea supplies (*Applause*) and also those involved with the RMA stall, which has raised £1,096.85. (*Applause*) Thanks to all those who donated the raffle prizes. A thank you to Monica Smith, the RMA Secretary, for all she does for GMB. (*Applause*)

Thanks to all Regional Secretaries and their PAs, especially my own Joe Morgan and Adelle Atkiss, for the help they have given me. (*Applause*)

The biggest stars of the week have been you, the delegates. We could have the best President and the best General Secretary but no Congress without you. Your contributions have been the best I have known in all my years here. Linda Millar from Scotland, and Karen Guest and Jason Evans from the Midland Region, deserve a special mention. (*Applause*) You all received a very well deserved ovation. The first-time delegates' work was magnificent, as were the old hands and the dinosaurs. Also, Paul, Malcolm, and yourself, Mary, thank you very much indeed, colleagues. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Brian. It takes everyone to run this Congress and when we leave here I know the head office staff, regional staff, auditors, and everybody else, will start again in about three weeks' time trying to get it together. Thanks a lot, everyone. I now ask the General Secretary to make his closing speech. Paul Kenny.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: I may go on for a couple of minutes because we are having a bit of technical trouble with the closing video, Mary. I am looking for thumbs up or down at some stage.

Brian, thanks for that great vote of thanks. Can I just call Congress's attention to the line of people against this wall here? This is the staff of the union that work really, really hard, to make Congress work. (*Applause*) Emma, Katie, Marilene, Laura, Marion, Helen, Barbara, Kevin, Pat, Tom, and Leila. Thank you very much.

To Phil Wyatt, who retired some years ago but came back to help us put together the Special Report that Brian has quite rightly highlighted and is the bedrock now of where we go over the forthcoming years fighting for our values. Thank you, Phil. (*Applause*)

Somebody you have not seen much of, Eamon, who is up in the box. He works part for the Organising Department and part National Office. His job was to make sure that all your names came up on the screen. Thank you, Eamon. He had to be here for every single moment of each call. (*Applause*)

To John, Kevin, Bob, from the IT department, they work tirelessly. Thanks a lot, and thanks to Alex McMillan as well. Thanks a lot. (*Applause*)

Our press and campaigns team, my God, they were busy this week. It is a good job we are not paying them a productivity bonus, I tell you. For most of us we probably focused on the hall but around the country it has been wall to wall, literally. There cannot be a living room or a household that does not know that the GMB was meeting this week. All of the messages and stories which have been about all the right issues, about us standing up for people, about us arguing the rights of working people, were

coming across loud and clear. To Rose and Steve, and Charlotte, a brilliant job again. Thank you very much indeed. (*Applause*)

Some of you may have seen this great article, another national daily article this morning, “32 people for every one job”, that was put together by two people who have been working for us. They are trainee journalists from Roehampton University, and forgive me if I get the pronunciations wrong, Angela Nyarko and Miriam Ajibola, and they have been here all week. I would like them to come up, actually. I am just adlibbing a bit now. Come up here, I am going to embarrass you. If you both would come up here for us to say thank you. (*Applause*) Maybe we should ask you what you thought about your experiences with the GMB. Go on.

ANGELA NYARKO: Hi, everyone. What I have learnt from the GMB is the unity with everyone, from staff to delegates, everyone is just very friendly. I think this is a good cause where we all work together for working people. It is people working for people. I think supporting and helping everyone, it is the best feeling in the world to just meet everyone. Paul has made my experience here one of the best. He made me feel so comfortable from the beginning, even as I was nervous, as I am now. Now I feel very relaxed, very welcome by everyone, and I appreciate the fact I got to experience this. Thank you, everyone. (*Applause*)

MIRIAM AJIBOLA: I am kind of shy and kind of nervous but Angela basically took all the words out of my mouth. My name is Mariam. I just want to thank everybody who has been so welcoming and so friendly, and so nice. Like she said, it is such a good cause. As a student journalist just training up, to start off here is just a privilege and it is an honour, and I really do thank everybody just for being so nice. (*Applause*)

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: You will get that one framed, won't you? You will get that headline, that page, your first time nationally. Well done. A treat!

