

FOURTH DAY'S PROCEEDINGS

WEDNESDAY 8TH JUNE 2005 MORNING SESSION

(Congress assembled at 9.30 a.m.)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, while you are settling down we will have the safety video.

(Safety video shown)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I want to advise you that we will be taking Emergency Motion 3, Rover and the Phoenix Group, this morning in the manufacturing debate.

As we dealt with item 8, Welfare Rights & Services earlier in the week, I plan to bring forward to this

morning the housing debate which was originally scheduled for Thursday morning. The housing debate will take place after the Youth Award.

Colleagues, when we come to the Congress award the subject, as you know, is domestic violence. We chose the Women's Refuge in Lowestoft. I want to pre-warn you that we will be showing some film. These are real life pictures. This is what happens. You might find some of those pictures extremely disturbing. When the member from the Lowestoft branch comes to the rostrum, I think we will warn you about what you are going to see.

You can see that the Vice President has deserted me. Malcolm Sage has had to go home to deal with a family problem. He needs to be with his wife. He sends his apologies. The Liverpool Regional Secretary has also had to go home because of personal problems. We wish them both well and hope that things will be okay.

LIVERPOOL, NORTH WALES & IRISH REGION - REGIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

1. Membership and Recruitment

Total membership	53,072
Women membership	23,743
Section membership (by each Section):	
Clothing & Textile	2,496
Commercial Services	2,560
CFTA	3,981
Energy & Utilities	2,535
Engineering	5,323
Food & Leisure	5,785
Process	3,442
Public Services	26,950
Grade 1 members	34,560
Grade 2 members	12,232
Sick, retired & unemployed members	6,280
Total number recruited 1.1.2003 - 31.12.2004	12,674
Gross increase/decrease 1.1.2003 - 31.12.2004	2,200-
Net increase/decrease 1.1.2003 - 31.12.2004	3,678-
Membership on Check-off	34,631
Membership on Direct Debit	6,638
Financial membership	49,824

RESPONSE TO THE CULTURE CHANGE

Following the 1997 Congress decision, the Liverpool, North Wales and Irish Region has continued meeting Officers, Shop Stewards and members on a regular basis to discuss the way forward in relation to the culture change with the main emphasis being on recruitment and retention.

The Region has continued to free-up Officers' time by spending less time on committees - instead positively encouraging Lay-reps to take up these positions. This not only frees-up time for the Officers to concentrate more on servicing recruitment and retention but also gives Lay-reps the experience sitting on these forums and acquiring more skills and confidence. Lay-reps are also encouraged at such meetings as Regional Council, Regional Committee and Sectional Conferences to be involved in recruitment, i.e. consolidation within their own workplaces and offering assistance in identifying targets to Officers and also assisting in recruitment campaigns.

RECRUITMENT TARGETS AND CAMPAIGNS

Regular officers' meetings have taken place during 2004, organised by the Senior Organisers, to plan strategies for recruitment and retention in order for growth to take place in the Liverpool, North Wales and Irish Region.

Key to this strategy was the reorganisation of Officer responsibility and also Staff responsibilities following the redundancy programme which took place some 12 months ago. As a result of the policy of non-replacement of people going on redundancy, duties had to be re-engineered to try and achieve an equal and equitable spread. We believe that this has been done with the goodwill with all of those people involved. As a result our Region has continued recruitment activities in the following areas:

Public Services

Local Authorities - Campaigns have been ongoing predominantly in Liverpool City Council where we capitalised on the recent abolition of the two lowest grades thereby giving us a recruitment platform to campaign on and attract non-union members. We also embarked on a campaign of recruitment in public buildings, i.e. libraries, museums, admin offices, etc. with some success. There has been a campaign-led issue in PFI schools.

The Region has since 1997 had a programme of recruitment across all local authorities within the Region. This has been highly successful and has seen membership increase in all categories of worker, i.e. GA's, cooks, cleaners, teaching assistants and school admin staff.

Single Status - Many local authorities are finally looking to address the issue of Single Status and Job Evaluation. Chester City Council has completed and others are nearing completion.

National Health Service - The Agenda for Change continues to dominate. Members have been recruited and retained throughout the Region.

Food and Leisure

Stanley Casinos - Following a national agreement in respect of recognition we now have a solid platform to recruit in the casinos within the Liverpool, North Wales and Irish Region. The Officers are in the process of building up infrastructures which hopefully we can capitalise on. This year a recognition agreement was signed with this company and the process of the election of shop stewards took place. These are receiving regional education.

Greencore Pizzas - We have recently issued bulletins in Portuguese. We are hoping to recruit Portuguese nationals who work at the site and have joined the GMB. We are awaiting feedback on the success or otherwise of that initiative and then decide whether to do the same in respect of other nationalities. Also the Distribution Centre for Greencore Pizzas in Runcorn has been visited and we have been successful in recruiting numbers of direct employees.

CFTA

Finn Forest - Recognition was achieved with this company in 2004 and an agreement has been reached which covers our 60 members.

Remploy - Following the relocation of the Remploy site at St. Helens, local Stewards and the full-time Officer have drawn up a plan to recruit non-union members. A figure of 55 has been identified and various recruitment initiatives are ongoing to increase membership at this site.

Commercial Services

DHL Security - There is scope for recruitment within this company and we are presently doing well in recruiting members into the GMB.

Liverpool John Lennon Airport - With the expansion of the Airport we are making inroads into increasing the membership and GMB presence within this workplace.

Other places that have been targeted by officers on their recruitment days are as follows: Shepherd Chemicals, Lion Foods, A V P Oswestry, Liverpool Boat Company, NW Ship Repairers, Medico, Care Watch.

In addition, Officers have been continuing within all of the Region to operate to a one-day a week recruitment rota with days blocked off in advance within their diaries for the purposes of recruitment campaigns as described above and also for the purposes of visiting Green and Brownfield sites, day centres and nursing homes, etc.

In respect of retention, again there has been major emphasis with Officers and Stewards regarding the importance of retaining members who may have left a site for one reason or another to keep them within trade union membership which will have an impact on regional figures. Officers are circulated with a list of expected leavers in advance of them being taken off the regional system. There is then an opportunity for the officer to contact the branch in order to retain those members identified.

The regional branch health checks have been updated to include details of what action has been taken on apparent leavers so we can have ongoing monitoring of leavers and retention.

This approach is reinforced by the Region writing and ringing, directly, members who have been taken off the system as lapsed members. Again this can result in a positive retention for the Region.

Officers are encouraged wherever possible to use the Region's resources regarding retention of members in a variety of ways.

The most prominent feature has been where we have suffered large-scale redundancies or indeed even closures within the Region. In this particular circumstance we would liaise with our regional Employment Law Solicitors to see whether or not we could bring a claim for our members against the employer, possibly for lack of consultation under the statutory regulations. Where this has been possible we have arranged meetings with the redundant members to advise them of their rights and of the course of action the GMB is taking. These meetings have then been used as an opportunity to retain members within the Region.

One notable success was McTay Marine where we not only managed to retain the members but also recruit members on the back of a closure by filing a Failure to Consult Tribunal claim. It has been my experience in the past that even when the court case has been heard and we are successful that we do still retain some members. This approach was also adopted at EP Mouldings in Kirkby which closed last year and where we managed, again, to retain and recruit members on the back of a successful court case.

Another notable recent success was the GMB v Shop Electric Limited in Northern Ireland. Our members lost their jobs when the company went into Administration virtually overnight. Obviously there was no consultation with our members and our regional solicitors launched the case against Shop Electric which was rigorously defended by the Administrators. The result was a huge success with our members receiving the maximum award of 56 days. This will cover over 120 members and will also assist in retention.

Bidston Marine - We had a very good result for our members when again we lodged a claim for lack of consultation and also unfair dismissal as a result of the company going into Administration. The overall amount of compensation was over £100,000+ with individuals receiving approximately £2,150 each. Again this will assist, not only in recruitment and retention, but also in publicising the GMB's legal work in the Region.

As well as Officers being involved in the above projects, officers are encouraged to liaise with Shop Stewards and members to ensure that we consolidate within the workplace and also retain members when people leave the site for whatever reason. The above would also encompass the question on regional recruitment targets and campaigns. Officers in Northern Ireland attended consultation seminars in various locations in Northern Ireland on the Government's Draft Priorities and Budget 2005-08 and Draft Economic Vision Documents. These proposals cover the vision on education, health, transport and the future of the Civil Service. A number of points were raised by GMB around equality and social need. Any strategy for the future must protect our members in the workplace, strengthening legislation, ensuring equality of opportunity and actively combating discrimination. It was also emphasised that Trade Unions must be positively engaged at all levels in any Change Process. A report was given to representatives who have been briefed to ensure that in all negotiations equality and respect for cultural diversity form the cornerstone of our input.

We suffered massive job losses in Northern Ireland, notably in Clothing & Textile and some in Engineering. In Clothing & Textile, specifically Adria, three sites were closed in 2004. These are at Swatragh, Omagh and Irvinestown. The Union was concerned regarding the communication and consultation process in connection with these redundancies and we are presently in the middle of a protective award against the company for a lack of consultation. Again this has been used as a retention opportunity for the Region.

Meetings with groups of Shop Stewards from across a wide-ranging spectrum of industries were convened in 2004 at the Belfast and L/Derry office, with Branch Secretaries and Shop Stewards invited to attend, along with the Regional Secretary and Senior Organiser. The meetings were well attended and were an extremely worthwhile exercise. The basis of the meetings was to hear the Lay-reps views on how they felt we could take this area of the Region forward in terms of recruitment and consolidation. Further meetings will be planned.

The Northern Ireland Act 1998 Section 75 enshrines in legislation that all public bodies must submit an equality scheme to be approved by the Equality Commission. All policies must be screened and possibly subject to equality impact assessments. Officers and Representatives must ensure that any proposed PPP/PFI Projects do not have a negative impact on the workforce. We are currently changing the Northern Ireland Water Service on a number of points arising out of Section 75 where they are intending to TUPE staff to a co-co in April 2006. This could unbalance the religious makeup of the remainder of staff and therefore have a negative impact. Reps have been advised and negotiations are ongoing.

The overall regional figures, for December 2004 for the Liverpool, North Wales and Irish Region was 49,824 financial members. That is a change on 12 months ago of -1,388.

For the year 2005 we will continue within the Region as a whole to pursue recruitment and retention opportunities wherever they occur.

Throughout 2004 as stated above, the change in financial membership, December to December, was -1,388. The Region has again suffered redundancies from Clothing & Textiles in Northern Ireland and the closure of sites throughout the Region as a whole. Opportunities still do exist and as stated, the strategy for 2005 will be a strategy for growth and the Region will be planning to place resources in areas where we can get the best returns on recruitment and retention following the policies used in 2004.

ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT SITUATION, ENGLAND, WALES & NORTHERN IRELAND

The Region has suffered redundancies across most sections - notably across Clothing and Textiles which has seen considerable decline over the last few years.

The current situation in relation to national figures on unemployment is as follows:

The current national unemployment rate is 4.7% and the national claimant rate is 2.7%. Across the region the claimant rate is as follows:

Merseyside	3.5
North Wales	2.0
Northern Ireland	2.7

The Region has 10 areas which have been identified as above the national claimant average:

Liverpool	4.9	Derry	5.2
Wirral	3.0	Fermanagh	3.1
Knowsley	3.7	Limavady	3.2
Belfast	3.9	Moyle	3.2
Coleraine	3.9	Strabane	4.6

The figures clearly indicate the decline in manufacturing industry related employment. Despite the problems, the Region's target for 2005 is one of growth and we will continue to allocate resources to optimise recruitment and retention across the whole of the Region.

2. General Organisation

Regional Senior Organisers	2
Membership Development Officers	-
Regional Organisers	16
Recruitment and Organisation Officers	-
Regional Recruitment Officers	-
No. of Branches	210
BAOs	-
New Branches	4
Branch Equality Officers	10

3. Benefits

Dispute	£4,180
Total Disablement	£28,000
Working Accident	£17,675.15
Occupational Fatal Accident	-
Non-occupational Fatal Accident	£1,000
Funeral	£39,399

4. Journals and Publicity

Communication plays a crucial role in both recruitment and retention of members and has therefore been given high priority in the Liverpool North Wales & Irish Region. Our regional magazine CoastLines is produced twice a year and is mailed directly to all members. By providing news items, health and safety information, legal updates and profiles of Staff and Lay Officials it aims to answer the question "What does the union do for me?" We believe that it helps build a better informed and more involved membership and have been pleased with the positive feedback the first four editions have generated. CoastLines Cymraeg is a newsletter in the Welsh language which covers items of particular interest to members in North Wales. This is mailed directly to members who have indicated an interest by responding to adverts written in Welsh in CoastLines magazine.

In conjunction with the Region's first Women's Conference in March 2004 a special publication Women in the GMB was produced. This aimed to encourage more women to get more involved in the union by profiling a range of female activists from across the Region as well as featuring an interview with National President Mary Turner.

Amongst other promotional materials of note a leaflet 'The GMB Agenda' set out the union's proactive approach to dealing with issues of concern to nearly 5,000 members working directly for Liverpool City Council.

The media are always interested when job losses and disputes arise and it is important that we try to ensure that the union case is fairly presented by issuing press releases and having officers available for comment. It is possible to use what could be a negative story to argue our case for more Government support for manufacturing industry or for curbs on the monopolistic powers of the big four supermarkets over their suppliers for example. The Region's banner is always good for photographic coverage whether leading the May Day parade in Belfast, marching to keep shipbuilding jobs in Birkenhead or at a rally in Corwen North Wales supporting fair rates for overtime. A number of successful legal cases, particularly where a significant financial settlement is involved, have produced some excellent positive publicity. Debbie Coulter's election as Deputy General Secretary received particularly good coverage on Merseyside because of her local roots.

Survey style national press releases e.g. average pay are picked up wherever a local authority appears near the top or bottom of a list. It is very unusual for at least one area in North Wales, Northern Ireland or Merseyside not to appear in extreme positions on these tables.

In Northern Ireland a very strong and on-going story has been the successful bid to force the Labour Party to lift its ban on membership for people living in Northern Ireland led by Andy McGivern, a GMB representative at Shorts/Bombardier. Following the decision at Labour's 2003 Annual Conference to overturn the 79 year old ban Andy's battle to achieve parity with Labour Party members elsewhere in the UK continues to attract good coverage.

LexisNexis means that monitoring of coverage is much more immediate for all main newspapers in the Region although local freepress publications which often pick up on stories ignored by others are not covered.

Our website has been running since December 2000. The site provides information about all offices in the Region, benefits, legal services, education and training, health & safety, equal rights, financial services and more. A latest news page is updated regularly. A comprehensive review of the site is currently being undertaken with the emphasis on improved accessibility and more information.

The following charities have been supported through sponsorship and fundraising: Zoe's Place Children's Hospice Liverpool, Northern Ireland Children's Hospice, Ty Gobaith Children's Hospice North Wales, Oakfield Special School Belfast, Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation and Dream Holidays 2004 which deals with cystic fibrosis awareness.

The Region has advertised in the Morning Star on a regular basis for conference editions; the Big Issue in the North including a two page spread article on low pay in a TUC special insert in August 2003; Eastern Drugs & Alcohol Co-ordination Year Planner Belfast and St Helens Rugby League Club programmes. A roundabout sign was also taken out for twelve months. A staff team has competed in all six Corporate Cup Runs in our Region in Cheshire and Merseyside.

5. Legal Services

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

Applications for Legal Assistance	1,374
Legal Assistance Granted	1,374
Cases in which Outcome became known	
Total	1,313
Withdrawn	229
Lost in Court	15
Settled	923 (£5,693,193)
Won in Court	30 (£230,323)
Total Compensation	£5,923,516
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2004	1,375

(b) Employment Tribunals (notified to Legal Department)

Claims supported by Union	477
Cases in which Outcome became known	
Total	303
Withdrawn	90
Lost in Tribunal	12
Settled	180 (£1,412,632)
Won in Court	21 (£340,400)
Total Compensation	£1,753,031
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2004	174

(c) Other Employment Law Cases

Supported by Union	8
Unsuccessful	1
Damages/ Compensation	£9,816
Cases outstanding at 31.12.2004	4

(d) Social Security Cases

Supported by Union	69
Successful	36
Cases outstanding at 31.12.2004	12

The Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region's legal service, for a number of reasons, is now much more streamlined and the Region deals with fewer solicitors, bringing economies of scale as a result.

Other important changes which impact in respect of the culture change have resulted in Senior Stewards, who have been endorsed by the Region, having the facility to contact regional solicitors

direct on aspects of employment law, thereby delivering a rapid response to perishable employment law issues within GMB workplaces. Officers also have the facility, again with the agreement of the Region and following a set procedure, to contact the regional solicitors regarding immediate advice, particularly on employment law matters. The above cuts down on bureaucracy and form filling and delivers a more efficient response and service.

The Region has continued its programme of full time Officer training which is delivered by the regional solicitors. These training sessions, numbering approximately six in total for the year (more if needed) cover all aspects of employment law which is an asset to the officers involved. Deliberation and discussion has taken place to widen that training to also include some regional lay representatives.

The Region also continues the practice of employment law surgeries where once a month regional solicitors will visit GMB offices within the Region for the purposes of pre-arranged meetings with the Officer and member concerned. Again predominantly these will cover employment law issues. This approach has the impact for the member of gaining fast legal access and also offers support for the officer involved.

6. Equal Rights ENGLAND & WALES

During the past two years there have been several Officers who have had responsibility for the Equalities Committees: One of the Senior Organiser's had responsibility until Alf Jones, our newly appointed Education Officer took the reins in January 2004.

Despite trying to maintain continuity, very little in the way of committee meetings took place during 2003 with nearly all national meetings being cancelled due to the National Equal Rights Officer being on long-term sick leave.

The Region recognises that women members are in the main an untapped resource of skill and experience. We held a two day GMB Women's Conference in Liverpool in March 2004 which was planned to coincide with International Women's Week. We followed this by holding another two-day conference in Colwyn Bay, North Wales, in October 2004 and at the time of compiling this report a further conference is planned for Belfast in January 2005.

The theme of the conferences has been the role of women in the workplace; equal pay; training opportunities; and health and safety issues. They are chaired by our National President, Mary Turner, and attended by European Officer, Kathleen Walker Shaw, as well as representatives from the regional solicitors, TUC and other training providers.

What these conferences do is act as a springboard to women to access further courses: initiatives aimed at developing women members within our Region. One such initiative following the Liverpool conference was to hold a one day seminar on confidence building and assertiveness for women and we intend to roll this out across the Region. Another planned initiative (that comes from a suggestion following these conferences) is to introduce health awareness and this will be piloted in Liverpool in early 2005.

The Eva Project was approved and began operation in 2002 with donations from GMB and many of its regional Branches. Unfortunately in May 2003 the Management Committee closed down the project due to lack of funds.

We nominated four delegates to the National Race Conference in November 2004, putting forward resolutions calling for the Government to

- (a) publish its long term policy on immigration and why it is required, i.e. (pensions for the future), and
- (b) undermine press reports that often portray immigrants as a threat to our communities, promoting propaganda for the right wing extremists.

The Retired Members Association has met every six weeks throughout the past two years and in 2004 introduced several guest speakers. The Committee undertook several campaigns including the Stay Warm campaign.

ETHNIC BREAKDOWN - ENGLAND & WALES***Regional Equal Rights Committee***

White UK members	8
------------------	---

Regional Race Committee

White UK members	5
------------------	---

White non UK members	1
----------------------	---

Black members	5
---------------	---

Retired Members Association

White UK members	31
------------------	----

White non UK members	1
----------------------	---

Black members	1
---------------	---

NORTHERN IRELAND

The Regional Equal Rights Committee has had a wide and varied programme since the last Congress. Most of the sub-committees have met on a regular basis and have fulfilled a number of projects.

Our links with the ICTU have continued, in particular through the Women's Committee of the ICTU and the international Solidarity Committee where we have representatives on both committees.

Unfortunately the continued suspension of the devolved Assembly in Northern Ireland means that whilst we continue to speak to locally elected politicians, the impact and influence that our committees can have has been greatly reduced and access to the Ministers of State is not forthcoming or effective as had been the case with the Executive Ministers of the Assembly. The Civic Forum has also been suspended.

The Committee have also been involved in the assessment of the impact of Family Friendly Policies within the workplace. We have looked at ways and means of addressing the effectiveness of how those policies impact in various Companies and are continuing with this process.

The Regional Equal Rights Advisory Committee has continued with its programme of raising the awareness of Branch Equality Officers to various issues, especially the growing numbers of racial attacks on ethnic minorities and migrant workers in Northern Ireland.

Race Relations Advisory Committee - At the Regional Race Conference in Nottingham, November 2004, Sis Rosemae McDowell moved a motion condemning growing heinous attacks on migrant workers and ethnic minorities in Northern Ireland. In conjunction with the NRC the motion was selected to go forward to the TUC Black Workers Conference in April 2005, this is the 5th year in a row that this has been achieved.

Bro Andy McGivern, supported by the GMB has managed to force the Labour Party to recognise the membership of Northern Ireland residents of the Party this has overturned 79 years of exclusion of Northern Ireland residents and denial of their rights to belong to the Labour Party whilst they resided here. This decision by the Labour Party was taken on advice that they had received from their own legal teams. Bro McGivern has now lodged a claim at the County Court in London against the Labour Party in relation to their refusal to set up Constituency Associations here in Northern Ireland a further attempt to racially discriminate against UK citizens.

Sis Dana Bruno continues her excellent work through the ICTU's International Solidarity Committee, and in particular they have in particular the continuing campaign for Fair Trade. Sis Bruno sits on the Women's Committee through which she has been selected to represent the GMB on a visit to Washington USA to be part of the Community Advocacy Mentoring Programme (CAMP); this is to actively encourage women in Voluntary Sector, Public Sector and Trade Unions to enter power decision making positions within these sections of employment. Sis Bruno also sits on the Equality and Human Rights Committee, there are currently discussions undergoing on the Human Rights Bill for Northern Ireland and there are also talks currently ongoing in relation to the setting up of a Black and Ethnic, Gay and Lesbian, Transgender Committee that will consist of both Northern and Southern Ireland nominations.

The RMA has met three times within the last ten months. There have been an increasing number of participants at the meetings and a wide range of issues have been discussed. Various speakers have also been invited to the meetings. Campaigns regarding Care of the Elderly have been participated in and indeed a proposition was submitted to the RMA Conference in November 2004 regarding this issue, the proposition was carried.