The General Secretary's department, I have to thank those. We use these grandiose titles but as I keep saying to people there are not actually that many of us. Ida Clemo, Ida, thank you. She does huge amounts of work, huge amounts of work. (*Applause*) Steve Short, those of you who have come across Steve Short, an absolute diamond. (*Applause*) Thank you, Steve, for everything. The delectable Dolores. (*Applause*) Sometimes if you see me grimacing it is because my knees are hurting me and if you see me smiling it is because she is rubbing them! (*Laughter*)

The technical staff, I know we have had a few problems and I think I am getting the idea that we probably will not be able to show the “End of Show” video, I do not think that is entirely their fault but we will deduct it from their fee anyway! (*Laughter*)

Robert Badlan, who arranges all the sponsorship, I think most people will be very pleased. I think Robert managed to encourage — encourage — people to offer us about £85,000 or £86,000 this year which helped to pay for a lot of the teas, coffees, and a lot of the other stuff, and go some considerable way to offsetting the cost of Congress. Thank you, Robert. Another good job done. (*Applause*)

Phil McEvoy and Mickey Balfour, who have been sitting at the back, it is their job to sit at the back of the hall, watch every single vote, every single resolution. They also have to sit cross-legged for quite a long period of time to make sure we all get it right. Thank you, both. I will reward you with a pint later, both of you. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

Well, see, as soon as you mention you will cut their fee, guess what, the video is on! (*Laughter*) Okay, thumbs up.

Anyway, John Kane, Northern Region, I have known John a while, a great bloke. He came here to this Congress, and came to this rostrum. Courage: bags of it. Honesty: Jesus, Mt. Everest. He asked a question when he was here, when he was talking about suffering from Parkinson's, and he said could we use the handsets to test awareness and so on. I saw him outside and I said to him, "We couldn't use the handsets without a degree of preparation but we'll do better than that. This is the GMB, mate, we do better than that." So, with your permission, but only with your permission, we will put your story in the magazine. We will invite people not just to make them aware of the campaign but will participate in your response. We will get that to a million people. John, you have our utmost support. Thank you very much, mate. You are a very, very courageous man. (*Applause*)

Thank you to Standing Orders. Brian, quite rightly, pointed out the work they do. Thank you to Barry Smith, and thank you again to the new delegates. I just think it was wonderful, even here on the last day, and it must have been a nightmare for some of them waiting all week for that moment when they are going to come up. If you are going to get it out of the way, get it out of the way Sunday and then you can enjoy yourself. All the week and they were still coming up today. I don't know about you but, you know, it made me feel really proud. (*Applause*) One thing that is great about it, you just know the future is great. It is thumbs down again, keep speaking! (*Laughter*) Keep trying.

To the I won't say dinosaurs but to the longer-serving, the delegates who have kept the union going in many instances around the country when maybe it was not quite as popular to be a trade unionist as it is now, you kept the union going, you kept the flag, you kept the standard, you kept the morals, you kept up that argument. Isn't it great for you as well to see this fantastic new intake into Congress? Whatever happens never, ever, ever, let anybody take your democratic parliament away again. This is our annual event and don't let anybody convince you that the union can do without it because it can't. (*Applause*)

I will echo what Mary said and Mary says it regularly, thanks to all the visitors up in the gallery. Many of them have been sitting there every single session. Thanks to you and thanks to the partners of everybody. I know a lot of what we do we just could not do unless our partners gave us support.