A vigorous campaign has also been spearheaded by GMB retired members regarding free bus passes. We have also raised issues on proposed water charges with a particular emphasis on the elderly and disadvantaged. We have encouraged our retired members to claim Pension Credit and this has resulted in a number of enquiries.

Another campaign which is high on our agenda is the changeover from pension book to electronic payments where we continue to put pressure on local government to allow people to have a choice.

We are currently looking at disabled access particularly in airports as we have had complaints from members of the RMA committee who have found it very difficult to access these areas.

Our retired members remain active within many community groups and within the ICTU Retired Members Committee.

On another note we have circulated a guide to events in Belfast Parks which our members thought would be of interest and which also links in with health and education.

ETHNIC BREAKDOWN - NORTHERN IRELAND

Regional Equal Rights Committee

White UK members	8
Afro Caribbean members	2

Disability Forum members

White UK	5
----------	---

Race Relations Committee

White UK members	4
Afro Caribbean members	3

Retired Members Association

White UK members	12
------------------	----

7. Youth

ENGLAND & WALES

We have found it difficult to make any real progress. The recent initiative by TUC to train young members to visit and promote the role of trade unions into schools was circulated amongst our younger members and although we have had several who have shown interest, so far we have not been able to induce members into taking up the opportunity.

We are nonetheless committed to seeking ways to develop this section and intend to pencil in some dates in 2005 that we will use to arrange training initiatives aimed at younger members. One positive note is that as a result of successful working relationships with local companies we were able to see several young people taking up apprenticeships and we look to build upon this as a way of showing to young people what GMB can offer them.

NORTHERN IRELAND

There have been investigations into how the Young members section here in Northern Ireland can be resurrected, it has been discovered that the membership lists can be interrogated and those members born before a certain date can be identified, it is envisaged that a mail shot sent to these members would hopefully encourage these members to be active within the Union. There are approximately 2000 members currently under 26 years of age here in Northern Ireland. We are also in discussions with Belfast Community workers to organise a modern apprenticeship seminar that would be aimed at youth groups and community group members of the Irish Labour Party would also be involved including Mark Langhammer, who is also a member of this Trade Union as well as being a sitting Councillor in Newtownabbey Borough Council.

8. Training

	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
(a) GMB Courses Basic Training					
Introduction to GMB (2 days)	19	206	33	239	4,541
GMB/TUC/ICTU/MWTUC Induction (6 days)	14	145	19	164	2,296
Branch Officers	-	-	-	-	-
(b) On Site Courses					
GMB Women's Conference (2 days)	2	3	60	63	126
GMB/NWTUC Confidence Building for Women (2 x ½ day)	2	-	12	12	24
Computer Courses GMB/TUC (3½ hrs) 14 wks	5	38	18	56	280
ECDL Inductions (6 x ½ day)	6	40	18	58	348
European Workers Directive (2 day)	6	17	4	21	21
Learner Reps Course (5 days)	6	51	2	53	318
Understanding Pensions (1 day)	3	32	5	37	111
Pensions Course (3 days)	1	9	2	11	11
Public Speaking/Communication (2 days)	3	28	7	35	105
(c) Health & Safety Courses					
GMB 2-day Health & Safety Course	15	155	26	181	2,715
TUC Women's Health & Safety Course (1day)	1	-	2	2	2
Health & Safety Follow-on (5 days)	1	17	4	21	21
(d) Other Courses					
TUC Women's Conference (1 day) w/d	1	-	1	1	1
GMB Computer - GMB/WEA (2½ hr) w/d	1	8	14	22	22
GMB Computer - GMB/NWCLD (3½ hr) w/d	2	5	14	19	38
GMB Computer GMB/Stabane College (2 hr) w/d 12 wks	1	12	4	16	16
Equality Training (1 day) w/d	1	14	4	18	18
(e) GMB National College Courses					
GMB National College Courses	17	24	10	34	578
(f) TUC (STUC & ICTU) Courses					
TUC (10 day)	21	48	16	64	640
ICTU (10 day)	7	6	1	7	70

9. Health & Safety

Health and Safety remains very firmly embedded in our training of new and experienced representatives and towards the end of 2004, within the Region, we piloted a 5-day Health and safety follow-on course that teaches representatives to further develop skills gained from their two-day Health and Safety induction and become more proactive on behalf of our members within the workplace. We now intend to include this course as part of our core programme across other parts of our Region.

Other initiatives - Staff manual handling training commenced towards the end of 2004 and we are committed to further develop Health and Safety awareness training to our Staff.

Workers' Memorial Day was commemorated in April 2004 by distributing Health and Safety packs to representatives across the Region to aid promoting the day within their workplaces. A one minute silence was also held at Regional Office and press releases were passed to local media to further highlight the day. The Region also sent several delegates to the Asbestos Seminar which was held in Manchester in February 2004.

(Adopted)

(The Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Regional Secretary's Report was formally moved)

(There were no questions raised on this section of the report)

(The report was adopted)

THE PRESIDENT: In relation to the Regional Secretary's Report, the region has been running courses across the region in health, safety and

training for young women stewards, which brings the women together from across the region. I have been a party to that. I can tell you that it was a wonderful experience and a great training ground to see nervous stewards coming in and going out like lions to take on the world, and I know they will. I know that later this year it is the intention of the Education Officer in Liverpool to bring all those three training courses together, so I think that is something worth doing. It shows our education courses are working.

ENGINEERING SECTION REPORT

1. National Committee

The Engineering Section National Committee has continued to meet since the last Congress where it has received and endorsed reports from the Officers of the section. In particular, it has debated, and is becoming involved in recruitment activities across all industries covered by the section.

The Engineering Section National Conference took place in May 2004 in Scarborough. Scarborough proved to be a very good venue as was the Royal Hotel for the conference. The conference was a great success and we express our grateful thanks and gratitude for the hospitality and the warm welcome to Midlands and East Coast region. The conference was attended by 68 people and 30 motions were submitted by regions.

Guest speakers at the conference included Kevin Curran, GMB General Secretary, Debbie Coulter, GMB Deputy General Secretary, The Rt Hon Geoff Hoon, Secretary of State for Defence, Lynne Tomkins, Semta Head of Operations, Alan Robson, CSEU General Secretary, Francis O'Grady, TUC Deputy General Secretary, Mary Turner, GMB National President, Councillor Freda Coultas, Mayor of Scarborough, Naomi Cooke, GMB Pensions Officer, Kim Sunley GMB Health & Safety Officer and Charlie King, GMB Research and Policy Officer who gave a presentation on the GMB political fund ballot.

National Committee; Dave Falconer MBE, Section President GMB Scotland, Barry Montgomery, Section Vice President, Lancashire Region, Ray Lowden Liverpool, North Wales and Irish Region, Tommy Robertson, Northern Region, Derek Hocking, Midland and East Coast Region, John Christie GMB Scotland, Peter Ferguson Liverpool Region, Charlie James Yorkshire Region, Micky Laws Southern Region, Alastair McLean London Region, Keith Patience London Region, William O'Williams BEM South Western Region.

The National Committee consists of representation from every region, one from the Thermal Insulation industry and one from the Offshore industry including one black member and an equal rights representative.

2. Shipbuilding

The UK shipbuilding industry still continues to be an industry of mixed fortunes, with total cut throat competition. For the last few years, we have one yard winning an order at the expense of other yards

and in some cases even putting another yard out of business. This applied across all areas, warship, commercial build and ship repair.

We need to look at ways and means of working together for the UK shipbuilding industry as a whole to stop this unnecessary decimation of the industry. At the time of the last conference in 2003 we had two commercial shipbuilding yards and now with the closure of Appledore we are left with just one in commercial build.

However, all indications are that the future of the UK naval shipbuilding industry is looking good, we have the biggest order book ever in the UK. The MOD awarding orders under the UK Government's public procurement policy for the building of Royal Navy ships.

Six Type 45 Destroyers have been awarded to BAE Systems with a further two yet to be awarded, these will be built in modules at the yards on the Clyde in Scotland but will also share work with Vosper Thornycroft at Portsmouth. This will provide stability to the UK shipbuilding and preserve the possibility for competition for future warship building programmes. However, we did experience shortages of orders up until the cutting of steel started in August 2003 for the Type 45 orders.

The MOD has awarded its biggest Government order yet for two new Royal Navy carriers sharing the order between BAE Systems the prime contractor and Thales using their design this is wonderful news for the industry. The new aircraft carriers will be among the largest warships that the Royal Navy have ever had built.

The carriers will be built in the UK in modules or blocks and will create work throughout the UK for BAE Systems yards on the Clyde, Vosper Thornycroft in Portsmouth, Swan Hunters on the Tyne, DML and Rosyth. These modules / blocks will be floated to the Rosyth yard to be assembled. When built they will deliver a formidable force, and a projection capability, creating some 2,000 jobs and sustaining 10,000 through the build, fitting and systems of these two carriers.

So the long term future of the UK shipbuilding industry looks good and the MOD has the largest forward warship building programme for many years. Along with the aircraft carriers and the Type 45 Destroyers there are also astute submarines which will be built at the BAE Systems yard at Barrow in Furness. We are also awaiting the awarding of the contract for the MARS programme which we will be pressing for to be built in the UK.

Although this is good news for UK shipyards this experience has taught us not to be complacent we must always be competitive, deliver on budget and on time in order to sustain a competitive, buoyant and successful shipbuilding industry for the UK that is able to pursue commercial work.

3. Engineering Industry

As reported at the last Congress Engineering is still suffering the same sad story of cutbacks, pay freezes and pay cuts to save jobs and of course redundancies where this fails. This is the sorry story for UK manufacturing. We need to work with the employers, Government especially the DTI and TUC and the other trade unions to formulate a UK manufacturing survival strategy.

Despite all the concessions made by the shop floor, we have to constantly contend with comments like, "we cannot compete with other countries," it is more economical to import, blaming the strength of the pound and any other excuse that can be dreamed up. We need UK employers to invest in their workforce more training more up to date technology so we can compete on a level playing field.

Yet with all these job loses along with all other Engineering and Construction related industries there is a skill shortage which can only get worse, the age profile of the sector continues to rise as people leave the industry and are not replaced. The skill shortage desperately needs addressing, this can only be achieved by investing in training and the recruitment of apprenticeships. The Government have now made funds available for apprentices across all sectors of industry, for engineering and related industries to survive we must take up the offer from Government and invest in apprentices for the future of the industry.

4. Offshore Industry

The GMB, Amicus and the OCA, (Offshore Contractors Association) are signatories to the Tripartite

Partnership Agreement which represents the employees working offshore, together we are working quite well with the OCA in order to improve Health and Safety Offshore and also to improvements to member's terms and conditions.

One of the trade union priorities is to build up the membership within the industry and get representatives from the platforms. This would allow us to become more organised, providing more input from the workforce by building up the membership and it will enable us to work at improving terms and conditions. So far we have one shop steward offshore who is doing an excellent job.

Working Time Directive, we are still having the long running saga with the offshore industry about the implementation of the Directive. The employers stick with their interpretation that as these people are only working 6 months of the year, on a two week on, two week off basis. They therefore are only entitled to 14 days off the job, whilst the trade unions interpretation is that they are entitled to 4 weeks off the job with payment the same as all other workers.

At the time of writing a meeting is being set up between the TUC (co-ordinating the trade unions), the DTI and the Offshore companies involved within the industry in an attempt to resolve this long ongoing saga. If this fails then the only avenue left open will be to go to law. All stakeholders give a commitment to try and resolve this issue and explore every avenue that was available to us before taking the very expensive route of going to law. But if all else fails then that is the way we will have to go to resolve this issue.

5. Aerospace Industry

The Aerospace related industries pre September 11th 2001 began to look like a very exciting industry. Several lucrative orders had been awarded which would have meant security for both the aerospace related industries and their employees. Unfortunately since September 11th, the industry has taken a drastic nosedive. We faced announcement after announcement of redundancies and closures such as companies like BAe Systems pulling out of Regional Jets delivering yet another fatal blow. We continue to encounter massive job losses with closure of various sites up and down the UK and the transfer of work and employees.

Work is still ongoing on Nimrod, Boeing and Airbus, providing manufacturing work in related industries. Another recent glimmer of light within the aerospace industry after heavy lobbying by the CSEU aerospace committee was the awarding of the RAF for Hawk Trainer aircraft from BAe Systems site at Brough, this was quickly followed by the long awaited contract from the Indian airforce for the same Hawk aircraft very welcome work for BAe Systems.

Within Bombardier we have mixed messages whilst they are competing for a C series aircraft which will be a much needed order for the Bombardier factory in Belfast. They are also facing the possibility of massive redundancies around the world including the sites in Belfast and Montreal.

Under the umbrella of the CSEU Aerospace committee, we are constantly lobbying the Government to save the Aerospace related industries, the lobbying will continue in order to save jobs and the industry.

6. Car Industry

The UK's car industry is still a roller coaster one at this moment in time with some manufacturers pulling out of the UK and others investing in the UK, the announcement of Jaguar closure at Coventry being the latest casualty, a devastating blow to UK manufacturing yet again. Problems at Rover with discussions about more capital being supplied from an alliance with China. I am pleased to say the threat of closure has been lifted from Landrover at Solihull. Our members within the automobile industries are experiencing a knock on effect of these issues and in each case are fighting their corners for survival.

7. Thermal Insulation

The two year wage deal for 2003 and 2004 was accepted which provided a deal of 4%, for year 1 and 4% for the second year. I can now confirm that the interface between the NAECI and the Thermal Insulation has been accepted and this will now be included in the NAECI booklet.

We are in the process of sitting down with the employers of the industry to look at updating the National Agreement and bringing it into the 21st century, this is long awaited, and will make it a more workable,

updated Agreement.

Now that TICA has got a new Chief Executive with fresh ideas we need to be looking forward within the industry. We will convene a small working party on recruitment as there are some 10,000 employees working in the industry and only 4,000 of them are current members of a trade union. We need to formulate a campaign within the Lagging Industry, based on health and safety. To enable us to recruit in this area. This can be on the back of the new regulations on the usage of asbestos, which have to be addressed by the unions involving consultation along with TICA.

8. NAECI

After many hours of work and numerous meetings I can now confirm that the revised terms and conditions have been accepted and are in place as from 1st April 2004. Shop Stewards were involved in all the processes with the Joint Review Body reporting back to the Shop Stewards forum, to ensure we are taking them with us through this difficult exercise. After a second vote the offer was accepted, a two year deal from 2004 to 2006. The anniversary date runs from April to April with the new rates applying from April 2004.

Since the last Congress the Engineering Construction industry has had its ups and downs over the last two years. With the recent pay claim, after several meetings we ended up balloting the membership for industrial action to get the employers to improve their offer. At the second ballot the offer was accepted.

It would be remiss of me not to mention the problem at Wembley Stadium where due to a dispute between Cleveland Bridge and Multiplex 240 steel workers were sacked twice in three weeks the second time for not agreeing to a redundancy criteria when they weren't in a redundancy situation. After lengthy talks and implementing the full NAECI terms and conditions the workforce returned to work, and, at the time of writing this report the project is progressing.

The revision of the NAECI text by the NAECI Joint Review Body has now been concluded, and the changes incorporated and the new booklets printed and distributed to Officers within the regions.

9. Steel Industry

Steel has been another sector which has felt the wrath of the decline in UK manufacturing with Corus being one of the companies undergoing a huge restructuring which has had a great knock-on effect across UK industries. After months of setbacks, closures and job losses it would appear that the steel industry under Corus is on the turn, unfortunately not without casualties and a wage freeze in 2002.

This was followed by the disaster at the Port Talbot furnace which caused fatalities and grieving throughout the steel community. The furnace has now been replaced and investment made to prevent this happening again. If all that was not enough to be going on with, at the same time the USA imposed import tariffs on European and third world steel imports to the USA. We tackled this on a European and UK front, meeting with the DTI, Government Ministers and European MPs for support to save the steel industry and our member's jobs. The 2004 pay negotiations resulted in a 2.5% increase which was accepted, the 2005/2006 pay claim has been concluded resulting in a 2 year deal of an increase of 3.5% for year 1 and 3.5% increase in year 2, and a commitment to discuss a move towards a shorter working week.

10. Marconi

Marconi, which was formed from the old GEC empire's attempted to get the company on a sound economic basis, previous various attempts had failed, they hired a company called Jabil, which also became a failure. Bad investment decisions by the management cost many valuable jobs when billions of pounds were wiped off the value of their shares overnight resulting in mass closures, job losses, the sale of subsidiaries and joint ventures to anyone that would have them. However, while workers lost their jobs the people who made the decisions left with secure pensions and huge packages.

11. Conclusion

When we met two years ago at the last congress we reflected over the continuing decline of the UK manufacturing industry, with many companies closing down, relocating production and forming joint ventures. All these have been at the expense of our members jobs. I am sad to say that this trend has continued over the last 2 years in the UK losing over 10,000 manufacturing jobs per month throughout 2004.

At the time of writing this report there are meetings between the trade unions the Government and the industry in an attempt to stop the decline of UK manufacturing and formulate a manufacturing strategy to save the industry.

In various industries we are experiencing the increased use of EU and non EU labour. Whilst we are all members of the European Union we cannot sit back and see our colleagues from other European countries be exploited by ruthless employees paying our European colleagues less favourable rates of pay or terms and conditions than the negotiated rate for the job.

Finally on the issue of training and apprentices, we are constantly hearing of skill shortages and age profiles within the industry. This can only be addressed by reminding employers that apprentices are not a cost but an investment in the future of the industry. We need to ensure that on every negotiating agenda we raise the issue of apprentices in order to maintain a stable, well trained and effective workforce to secure the future of UK manufacturing.

MOD HR Transformation

Compelled by the Treasury's Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) and the Gershon Plan ("Releasing Resources to the Front Line") provisions there will be a significant overhaul of spending and staff in the period 2005 to 2008.

The CSRs fiscal policy calls for the MoD to find over £2.8 billion in efficiency savings. Subsequently, this will result in staff cuts of up to 10,000 in the civilian sector and a similar reduction in armed personnel by 2008.

Ultimately it is civilian staff in London and spatial locations around the country that will bear the brunt of change. The MoD has planned for a 10% reduction in financial staff in addition to the downsizing and mergers of certain sections. Furthermore, the HR transformation is expected to affect the jobs of 1,000 locally engaged civilians overseas.

It has been projected that 4,000 jobs will be lost due to post relocations from London as part of the MOD contribution to the Lyons Review, an independent study conducted by Sir Michael Lyons, Director of the Institute of Local Government Studies at the University of Birmingham, called "Well Placed to Deliver? - Shaping the Pattern of Government Service".

The MoD has announced HR functions will be centralised into two main sites. HR Operations will be based at Bath in the south-west, while HR Pay and Pensions will be based in Cheadle Hume, outside of Manchester.

As part of this change, some personnel functions will be on line, or by a call centre facility, and others will be transferred to line management. This does not directly affect the industrial staff, as the main job losses will be in the staff numbers.

However, the application of the new HR transformation into an online electronic data system will affect how the industrial staff interrelate and deal with personnel issues.

In addition to this the management wish to rewrite the associated procedures on discipline, grievance, restoring efficiency, sickness and absence, and promotion.

The MoD has stated there will be a commitment to retain and re-deploy where possible.

The Four-year Pay Deal

In 1998 the MoD reached an agreement with the Industrial trade unions AEEU, GMB, MSF, TGWU and UCATT. The agreement stipulated they would work towards harmonisation with the Staff-side unions covered by the Council of Civil Service Unions PCS and Prospect.

Subsequently for the 2001 pay round a 4 year deal was agreed with a 32 pay step 4 broad banded with structure this would provide 2.5% differential between each step and 2.5% rise for 4 years. There would also be a target rate in each Zone and a maximum rate. This has been the largest and best pay deal in the public sector since the millennium 25% over 4 years.

One additional factor imposed by the Treasury was there had to be a performance related bonus that would apply to 50% of all staff. This was reluctantly agreed however; as there was no performance history for industrials they agreed a fixed bonus for years one and two.

A similar arrangement was made for the non-industrial except that they had to accept the 50% bonus from year one. The industrials also negotiated a two-year review.

The working group has continued to meet between 4 to 6 times per year to monitor the implementation. In addition the two-year review took place and the pay deal was judged to have been very successful a few hundred appeals for over 23,000 employees the main concern was the bonus paid in 2004 year 3. As a result a survey of employees took place with over 95% rejecting the 50% bonus as divisive and demoralising.

As a result MOD trade unions consulted their members for ideas on how to move forward. The main consensus was that the bonus should be tiered at three levels with a low average and enhanced payment, based on actual performance not arbitrary.

After negotiations in 2004 The MoD agreed to increase the number of people receiving bonus to 60% a one off payment would be paid to all industrial staff and an enhanced bonus could be paid too high performing staff.

Thought must now turn to how we deal with the pay after 2005 and the MoD have issued a report expressing their views and this will be part of the trade union discussions this year.

MOD overspend

The MoD has recently encountered fierce criticism for overspend that has been projected as high as £3 billion on their major projects. The department's fiscal problems are the catalyst for the Comprehensive Spending Reviews efficiency savings demands.

The department's budget has also been exacerbated by the Iraq war. In 2003, the MoD was forced to spend £510 million on last-minute equipment upgrades and new weapons - a sum that accounted for one-third of all spending during the preparation and fighting stages of the conflict.

£2.6 bn per year is also spent on MoD Research. The MoD currently employs 40% of all government researchers, and their work accounts for 30% of the total public research and development budget.

Other Issues

Centralisation

The MOD has announced that some devolved agencies such as the War Ship Agency (WSA) will lose their devolved responsibility for pay and conditions and will be transferring back to the centralised pay bargaining.

Facility Time

At the beginning of 2005 the MoD agreed to provide facility time and travel costs for a steward from each of the four main industrial unions Amicus, GMB, TGWU. and UCATT. Bob Gunn has taken up this new role for the GMB.

Northern Ireland

As part of the peace dividend the military will be reducing their presence in Northern Ireland this will lead to a considerable number of civilian job losses. Discussions are taking place over the redundancy and transfer terms.

Spending Review

The government announcement to pursue further closures and reductions in military bases in the UK fortunately at present does not affect too many GMB members. The government has also directed the MOD along with other government departments that it should move a number of civil servant jobs out of London into the provinces. Fortunately, this decision will not affect the civilian industrial staff workforce and therefore in the main GMB industrial members.

Outsourcing

This continues to be a threat to direct jobs in the MoD and the Government will continue to put the MOD under pressure to outsource work to the private sector - particularly in light of the fiscal demands placed on the MoD by the CSR.

GMB Structure and Membership

As a result of these changes GMB membership in the MOD is falling. The GMB is looking at its internal structure, how it organises itself in the MOD, its representation on the Whitley Council and other bodies in the MOD. This is necessary to ensure that we adequately represent our existing membership and we are able to recruit new members both in the MOD and its contractors.

Civil Service Pensions

Proposals to amend the Civil Service pension scheme were published in a document entitled "Building a Sustainable Future" December 2004. Various changes are suggested, although none have been agreed and the subject to negotiation with the Civil Service trade unions including GMB.

Membership

MOD Membership currently stands at 801.

(Adopted)

BRO. K. HAZLEWOOD (National Secretary, Engineering): President, before I give my section report, I would like to comment on the motion moved yesterday concerning asbestos - Motion 107. Two weeks ago at the IMF World Congress in Vienna, I moved a motion on behalf of the British section, submitted by the GMB, demanding a worldwide ban on asbestos. This motion was seconded by the Australian Metalworker's Union, and it was moved and carried unanimously, so we just need to sit back and wait for it to come through the system.

I move the Engineering Section Report to Congress, which is contained on pages 55 - 60 of the General Secretary's Report. I must apologise for the omission of Vin Blawes name of the Birmingham & West Midlands Region from the section committee. In moving this report of mixed fortunes, there has been a pattern of closures and redundancies in all sectors of the industry with companies using various excuses such as the economy, a downturn in orders, "It's cheaper to build abroad", "It's cheaper to import than to manufacture in the UK" and, of course, September 11th, 2001. We are in danger of becoming a nation of suppliers rather than manufacturers. This situation is leading to two major problems within the industry; skill shortages and the age profile. We need to use every opportunity to raise the issue of apprentices to alleviate the skill shortage that we are currently experiencing, which will get worse if not addressed.

Let me summarise. I turn first to the offshore industry. We have a partnership agreement that was formally entered into by the GMB, Amicus and the Offshore Contractors Association. This agreement, if properly serviced and worked on, should give us the opportunity to improve our membership base in offshore working in the North Sea.

The car industry has been hit with

announcements of closures, redundancies and work being transferred abroad. In relation to Rover, it gives me no pleasure to announce the recent closures at Longbridge with five thousand immediate job losses and many more in the supply chain. That is a devastating blow for the industry and for the community. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Bert Hill, the local officer, who did an excellent job in representing GMB members throughout this ordeal. *(Applause)*

I would now like to touch on other manufacturing-related industries which have, unfortunately, been the subject of more disastrous consequences. Many of them have been subject to the effect of post September 11th, 2001. Companies have taken the opportunity to use that date as an excuse for redundancies, closures, pay freezes and the worsening of terms and conditions for our members.

Whilst I am talking about manufacturing, it would be remiss of me not to mention the aerospace related industries, where we have seen most of our job losses. Most recently, 800 job losses have been announced at Marconi. These were caused by Marconi's failure to win a contract from BT. We need to campaign for the survival of our manufacturing-related industries through every channel that is available to us - ministers, local MPs and local communities.

In the shipbuilding industry once again we are faced with closures and redundancies through various excuses, such as no orders and not being competitive. We know all of the arguments. The commercial shipbuilding industry is an industry of mixed fortunes. We have witnessed total cut-throat competition. We have seen one yard winning an order which puts another yard out of business in some cases. I mention Appledore as a prime example. We

have enough competition from outside the UK trying to put us out of business without putting ourselves out of business.

On the brighter side, colleagues, hopefully, we are on the right track by working together for the UK military shipbuilding industry through the Government's procurement policy on the current Type-45 orders. It is an order for the MoD which is shared between BAe Systems, two yards on the Clyde and Vosper Thornycroft at Portsmouth. Also two aircraft carrier contracts have been awarded to BAe Systems as prime contractor in conjunction with Tallas as the main provider. The other yards involved in this order will be Swan Hunters, here, on the Tyne, Vosper Thornycroft from Portsmouth and Babcocks from Rosyth. This order will be built in five blocks and forwarded to Babcocks in Rosyth for assembly.

I want to talk now about BAe Systems in Brough, which has recently won a contract under the UK Government's procurement policy for the Hawk trainer aircraft, securing some 2,500 immediate jobs and the same again in the supply chain. This was followed by an order from India, which is a much needed boost for UK manufacturing.

We are constantly competing with Europe and the rest of the world. Therefore, we must maintain our presence in Europe through the European Metalworkers' Federation and globally for the International Metalworkers' Federation because, whether we like it or not, everything has a European perspective on it and we need to be part of that policymaking body and make our presence felt. We also need the strength of Europe behind us in attempts to address countries like Korea, Japan and China where huge subsidies in all forms of manufacturing are making the situation very difficult for us to compete. We are consistently losing orders to these countries.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all activists, shop stewards, convenors and local officers for all the help and support you have given me during the past two years and beyond. Last but by no means least, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Engineering Section Committee members who have worked closely with me during the past two years, since the previous Congress, and for the health and guidance they have given me.

I would also like to thank Neil Moore, who retired in September of last year for all he did for the section. I submit my report to Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: Let me run through the report. I move page 55?

BRO. J. DOLAN (GMB Scotland): Keith, you identified the naval shipbuilding industry and the work that the CSEU and the GMB have done with the Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee. We need your help again with commercial shipbuilding. We are an island nation.

How can we survive with one commercial shipyard, which is at the lower regions of the Clyde, called Fergusons? Keith, will you get the CSEU with the same commitment to assist the Ferguson shipyard to get the orders it needs to survive? Thank you.

BRO. G. CASTER (London): President and Congress, I would like to put on record a few thanks about the Wembley dispute and to give you a little history about it. I am a shop steward at the new Wembley Stadium.

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the GMB and AMICUS members to thank the GMB for the support that was given to us when we were sacked last August for refusing to have our terms and conditions changed from the national agreement to a compulsory 66 hours per week with two days off a month. Furthermore, those workers who raised safety issues were marked down for redundancy by Matrix. We won the battle - I say "we" - because all the different arms of the GMB worked together to achieve our success. I want to thank the national officer and to the London Region, particularly the London Region Secretary, Paul Kenny. I also want to thank the London Region's Construction branch for all the help and assistance that Tom Kelly, Kelly Rogers and Steve Kelly gave, but also Keith Hazlewood. I want to thank our local GMB members in the London Borough of Brent who made facilities available to use during the dispute. Let me give a thank you to all the workplaces and branches who gave financial and moral support. I also want to thank all those who supported us who I have not mentioned.

I would not like to say thank you to the Amicus leadership. I do not use that term lightly. Within an hour of being sacked, I repudiate any action we make take to defend our jobs. I do not want to say "thank you" to the Amicus officers who marched crane drivers across the picket line. I would not like to thank the Amicus officers who, behind the scenes, negotiated a return of Amicus members only. That is not trade unionism. The Amicus members told their officers to go forth and multiply. We started with the GMB and we stayed with the GMB. That is trade unionism. Trade unionism is the support given by the local GMB, at all levels of dispute, against the threat of legal action by employers. The GMB has shown in the Wembley dispute that when workers are given the full support of their union who are fighting to defend their rights, they can win. Once again, I would like to thank everyone involved. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. I will go through the rest of the report page by page.

Page 56? 57? 58? 59? 60? *(No response)* Keith.

BRO. K. HAZLEWOOD (National Secretary): I will take the last point first. Wembley Stadium. Before a ball is even kicked at the new Wembley Stadium, there are some champions, and the champions are the

workforce for what they did. When I went to meet Alandia, at the second meeting they refused to sit down with the GMB because of the press coverage, because people had been telling the truth as to what these people had been up to with our members. I said to the company, "If you are not going to speak to us, fair enough." I shut my case and when I reached the door I turned round and I said to the company, "I'll tell you one thing. You will speak to me, be it either today, tomorrow, next week or the week after because I have 80 members outside the gate telling you to speak to us. I suggest we have a short adjournment for you to reconsider what I am telling you." We had an adjournment and they fetched us back in. They said, "We need to be adult about this and responsible". We sat down and we achieved all but one demand that the workforce wanted. It is all through the workforce being united and in complete solidarity.

I would like to place on record my thanks and the thanks of this Congress to Tom Kelly and Kelly Rogers who stood through that demonstration with the workforce, shoulder to shoulder, from day one to the very last day. They are the people who deserve credit for guiding the likes of Graham and the workforce through this dispute. *(Applause)* I heard what John Dolan said about Fergusons. I will give you the commitment that we will give you all the support you require. We have done in the past and that will continue. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Keith.

ENGINEERING

SHIP RECYCLING

MOTION 206

Congress notes the need for state of the art facilities to be made available to decommission and strip vessels at the end of their life, in a secure and safe environment conforming to all current health and safety regulations and best practice. Congress recognises that this will create well paid, high skilled jobs in areas that are needed and also will remove the unsafe practices currently being used in other parts of the world.

HARTLEPOOL 2 BRANCH *Northern Region*

(Carried)

BRO. M. BLENCH (Northern): I move Motion 206 on ship recycling.

Congress, I am the branch president of the North Tyne Engineering branch nominated by the Blyth Engineering branch. I am the yard convenor at Swan Hunter and I am speaking today on behalf of Hartlepool no. 2 branch. I spoke at the venue once

before, but not in this hall. It was outside in the auditorium addressing three thousand hostile and vociferous offshore workers from AMEC in a long and bitter pay dispute without a microphone. Not only that but Aerosmith was due to perform in this arena that same night. Unfortunately, they started to practise as the meeting began. It was hard to tell who made the most noise, either us or them. Fortunately, that dispute was resolved by the ballot box but I fear that we, as a heavy engineering and shipbuilding industry, have another big battle to fight today. Shipbuilding was once dead on the Tyne and in the north-east. We might be on our knees and having to look to new industries to utilise our skills and expertise, and that is ship recycling.

You have heard in the media about the so-called "ghost ships" that have been brought over from America to be scrapped in Hartlepool. The nightmare vision of asbestos, poisons, PCBs and chemicals caused a wave of fear in Hartlepool and the UK. The facts are that thousands of tonnes of UK, European and worldwide shipping need to be disposed of in a controlled and safe manner. The people who have the greatest expertise for this work are at the centre of our shipbuilding communities.

Shipbuilding, ship repair and ship dismantling have been for years the centre of our industrial base. Skills and knowledge are constantly expanding. Instead of spreading fear and misunderstanding, the media should be welcoming major new orders in ship recycling and creating centres of excellence in ship recycling so that these ships can be disposed of in a clean and safe environment, one that is open and where the local communities know the facts. President, let us get the message across that ship recycling can be carried out in a clean and safe environment. We are the world experts. I urge Congress to support our industry and to support Motion 206.

BRO. J. CHEAL (Northern): I second Motion 206 on ship recycling.

The mover of the motion clearly set out the role of the media in creating fear about ship recycling. Many of you will recall the coverage about ghost ships steaming across the Atlantic from America. But, colleagues, what the media did not say was what happens in the rest of the world. It did not say that our industry maintains the highest safety standards, protects the environment, protects the workers and disposes of toxic chemicals legally and safely.

What the media never covered was the dismantling yards in the Far East and the Third World where these standards are not maintained, where workers - by "workers" I do not just mean adults but child labour as well - and the environment are destroyed by cowboy outfits which are out to make a quick buck. Congress, yes, ship recycling is dangerous work. Yes, old ships are full of dangerous and toxic

chemicals, but that is exactly why they should be dismantled by experts. I urge Congress to support Motion 206.

THE PRESIDENT: At this stage, I would like to thank the Birmingham Region last night for a wonderful party and also the Northern Region, hosted by the man coming to the rostrum. I would not surprise me if he makes a statement from the platform.

BRO. W. HUGHES (Northern): Colleagues, worthy President, with your indulgence and understanding, I would like to make a statement.

THE PRESIDENT: I thought as much.

BRO. W. HUGHES: On behalf of the Northern Region, and indeed the four hospices within the Northern Region, I would like to thank each and every one of you for the support you gave to the Northern night for making it so successful. The spirit was there, the brotherhood and sisterhood was there and, when you look at the top platform, Debbie, my worthy President, our General Secretary and in the hall our regional secretaries, the Union is safe in their hands, don't you think? (*Calls of "Yes"*) Don't think I am grovelling for money. Seriously, I want to thank those regional secretaries who came and issued cheques, which is quite unique, for the charities. Even though people have been bombarded with raffle ticket and what have you, the response last night was phenomenal. All I can do is to thank each and everyone of you from my heart and long may these Congresses work the way we have worked this week. Let's work together and let's build for the future because I have a feeling in my heart that we are heading in the right direction. Thank you, colleagues. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I understand, my worthy president, that you raised £800 last night.

BRO. HUGHES: In fact, and dare I say it, intoxicated President, the final figure was £2,000. (*Applause*) I know that when I give a statement of the final figure, I know that certain people in high positions will make a donation. I have no fear of that. I don't want to try and influence people in any shape or form.

THE PRESIDENT: I have got the message. We come now to Composite Motion 21.

MANUFACTURING

MANUFACTURING

COMPOSITE MOTION 21

(*Covering Motions 237, 238, 239, 240, 242 and 243*)

237 - Manufacturing (Birmingham & West Midlands Region)

238 - Manufacturing (Northern Region)

239 - Manufacturing (Northern Region)

240 - Manufacturing - Relocation Overseas (Northern Region)

242 - Manufacturing - (GMB Scotland)

243 - Public Procurement (South Western Region)

Congress deplores the ongoing demise of manufacturing, 110,000 jobs lost in the last 12 months alone, and notes with concern the loss of British manufacturing jobs overseas as British and multi national companies move operations abroad to exploit low wage economies. Congress views the continuing loss of Manufacturing jobs across the UK with alarm and notes with concern the quality of replacement jobs available in the Economy as the levels of earning in the new jobs created does little to support the Government's stated aims of the High Performance Workplace.

Congress acknowledges the vital contribution that the UK Manufacturing base makes to the overall Economy and calls upon congress to recognise that manufacturing output and employment remains central to UK economic success and prosperity, and that an increasingly global economy means that without international agreements such exploitation will only increase.

Many of these contracts are awarded in the majority of cases by those companies who submit the lowest tender and many accomplish this by manufacturing this work off-shore to meet these tendering costs. Congress believes that it is a scandal that billions of tax payers' money is spent each year on supplies procured for the Public Sector which are not produced and manufactured in the UK.

Public Procurement involves a whole range of products and we believe that it is vital, to ensure job sustainability and protect manufacturing jobs within the UK, that contracts are given to companies that are UK based and manufactured within the UK. If contracts are awarded to UK firms who manufacture in the UK, this would provide work for UK citizens who in turn will be supporting the economy by paying taxes and reducing the burden on the state by reducing the need for state benefits that would be paid to those unemployed as a result of manufacturing job losses. We must also look to the future by providing work for our youth and our potential members.

In light of these concerns, the introduction of the

Information and Consultation of Employees (ICE) Regulations is viewed with concern by Congress. Congress therefore:

- calls on Government to ensure that employers implement fully the Regulations and challenge those many Organisations for whom a wall of silence has become a way of life in their relations with our members, to ensure that proper information and consultation takes place prior to any important decisions being made
- also call on Government to fully implement the adopted EU Directive on public procurement as a means of developing a positive boost to Manufacturing, ensuring the legal obligation in contracting Authorities to consider social, employment, disability, and environmental issues when awarding public contracts
- and to halt these current trends, congress calls on this Government to implement a more pro-active programme to protect manufacturing jobs throughout the UK and Northern Ireland, securing the future of manufacturing in the UK

Congress therefore calls upon the CEC to:

- continue the GMB's campaigns to highlight the importance of maintaining the UK's manufacturing economy and to direct government policy towards supporting manufacturing employment
- join with other trade unions, the international labour movement and others to campaign for fundamental reform of the WTO and other global trade agreements to ensure that minimum wage and social standards are an integral part of any agreements.
- urge the Government to make the process of securing public procurement contracts more accessible for British companies who are based and manufacture in the UK, thus giving the tax payer value for money
- campaign for Government contracts to be awarded to UK companies in order to secure the manufacturing base on which the wealth of this country is built
- place the sustainability of a viable and dynamic manufacturing sector as a key priority

(Carried)

BRO. W. HUGHES: Congress, I move Composite Motion 21 on manufacturing. Without undermining the hard work and the effort in the public sector and the

service sector, of which I have many friends and I have the greatest of respect for those colleagues, believe you me, I have to say it is manufacturing and manufacturing alone which will produce the wealth to fund the services that we are so proud of. However, we need investment to halt and reverse the decline which is going on in manufacturing. This Government of ours needs to stop wasting billions of pounds on international conflicts, hair-brained schemes and fat-cats, which they seem to be nurturing every day of the week. We need to halt and reverse the decline and put the money where it is needed most, and that is in the manufacturing sector. Halting the decline will have a knock-on effect thereby providing better services to and from our sections.

Colleagues, "manufacturing" is a word that is slowly disappearing. We export less, we import more, more and more jobs are growing abroad, we close our mines and we import coal. The clothing and textile industry is just about rundown, yet Germany and Turkey make uniforms for our armed forces. Our ocean-going liners are built in France and then they are brought to the UK to be named.

Consider the position with North Sea oil. This Government give out licences to build oil rig platforms in the North Sea, yet not long ago Spain won a contract for the North Sea programme.

Our members at Remploy, who for years have built wheelchairs for the disabled, have found out that the contract for building wheelchairs has gone to Taiwan.

I am not against any worker wherever they are in this world bettering themselves with skills and improved pay conditions, but I strongly object to this happening at the expense of the British worker. Furthermore - I bet you didn't know this - when the chairs come into the UK they have to be examined by the Remploy workers by the reduced workforce!

Colleagues, what has the British worker done to deserve this kind of treatment? We have to stop our skilled workforces from being thrown on to the scrapheap. Now is the time to act to save the manufacturing industry in our country.

I welcome the statement by the CEC on manufacturing. I, personally, give it my full support. During Labour's first term of office, we said, "They have just got in. Don't rock the boat, don't rock the boat". Fine. During their second term of office, we kept saying, "All we want is a level playing field". Mind you, they have done some things right. In their third term of office, when the GMB played a big part in Labour's return to power, and none more so than the Northern Region - I had to get that plug in - under the guidance of Tom Brennan, our Regional Secretary, our members fought tooth and nail to win marginal seats, and we succeeded, we have to tell them, "Tony, the kid gloves are off, and enough's enough. It is pay back time." That is the message we have to give them. It is time to take off the kid

gloves, throw them away and it's payback time!

Manufacturing in the Northern Region is our livelihood and it is also our birthright. Like my worldly brother in GMB Scotland who spoke about an island, some people seem to forget that we still live on an island. Thank you.

SIS. A. LEADER (South Western): President and Congress, manufacturing in the UK is in crisis. Within the South Western Region, the clothing industry, for example, has been decimated and I am sure that other regions in the UK have suffered the same experiences and consequences. At the same time, whilst making sympathetic noises, the Government, through their various agencies, spends around £1 billion per year on public procurement. Much of the clothing and footwear as well as textile products for the armed forces, the NHS, the Prison, Police and Fire Services are made outside of the UK and, even more worrying, outside of the EU. This is, potentially, a huge market which would be of benefit to the UK.

A large pool of skilled labour already exists, many of whom have been thrown on the scrapheap, which is more than capable of fulfilling public procurement contracts. Best Value does not necessarily equate to the lowest price. UK based production would not only yield income tax revenue but significantly reduce the costs already being paid to unemployed clothing and textile workers in the UK. They say that charity begins at home and I hope that this Congress believes that the Government should show some loyalty to British workers, unlike many of the clothing and textile companies, which have abandoned dedicated, hardworking and British workers, purely for profit and to placate their shareholders.

If the French Government can protect their workers by awarding public procurement contracts to French firms to manufacture in France, why can't the British Government show some backbone and faith in their British workers to produce British goods on British soil. I second.

SIS. C. LAVERY (GMB Scotland): I speak in support of Composite Motion 21.

My background is the clothing and textile industry, from manufacturing shirts to producing industrial workwear. I am one of the statistics outlined in this composite due to off-shoring. Gordon Brown in his speech spoke with some passion and conviction of the devastation and waste of unemployment, which robs people of their dignity.

Gordon also said in his speech that manufacturing was not the economy of the past. Gordon, from where I am, it sure as hell looks like it! His commitment was that the Labour Government will build modern manufacturing strength. This composite sets out a clear agenda and strategy for the future. Our members want more than to become another unemployed statistic destined to work in the

service economy, doomed to low pay, poor work benefits and relying on social benefits. Support the motion. Support our manufacturing base.

MANUFACTURING CAMPAIGN

MOTION 241

Congress believes that, due to the fall in membership because of the loss of major manufacturing companies in the Country, we should start a major campaign with other organisations to try and re-establish ourselves as a major manufacturing producing country instead of just providing a service industry to the Public. If the decline continues at the present rate, we will be open to exploitation on imports from other Countries.

The other downturn on this has been the loss of apprenticeships and skill trades within the Country. As many of us know when we want some repairs or work done by a Tradesman, it is just impossible to obtain one. So we believe it is time more publicity should be given to try and resolve the position.

243 MANCHESTER NO 1 BRANCH
Lancashire Region

(Carried)

BRO. P. PERRY (Lancashire): I move Motion 241. I don't know how I can follow Billy Hughes because I think he covered practically everything in his speech, but I will make an attempt.

This debate has been going on for the past 20 years and we are no nearer to solving the situation. Everyone talks about the million jobs lost in the industry. I think we are way off target. I think the true figure is nearer to 2.5 million to 3 million jobs lost, if you take into account the supply companies where jobs have been lost when major companies close.

Jobs have been lost every week. In Lancashire another 600 were lost last week and I believe another 700 job losses have been announced in Durham. Not only are the jobs lost but also the revenue earned for the State is lost, thereby ensuring that the income tax, benefits paid in unemployment and money spent on retraining for jobs that do not exist as the majority of ex-employees are unable to obtain alternative work in their home areas. They cannot afford to move because of family commitments.

Great Britain is an island totally dependent on exports to keep the economy going. With the loss of manufacturing industry, such as engineering, shipbuilding, car production, textiles and coal mines, what employment remains in those areas and what are the jobs that are coming into replace them? In this country major companies can tender for work

and obtain the contracts because we have a level playing field. Once the contracts are given to major companies, the work moves overseas. However, we never hear of a British company obtaining contracts from abroad, and that is because there is no level playing field. What foreign countries have, they keep. They allow us to tender all right, but we haven't got a cat in hell's chance of getting the contract from them.