To the platform, Kathleen Walker-Shaw, I have said it before and I say it to her privately, and I say it absolutely publicly, trust me, Kathleen is just ace. We have a reputation in Europe that is gold-plated and when you saw Maggie come here and talk about having moved the whole of European law or on the verge of doing it, and all I did was meet Maggie at a fringe meeting and listen to her story, it was Kathleen that



actually took up the baton. It was Kathleen that badgered the European Commission. It was Kathleen that put it on the map. Kathleen, I think, has had that recognition by the Commission. I think it is what they call a raconteur; is that right, raconteur? It shows how old you are getting — it used to be a slum landlord when I was a kid! *(Laughter)* You are going to be a raconteur and that legislation will come forward. That is the skill of the people we have, and their dedication. Yes, I think it is right, a round of applause. *(Applause)* Well done, Kathleen.

Malcolm, I have said it before and I say it again, is a rock. You can see him when he does a great job here, a great job in the region, a fantastic advert for us and the TUC. He is an absolute rock. You know, he is a really, really, good guy and he believes in what we do. He is passionate. He has been working for working people all his life. I like him a lot. He is not slow, trust me. He moves me along a bit when he needs to and I am really, really, grateful that we have such a fantastic Vice President. Thank you, Malcolm. *(Applause)*

Mary, I ran out of plaudits to give Mary Turner many, many years ago. I know she is a woman of incredible courage. I know she is a woman of passion. I know she is a woman who really has never in her life passed by on the other side. She has time for everyone and she has everything in her mind. I know she is one of the finest people I have ever met in the trade union Movement. I am really, really, proud to say she is my friend. Thank you, Mary. *(Applause)*

There are a couple of Regional Secretaries this week, key members of the SMT, who have reached those magical milestones that come to us all: Allan Garley, who has been an absolute rock, and Richard Ascough, and Richard described in his speech that some of his SMT colleagues have given him a bit of stick over the years about his ties, that is true. Hands up, I may have led the banter occasionally, and he did mention there that we gave him a bit of banter about his taste in music. None of you may know this but Richard is actually a very, very, accomplished musician — *(Laughter)* — *(Applause)* — It was not even Freudian; it wasn't, really! He is a very, very talented musician. That is what it says, honestly, it does: look! He told us about music he had written, in fact he produced a CD and he gave every member of the SMT a copy of this CD, and everybody went home and played it. The next time we were together Richard said, "Did you enjoy it", and there was a sort of a long silence and one or two people were sort of grimacing a bit, so he looked at me and he said, "What about you," I said, "I thought it was brilliant." I said, "It's fantastic, mate. You couldn't let me have five or six more, could you?" He said, "Really, was it that good?" I said, "I've never had anything as good for getting the ice off my windscreen in the mornings as that, I tell you." *(Laughter)* True. True.

This week we have talked about our values and our dreams, and maybe we should have a little bit of audience participation as we wind up so I will ask you a few questions. Tell me, and tell those who are listening, who will speak up for the vulnerable in care? Who will? *We will*. Who will rage against youth unemployment, indeed all unemployment? Who will do that? *We will*. Who will fight for pensions and equal pay, and decent housing for all? *We will*. Who will raise their voice for the children in poverty or harm, or those who need special care? *We will*. Right!

Be proud of our ideals. What we stand for, they stand for, and we represent all that is good. We have no need to apologise to anybody for being trade unionists. We are proud of it. We stand up for everything that is good in our society. We have battles ahead, you better believe it.

Southern Cross, as you were told when I had to leave the hall, were announcing 3,000 redundancies, 1,300 care staff, 300 nurses, 700 catering staff, 700 cleaners, and yet somebody is trying to tell me, first, that it will not affect the standards of care. Are you having a laugh? Secondly, somebody in some government office somewhere has said, "Well, it's not really our business. They are an economic commodity." An economic commodity; we do not think that about the elderly in our care. We do not think that about 31,000 people, many of whom will have spent their lives building this country, paying their taxes, making contributions, maybe even some of them caring for people before. They are not economic commodities to us, they are real people, and our voice is going to be heard for them, their relatives, and their staff. No sweat! *(Applause)*

We are going to fight — there's no question of that in my mind — big battles about public services because our moral stance is going to hit an ideological idea. Even today we know we are going to have a big battle over Remploy. The Sayce Review that will report tomorrow on the review of supported employment that has been going on, and covers Remploy, is likely to recommend the closure of Remploy factories. That report and the publicity around it will take place in Holloway Road, London, between about 5 to 2 and a quarter to 3 tomorrow. The nearest Tube station is Holloway Road. We are inviting anybody who happens to be in the location to come along because you can guarantee the GMB are going to be there.