We are now becoming an island dependent on imports and at the mercy of foreign industrial companies which can charge what they want for their products, which we require. Such a situation does not help the balance of payments or the Chancellor. Even though, at the present time, we are putting people through training at our skill centres, including apprenticeship up to NVQ2, the facilities where practical experience used to be available do not exist any more. As well as training in practical skills, we are educating thousands of graduates every year. Unfortunately, when they graduate, very few of them are successful at getting employment because where they used to get work in manufacturing, manufacturing is now almost non-existent. The only industry left for them to work in is the service industry.

We must work in conjunction with other trade unions to get a manufacturing campaign going because we are now at crisis point.

I have four points to make. First, we must safeguard our existing manufacturing jobs with investments. Secondly, we must keep contracts inhouse so that future generations can have work in this country. Thirdly, we must stop manufacturing industry being shipped or transferred abroad. Fourthly, we must continue with the training programme to create a pool of skilled labour. If the present trend continues, we will become a third world country, depending on imports and exporting nothing.

With Gordon Brown's promises, which I hope are not lukewarm, and the Warwick Agreement, we should hope to make progress but we will have to await developments and see.

BRO. A. GLEAVE (Lancashire): I speak in support of Motion 241.

Once upon a time there was an island called Great Britain and its manufacturing business was booming. It had a company called British Steel which had a massive works in Ravenscraig in Motherwell. Where is it now? Gone! The communities of Motherwell, Wishaw and Hamilton have been devastated by a mass of redundancies. There used to be coalmines throughout England, Scotland and Wales. Where are they now? Ninety-nine per cent of them have gone!

There used to be the Great British Rail. It's not British Rail now. Where is it now? Gone! It has been privatised. It is now a group of small companies

running a dangerous network.

At one time we had a British car manufacturing industry. Where is it now? Again, nearly gone!

Only a few weeks ago an announcement was made of massive redundancies at Longbridge in the Midlands. So another British car manufacturer bites the dust.

I live in a little town in Cheshire called Northwich. It used to have a steel works called Joseph Parks. As funny as it sounds, I served my time there as a joiner. Where is it now? Gone!

There used to be an iron foundry called Henry Bates & Sons. Where is it now? Gone!

There were two shipyards - Yarwoods and Pimlotts. I want you to tell me where they are now? Yes, you've guessed it. Gone!

I bet you're thinking "Why is he telling us all this?" I will tell you why. It is because all of those companies employed apprentices. All of the companies I have mentioned have gone and so are all of the apprenticeships, which these companies had. I am talking about joiners, fitters, electricians, plumbers and boilermakers. They have all gone! That is the sad state of the British manufacturing industry. There are no such things as apprenticeships these days. I know because I have looked into it.

I will tell you what is happening. When pupils leave school, if they have certain grades, they get the chance to go to a training school for a couple of years and learn basic skills, whereas apprentices worked with skilled tradesmen and got to know the workplace at the same time. They also went to college. However, the most important thing was that they earned a wage.

Before I end my sad little story, I have a message for those who this situation concerns. I am addressing this Government and the managers and directors of our companies. Wake up, get off your backsides and start to invest in apprenticeships and manufacturing. Let us now make little Britain become the Great Britain it once was - the biggest manufacturer in the world. Thank you.

ROVER AND THE PHOENIX GROUP

EMERGENCY MOTION 3

This Congress condemns in the strongest possible way the disgraceful actions of those in control at Longbridge.

We call upon this Congress to ensure that there is no fudge in the Inquiry and those guilty for this travesty are punished accordingly.

BIRMINGHAM & WEST MIDLANDS REGION
(Carried)

BRO. S. EVANS (Birmingham & West Midlands):

President and Congress, I move Emergency Motion 3 and the disgraceful way in which the Phoenix Four have acted. I call on Congress to support this motion.

We have heard many stories and versions this week. Everybody seems to know what happened at Rover. I don't know if that is because everyone was watching BBC News that night, but you think about the lads and lasses on the lines that night. They didn't have a television. They had 'phone calls and text messages from their loved ones, partners, family and people concerned. That is how they found out.

Let me take you back to that fateful and sorrowful night a few weeks ago in April. Workers were told not to come to work the next day. They were told to go back home and listen to the radio and media. They were told that they might get paid next week. Indeed, Rover had to rely on the Government to pay that week's wages.

So when did all of this start? Let's go back to some five years ago. I am sure that there are many people in this room today who walked the streets of Birmingham. Eighty thousand people took place in that momentous march. They came from the north, south, east and west, trade unionists and concerned supporters to the last British car company. BMW bought the company. BMW called it "The English Patient". They split up the Rover Group - the Land Rover badge, the Mini badge and the Rover Cars/MG badge.

What did this English patient need? It needed the correct medicine. Land Rover builds successful models. The Mini is a '60s icon, but it is still successful. What medicine did Longbridge get? It received a £500 million interest free loan. Who had that loan? Everybody knows it was Towers, Beal, Edwards and Stevenson. Their initials are B-E-S-T. It certainly was not the best medicine. We might as well have had Dr. Harold Shipman giving us an interest free loan. I think I would have trusted him better.

So what happened to the £500 million interest free loan. The Rover 75 was moved from Cowley to Longbridge. The management had five years in which to find a partner. Were they active in finding that partner? Of course they bloody wasn't. How do we know? We know because they were too busy in selling off what they could and pocketing it. What did they sell. They sold Caterpillar for £89 million. The sale of land raised £47 million. It was not just the sale of land, but come the developments and the profits started rolling, they got another 20%. The intellectual property rights to the 25 and 75 was £68 million. What happened to the £400 million missing out of the pension fund, never mind the £1.3 billion owing to suppliers? How did they manage to get away with it?

At this moment in time, I am not worried about how they managed to do it. The question is how are we going to get them? Let's get one thing straight. The delegate who spoke yesterday on Motion 253 did

not seem very hopeful that those responsible will be brought to book. Brother, keep your faith because that is what the workforce have to do. The point is that without this Union and without our organisation, we know that natural justice does not come in Britain for the workers. We need the GMB and the wider trade union Movement to get them. That is what we are going to do. Let's be clear on this issue. They ain't going to get away with it. Why? It will be thanks to the GMB, other unions, Bert Hill and even the Government. Now Alan Johnstone, who was at the DTI before the election - they all said it was a gimmick - has come back since in the form of the Secretary of State for Trade & Industry. The situation will not be remedied until we get a full and proper inquiry. I do not mean an independent inquiry but an inquiry under the Companies Act 1985, section 432. That section has strong powers. What we need to see is an inquiry implemented under section 432 of the Companies Act. What we are going to see is the Phoenix ashes consigned to where they belong - the prison dustbin, the dustbin in the prison cells where the Phoenix 4 should be. That is what we want to see. We do not want an inquiry whereby the Phoenix 4 get a slap. We know that they have been busy. We know they have rich and powerful lawyers.

Let us be straight about this. By acting together, the union Movement will nail these people and put them where they belong.

You know where they belong. It is not just Towers, but it is Beal, Edwards and Stevenson. Remember the names. Help us consign those people and the Phoenix ashes to the proper dustbin here they belong.

Brothers and sisters, support the emergency motion. *(A standing ovation)*

(Emergency Motion 3 was formally seconded)

THE PRESIDENT: Let me say to the mover, you have seen the reception. We are determined to get these individuals by hook or crook.

I now call on Phil Davies to make the CEC's Statement on Manufacturing.

BRO. P. DAVIES (National Secretary, Clothing & Textiles, CFTA, Energy & Utilities): I am speaking on behalf of the CEC in relation to Composite Motion 21 and Motion 241.

Before I begin, let me give some information to Congress that the wheelchairs that Billy Hughes referred to at Remploy being off-shored to Taiwan due to the threat of industrial action from our members are now coming back into the Remploy factories in Scotland and the Remploy factories the north-east and that is a victory for our Remploy people.

The CEC is supporting the composite. Manufacturing in the UK is still an important part of the economy. It employs more than three million

people directly and a similar number indirectly throughout the supply chain. Since 1997 the UK has lost more than one million jobs in manufacturing industry. We are losing jobs at the rate of 10,000 per month. This is an absolute disgrace under a Labour Government.

These jobs have been lost due to a number of reasons, including the high price of oil, lack of skills, training and investment, failure to win orders, outsourcing and transferring of production across the world.

It is interesting to note that the CBI also complains about the lack of help for manufacturing industry, yet it is their own members who transfer work to other parts of Europe and to the developing world. At the beginning of May we had the BTS Shipbuilding Group suggesting that it could save the Government money if it was allowed to build the new naval support vessels in China. What a disgrace!

This approach might save the MoD some money but it will cost the country dearly in welfare benefits and loss of skills. This is a prime example of the double standards of UK management thinking. There is no thought for the workforce; no thought for the local community and no thought for UK Limited.

Colleagues, the situation is not all bad. The Government, under pressure from the trade unions, have invested in training and apprentices. Since 1997 the number of young people taking up apprenticeships has increased tenfold. Next year, we will have almost 200,000 - yes, 200,000! - young people on apprenticeship schemes. Money is available to train all the workforce up to NVQ Level 3, but even with the Government putting in large amounts of

money, the employers still exploit young people.

The CEC supports Motion 241 with the qualification that the Government's support for apprenticeships ought to be acknowledged. Labour has done an awful lot. However, it needs to do more to support and encourage manufacturing to stay in the UK. This Labour Government must also do a lot more to stop employers exploiting our apprentices. We need grants for inward investment, research & development and more training to NVQ Level 3 for those over the age of 26, as well as young people.

We need the Government to put in place community development funds. Such funds would be administered by the regional development agencies so that when plants close we have the support for both individuals and the local communities ready and available. The community development funds would be available to attract inward investment and retrain the workforce. We accept that the Government have been quick to do this in the case of MG/Rover but we need such help in less high profile areas as well. Please support Composite 21 and Motion 241 with the qualification that I have given.

(Motion 206 was carried)

(Composite Motion 21 was carried)

(Motion 24 was carried)

(Emergency Motion 3 was carried)

(The CEC Manufacturing Statement was carried)

MIDLAND & EAST COAST - REGIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

1. Membership and Recruitment

Total membership	56,618
Women membership	20,291
Section membership (by each Section):	
Clothing & Textile	766
Commercial Services	3,531
CFTA	5,178
Energy & Utilities	3,012
Engineering	8,092
Food & Leisure	13,085
Process	3,650
Public Services	19,304
Grade 1 members	40,645
Grade 2 members	9,795
Sick, retired & unemployed members	6,178
Total number recruited 1.1.2003 - 31.12.2004	15,367
Gross increase/decrease 1.1.2003 - 31.12.2004	5,106
Net increase/decrease 1.1.2003 - 31.12.2004	4,198
Membership on Check-off	32,660

Membership on Direct Debit	12,598
Financial membership	51,812

Whilst our financial membership shows a drop statistically during the last two years by 5106, much of this reduction were “members” who we cleansed from the system during 2004 who hadn’t paid contributions for a very long time, ASDA and retired being two prime examples. We made this move early to produce a true membership figure as all affiliations are paid on declared members and secondly, future recruitment will show real growth rather than be negated by false membership losses month by month.

Through our annually updated Business Plan and 3 Year Plan, we place heavy emphasis on workplace organisation as the key to success. More reps that are better trained and motivated are able to both service existing members and recruit new ones, knowing along the way that they have the support of their Organiser when they need it, has proved the key to our successes on recruitment **and** retention.

We have continued with our Branch Forums initiative where a number of Branches in one area get together and this can be for a number of reasons, actual examples being benefits road shows, employment law updates, equal pay in Public Services, social events and most latterly consultation on the CEC Task Group. This has significantly enhanced two-way communication and has raised our profile, providing social activity and raising money for local charities.

RECRUITMENT TARGETS AND CAMPAIGNS

Targeted recruitment has once again been the way forward in the Region since Congress 2003. Recruitment Officers have concentrated on public sector recruitment as the core of our campaigns but then have worked with individual Organisers on more concentrated and specific targets in the private sector, both consolidation and greenfield.

As for our methods, well in our view “one strategy fits all”. You need an issue on which to concentrate then you must **plan** how you intend to set about your campaign. Exactly who are you going to target, how many people are there, what shifts do they work, what access (if any) can you secure, what literature do you need, what forms will you use, how many people do you need to deliver it. Then you must fix precise meetings and the actual recruitment is the last and often easiest bit, if you have planned properly. One final slogan in our Region is “sign ‘em up at the time or else you probably won’t get ‘em!”

As well as recruiting new members, you need to recruit new reps who will then underpin your efforts with effective workplace organisation. So what have our efforts produced? In the last two years, we recruited 15,306 new members and importantly this averages on a month by month basis of almost 14% of our financial membership. Real successes have been achieved in County Councils in Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Derbyshire, North East Lincolnshire and East Yorkshire in schools, care homes, depots and offices, District and City Councils and the NHS. In the private sector, we used the same recruitment strategy in Butlins, recruiting over 1000 new members as we did in greenfield initiatives in IKEA distribution and Nottingham Tram, both of which are now almost 100% organised and where we have agreements and working relations to be proud of.

REGIONAL LEARNING AND ORGANISING ACTIVITY

The Region has been active on the “learning agenda” since the ULF was officially launched in 1998/9. The initial, path-breaking project, “ATLA”, set pilot activity in train from which two further self-sustaining projects were later established, “Leicester Learning Links” and “Recipe 4 Food” at Grantham. It also gave support to a third project, “Springboard” at Bird’s Eye on Humberside, which has since developed on a nationwide company basis.

“Springboard” has also demonstrated its worth in the context of the closure of the Bird’s Eye factory in Grimsby by the parent company, Unilever. The investment in learning by the 600 strong workforce has greatly eased their forced return to the local labour market. Part of the closure agreement has been the retention of the Springboard Learning Centre in Grimsby and a further investment by the company in the re-location of the project facilities, enabling it to become a community-wide project.

By end 2004 there were 100 identified ULR’s in the Region a growth of nearly 100% in the last 18 months. Of these the majority are connected with the four continuing learning projects in the Region,

demonstrating that project-based organisation (and agreement from the employer) were vital elements of support. Across the Region nine formal learning and ULR facilities agreements have been signed to date. The overlap between learning and organisation has been recently demonstrated in the recruitment of workers for whom English is a second language in the Lincolnshire area. A new ULF supported project is due to be launched in Scarborough in 2005.

In anticipation of the spread of URL appointments following the advent of the new URL rights in April 2003, the Region has developed a number of administrative steps to support new URL's:

- Letter of appointment to ULR from Organiser and to employer
- Credential card to ULR from Education Department showing ULR name, Region, Branch and reference to Employment Act 2002 / ACAS Code
- Information Pack including ACAS Code, latest TUC Learner Rep magazine, GMB's latest ULR celebration publication, details of TUC training courses

In the lead up to the enactment of the ACAS Code of Practice in April 2003 the Regional Education Officer provided a "PowerPoint" briefing for Officers in the three Area Teams on the new Code and implications for Organisers.

ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT SITUATION

The East Midlands Region has a diverse range of industry with a substantial mix of public and private sector industry. Predominantly, the East Midlands is seen as a rural Region with over 30% of its population living rurally, compared to the National figure of 20%. This creates obvious transportation challenges in these areas which are being addressed through the Region's transport strategy. Gross domestic product per capita still performs well compared to UK and European levels and the East Midlands remains in the upper quarter of the 77 Regions in the European Union.

Whilst most businesses in the Region are SME's, big businesses are essential to the Region as Firms with over 500 employees still account for 38% of all employment, compared with 36% across the UK.

EMPLOYMENT

Around 7% of UK employment is located in the East Midlands. The majority of the Region's workforce is employed in service and leisure industries whilst manufacturing continues to decline, standing now at only 18% of the workforce. Employment overall is still forecast to grow faster than the UK as a whole and the Region's level of unemployment has reduced and remains low at 2%. This is encouraging but conceals high levels of unemployment in certain areas as well as areas of long term unemployment.

EARNINGS

The Region has one of the lowest levels of average earnings for both men and women across the UK. This is particularly prevalent in the more rural Authorities of Lincolnshire and Derbyshire whereas the further south you go, the higher the average earnings with Leicestershire and Northants almost achieving the national average.

Through our Region's direct representation on the East Midlands Regional Assembly, a development framework has been produced to improve the quality of life and sustainable communities, thriving because of its vibrant economy and rich cultural diversity. This has identified five key priorities that are:

- a) To reduce inequalities in the Region
- b) Improve economic performance and competitiveness
- c) Create sustainable and healthy communities
- d) Conserve and enhance the natural environment
- e) Use natural resources to reduce the impact on climate change

All partners on the Assembly are stakeholders in the framework and are therefore committed to major improvement which should improve the performance indicators above by Congress 2007.

2. General Organisation

Regional Senior Organisers	3
Membership Development Officers	0

Regional Organisers	15
Recruitment and Organisation Officers	0
Regional Recruitment Officers	0
No. of Branches	99
BAOs	0
New Branches	1
Branch Equality Officers	52

The Midland and East Coast Region continues to be organised in three geographical areas with a Senior Organiser in each area having managerial responsibility for teams of Officers and Support Staff. The three Senior Organisers then form part of the Region's management team, led by the Regional Secretary.

As part of our aim for ever-improved communications, almost three quarters of the Region's Branches have been provided with a computer. This has not only assisted offices and Officers to contact Branches more quickly and easily, but has also thrown up some exciting ideas and ventures from them to their members including own websites, intranet links and Branch Newsletters. We helped some Branches to produce their own directories which include a list of Branch Officers, meeting dates and other useful information.

We continue to review all of the processes used across the Region in ongoing efforts to improve and streamline everything we do. Working Groups are established to implement smarter ways of working, very much in line with the Office Administration and Officers' Best Practice documents we put together some years ago. The latest initiative is scanning and we have achieved paperless departments in Membership Services, Legal and to a lesser degree Finance. We are now developing this amongst our industrial teams. The Region has, once again, retained IIP (Investor in People) status which fits perfectly with our aim of ensuring the continued personal development of Staff and Officers alike.

3. Benefits

Dispute	£500.00
Total Disablement	-
Working Accident	£13,618.80
Occupational Fatal Accident	£22,000
Non-occupational Fatal Accident	£1,100
Funeral	£46,125

4. Journals and Publicity

Whilst we have continued to produce our twice yearly magazine called Contact, which is mailed to every member, the format is currently under review as we want to ensure it is what members want and remains relevant to them as after all, it is their magazine.

Our major new initiative under this heading is a "Members Handbook" that was sent to every member in January 2003 and forms part of the welcome pack for all new members. The 20-page Handbook includes assistance for members with workplace problems, their rights, regional support services, benefits and how to get more involved. Judging by the feedback this has been brilliantly received.

To compliment the Handbook, we have our own regional membership application forms with different return addresses for our three areas. Emphasis on the application part of the form is firmly on Direct Debit as part of our drive to retain members once recruited.

Media links across the Region are as strong as ever as Officers are encouraged to publicise the many successes achieved daily for our members. We have undertaken a number of sponsorship and advertising initiatives with a view to getting the GMB "into the community". For some years now, we have been main team sponsors for the Nottingham Panthers Ice Hockey Team. This includes our logo across players' shirts, advertising boards and constant references to the Union throughout games. We also have a corporate match night, the latest of which was in February when we had 600 members and their families, including delegations from a number of Regions, all enjoying the game. Four blocks in the crowd full of GMB members was a very impressive sight!

We ran numerous community initiatives including Leicester Caribbean Carnival, Asian Mela and

Ashfield and Melton Shows. Regional sponsorship included local sporting clubs, disabled groups, working with the elderly and activity with young people. All of this has resulted in a higher profile in the Region than we have ever had and closer direct communication with our members which is very well received.

5. Legal Services

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

Applications for Legal Assistance	2,621
Legal Assistance Granted	2,571

Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	3,282
Withdrawn	1,340
Lost in Court	3
Settled	1,939 (£11,387,744.27)
Won in Court	0
Total Compensation	£11,387,744.27
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2004	1,880

(b) Employment Tribunals (notified to Legal Department)

Claims supported by Union	638
---------------------------	-----

Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	623
Withdrawn	252
Lost in Tribunal	6
Settled	280 (£861,257.34)
Won in Court	85 (£13,206.42)
Total Compensation	£874,463.76
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2004	495

(c) Other Employment Law Cases

Supported by Union	-
Unsuccessful	-
Damages/Compensation	-
Cases outstanding at 31.12.2004	-

(d) Social Security Cases

Supported by Union	60
Successful	32
Cases outstanding at 31.12.2004	12

During the period 1.1.2003 - 31.12.2004, Legal Services have been the focus of an ongoing review and we are continually striving towards improving the service to our members.

Our Regional Solicitors, Thompsons, are now our sole providers in relation to employment law advice, personal injury and medical negligence claims. As well as those just mentioned, they also offer a wide range of services to our members, including a reduction in conveyancing fees, together with a free advice line (on non-work related issues) and they also offer a free will making facility to all members and their partners, within the Region.

Our Organisers have undertaken several Employment Law Seminars over the last two years which has brought them up to speed with the changing employment legislation, and given them the knowledge and ability to improve the quality of service to our members.

Personal injury compensation has increased by 15% over the previous two years' figures and the amount obtained in relation to Employment Tribunals has also risen by 9%, with three quarters of those settlements being obtained prior to the Tribunal hearing.

The Legal Department has now been streamlined and all personal injury claims, DSS claims, criminal cases and compromise agreements are scanned, making it 'almost' a paperless office, resulting in a further reduction of unnecessary paperwork and undoubtedly improving the quality of service to our

members, as information is now to hand at the touch of a button.

6. Equal Rights / Race

RERAC

RERAC meets 4 times a year, and meets with RRAC annually.

The 2004 Regional Conference was a great success and well attended by delegates from Branches across the Region. Unfortunately, the Guest Speaker could not attend at the last minute, but this gave delegates the opportunity to have in depth debates on the Motions that were put forward from Branches.

In 2004, RERAC attended the Leicester Pride event where a great deal of interest was shown. RERAC also attended the Brigg Fair. These two events give the GMB a chance to raise its profile.

Our ongoing work throughout the year is to encourage more women activists, encourage Branches to elect a Branch Equality Officer and to raise equality issues in the workplace. The Region also keeps Branches and members up to date on new legislation.

The one biggest disappointment for the Midland and East Coast Region's RERAC and members was that the National Equal Rights Conference did not take place.

RACE

The last two years have been difficult in terms of vigorously pushing through the race programme because of the fact that we have had to maintain an economical approach to activities due to the financial situation that the Union was in. This has meant that at a Regional level we have had to reduce the level of meetings and therefore the Race Committee has met on a quarterly basis rather than bimonthly. This of course has impacted on our ability to develop work in certain areas, however, despite this we have managed to utilise communication via e-mail which has enabled us to share crucial information across the Region. This was crucially significant in the run up to the June elections and the huge amount of information on the BNP and their activities prior to the elections. Bearing in mind the extremely poor BNP performance, I would like to think that many of our branches and activists were able to act on the information that was supplied and do their bit to spread the word and actively prevent the BNP from gaining any further footholds in our political structures.

Much of the information that was distributed had been received through the Regional Race Officer's attendance at the TUC Race Task Group, which continues to be extremely helpful in providing information which we believe would otherwise bypass the Region. One of the issues that we have been looking at is the formation of groups/initiatives that organise information and events to fight against racism. Such groups are becoming more and more important as they act as local focal points for antiracist activity and have also been able to encourage quite a high level of participation due to their grass roots status. It was intimated to the TUC Task Group that as a response to concerns about racist activity within certain areas of this Region, i.e. Lincoln, Grantham and Mansfield, that it might be worthwhile looking at supporting the development of such a group. Of course this would require some steering from the Regional Race Officer, the Race Advisory Committee and other committed activists, although we would expect that any such group would be formed from likeminded people, from likeminded organisations who would then maintain and manage the day to day organisation of the group. Of course at the moment this is in its embryonic stage as an idea and once we have been able to consult further with the relevant people we are hopeful that we will be able to report back that the group is established and up and running.

On the subject of migrant workers you will all be aware of the terrible tragedy regarding the cockle workers in Morecombe Bay; this has generated a great deal of discussion amongst Race Advisory Committee Members and the TUC Race Task Group. There is a serious worry that many of the employees within the Fenland areas that are involved in seasonal work and are from ethnic minority backgrounds are being seriously exploited as well as being put at risk. Within our own Region the increase of migrant workers is slowly beginning to soar and this creates difficult problems for Trade Unions in terms of organising in these circumstances.

First and foremost, there is the inevitable problem of the language barrier because it is extremely important for us to be able to communicate to potential members the benefits of being in the Union and

having our protection. Secondly there is the effect of the migrant workforce on existing workforces where we have recognition or significant GMB membership. This is leading to serious tensions within the workplace and without a careful and considered approach from the GMB, could spiral into something much worse. The third and final effect is that which is being experienced by the communities in which the migrant workers are working and living and as this becomes more and more of a trait, the BNP is able to seize on this and whip up racial tension using its racist propaganda.

There are no quick fixes where these matters are concerned and we hope to develop some positive ideas on how to tackle these issues through further discussion with the Task Group but also through the Race Advisory Committee Members consulting with their respective membership to obtain a clear understanding of the impact on our membership.

The debate on culture change has been driven mainly by the recommendations that were made in Elizabeth Henry's Race Audit Report. Part and parcel of our efforts to meet the recommendations was the internal monitoring of GMB employees ethnicity and to that effect I can report that for this Region the monitoring exercise was fully completed and the information passed on to National Office.

The main thrust of our work continues along the line of establishing comprehensive training and awareness about race and race issues and to aid us with this, we have examined all the training information that is available on race from each Region. The information varied of course from Region to Region but in general it was scarce and the only information that was abundant was mainly outdated. However, the Race Officers are compiling information and ideas that will be significant in producing a comprehensive programme of race training that will be available throughout the GMB.

The ethnic breakdown of the Regional Race Advisory Committee, and the Regional Equal Rights Committee is:

	Black	White	Asian	Other
Male	3	6	1	0
Female	4	7	0	1

7. Youth

For this Region the years 2003 and 2004 have continued the debate on culture change. Youth and youth issues have been a part of this debate. It is still vital to answer the question of how youth is engaged and incorporated into the structures of the organisation. Progress on this question needs to be made so that young members can play a fully defined and inclusive role in the trade union movement and the GMB in particular.

The political climate still tends towards a freezing out or marginalising of youth issues. However, this Region believes that youth has a vital part to play and this is evidenced in their continuing involvement in single issue politics such as the stop the war movement. We need to harness this positive energy within the GMB.

This Region welcomes the belated introduction of a minimum wage rate for 16 and 17 year olds. We still believe that there should not be any discrimination on minimum wage rates due to age, but we recognise this as a starting point and the campaign for full equality must continue.

From experience within our own Region it is clear that many young people continue to juggle education and part time work. This creates a situation that many unscrupulous employers are seeing as a green light for exploitation. This Region believes such young workers desperately need a trade union and we have continued to promote the GMB at Freshers Fayres in colleges, as well as at community functions such as Regional shows and events. Colleen Harwood from Mansfield was awarded the National gold badge for her work with young members. Members from this Region also attended the TUC Respect festivals in London for the last two years.

In 2003 this Region continued to send delegates to the NYMAC committee. In 2004 NYMAC found itself at a crossroads as to the best way to proceed. Views were forwarded from this Region as to how this could be achieved. It remains to be seen in what form the youth structure will go forward. Whatever is decided it is hoped by this Region that our young members will continue to play an active part.

8. Training

	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
(a) GMB Courses Basic Training					
Introduction to GMB (2 days)	18	184	51	235	470
GMB/TUC Induction (5 days)	24	241	70	311	1,555
Branch Officers	-	-	-	-	-
Introduction to GMB (3 days)	6	73	21	94	282
(b) On Site Courses					
(c) Health & Safety Courses					
General	24	265	68	333	999
(d) Other Courses					
Job Evaluation (1 day)	1	5	4	9	9
Job Evaluation (2 days)	1	6	2	8	8
Pay Bargaining (2 days)	1	12	1	13	26
Communicating with Confidence (weekend)	2	18	4	22	66
Communicating with Confidence for Women (weekend)	2	-	19	19	57
Discover GMB (weekend)	3	36	10	46	138
Joint Training, Owen Brown (1 day)	2	23	1	24	48
Northern College courses	5	4	2	6	21
(e) GMB National College Courses	-	46	10	56	-
(f) TUC (STUC & ICTU) Courses	-	175	43	218	-

9. Health & Safety Service

RECRUITMENT, ORGANISATION AND CAMPAIGNING

Organisers and Branches continued to make use of the Regional Health and Safety Service during 2003 and 2004, particularly where recruitment activity was planned. The RHSO has attended meetings with GMB members to advise on health and safety matters which assists with the process of securing recognition and consolidation. In certain sectors specialised leaflets with health and safety messages were drawn up aimed at potential members.

A seminar arranged within the Region, under the title of "Asbestos in Building: Taking Control" will take place at Derby on 22nd March 2005. This is part of a successful GMB bid to the Workers Safety Advisor Challenge Fund.

INQUIRIES

Since 1994 to end 2003, 888 inquiries have been recorded on the electronic database in Regional Office. On this database is recorded only those inquiries which require some sort of written advice on a specific problem. All replies receive a standard "feedback form" which is proving to be a vital means of follow-up and acquisition of "success stories".

Concerns about Temperatures at Work and Working Time in general dominated the type of inquiry which was placed with the Department during 2003 and into 2004.

TRAINING

During 2003 and 2004 a total of 24 three-day Health and Safety courses were held at locations throughout the Region with a total of 333 Representatives attending.

INFORMATION DISTRIBUTION

GMB members continue to make use of the Region's website and the many Health and Safety documents and links that it has available, including an online version of the Most Asked Questions and, in a members-only password-protected area, the full version of the GMB's Health and Safety Best Practice Guide, back copies of Health and Safety Matters, and a Safety Reps Toolkit. In addition the Members Email Network (yahoo group) allows direct exchange of information by activists on problems they face at work. Finally the Regional E-Mailing Service continues to be regularly used to distribute electronic versions of documents dealing with health and safety. Regular contributions were also made to the Region's "Contact" magazine.

(Adopted)

(Bro. A. Worth (Regional Secretary, Midland & East Coast) formally moved the report)

(The report was adopted)

(There were no questions raised on this section of

CLOTHING AND TEXTILES SECTION REPORT

Introduction

In starting this Report, I would like to thank the retiring National Secretary, Des Farrell for all the work and commitment that he has done over the years within the Section.

On Des' retirement, Jude Brimble, National Officer was given responsibility for the Section on a temporary basis. In September 2004, Phil Davies, National Secretary, agreed to have responsibility for the Section.

Since the last Congress in 2003, the Section has continued to decline. Membership is now less than 15,000 mainly, if not entirely due to the retail trade demanding ever lower prices.

Nearly all the Clothing and Textile Industry is now in developing nations. There is not a level playing field and those manufacturing countries that now supply the UK with the clothes we and our children wear, pay little attention to the welfare of their workers. The employers who used to exploit the UK, now turn a blind eye to workers who have to work in some appalling conditions and who have to live in accommodation eight and ten to a room, earning levels of pay that are well below the poverty levels of their own country.

China is now the country who has massive state run clothing and textile factories with two to six thousand women workers. Many are kept like prisoners; many of these factory-like jails are run by nasty British bosses whose style of management disappeared in the UK hundreds of years ago. These regimes are supported and kept alive by the major UK High Street stores.

The British public do not know the real existence of the suffering of workers in countries like China. The trade unions have campaigned tirelessly against the likes of Marks and Spencer who have been responsible for making thousands of GMB members redundant.

My main priority is to stop the decline and start to build a strong clothing and textile section. The industry still employs over 150,000 workers, many of whom are very low paid women. We need to make the GMB relevant to those standard workers.

Section National Committee

The Section National Committee is active and meets on a regular basis. They submitted their views on the Task Group Questionnaire in December 2004.

At the last Committee meeting, there was an agreement that they would work with and supply the CFTA Section in the field of public procurement.

The current membership of the Committee comprises of:

Jayne Norton,	<i>Birmingham & West Midlands Region</i>
Sheila McKane,	<i>Lancashire Region</i>
Christine Howell,	<i>Lancashire Region</i>
Teresa Madden,	<i>Liverpool, N Wales & Irish Region</i>
Kath Slater,	<i>Midland & East Coast Region</i>
Brenda Fraser,	<i>London Region (President)</i>
Mary Hutchinson,	<i>Northern Region</i>
Tony Nisbet,	<i>Northern Region</i>
Ann McClaren,	<i>GMB Scotland</i>
Sheila Bearcroft,	<i>South Western Region</i>
Sylvia Burton,	<i>Yorkshire Region</i>

Pay Negotiations

Based on the 2004 Section National Conference decisions, a pay claim was presented to the BCIA.

The Employers made an offer of 2.75% which was rejected by the members. Since then, the Section President and the National Secretary met with the Employers on two occasions. Without any movement from the employers we have refused to sign this year's agreement. Pay rates within this Industry are now governed by the NMW and pay bargaining has very little relevance. The Section Committee will need to take a long hard look at this situation.

Training

We have been offered a seat on the Industry's Sector Skills Council and will take this up very shortly. In closing this report, can I thank all the Officers, Stewards, and activists, including the Section National Committee for all the work they have done in the last two years.

(Adopted)

BRO. P. DAVIES (National Secretary, Clothing & Textile): I move the Clothing and Textiles Section Report to Congress, which appears at page 35 of the General Secretary's Report.

President and Congress, it was a little over a year ago when I volunteered to take responsibility for the Clothing and Textiles Section. Obviously, the industry in which the section is based is in decline due to the manufacturers moving to off-shore, low cost manufacturing areas. One leading retailer has done the industry no good whatsoever, and Marks & Spencer no longer cares about British workers who have built that company into the leading retailer of the 1980s and 1990s. Marks & Spencer is suffering a dramatic decline in profits. Maybe it is because of the high street competition or is it because of the British public's distaste from a company which has withdrawn from the British manufacturing sector?

We trade unionists are also to blame. More than 6.5 million trade unionists have the power to resist and the opportunity to buy clothes which are manufactured in the UK. They do not have to buy goods which are manufactured in parts of the world where workers are employed in the most appalling conditions with no trade union rights and, more importantly, no human rights. It is time that we, as trade unionists, started to understand the value of international solidarity by threatening UK retailers with boycotts of goods where workers are not paid

proper wages, where child and slave labour are common place, where comrades are imprisoned and tortured for standing up for their rights. All roads now lead the capitalists to China where their textile and clothing factories employ in excess of 7,000 workers. There are no free trade unions in China. Women as young as 16 are made to work for more than 12 hours a day, and sometimes as long as 16 hours a day. Segregation of male and female workers is statutory. Basic food is supplied but there is never enough. The Chinese workers share accommodation with sometimes 10 or 12 to a single room. Intimidation and beatings are common practice.

The British industrial revolution brought with it a revolutionary trade union Movement. Brothers and sisters, what is happening in China is a new kind of revolution, never before seen in the world. The vast size of China's industry has never been imagined by the rest of the world. Whilst all of this behaviour continues, the abuse of human rights continues.

At the Qin Shi factory a thousand employees are employed making Kathie Lee handbags for that famous company Wal-Mart. The workers are under indentured servitude, forced to work 12-14 hours a day whilst earning an average of 10 cents an hour. They are housed up to 16 to a room and many workers end up with no money left at the end of the week. This situation will continue if the West ignores the abuse of human rights.

This year's pay negotiations with the BCIA took place against a background of factory closures. The employers had the dubious honour of being responsible for an industry that pays the lowest basic rate in the UK. The national basic rate for the industry is no higher than the Government's minimum wage and, therefore, our members who work in the industry for that basic wage are living on the poverty line. The employers offered 2.75% which was amongst the lowest pay offers that I have had to accept. Inflation was 3.5% at the time. Therefore, this offer was a pay cut, not a pay rise. The offer was put to the members and rejected. To date we have not signed the agreement. The old adage that "No agreement is better than a bad agreement" is probably most apt for the time being.

On the international front, I am afraid that KC and the Sunshine Band's decision not to allow a 359 delegation to attend the World Textile Congress in Turkey, which is held every four years, meant that our seat on the ITGLWF's International Executive was lost. A valuable lesson should be learned that you cannot influence international solidarity by not playing a part in the world trade union Movement. By staying put in Wimbledon, when the world's capitalists are exploiting workers halfway around the world, has done this Union and the Movement no good whatsoever. More importantly, the international fight for workers' rights has been harmed.

In conclusion, our brothers and sisters in China, India and Africa can only achieve decent working conditions and pay if they are given a lead from the international trade union Movement. The GMB Clothing & Textile Section still has a role to play to fight to stop the exploitation of all workers wherever they live.

Karl Marx said more than 130 years ago: "Workers of the world unite. You have only your chains to lose." This is still true today.

Even without our executive seat on the International, the section intends to fight at home and away for workers' rights.

I thank all the officers, members and shop stewards for all the work they have done in the past two years. In particular, I thank members of our sectional committee who have done a tremendous job and have given me tremendous support and advice during the past year.

BRO. G. WELLS (Lancashire): I am speaking on the Clothing & Textile Report. Colleagues, I know many people buy goods which are made in Marks & Spencer because the parasites who call themselves the BCIA will not pay them wages that they can afford to buy clothes in Marks & Spencer. They can afford to make them but not to buy them. We might not be able to help the imports but we can help ourselves by lobbying our local Labour councillors and Labour MPs throughout the land. Labour councils should buy

British goods made by British workers instead of being awarded contracts, saying the goods will be made in Britain but then exporting the work abroad. We must support those councils and Governments to keep British goods in Britain.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think there is a reply to that.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 3

THE PRESIDENT: I call Gerry Ferguson to give SOC Report No. 3.

BRO. G. FERGUSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): I formally move SOC Report No. 3.

Withdrawn Motions. The following motions have been withdrawn. Motion 35: MPO Fellowship - Legal Opinion, which was due to be heard on Wednesday afternoon. That motion is withdrawn.

Motion 83: National Administration Unit, which was due to be heard on Wednesday afternoon. Motion withdrawn.

Motion 303: The London Marathon - South Coast Marathon - Half Professional Runners - Expenses Sponsorship, which was due to be heard on Thursday afternoon. Motion withdrawn. Motion 17: Merger, which was due to be heard Wednesday afternoon. Motion withdrawn.

Motion 20: GMB - The Future, which was due to be heard on Wednesday afternoon. Motion withdrawn.

President and colleagues, I formally move SOC Report No. 3.

(The report was adopted)

ANNOUNCEMENT

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I would like to announce that McVities have kindly donated samples of their Healthy Eating range for Congress delegates. But as most of you will be missing your breakfasts to go to the AA demo tomorrow morning, the samples will be given out on the buses. I would like Congress to thank our members at McVities who make the snacks. You will not go hungry. *(Applause)*

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

PRIVATISATION OF THE HEALTH SERVICE

MOTION 227

Congress, the GMB has long campaigned to end the privatisation of sections of the Health Service. This must continue. The staff who have already been subject to privatisation must not be forgotten. Barnsley Health branch calls upon national negotiators to continue the campaigns to keep public services public and to ensure that

any section of staff receive the benefits of Agenda for Change terms and conditions.

BARNSELY HEALTH BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

BRO. M. JACKSON (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I move Motion 227.

Congress, the GMB has long campaigned to end the privatisation of sections of the Health Service, and long may that continue. Many members who worked in our Health Service have been pushed out to work for private companies in services such as catering, domestics and the laundry service. Many of our members are part-time and female on the minimum wage. This is a group of staff which costs the least to the NHS but because of their vulnerability they are the ones who are contracted out to companies such as Initial, ISS Mediclean, Gardner Merchant, etc. These companies operate for profit. They do not care that their employees in hospitals often have to work in terrible conditions. The catering industry is hard work in most circumstances, but in a hospital kitchen, where the staff have been privatised, staffing levels are slashed, worked loads increased yet the staff still receive minimum wages.

The domestic who gives you your cup of tea when you are in hospital is also working for a private company. These members are, again, generally female and part time workers, yet the private companies involved crave maximum profit. How do they achieve that? Instead of allowing one domestic to deal with cups of tea and another to deal with cleaning, they just halved the workforce in one fell swoop and instruct one domestic to do both jobs.

Such an approach not only gives massive concerns about spreading disease and causing infection, it also prevents the domestics from having a chat with the patients. Patients used to be able to chat with domestics giving them some light relief from their stress and worry. Now all domestics have time for is a quick "Good morning". That is because they have to dash round with the drinks and then go and do the cleaning as well. These members are on the minimum wage, with minimum annual leave, no sick pay, no enhanced rates for evenings and weekends plus no enhanced pay for doing two people's jobs at a time. They earn £4.85 per hour, no matter the day or the time of day.

Congress, such workers should enjoy the full benefits of the Health Service. Agenda for Change is not a perfect agreement by any standards. However, when negotiating deals you have to come out with the best you can. Agenda for Change provides Health Service staff with at least a halfway decent starting salary, 33 days a year paid holidays, appropriate sick schemes and, hopefully, good enhanced pay for working out of hours.

All brothers and sisters who work in our hospitals should benefit from this national agreement. This partnership should ensure equality, transparency and fairness. Where is the equality or fairness when our lowest paid colleagues are not included in the agreement?

I know that Mary is doing a great job on the NEC in trying to persuade the Labour Party to give some support, and Sharon is leading a great campaign to include everyone. Unfortunately, we have not achieved much yet. I hope that Mary and Sharon persist in this campaign until we reach our goal. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: You can be assured of that.

(The Motion was formally seconded)

NHS HOSPITAL CLEANLINESS

MOTION 228

Congress notes the recent priority given by the Health Secretary to appearing to be tough on hospital cleanliness and reducing MRSA.

Congress calls upon the Health Secretary to demonstrate the seriousness of his concern by reversing 20 years of privatisation and cuts in hospital cleansing services.

DARLINGTON 2 BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

BRO. J. JONES (Northern): I move Motion 228 on hospital cleanliness.

President, I want to ask the delegates a question. Did anyone see that Tory poster during the election campaign? You know the one: "How hard can it be to keep a hospital clean?"

When I saw it, I nearly crashed the car off the road! When I saw it, I nearly burst a blood vessel. How stupid do the Tories think we are? For 20 years the Tories cut the NHS to shreds.

I know because I was, as a branch secretary, looking after the Teesside and Hartlepool General Hospital. I know that it was the cleaning and the domestic services that were hit first. Budgets were slashed and private cowboys were brought in to cut wages, jobs and standards.

Congress, this is not rocket science. If you want clean hospitals and infection control, the cleaning has to be done constantly, and you have to pay for it.

The Health Secretary has launched a major campaign to clean up our hospitals. This motion tells him how to do it. The message from the GMB is a simple one. Give us the tools, i.e., the money, and our members will do the job. I urge you to support Motion 228.

BRO. M. BAKER (Northern): I second Motion 228 on hospital cleanliness. I am a first-time speaker.

Congress, the recent press coverage about the increase in deaths and serious injuries caused by infections caught by patients in hospitals is a national disgrace. Hospitals should be places where we can depend on the best possible care and the highest possible standards. Hospitals should be places where people go to be made better, not to be made worse.

The mover of the motion has quite rightly highlighted that cuts in budgets for cleaning and domestic services in our hospitals are directly responsible for the increase in MRSA and other infections.

The solution, colleagues, is simple. Reverse the cuts and get rid of the cowboy private contractors. I urge you to support Motion 228.

NHS CONSULTANTS

MOTION 312

This Congress believes that the current practices of NHS Consultants in all sections of the NHS of moonlighting to the private sector whilst being paid by the NHS must stop, and therefore mandates the General Secretary to utilise all the facilities of the union to bring these practices to an end.

PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS BRANCH

London Region

(Carried)

BRO. S. MCKENZIE (London): I move Motion 312, NHS Consultants.

Congress, my partner is a senior nurse and works and has worked in the Health Service. She has been a trade union member for all of her working life. She has seen some sickening things but nothing sickens her more than to see the unnecessary suffering of ordinary working people because consultants, who have been trained by the NHS and who are being paid very well by the NHS, are off moonlighting, working in the private sector to supplement their already very lucrative incomes, leaving junior doctors to struggle on with impossible workloads. These characters satisfy their greed as patients are left suffering.

If anything goes wrong with the operations in their private practices, where do their patients go to get it put right? I think you have guessed it. The NHS.

The NHS attempts to plug the gap by importing foreign doctors, taking them away from where they are desperately needed in Third World countries. They have the cheek, when they bring these doctors over, to say they don't recognise their qualifications and, therefore, they are paid a staff rate. So they are trying to plug the gaps, effectively, with cheap labour.