Liz Sayce (it is the Sayce Review) is actually the Chief Executive of RADAR and she has long advocated the closure of Remploy factories. When you ask someone who has a pre-stated belief whether Remploy factories should exist and they produce a report saying, no, they should not, you can hardly be surprised. We know that our Remploy membership is solid, good, they do good jobs, they are real people, and not for them — not for them — any lectures that they are in some form of sheltered workshop. These are real solid jobs being done by real people. They are going to get our support and again make it clear, all of us, we do not lay down for people who try and put our members out of work. If this Government, like the last one, thinks that Remploy workers are going to take a few thousand pounds, slip away on benefits, and no one will be any the wiser, you have a bloody big mistake coming. We are with you. *(Applause)*

I am now getting a signal the video might run so I am going to wrap up while it is working.

Tom Watson MP I thought was in many ways everything we wanted from MPs. I am really pleased we invited him. In fact, he came for a day and stayed for three. I think you made a bit of an impression on him. If we could do that with another 400, we are in with a chance. *(Laughter)*

Could I just finally say thank you to my wife, Pat. *(Applause)* I woke up this morning at about 6, went like that, nothing, nobody there, looked across and she was curled up

in the chair in our bedroom. Apparently she snored so badly she had to get in the chair! *(Laughter)* Sorry about that, love. Sorry. I have told you before where the power lies in our house so I won't tell that story again.

Just one other person I would like to mention is John Cope, who is sitting down there. *(Applause)* To the new delegates, if you look in the front of your Congress Guide and your Business Guide you will see a resolution in the very first page that talks about the rights of delegates to a Congress, hear the arguments from other regions and from other delegates before you make up your mind. It harks back to a day when people came to GMB Congress and every single decision had already been taken. That was the starting point; that was very, very important. That inspired me to move to a much wider level of democracy and participation. It goes to show that when you do that, people participate, they care, there is passion, and different ideas; that is healthy. John, really, is the great grandfather of bringing democracy to the GMB. *(Laughter)* You are from where I'm sitting!

Thank you, everybody. You have been brilliant. I think the GMB is brilliant. You can go back, I hope, with some passion and pride, and some camaraderie because you will have, hopefully, not just met up with old friends but made a load of new ones. You have every reason to be very proud of yourselves in what you do and maybe a little proud about your union. We do not roll over for anybody. We are about fighting for the rights of working people. We are about changing society for the better. You know, that ain't a bad old creed to live by. Thanks very much. *(Standing ovation)*

*Closing video shown to Congress.*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, we are now about to come to the end of a great week so may I wish you all well. We will now all stand and sing the Red Flag, but please take your seats afterwards.

*Congress stood and sang the Red Flag.*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, there are another ten verses of that! Honestly! *(Laughter)* I look forward to seeing you tonight at the President's Night which will be held in Horatio's Bar, Nelson, at the end of Brighton Pier, doors open at 8 o'clock, details are on the screen, and don't forget your credentials. I say now a big thank you to EAD Solicitors, and Future Plus, joint sponsors of the President's Night. We will see you later.

The last and final word from me and Malcolm is have a good night and have a safe journey home. I just want to say to Paul Kenny, from Malcolm and I, we are proud to have you as our friend. Thank you. *(Applause)* Congress adjourned until 8 o'clock tonight.

*Congress concluded.*