I have been asked to point out that these disgraceful practices are undertaken by the most greedy and selfish of consultants but that it would be totally wrong to tar all consultants with the same brush. I am reliably informed that this behaviour is most prevalent amongst cardiologists, ophthalmologists and orthopaedic surgeons, whilst those surgeons who are involved in care for the elderly tend to be, on the whole, very dedicated and self-sacrificing.

I will never forget the story that Laura told me which made me very proud of her and disgusted at the greed and selfishness of those who indulge in these kinds of moonlighting practices. An anaesthetist told her that he was moving to Tonbridge in Kent. When she asked him why, he gleefully replied that it was because he would be able to get all the private work that he wanted in that particular area. She said to him, "You already have a house with more rooms than you need; you already have two cars and you take three holidays a year. Just how much money do you need?" Once again, it is a case of the haves getting more at the expense of the have nots.

All that motion is asking is that we use the facilities of the Union to see whether there is any way that we can help bring these totally immoral practices to an end. Please support.

BRO. D. BYRNE (London): Congress, the thing that concerns me about this whole shameful business is not just the impact on the NHS but the knock-on effect on the health services provided by the various countries in the developing world. Every time we lose a consultant, a doctor or nurse to the private sector we have to recruit another skilled worker from somewhere else. We have spoken a lot this week about alleviating world poverty. However, if we continue to take the best doctors and nurses from Africa and elsewhere in order, indirectly, to improve our private healthcare provision, we are guilty of contributing to world poverty and not making it history. I second.

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone else wish to take part in the debate?

BRO. D. HENRY (Liverpool, North Wales & Irish): I have been a Health Service worker for 35 years.

President and Congress, I have had the pleasure, and it was a pleasure, of being a patient three times in the past two years for various complaints. When I say "pleasure", I am not joking.

I want to talk about cleanliness, but I want to talk about what one of colleagues spoke to at the rostrum. When the National Health Service began in 1947, it was to operate on the basis of a 60%/40% split. Doctors received 60% in pay and 40% for their private practice. Many doctors took it on, and that is

how the National Health Service began, because we would not have had it otherwise. When I was a child, if you wanted to visit the doctor, you had to save half-a-crown to go. If you went to the chemist, you had to pay tuppence for some tablets. That is how it started.

Today many consultants do a lot of private work. The ones you mentioned are the in high priority specialisms. Obviously, you do not need a private practice for elderly people because the money does not exist.

The main thing I want to refer is what your seconder referred to. I was admitted to a heart hospital on 11th January of this year in London by my 362 private nurse, Debbie Coulter, and there was not one English person working on that ward. They were from the Philippines and Africa. The doctor was from Arabia. Although he was an Arab, he was a lovely gentleman. It was all very professional. I have no complaints whatsoever about them. The nearest one to an English person was the charge nurse who came from Cork. I am not arguing about their professionalism because it was absolutely superb.

I want to talk about MRSA. I worked in a theatre for 20-odd years before I became a full-time union rep. We were always frightened of one thing in the operating theatre. We wore masks not to protect ourselves but to protect the patients when the surgeons were opening their chests. Everyone in this room has Staphylococci in their noses and we all have staphorias in the throat. So if we breath into an open wound, we can cause infection. That is why we wear operating masks.

There used never to be MRSA but there was a thing called Flurei Welshi. Does anybody know what that means? It means gas gangrene and everyone was very frightened of it. It is in soil. Let me give you my best example. Some of you might be old enough to remember this. There was a footballer called Dooley who broke his leg when playing for Sheffield and he got a blood infection in it. As a result, he lost his leg. That was gas gangrene. So we were always very frightened of that. We always made sure that the theatres were clean and sterile.

Now we get MRSA. I had better not swear, had I? You will remember Dr. Dracula! When we were talking about whether hospitals could be kept clean, he was the one, with Maggie Thatcher, who brought the bloody private contactors in the bloody first place and cut my hospital's 7,000 cleaning hours to 4,500 cleaning hours! That is what he did to us. We have had seven contractors in one hospital.

The other thing that amazes me - I still get in touch with people about this and people still ring me - is this. In Liverpool we have two large general hospitals, one with 1,200 beds and another with 1,000 beds and they are only eight miles apart. Yet the contractor had been working for five years and he lost the contract for £7 million, and who takes him on? The other one, eight miles down the bloody road!

So what's going on there? If it is not good enough for Aintree Hospital, why have the cleaning contractors come to the bloody Royal Liverpool Hospital? It just doesn't make any bloody sense at all!

The other thing is ----

THE PRESIDENT: The operator says your time is up.

BRO. HENRY: Okay. I will just finish, and what I have to say is the most important part. Because we now get lots of immigrant workers, the induction training for a cleaner is an afternoon. The hospital is a 16 floor building. They don't even know how to get out if there was a bloody fire, for God's sake! It's not good enough. They need adequate training and equipment. As somebody said, they are now generic workers. If a machine breaks down, they go down to another ward and borrow their machine. That is not acceptable.

SIS. S. HOLDER (National Officer, Public Services): I am speaking on behalf of the CEC. The CEC is supporting Motion 312, but with a qualification. The motion calls for all the Union's facilities to be utilised to bring consultants' money-grabbing practices to an end. The qualification is that there are workplaces used across many sectors and we cannot use up all of our organising resources on NHS consultants.

Congress, consultants start on £63,000. Those at the top earn as much as £150,000, but it is clearly not enough, and consultants need, obviously, their private earnings to top up their NHS salaries. This is an issue which has plagued the NHS since its inception, but from day one, the medical profession was overwhelmingly hostile to Aneurin Bevan's plans for an NHS free at the point of need. Bevan could only overcome these strongly-held moral objections by his own words, "stuffing their mouths with gold".

Consultants are given a salary and are allowed to exploit NHS facilities for private practice; an arrangement which continues even today. The consultants milk the system. Operations are cancelled at the last minute for that all important round of golf; NHS waiting lists are kept artificially long to maximise private earnings.

Successive attempts to curb these excesses were met by unveiled threats, threats that consultants would emigrate or leave the NHS and, sadly, more money or more gold was handed over. Today, it is true, consultants are working under more stringent rules than before, and it is hoped that this would lead to higher productivity and shorter NHS waiting times. However, can you imagine any other group in the NHS double jobbing on the premises without the threat of getting the sack? This is an abuse of the system and which the GMB expects the Government to tackle. Please support the motion with the qualification.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sharon. To our colleagues

in the NHS, the GMB has worked tirelessly to highlight the problems because many of us who do not work in the NHS during the past few years, unfortunately, have had to spend time watching it being wrecked for profit, that is what it is - profit. Everybody blames the staff. You can only work with the tools and the time you are given, but they are all dedicated workers, whether they are the cleaners, the nurses, whoever, because you would not work, with the exception of consultants, in that job just for 363 the pay you receive.

I am very proud to say that Debbie and I have worked tirelessly to make sure that their terms and conditions were highlighted at the NEC and the Labour Party. This is a good time to say to you that I would like to welcome Mel Whitter to Congress. Mel is 22. She is a young member in South Western Region. She is a member of Cardiff & District branch and is a Regional Council member. The reason why I welcome Mel is that she has recently been elected to the National Executive of the Labour Party as the Youth Rep. It is lovely to see you, Mel. We will train you well. Debbie and I will take you under our wings. But, most importantly, we have another arm and another vote to make sure that when the votes are called around that Executive on the NHS, on the public services and on manufacturing we have another supporter. So be warned, Mel.

This Union will defend the NHS to its bitter end. It belongs to us, it was created by us, and it will go on belonging to us. Whether it is the Tory Party or the new Minister, we have news for her: "No, you will not do any more privatisation of the NHS." Privatisation has to stop. Stop the MRSA because when you have MRSA, believe you me, it is a very serious illness.

(Motion 227 was carried)

(Motion 228 was carried)

(Motion 312 was carried)

CONGRESS LOCAL GIFT

THE PRESIDENT: I now move, colleagues, to Congress's local gift. As you are aware, Waveney's Women's Aid provides safe accommodation for women and children escaping domestic violence. It also operates a helpline for women and men attempting to escape abusive relationships. Waveney's Women's Aid receives calls for refuge spaces from all over the United Kingdom, which makes it truly worthy of national recognition. It operates 24 hours a day and all the workers are members of the GMB Lowestoft, 43 branch, in the London Region.

I now would like to ask Claire Taylor-Crisp of the GMB Lowestoft branch to the platform. Thank you, Claire.

SIS. C. TAYLOR-CRISP (London): I am accepting the Gift of Congress on behalf of Waveney's Women's Aid. This is my first time at Congress.

President, Congress, colleagues and new brothers and sisters, statistics can be boring but necessary in order to show the enormity of the problems of domestic violence and its effects on family, friends and the workplace. As you have already been told, the pictures you are going to see may disturb you. I have not put these pictures up to disturb you. I put them up to actually show you that these are the facts.

(Slides shown)

One in four women will experience domestic violence during their lifetime. Every year one woman in nine is severely beaten by her male partner. Every minute police in the UK receive a domestic assistance call, yet only 35 per cent of domestic violence is reported to the police. In 2001/2002, a British crime survey found there were an estimated 635,000 incidents of domestic violence in England and Wales; 81 per cent on women and 19 per cent on men. Yes, brothers. Only 19 per cent of you felt able to report domestic violence incidents. There are helplines for you. Waveney Women's Aid recognises that, but Women's Aid does exactly what it says on the paperwork, it aids women.

Of all violent incidents reported last year, 22 per cent were domestic violence. Children are present or in another room in 90 per cent of domestic violence incidents. Twenty-five per cent of women experiencing domestic violence are assaulted for the first time during pregnancy. The criminal justice system, Health Service, Social Services, housing and civil legal costs amount in total per year to £3.1 billion. The loss to the economy is £2.7 billion. That is a grand total of £5.8 billion per year, plus the hidden costs of the police having to return to the same household time and time again; women and children who must attend casualty wards and can end up in bed breakfast; children being put into care and women not being able to continue to contribute to the workforce.

In 1983, the Tory Government accepted the scale of domestic violence -- yes, colleagues, the Tories accepted something -- and acknowledged that women's refuges should be adequately funded. In the late 1990s, GMB Lowestoft branch moved the first ever motion on domestic violence. It called on central government to acknowledge the work being done by Women's Aid.

Since 2003, through Supporting People, which the Government are funding, funding is received directly by the refuges. GMB is a forerunner in highlighting awareness of domestic violence, providing advice and support through shop stewards, regional office and websites. The "Never in a Million Years" is just one initiative produced by GMB. It is a

discrete, hide-able card giving details of what to do and who to contact. Although based in Suffolk, Waveney Women's Aid helps victims of domestic violence all over the United Kingdom. Please take note of the number. You never know if and when you may need it.

Many families arrive at a refuge with only the clothes they stand in. Rarely is there time for the children to collect their favourite clothes or toys. So 364 most refuges rely on the local community for donations of food, clothes, toys, household items and money in order to survive.

The childcare resettlement and outreach workers are paid for by each refuge applying for funding from Children in Need, Comic Relief and the Community Fund, and any other funder, really. Colleagues, this is why I am receiving the Gift of Congress because Waveney Women's Aid has no spare cash to send a representative.

Finally, brothers, sisters and President, between now and our next Congress, 243 women will die at the hands of their partners. It is June now and 1 million women have been severely beaten. By Christmas, the figure will be 2.5 million. In the time that we have been here this week, two women have been killed by their partners.

On behalf of all the staff and residents of Waveney Women's Aid, I would like to thank you all for your support. Please dig deep. Every penny you give makes a difference. Thank you.

SIS. J. SMITH (London): President, Congress, I am supporting Claire in her receiving the Gift on behalf of the Waveney's Women's Aid. I am now going to speak to you straight from the heart because I was a beaten wife back in the 1960s. That is something a lot of you who are my friends know, but one does not talk about it. The injuries depicted on the screen I have suffered. I have suffered the bloody noses and the bruises. I can tell you the shame, how you hide away, the excuses that you make to cover the bruises and where you got them, where you have fallen into the door post; anything to cover up. You never explain where you got those bruises from.

However, like Claire has said, about the children, last weekend, I was at Butlin's at Skegness. My husband, my brother, sister-in-law and I were watching a wrestling match, which was hyped up purely for the children. A gentleman, who came from Scotland, lent down to me and he said, "Can you please speak to my granddaughter?" I thought the granddaughter, whom I was watching unbeknown, was looking at this show through the railings, but she was cowering. I understand that she had suffered equally the abuse she had witnessed between her parents and now recognised in this wrestling match. This little girl was about 10 years old. I spoke to her and managed to calm her by telling her it was playacting. I was looking at her and talking to her all

the way through until the end. Her grandfather, who was very grateful, then said to his granddaughter: "You did not know that lady; she would not have lied to you."

I want tell you, and particularly where there are children, I know I still suffer. My husband is sitting at the back. He was not the wife beater. He will tell you even now, on the rare occasions I watch the television, if I see domestic violence, I will get up and walk out of the room. So, Congress, please support this Gift Aid. Every bit of money is needed and every bit of money is spent. I did not use a refuge. I had a loving family to whom I could turn, but even they did not know exactly what I suffered. I support.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jan. Claire, would you like to come to the platform, please? I thank all the Regions that have been so heavily involved in this project and all projects in their own regions? Birmingham Region had a Daphne Project, which is now operating throughout the country and, indeed, some councils have adopted it. Even the Mayor of London is adopting the Daphne Project. Fair play to you.

Claire, they would not give me the cheque now, but, on behalf of Congress, I would like to say thank you to you and our members there. I know the work you do because I have been there, as you know. The Gift, Congress, is £2,000. We will present it at Lowestoft as soon as you go back. But I am making this appeal. Don't let's stop at £2,000. We can all make donations and Claire can take them back with her. I am proud of their members and I am proud of the work they do. I am going to get emotional, because you never know when you or your children need that support. Please help. *(Applause)*

Oh, dear! We should have a break now, shouldn't we?

UNION ORGANISATION - EDUCATION & TRAINING

NATIONAL LEARNING FUND STRATEGY

MOTION 92

Congress calls on the CEC to pursue the establishment of a National Learning Fund Strategy. Any such strategy must be inclusive of all Regions to embrace their input.

NORTH WEST CUMBRIA GENERAL BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

SIS. R. CLEWES (Northern): President, Congress, in moving this motion, I wanted to stress the importance of having a National Learning Fund Strategy, but that the strategy is there to support and service the regions. The National Learning Fund

has been of huge importance to the trade union learners. It has brought in significant new funds to provide education.

The Northern Region has developed two strands of learning fund projects. We currently have six learning fund projects funded by the Learning for All Fund, which is administered by the regional TUC. We also have one regional learning fund project. This project is strategic and is intended to bring union 365 learning fund reps into the mainstream of the GMB activity as well as developing new learning centres throughout the region. The Remploy National Union Learning Fund project, which currently has 62 learning centres, is administered and managed by GMB Northern Region.

These are real success stories, which require funding to be maximised towards them, not taken away. Therefore, it is supporting the concept of a National Learning Fund Strategy. This criteria must be used as a benchmark going forward. Congress, I urge you to support this motion. I move.

BRO. K. YOUNG (Northern): I am seconding Motion 92. Congress, education within the trade union Movement in recent years has been a huge success seeing massive growth. I support the concept of a National Learning Strategy with the caveat that any such strategy must be there to service regional learning fund projects and not take money from them by developing a centralised bureaucracy.

The strategy, when developed, needs to be fully inclusive and, if it is to be called "national", must cover all parts of the UK, not just England. It is important that we build on the tremendous successes of the regions that the Union's learning funds have resourced. There are numerous, wonderful examples of excellent work and success stories.

Congress, in seconding this motion, I want to see greater support for the Regions in their quest to deliver top class education to our members. Congress, please support this motion.

TUC ACADEMY

MOTION 95

Congress calls on the CEC to oppose the TUC Academy until such times as full consultation takes place throughout the GMB on the implications for us, and its impact on our education programme.

NORTH WEST CUMBRIA GENERAL BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

BRO. A. KIGHTLY (Northern): Congress, the sentiments behind this motion are that the TUC Academy has been rushed into. It has been rushed into before any

real thought has gone into how it will impact on individual trade unions and their election programmes. This motion calls for the CEC to oppose the TUC Academy until such time as a full consultation takes place throughout the GMB Movement and one sees the implications for us and the impact it will have on our education programme.

This seems to me the sensible way forward. I may be in future we can support. It may be we can support the TUC Academy. It may be that we cannot. The truth at this moment in time is we simply do not know, because for us to move forward on something as big as this, we need to know what the consequences for our organisation will be. At this point, we simply do not know; we do not know what the consequences will be.

We, therefore, urge the CEC to move swiftly to look at the implications for us as an organisation. We need to consult as widely as possible so that we can make a decision on the TUC Academy as quickly as possible on an informed basis. Congress, please support this motion. I move.

BRO. G. ROWLEY (Northern): Congress, the GMB has a proud record of excellence in training our activists as well as providing them with the skills and knowledge required to represent our members in the workplace.

The TUC Academy may be an improvement on that proud record that we can build on. However, the truth is we just do not know. Motion 95 urges caution. Let's make sure that we do not make changes that could undermine our own education programme. Let's consult the route map before we start the journey, not near the end, when we may just find that we have gone in the wrong direction. Let's think before we act. I urge you to support Motion 95. I second.

BRO. R. ASCOUGH (Regional Secretary, Southern): I am speaking on behalf of the CEC. The CEC is supporting Motion 92 with a qualification. Congress, since the Government established the Union Learning Fund, the GMB has been the recipient of more funding than any other trade union. ULF funding has been at the heart of some fantastic achievements by GMB members. It has been used to establish a variety of regional projects which have helped thousands of our members with their learning needs. Many have now learned to read and write, having been failed by the education system whilst at school, and many others have learned how to use a computer for the first time, often from a position of being scared stiff of them beforehand.

Let me at this point just go slightly off-piste from my brief? I will just make a few personal comments. If somebody had said to me 10 years ago that I would be talking about computers, I would have said, "You are having a laugh." I wanted to go through life not knowing how a computer worked, but about

10 years ago I began to see the light. I am now a dab hand at cutting and pasting and I even respond to a few of my emails. I still do not know my gigabytes from my megabytes or my overbytes, and I thought that “cookies” were American biscuits, but I am learning. If it had not been for the fact that I began to learn how to work a computer, I would not have been able to do my MA, which I was fortunate enough to do five years ago. Without a computer, I would not have been able to do that.

Having gone off-piste, I will now return to my brief. These learning projects have been invaluable in helping our members to gain new skills, greater confidence and a better chance in life. So it is vitally important that we, in the GMB, continue to identify learning projects and to submit funding bids based upon local needs and circumstances that will benefit our members the most.

The CEC recognises the need to develop a national learning strategy. Steps are being taken to make sure that this is an inclusive process with all regions having an input. However, we must be careful to ensure that regions do not lose their ability to obtain funding for learning projects based upon local needs. The CEC will keep a watchful eye to ensure that regional funding bids are submitted in a way that is consistent with the union broad approach to learning and national learning strategy based upon regional needs and incorporating regional delivery.

With this qualification, the CEC asks Congress to support Motion 92 so that GMB members with learning needs continue to benefit from the great work that the Union Learning Fund allows us to carry out.

That is the end of my brief, but the President has indulged me again twice in two days.

THE PRESIDENT: Don't tell my husband, will you!

BRO. R. ASCOUGH: It has been quite a record. I have been asked to let you know what the arrangements are for tomorrow. We could only get two coaches, but we are going to do a number of shuffles back and forth between two points. I wonder if Regional Secretaries could just make a note of this.

One coach will, first of all, start from the Quality Inn, which is the hotel that Southern Region are in, at eight o'clock; so if Southern Region could be available at 8.00 am? It will then move to outside the Thistle by the station and pick up the Scottish Region delegation. I am sorry about the early start. I know you have your “do” tonight. That will be there probably about 8.05 am or 8.10 am. It will then drop at the AA building and then come back, probably getting there at about 8.30 am. I know it is going to mean that some people are arriving late, but it is the only way we could do that.

If Birmingham and Northern could be available just before 8.30am to be picked up? It is about a 15-

minute ride from there. They are 49-seater coaches, so hopefully that will accommodate everybody. The other coach will leave from Jury's at 8.00 am, 8.15 am and 8.30 am. It is a 15-minute round trip from there, subject to traffic. I would suggest that Liverpool gets the eight o'clock along with 19 people from Lancashire. If the rest of the Lancashire delegation could leave at 8.15 am with, perhaps, 30 from London, and if the final coach could take the rest of London and Yorkshire, we should all be available from about 8.45 am.

We will be handing out leaflets. We will be trying to speak to people who have been very confused by this. We are not being hostile to those, but I can assure you if I see any of the ring leaders, I will let you know so we can be hostile to them! Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: I will take the vote.

(Motion 92 was carried)

(Motion 95 was carried)

SOCIAL POLICY - EDUCATION

EDUCATION

MOTION 293

Congress calls on the Government to allow Trade Unions access to secondary schools and universities enabling them to raise awareness of the work they do in their wider community.

**R35 - ROCESTER JCB BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region**

(Carried)

BRO. G. RICHARDSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): President, Congress, in moving Motion 293, we ask Congress to call upon the Government to allow trade unions access to schools and universities enabling them to raise awareness of the work they do in the wider community. More and more urgency is needed to halt the steady demise of the trade union Movement. Numbers are dripping away down the drain of national apathy. No matter what recruitment scheme we come up with, the hole in the bucket still leaks; so let's have a new look at bringing awareness back to grass roots by giving potential new members some prior knowledge of what we are about.

If you talk to young adults ready to embark on the journey of further education or join the masses in industry, all too many of them have never heard of it. They have no knowledge of trade unions, they know nothing about their history, their ideals or their work in society. The ones who do have prior knowledge tend to think that trade unions are just about being on strike. That is a legacy from the

Thatcher years.

We seek permission to redress this movement by being allowed by Government as a right, not a favour, to have access to address students about our passion and our livelihoods. Give this opportunity to speak and we can sow the seeds for the future.

Everywhere in the country schools are creating 367 links with industry, a two-way bond of finance and labour recruitment. This is our ideal opportunity to extol our virtues of equality, health and safety and industrial relations without even mentioning policies.

In what subjects can we provide a useful part of the curriculum? Social history, economics, but, more basically, citizenship and careers information. All too often the teachers I speak to involved in citizenship have a staid and lifeless topic choice. They tell me there is only so much about sex education they can teach the children; whereas introducing children to democracy in a fun way could lead quite nicely to trade unionism. What better opportunity than to become a part of a new inroad to our future by being involved? Yes, it means extra work for some and, before too many shout, yes, activists are already forging links in industry with education with good results. Increases in recruitment can only follow. Young students do not realise the pitfalls of industry and many will never need the assistance of a trade union, but, unfortunately, in today's ever savage profit-seeking environment, management are for ever looking at ways of tightening any comfortable working conditions, and the call for shop stewards' involvement is all too prevalent in HR.

So it is a move into education and laying the foundation stone for the future. The future of the GMB could rely on it!

(The Deputy General Secretary took the Chair)

(The Motion was formally seconded)

FOUNDATION SCHOOLS

MOTION 294

Congress calls to adopt the following principle - The GMB Trade Union will not accept the introduction of Foundation Schools in any circumstances.

We believe that Foundation Schools are a direct attack upon the Trade Union Movement and will effectively wipe out the collective bargaining rights of members employed within them.

S30 SOLIHULL LOCAL AUTHORITY BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region
(Carried)

BRO. G. HARVEY (Birmingham & West Midlands): Good morning, comrades. It's a good job I had Joe's help yesterday, otherwise I wouldn't be fit to do a speech

this morning!

President, Congress, during the past few years, the main area of growth in trade union membership in the public sector has come from the school workforce. It is no coincidence that this rise in trade union activity comes at this time as school support staff face the teacher-led agenda of school workforce remodelling.

They are looking at fundamental changes to their working practices. They have joined us for the simple reason that they need representation because they need their voice to be heard. We have done much nationally on the issues that affect these members, but they, unlike their teacher colleagues, do not have the nationally agreed terms and conditions; so the real battles have been fought locally within each Local Education Authority.

Now we face a new crisis. The Government, like the Tories in opposition, think that schools should be free from local authority control, that private providers should be given more opportunities to take over. It is making it easier for individual schools to take on foundation status and, in effect, to become independent State schools. This means that these individual schools will directly employ staff and they will be able to vary pay and terms and conditions of employment for our members. This means that they will no longer be part of the local authority bargaining unit; school support staff will be left alone and weak, isolated from the rest of our members.

Due to the local management of schools, we are finding it hard to ensure agreements reached at local authority level are implemented within individual schools. If schools are no longer banned by these agreements, where will that leave our members? Indeed, where will that leave our union? If we do not have the resources to represent every school in every negotiation, we will cease to be effective. It would be harder to argue against Foundation Schools if they were proven to raise achievement for pupils within them. However, like much of the Government's education policies, the evidence currently is not there. I urge you to support this motion.

(The President re-took the Chair)

(Motion 294 was formally seconded)

EDUCATION

MOTION 295

This Congress calls upon the Government to review the "Standards Act". In particular all schools should be required to comply with the respective policies and local agreements of their authority.

CAMBRIDGE 2 BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. K. ROBERTS (London): The Government need to review the accountability of the schools to the relevant local authorities. Whilst recognising the importance of the governing bodies within the schools, there must also be a constant treatment across an authority. While the authority as the employer can only advise the schools on certain aspects of the employment, we will never achieve a constant treatment for our members.

The GMB should campaign for review of the "Standards Act" to ensure fair and constant policies authority-wide, irrespective of the status of the school. We will never achieve workforce reform or single status while this Act is in its current form. As the leading union for the schools' support staff, we must lead this campaign from the front. A school is a school. A school worker is a school worker. The GMB will not let them be divided. Please support this motion. I move.

BRO. M. HOLLAND (London): I am seconding Motion 295. President, Colleagues, what does the Schools' Standard Act say? Well, that is a good question. It is great when you get a local education authority telling the schools: "This is good practice that we have designed. Now implement it."

However, I want to talk about the other side of the story. This is where the local education authority only gives guidance and the schools are free to do as they please. My LEA have laid down guidance for cover supervisors and higher level teaching assistants. They have also given the green light to schools to make up their own job descriptions and pay grades. We are now in a situation where the schools are not even following national strategy. If we are not careful, we will end up with a league system for schools with rich schools attracting staff and poor schools failing.

If you look at the terms for Standards guidance, it basically says, "If the head teacher believes the person is competent, then let them do the job." You do not even have to bother assessing them. It also goes on to say: "Teachers are best placed to determine which activities can be delegated to support staff."

In reality, the head teacher places them where there is a need to cover, planning, preparation and assessment time or teachers' absences. Then there is the phrase: "Subject to the direction and supervision of a qualified teacher". We know what that is meant to mean, but, in reality, for a lot of staff it is a quick chat first thing in the morning.

There is one thing to be said for the Schools Standard Act, and that is it says a lot more between the lines than it says in the lines. Our members are being abused and it needs to be reviewed. I second.

SOCIAL EDUCATION

MOTION 296

Conference instructs the CEC to lobby government for the introduction of social studies into all levels of school education.

The aim is to address the increased incidents of bullying, harassment and racism in schools, workplaces and within the community.

We must reinforce the ethos of respect and tolerance and highlight the effects that such behaviour has on individuals and the human costs to all concerned.

X07 BRANCH

Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region

(Carried)

SIS. M. GREGG (Liverpool, North Wales and Irish): President, delegates, recent events, unfortunately, have reinforced the importance of this motion. I understand the Government have introduced into the curriculum in the UK Learning for Life work, global citizenship and personal and social health education. Pilots were carried out in Northern Ireland last year and full implementation of the new Pathways curriculum, Key Stage 3, is planned for September 2005.

So what is the point of this motion? The point is this programme has only been introduced into secondary education at 11-16 years, high schools and grammar schools, not in primary schools. What is happening, I am told, is sporadic and not well coordinated.

As I said at the start, unfortunately, we have seen that some young children do bully, harass and physically injure, even younger children, with horrific results. Prejudices can start at a very early stage, but children of this age are also very open to positive and enjoyable experiences. They can learn to respect each other.

Northern Ireland has a small percentage of ethnic groups compared to England, Scotland and Wales. Children do not meet or mix with other cultures on a daily basis. Introducing social education to the younger school children will help to build a base, which is what one of the other movers of another motion said. It will help to build a base for the future. It will help with better relationships amongst all citizens of the UK.

Unfortunately, Northern Ireland has also one of the highest percentages of teenage suicides. Research shows that media image - things like the thin models in designer wear and the must-have trainers, drugs, bullying, low self-esteem - is the main reason behind a lot of these untimely deaths. Who has campaigned for and highlighted these issues? We

have. But you would not know it from the curriculum.

Young people still in schools are amongst the low paid and exploited workers. We campaigned for that also. Ignorance can be overcome with knowledge. Self-esteem can be improved and built on with encouragement and confidence-building. Bullying can be helped with trust and support. Drugs can be helped with by offering a constructive alternative. Vandalism, which causes millions of pounds of funding, being deflected from improving schools and communities, is shown to decrease with community involvement.

The trade unions campaign for all those issues. School children should know this. For all these reasons, it is very important to help future citizens, maybe our members. There is a major crisis of funding in education, but we cannot afford not to put time, money and effort into a full and comprehensive social education policy that covers all levels of education. As Gordon Brown said, is not every child worthy of our help? I move.

BRO. A. SPINKS (Liverpool, North Wales & Irish): I gladly second this motion. You only need to look at the behaviour of some of the schoolchildren in this day and age. It is an absolute disgrace. I honestly believe the greater percentage of kids are still good, though. I have to be truthful in that respect. However, when you see the kids on the buses when they have come out of school, they are swearing, they are spitting out of the windows, they are throwing cans and they are abusing people. It is going well beyond what is acceptable as childhood behaviour. We were all mischievous when we were young -- in my case, a long time ago, by the way -- but the bullying is so serious, somehow or other we have to try to achieve success and stop it altogether. Obviously, the school is a great place, if we can get to them at a young age and, hopefully, put some sense into them.

To conclude, the biggest fault for me lies with the parents. Some parents are an absolute disgrace to the children. They do not deserve children. Thank you very much.

I am sorry. May I just say something else? What a wonderful breath of fresh air Dawn Butler was yesterday. Thank you. Our love child!

VOCATIONAL TRAINING

MOTION 297

Congress recognises that future economic success depends upon ensuring that the UK workforce has the skills to compete in an increasingly global economy.

Congress calls upon the Government to prioritise all aspects of education funding, not solely higher education funding and to address

the urgent need to invest in vocational training and skills training.

NORTHUMBERLAND GENERAL BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

SIS. L. LOTHIAN (Northern): Our esteemed President has given me a few minutes to thank everyone for their support for me and my abseil. I have to give you a reason for why I am doing it. ASDA for a long time have been telling me, "Go and jump off a tall building"! *(Laughter)* So I am doing it now, but only for a great deal of money, because you will not get me jumping off a 150-foot building for nothing! *(Laughter)*

I am moving Motion 297. Congress, in the last Parliament one of the most contentious issues debated was the issue of tuition fees and the costs of higher education. From those issues, the Government were forced into concessions and they also faced a major revolt from back benchers.

President, how many of us can remember there being any revolt over the issue of vocational training known to all of us as "NVQs"? How many concessions have the Government been forced to make to help the millions of working people who every year have to fund themselves the costs of training to acquire the skills to compete in the competitive global labour market?

None of us underestimate the need for quality higher education and the desperate need for graduates in the economy. But, why is vocational training constantly ignored and under-resourced?

The future wealth of our nation depends not just on the quality of higher education for our doctors, teachers and many others, but crucially upon the quality of vocational training provided to ensure that Britain has the engineers and crafts to compete effectively in the world economy.

France, Germany and every other European economy spends more on vocational training than the UK. In the US and Japan, the level of financial support given to vocational training is greater than the UK.

The wealth of our nation depends upon our ability to compete in that global economy. Let's hope that in this Parliament the Government finally wake up to that fact and finally address the need to increase dramatically the funding to improve vocational skills training. Congress, I urge you to support Motion 297. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I urge you to support her abseiling and show ASDA! *(Applause)*

BRO. B. TAYLOR (Northern): I am seconding Motion 297. This is probably one of the most important debates that we will have this week. Education and training are the key to everything; the key to each

individual in this Congress today and the key to all of us collectively. Because we must produce items, if we need a strong economy, obviously we need a skilled workforce.

In a debate on manufacturing, Billy Hughes mentioned the decline of manufacturing throughout 370 the country. Another delegate mentioned the fall in apprenticeships. As the shipyards closed, then obviously there was less training and less apprentices. Without the training and without the apprentices, we cannot continue to have a strong economy.

What we cannot do is rely on low wages. That is what they do in other parts of the world. We need to do the opposite. We need a very skilled workforce. Therefore, it is important that this motion is supported, but we need to call upon the Government, and it has already been said, to put more money and more investment into vocational training. We have been boasting this week that we have 100 MPs in Parliament. Let's call on those 100 MPs to support what we are trying to do, as far as training in this country is concerned. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Like Bernie said, education is most important. It educates our future. Does anybody wish to come in on the debate? No.

SIS. E. DALEY (CEC, Commercial Services): The CEC is supporting Motion 294 but with a qualification that I am about to give, and asking for Motion 296 to be withdrawn.

Turning, first, to Motion 294, the CEC is fully supportive of the principle that this Union should oppose the creation of more Foundation Schools because their independent status will undermine our current collective bargaining structures for school support staff. This would leave us with the impossible task of trying to maintain negotiating rights with thousands of individual schools.

The CEC wishes to qualify the motion in one respect. If we are successful in achieving national pay and conditions for school support staff, which are binding on all types of schools, the stance adopted by this motion might need to be amended. This is because our chief concern about the impact of more Foundation Schools would have been dealt with.

Turning now to Motion 296, the CEC is asking for this motion to be withdrawn. The CEC supports the motion's emphasis on the importance of teaching school pupils about the effects of bullying, racism and harassment and about the need for respect and tolerance. However, the motion is asking the CEC to lobby the Government for something that already exists, personal, social and health education. PHSE is already a national curriculum subject, which must be taught throughout schools from Key Stage 1 upwards. The national framework for the teaching of PHSE includes issues of bullying, respect for difference and

awareness of the effects of behaviour on others.

Congress, please support Motion 294 with the qualification that I have just outlined. Congress, we are asking for Motion 296 to be withdrawn. If not withdrawn, the CEC asks Congress to oppose the Motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Liverpool, North Wales and Irish Region, are you going to withdraw? Do you want the right to reply?

SIS. M. GREGG (Liverpool, North Wales & Irish): We still believe social education should be taught in the primary schools at the early ages. It is definitely not in Northern Ireland and some of my colleagues in the Liverpool Region are saying the same. It has not been fully implemented even where it should have been, so I am not going to withdraw the motion. I ask you to support.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Margaret, my friend! Colleagues, Motions 293, 294, 295 and 297 are being supported by the CEC.

(Motion 293 was carried)

(Motion 294 was carried)

(Motion 295 was carried)

(Motion 297 was carried)

THE PRESIDENT: Liverpool, North Wales and Irish Region will not withdraw, so the CEC is asking you to vote against.

(Motion 296 was carried) (Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: 3-0 -- we are doing well this week! Right.

YOUTH TRAINING

MOTION 187

Congress we call on conference to start a campaign to highlight the lack of protection given to young workers on Government Training Schemes.

The training within private companies who use the young workers as cheap labour work long hours and get very little training, this is clearly a cynical exploitation of the system.

BRADFORD GMB BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

BRO. R. ALDERMAN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire):

Youth training schemes for young trainees on placements at private companies have hit rock bottom. Training schemes in this country are not up to the standard we expect for trainees of the future. Too many are leaving because of the treatment at the hands of these placement companies. These companies who take them on, allegedly to train for a profession, are exploiting the young trainees.

These companies are using the training scheme for getting cheap labour, working trainees for up to 50 hours a week for little or less than £1.50 an hour.

President, Congress, an absolute disgrace is the only way I can describe the exploitation of the young people of today. I use the word “disgrace” only because there are ladies present within this Congress hall.

Most of these young people are not in a union. They have no rights or are not informed of them. Health and safety is often non-existent, which brings into question the role of the training scheme coordinators. They have the responsibility for these young people to ensure their future training needs, but seem to lean more to the companies.

Let me quote a recent case. A young trainee, who had recently had an accident at work at one of these companies, heard of the reputation of the GMB and joined us. After joining us, he had an accident at work. He broke his arm in two places, but still was required to return to work on light duties, bearing in mind his arm was broken. The light duties consisted of loading wagons with heavy materials. He had to return to hospital twice for treatment on the arm. The hospital informed him that he had not to return to work until his arm had healed.

He then called in for his wages; the company sacked him on the spot. He then contacted the GMB who took on his case. In the meantime, the youngster called in for his holiday pay entitlement, which, believe it or not, was the sum of £25. The GMB took the case to an industrial tribunal for unfair dismissal. I would like to thank the Regional Legal Officer who successfully won the case. The youth was awarded nearly £1,800.

President, Congress, this is a typical example of what is happening to the youth of today and the future workforce of today by the parasites of privatisation. This gets right up my chump. *(Laughter)* That means posterior!

So we call on upon this Union to put pressure on this Labour Government for an inquiry into the treatment of these youngsters at these placement companies. I move.

(The motion was formally seconded)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. May I call Lena Sharp?

SIS. L. SHARP (CEC, Food & Leisure): I am speaking for the CEC supporting Motion 187 with a qualification.

The Government have placed great emphasis on the importance of training schemes for young workers as they seek to bridge the skills gap in the British economy.

Most recently, the Department for Education and Skills’ White Paper proposed increases emphasising vocational training in schools. They also proposed the removal of the age gap on modern apprentices to encourage more people to undertake training.

However, with reform comes responsibility to protect young workers. Whilst young workers on Government training schemes are classified as employees, situations exist which suggest they are rarely treated as such, £1 hourly rates, excessive working hours, et cetera, et cetera.

There are fundamental flaws in the system. For example, the exemption of apprentice workers from the National Minimum Wage and the loose regulation surrounding these schemes. The lack of protection affords employees scope to abuse the system. We know that wage rates for apprentice workers are scandalously low in most cases and that working hours are longer than the job description suggests.

The theory goes that training skills and training via apprentices will lead to increased earnings in later life. There are no guarantees in life and decent conditions are essential for the present.

The CEC supports the call for a campaign to highlight the lack of protection given to young workers on government training schemes with the qualification that our regions conduct extensive research into training schemes in their areas. In conclusion, with the qualification outlined, the GMB can obtain a clear picture of what is happening around the country and will provide the foundations for a stronger, more effective campaign. Thank you.

(Motion 187 was carried)

GMB YOUTH AWARD

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, we come to a really nice part of our Congress. As you can see, I have an apprentice up here with me this morning, haven’t I?

SIS. L. VINCENT: You have.

THE PRESIDENT: Leanne is the winner of our GMB Youth Award. Leanne is a student with learning difficulties at Warrington Collegiate and a member of the GMB Massive. She is a student representative at the college. As well as working part-time in Matalan, she led a successful campaign against unfair treatment and had her course reinstated by the College.

Leanne is a positive role model for other students with learning disabilities in Warrington. She is a member of SPARC, Supporting People Achieve Real Choice, a supportive employment project for

adults with learning disabilities. Leanne has taken part in several training events, including a trip to Germany. She has helped to deliver the Massive Respect course, which helps other members with learning difficulties to get into employment. Leanne believes that in the workplace everyone should be treated the same, with equal 372 opportunities for all.

Colleagues, it gives me great pleasure to present the certificate and voucher signed by us all, Leanne, to you -- your next President; that is why I am training you today, isn't it -- and tomorrow's generation.

SIS. L. VINCENT: Yes.

(Presentation amongst standing ovation)

THE PRESIDENT: All right? The voucher is for fish and chips down the road! OK?

SIS. L. VINCENT: I had chips for dinner!

THE PRESIDENT: And then we will all go to the pub, all right? Is Mel here? Mel, would you like to come up and stand beside Leanne? *(Applause)*

SIS. L. VINCENT: Good morning, Mary and Congress. My name is Leanne Vincent. I am aged 20. This is my learning support worker and GMB rep called Catherine Mannion.

I am a student at Warrington Collegiate and a GMB Massive member. Most of my friends at the College are also members of the GMB.

I am supported into work with the help of SPARC, a charity for people with learning disabilities who want to go into work. I think trade unions are really important for people with disabilities who face a fight for our rights.

Thank you for this GMB Award, and I dedicate this to the other people with disabilities in the UK.

Lastly, I would like to say a big thank you to GMB Lancashire for giving me the chance to go to the German Summer School and helping me and the Warrington GMB branch and for all its great support. Thank you to you all today. *(Applause amidst standing ovation)*

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, Congress, I think this is a good time to finish. I apologise for those in the housing debate, but that shows courage, doesn't it? Well done, Leanne. *(Applause)*

Remember The Justice for Colombia fringe meeting is in here at lunchtime. I call Congress to halt, returning sharply at two o'clock. Thank you.

(Congress adjourned for lunch)

AFTERNOON SESSION

(Following the Private Session)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, as we are now in open debate, let me tell you what we will be doing. Congress, first of all, I will ask Brenda Fraser to move the Special Report on Housing. I will then ask the regions which have contributed to Composite Motion 28 to speak. Then I will ask Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region to move Motion 306. I will then hold an open debate on housing, beginning with speakers on the Special Report, and anyone who wishes to oppose the Special Report. I will then give Brenda Fraser the right of reply before moving to the vote on the Special Report, Composite 28 and Motion 306.

CEC SPECIAL REPORT - A FAIR DEAL ON HOUSING: QUALITY AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR ALL

1. INTRODUCTION

There are few issues more important in determining our quality of life, and the kind of society in which we live, than housing. The place we call home is basic to our day-to-day living, our work and our leisure time, our health and general well-being, our close relationships and friendships, our freedom to make life choices and our sense of financial security. More broadly, the nature and availability of housing is fundamental to building a good society, based upon strong and inclusive communities and balanced economic prosperity.

Housing was recognised as one of the most important areas of public policy in the immediate postwar period, but for some time afterwards has been the victim of long-term neglect and short-term political opportunism.

In the 1960's Council tenants rents increased by over 200% as a result of the then Tory Government's decision to force Council's to borrow money on the open market rather than under the previous Labour

Government policy of offering a guaranteed rate of borrowing for Councils. The increased costs of borrowing saw council rents rocket.

Following this disastrous decision successive Governments have sold off publicly owned land such as 373 hospital sites, have encouraged tenants to buy their own council homes depleting the stock available for future generations and have failed to maintain investment in social housing stock.

The result has been the development of a serious mismatch between patterns of housing provision and individual and social needs. The most visible recent manifestation of this problem has been the dramatic house price inflation of the past decade, caused by an overall excess of demand over supply. But behind these headline figures lies a major social injustice - borne by those on low or moderate incomes who cannot access quality affordable housing, and communities who suffer the negative consequences of increasingly unbalanced economic development.

Now, housing is moving rapidly up the political agenda once more, recognised by parties and voters as one of the most urgent social and economic issues of our time. For Labour, a radical agenda for housing has the potential to be a key flagship policy, offering tangible improvements to the lives of millions of potential supporters in its "heartland" areas, and establishing the foundations for a more equal, cohesive, democratic, healthy, sustainable and prosperous society. Addressing the legacy of past housing policies that have resulted in worsening deprivation and social division could open an exciting new front in advancing progressive social change.

This report reviews the current situation and the most recent developments in the policy debate. It goes on to recommend a set of key policies that the GMB could support and campaign for in the coming period.

2. HOUSING AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Recent years have witnessed an extraordinary run of housing inflation in this country. Over the past decade the price of an average house in this country has doubled, and private market rents have shown a similar increase. Price rises have slowed in recent months and some have suggested that the next two years may see a house price "correction" in some areas. But the underlying upward trend is expected to continue as long as its fundamental causes remain in place.

While some have obviously benefited from seeing the value of their assets rise so impressively, it is recognised by economists and policymakers that such dramatic rises in house prices are not helpful for the country as a whole. They make it difficult to manage monetary and fiscal policy in a balanced way, often requiring the imposition of deflationary measures that can have a negative impact on other sectors of the economy such as manufacturing.¹ The potential instability that a volatile housing market brings has also been seen by government as one of the most serious obstacles to Britain joining the European single currency should it desire to do so.²

Moreover, headline figures showing the overall rise in prices conceal a highly unequal distribution of the costs and benefits of the rise in the national average:

- **Home-ownership is now out of reach** for increasing numbers of people on moderate and low incomes. In relation to average incomes, an average first home is now 60 per cent less affordable than it was 10 years ago.³
- This crisis of affordability is putting increasing **pressure on the country's limited stock of affordable social housing**, with a record 100,000 people now officially homeless and as many as one in ten children living in overcrowded conditions.⁴
- Businesses and public services are finding it **harder to recruit and retain staff** in areas where prices are high, constraining local economies and undermining local service provision.
- Meanwhile areas outside property "hot spots" experience the negative effects of **unbalanced development and demographic change**, with low demand and even abandonment afflicting

¹ Kate Barker, (2004) Review of Housing Supply, HMSO.

² HM Treasury, (2003) UK membership of the single currency: an assessment of the five economic tests.

³ Shelter, (2005) ROOF affordability index, February.

⁴ Shelter, (2004) Crowded House: crowded living in England's Housing.

many communities in the North and Midlands.

The overall reason for the rise in house prices, identified by the Barker review, is that housing supply has failed to keep pace with housing demand. The total number of households is increasing all the time, in part a result of changing family structures and increased longevity. Meanwhile overall house building has been in decline for years and in 2001 fell to its lowest level since the second world war.⁵

But, again, there is a more complex story behind these headline figures:

- The single most important reason for shortfall in housing supply is the **decline of social provision**. As the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors has put it, “the rapid decline in housebuilding levels are primarily due to the collapse of the social and affordable housing programme”.⁶ Private sector provision has remained fairly constant over recent decades but local authority house building has dropped from highs above 300,000 a year in the 1950s and 1960s to the low hundreds today. New build by Housing Associations - currently around 15,000 to 20,000 a year - is nothing like enough to make up the difference.
- Looking beyond London and the South East, it is clear that the housing problem is only not one of excess demand across the board, but of **regionally unbalanced demand**. In many parts of the country, especially in the North, the problem identified by Barker is reversed - dwellings are left empty as people leave in search of jobs elsewhere. Those who remain face appalling problems of social and urban decay. In these areas the issue is not under-supply, but the need to revive demand - addressing the flow of employment, population, and economic prosperity away from the area.

Behind the newspaper headlines about the house price boom, then, is a story of worsening deprivation and social division. To redress these injustices and bring the housing market into a healthier equilibrium, determined action is required to increase the availability of affordable housing for those on low and moderate incomes, and to regenerate areas where demand for housing has fallen to such low levels. The remaining sections of this report examine what needs to be done in three key areas:

- **rebuilding social provision** - local authorities need to be empowered to develop and expand the supply of affordable rented accommodation
- **extending affordability** - extra support is needed for those on moderate incomes to access housing near their place of work
- **regenerating communities** - housing provision needs to be integrated with wider strategies for achieving sustainable and balanced economic development.

In addition there are special issues arising for some GMB members from the arrangements governing **tiered accommodation**. These are examined in the final section.

3. REBUILDING SOCIAL PROVISION

Recent studies have made clear that the social provision of affordable rental accommodation has a vital role to play in meeting new housing demand, providing decent homes for those who otherwise could not hope to afford them and supporting the development of strong and inclusive local communities.

But in recent years local authorities have been starved of government funding and hamstrung by centrally imposed legal and financial regulations.

The Conservative “Right To Buy” policy has cut the stock of social housing by around half and continues to transfer tens of thousands of units a year into the private market.

Local authorities were not allowed to retain the proceeds from the sales, nor were other funds made available to replace the depleted stock. In fact there was a 60 per cent reduction in council house capital spending from 1992 to 1999, bringing new house building to a virtual halt and bequeathing a £19b backlog in necessary repairs and improvements.

⁵ Kate Barker, (2004) Review of Housing Supply, HMSO.

⁶ RICS, (2003) Submission to the Barker Review.

The result is that the Labour government inherited a severely diminished and dilapidated stock of social housing, suffering all the negative effects of “residualisation” as the poorest and most needy tenants were concentrated in the least desirable housing.

In 2002 funding was increased with an extra £1 Billion funding for Local Authorities but this is nowhere near the levels necessary to tackle the backlog of repairs that has built up.

The Labour Government is committed to maintaining investment in social housing and has a target to bring all housing up to the Decent Homes Standard by 2010.

4. THE CASE FOR THE 4th OPTION

However the Government’s approach to these matters is severely marred by its determination that investment is pushed “off balance sheet” through the use of PFI and Registered Social Landlords (RSL). In particular, the government has insisted that:

- All additional government support for local authority improvement programmes is conditional upon tenants accepting one of “three options” - large scale transfer to a social landlord, private finance, or setting up an “Arms Length Management Organisation” (ALMO). In practise this means that Local Authorities are prevented from improving their housing stock unless they turn over their housing stock to the private sector.
- Virtually all additions to the stock of social housing through acquisitions and new build - including the 10,000 extra units provided for in the 2004 Spending Review - are envisaged to take place through Registered Social Landlords

Despite considerable controversy and a vote at the 2004 Labour Party Conference in favour of a “level playing field” for direct investment by local authorities, this stance was upheld in the recently published Five Year plan for housing by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM).⁷ The Government’s refusal to create a level playing field lead Public Finance magazine to comment that “the small print of Homes for All might actually sound the death-knell for traditional council housing... In the government’s vision, very few councils will be landlords - the majority will be strategic facilitators.”⁸

There are serious problems with this approach. Housing Associations are an established part of the housing landscape. But they are no replacement for council homes owned and managed by local authorities, for a number of reasons:

- Like all other forms of “off-balance sheet” investment in public services, the idea that Housing Associations allow more social provision than would otherwise be available is an illusion.⁹ In fact it is always more expensive - involving higher borrowing costs and additional bureaucracy and transaction costs that must ultimately be covered by the public through government grants and higher rents (largely met by housing benefit).
- The National Audit Office and Public Accounts Committee have found that renovation through stock transfer is more expensive for the taxpayer than direct investment by local authorities.¹⁰
- There are, moreover, reasons to doubt that Housing Associations could ever fill the gap left by the freeze on local authority house building. The growth of RSLs is dependent on the willingness of the financial sector to invest - and much of the institutional funds available are now being taken up with large scale stock transfers rather than new build.¹¹
- The Barker report implied that it would be unrealistic to expect the RSLs to make up the entire 23,000 annual shortfall in new social and affordable housing predicted over the years ahead.¹² Shelter has argued that even these figures are underestimates, calling for an additional 55,000 affordable homes to be built each year to meet newly arising need and halve the current backlog of homelessness and bad housing.¹³

⁷ ODPM, Sustainable Communities: Homes For All, A Five Year Plan from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, February 2005.

⁸ Public Finance, ‘Keep on moving’, 11 February 2005.

⁹ IPPR, Report of the Commission on Public Private Partnerships, 2001.

¹⁰ National Audit Office, Improving Social Housing Through Transfer, 2003.

¹¹ ‘Private finance boom for transfers goes on’, Housing Today, 27 April 2000.

¹² Kate Barker, (2004) Review of Housing Supply, HMSO, p8.

¹³ Shelter, (2004) Building for the Future - 2004 Update.

- Finally, though Housing Associations do have special contributions to make to the development of social housing, as independent entities they are less democratically accountable than local authorities, and will always come under pressure to prioritise their financial viability, setting aside any “social mission” to behave in an increasingly managerial and commercial manner.
- There is widespread experience of Housing Associations becoming unresponsive to tenants and locally elected representatives, increasing rents and failing to maintain their existing stock, and ramping up executive pay while offering inferior terms and conditions to their employees - trends which could be exacerbated as the government encourages mergers and rationalisations in the sector.¹⁴ ALMOs, seen by some as a “stepping stone to privatisation”, have exhibited many of the same tendencies.¹⁵

Direct provision of and investment in affordable housing by local authorities cannot, then, be abandoned. On the contrary, it has a central role to play in bringing the housing market back under control and really ensuring homes for all. Of all the crucial pillars of the welfare state it was social housing that suffered the most vicious cuts through the 1980s and 1990s. It will require a major programme of public investment to rebuild it.

This will involve a number of steps:

- The government must create a “level playing field” between the various options for meeting the Decent Homes Standard, extending the subsidies and gap funding available for transfers and ALMOs and carrying through the policy supported by the 2004 Labour Party Conference to ensure that “where tenants choose to remain under the management of their local authority, they will not be financially disadvantaged”. This is the ‘4th Option’ that Defend Council Housing and other groups are campaigning for.¹⁶
- There are various proposals for releasing additional funds to support council borrowing under the new Prudential Borrowing Framework, including the ring-fencing of surpluses in the Housing Revenue Account, allowing local authorities to draw on “pooled” Right To Buy receipts, changing the rules on depreciation and the Major Repairs Allowance, or creating a specific “investment allowance” to support increased borrowing.¹⁷
- Ultimately local authorities must be given full powers to finance investment by borrowing against their assets and revenue streams, just as Housing Associations are able to. The crisis in housing availability will never be solved until local authorities are able to develop and expand the provision of social housing in response to local need. The “Right To Buy” will continue to erode a crucial pillar of our welfare state until local authorities, too, have a right to buy and to build new homes.

A revival of local authority housing provision would not mean more of the low-cost, poorly designed, socially problematic estates which have made council housing notorious.

In fact the development of such problems is largely a result of the “residualisation” of public housing forced by privatisation and cuts, meaning that many of the best homes have been lost and the remainder filled by those with greatest need - a problem recognised but unaddressed in the latest government policy statements.¹⁸

Increasing the scope for local authorities to invest in social housing would enable them to break up such concentrations of poverty and deprivation, and move back towards Nye Bevan’s original vision of public provision that would abolish the notion of “working class housing” and turn streets into “living tapestries” in which “the doctor, the grocer, the butcher and the farm labourer” lived side by side. There are now exciting ideas for ways in which councils could reconfigure their housing stock to create a better social mix throughout residential areas, not only through innovative new builds but by acquiring properties not traditionally associated with council housing, perhaps even allowing prospective tenants

¹⁴ “Tenants “marginalised” on housing boards”, *The Guardian*, 15 April 2004.

¹⁵ Centre for Public Services, *The Case for the 4th Option for Council Housing and A Critique of Arms Length Management Organisations*, May 2004.

¹⁶ Labour Party National Policy Forum, *Final Papers*, 2004.

¹⁷ Local Government Information Unit, *Housing: The Right to Choose*, 2004.

¹⁸ ODPM, *Sustainable Communities: Homes For All*, February 2005.

to choose which properties they buy.¹⁹

Much has been said lately about the importance of offering “choice” in public services. In fact this was highlighted as a priority in the GMB’s last report on housing policy as long ago as 1990.²⁰ Despite the constraints under which local authorities have been put many social tenants continue to choose them as their preferred landlord over other options. Those choices should be respected, and local authorities empowered to extend and support real choices for those in housing need through a development and expansion of council housing.

5. EXTENDING AFFORDABILITY FOR KEY WORKERS

In 2000 research commissioned by the GMB from the Labour Research Department highlighted the plight of key workers unable to buy homes in the area where they work. Nurses, primary school teachers, bus drivers, postal workers and hospital porters are forced to move away from their place of work in the search for affordable homes. The problem afflicts London and the South East particularly but also areas such as Cornwall and Devon where pay rates are low.

Since then the issue has continued to move up the political agenda as public services as well as businesses in high-priced areas find it difficult to recruit and retain staff, producing serious knock-on effects for services and all those who depend upon them. The government has taken a series of measures to try to deal with the problem, building on models already developed by local authorities and housing associations:

- the **Starter Homes Initiative** and now the **Key Worker Living Initiative** that builds on it will have offered no interest loans to 40,000 “frontline key workers” by 2010
- the **First Time Buyers Initiative** will help 15,000 key workers and others on low incomes by offering part-ownership of homes built on disused public sector land

Nevertheless evidence continues to emerge of the crisis in affordable housing placing severe constraints on the development of services and local economies in high-price areas. A recent report on the health service in London, for example, shows that job vacancies are twice as high as the national average as staff leave the capital in order to get on the housing ladder.²¹ It is clear that further action will be needed.

First of all, **the definition of a key worker needs to be broadened**. The Starter Homes Initiative was restricted to nurses, teachers and police officers. Under Key Worker Living this definition has been extended to cover social workers, fire-fighters, and prison and probation service staff. But this is still too narrow. Among those currently excluded from the definition are:

- street sweepers and dustmen
- care assistants
- catering staff
- cleaners and porters
- teaching assistants
- “white collar” civil servants
- private sector employees

It is clear that the lack of affordable housing is a problem that goes way beyond the classic examples, beloved of the media, such as nurses and teachers. In particular, the current definition continues to exclude many of the lowest paid public sector workers, as well as self-employed, agency and contracted-out employees upon whom public services increasingly depend. There is also an argument for extending schemes to cover lower paid private sector workers.

Local authorities have argued that they should be given flexibility and scope to broaden the definition of a “key worker” in response to local needs.²² Certainly we need to ensure that this kind of assistance is

¹⁹ Chris Holmes, *Housing, Equality and Choice*, IPPR, 2003.

²⁰ GMB, *Special Report, Priorities for Housing*, 1990.

²¹ King’s Fund, *Trends in London’s NHS workforce*, 2005.

²² LGA, *Key Workers and Affordable Housing*, 2002.

available to all who need it, and is not restricted to “media-friendly” but arbitrary occupational categories. Otherwise we risk creating a new false division between “deserving” and “undeserving” workers.

This will of course mean that **more funding will be needed to address the full scale of the problem**. The 2004 Spending Review allocated £690 million to Key Worker Living, on top of the £250m already spent under the Starter Home Initiative. These increases are welcome. But while government proclaims that its schemes will help 80,000 into home ownership, this is a problem that affects hundreds of thousands of workers, perhaps even millions. For example, it has been estimated that more than half a million public sector workers in London are unable to afford homes at less than half the average price.²³ The total number of households in London who are unable to afford to buy or rent housing in the private market but do not qualify for social housing has been estimated at 800,000.²⁴

Broadening the “key worker” definition so that more are covered by such schemes must not mean “spreading the money more thinly”, as the government have warned. We must be prepared to fund such initiatives properly. If necessary, funds for such initiatives must come from those who have benefited most from the uneven economic development that has created the problem - property developers and private businesses whose rates contributions have not kept pace with locally generated profits.

6. REGENERATING COMMUNITIES

It is essential that we extend help to key workers who will otherwise be unable to afford proper homes in areas of high property prices. But this cannot be our only response - for it will never address the fundamental sources of these problems. For the longer term we must attend to the geographical pattern of housing provision and the ways in which this relates to imbalances and injustices in our economic and social development.

The government have sought to address this issue with the **Sustainable Communities Plan**, launched in 2003 and now being taken forward under funding arrangements announced in the 2004 Spending Review. This has a number of key components:

- investment and intervention in **four new growth areas in the South East**, aiming for the provision of an additional 200,000 private and social housing units over the coming years
- a programme of **market renewal in the Midlands and the North**, demolishing, refurbishing and redeveloping housing to better meet current needs in areas of low demand
- as part of **The Northern Way** Regional Development Agencies in the North are developing plans for housing improvement as part of a wider strategy for economic regeneration and development²⁵
- government and other agencies are seeking to make use of the **latest innovations** in providing low-cost, high-density, environmentally sustainable housing in well-designed mixed communities

The scale and ambition of the Sustainable Communities Plan is timely and deserves support. But there are concerns and issues which will need to be pressed as it moves forward and takes further shape.

It is vitally important that **economic regeneration in every area is of a kind that all can benefit from**, and does not simply entrench new divisions and inequalities at a local level. Much has been made of the recent success of “core cities” such as Leeds, Manchester, Newcastle and Sheffield where the creation of Business Improvement Districts has helped to draw in investment in financial services, communications and cultural activities. But often this new economic activity has barely touched the poor communities living in outer areas of their conurbations.²⁶ Strategies for growth must always be linked to mechanisms for redistribution if those in greatest need are to benefit.²⁷

²³ ‘Billions needed for new key worker housing’, Public Finance, 10 May 2002.

²⁴ London Housing Statement, 2002, Delivering Solutions, p8.

²⁵ Northern Way Steering Group, Moving Forward: The Northern Way, First Growth Strategy Report, 2004.

²⁶ Chris Holmes, Housing, Equality and Choice, IPPR, 2003.

²⁷ Centre for Local Economic Strategies, Redistribute to regenerate, 2003.

Valuable lessons for ensuring balanced and inclusive communities can be learned from the success of the London Plan, which recommends a 50 per cent affordable target for all new housing developments, of which 35 per cent must be social rented housing and 15 per cent “intermediate housing” affordable to people on moderate incomes.²⁸

There are also real concerns that **the government continues to prioritise growth in the South East** over redevelopment in regions to the north.²⁹ It remains unclear whether the environmental impact of, and infrastructural limits to, the four new growth areas around London have yet been properly thought through.³⁰ At the same time the Market Renewal pathfinders only begin to address the housing problems of the north, so far touching only a fraction of the 850,000 houses identified by government in low demand areas and restricted by short-term funding.³¹

Ultimately the renewal and reconfiguration of housing provision needs to be properly integrated not just with regional strategies for growth and development, but with a national strategy for redistributing growth and development more evenly around the regions of the country.³² This is the only long-term solution to a housing crisis that is largely the result of supply constraints in the south and an ongoing drain of demand from the north.

7. PROTECTION FOR WORKERS IN TIED ACCOMODATION

There is a further issue that is of particular concern to the GMB and its members, and which needs to be moved up the agenda. This is the treatment of employees who live in tied accommodation. Although no longer as common as it once was, many workers today still live in homes owned by their employers and provided as part of their terms of employment. Today these include public sector employees such as nurses and caretakers as well as occupations more traditionally associated with tied housing such as pub landlords and farm workers.

Upon retirement many of these employees lose their homes and, because accommodation costs will frequently have been subtracted from their wages, will be in no position to make decent provision from themselves. Today this is an important cause of homelessness among older people, with local authorities forced to allocate them often to homes far inferior to that in which they had previously lived.³³

It is wholly unacceptable that individuals who have given their lives to an employer should suffer such hardship upon retirement. Where an employee has been living in tied accommodation, employers - be they private or public sector, or local authorities themselves- must undertake to compensate them for the loss of their home by offering housing options that are at least as good as their previous home or ensuring, through enhanced pension arrangements, that they are able to provide for themselves. If necessary legislation must be introduced that makes this a requirement of employment contracts.

8. CONCLUSION: A NEW POLICY FOR HOUSING

It can be argued that housing is just as important an area of policy as health, education, poverty or the economy - not least because it impacts so directly upon all of these other issues. As it moves up the political and social agenda there is an important role for the GMB to play in standing up for those who have suffered from the neglect of housing policy in recent years and taking the debate in a new, progressive direction.

This report has outlined five key priorities for taking policy forward in this area:

- A Labour Government with a housing policy based on **housing need and not greed.**
- **Rebuilding social provision** by empowering local authorities to develop and expand their housing stock is the only real way of addressing the current crisis of homelessness and affordability

²⁸ Mayor of London, The London Plan - The Mayor's Spatial Development Strategy for London, 2003.

²⁹ 'Communities Plan will fuel north-south divide', Regeneration and Renewal, 4 July 2003; 'Power blasts plan's focus', Inside Housing, 6 February 2004.

³⁰ House of Commons Committee on the ODP, Planning for Sustainable Housing and Communities, 2003.

³¹ 'Pathfinder "paradox" reveals tension', Inside Housing, 3 March 2005.

³² Ash Amin, Dooreen Massey and Nigel Thrift, (2003) Decentering the Nation: A radical approach to regional policy, London, Catalyst; John Adams, Peter Robinson and Anthony Vigor (2003) A new regional policy for the UK, London, IPPR; House of Commons Committee on the ODP, Reducing Regional Disparities in Prosperity, 2003.

³³ UK Coalition on Older Homelessness.

- **Extending affordability** by offering financial support to workers on low and moderate incomes in high-price areas, based not on the uniform they wear but on real housing need
- **Regenerating communities** by integrating housing provision within wider strategies for economic development that are equitable, inclusive and properly balanced, locally and regionally
- **Protecting workers** in tied accommodation by requiring their employers to provide for housing at least as good as their former homes as part of any retirement package

Progress on all these fronts would be an important step towards rebuilding our welfare state and creating a fair, democratic and prosperous society in the twenty-first century.

(Adopted)

SIS. B. FRASER (CEC, Clothing & Textile): I am speaking on behalf of the CEC in moving the Special Report - A Fair Deal on Housing: Quality Affordable Housing for All.

Two years ago Congress remitted various motions on housing to the CEC to give us time to do some serious work. It is more than ten years since the CEC reported to Congress on housing. Today, we are trying to make up for lost time. The housing issue has been in hibernation for too long. At last it has re-emerged as an important political issue. Few issues are more important in determining our quality of life than housing.

Decades ago housing was at the heart of public policy, a key issue in the creation of the Welfare State. The Labour Government of 1945 recognised that decent housing for all was central to tackling Bevan's five giants: Want, Disease, Squalor, Idleness and Ignorance.

However, affordable housing in Britain has suffered a spiral in fortunes since the creation of the welfare reforms. Housing almost fell off the UK political agenda for a while. More recently ever increasing property prices and an ever-lowering number of new houses have combined to make housing pressures more acute. Now housing has returned to the political agenda, recognised by all parties and voters as one of the most urgent social and economic issues of our time.

For many in Britain the status of home ownership is, sadly, out of reach, particularly if you or your family survive on a modest to low income. Recent research by Shelter reveals that, in relation to average incomes, the average first home is now 60% less affordable than it was ten years ago. Rising house prices have put home ownership beyond the means of skilled teachers, fire-fighters and nurses. If workers in our key public services are priced out of ownership, the future for the majority of British citizens looks bleak.

Fifty years ago even Tory governments recognised that local councils were best placed to provide quality housing for the many. But 25 years ago, Thatcher Right-to-Buy scheme began to take

around 1.5 million homes out of the public sector, cutting social housing stock by around 50%. This policy transfers tens of thousands of units per year into the private market to this day. We have looked to the present Labour Government to rectify the growing housing crisis. Their job has not been easy.

The Government have inherited a dilapidated stock of social housing where the most needy have been ghetto'd in the least desirable types of housing; a mess of a situation inherited from the Tories.

Domestic violence victims receive the worst deal of all. They tend to be rehoused in the worst types of property available.

As part of the Government's commitment for all households to meet the Decent Home Standard by 2010 progress was made with increased Government funding of £1 billion for local authorities. However, this figure is still not enough to achieve the 2010 targets. This Special Report says that the present Government are adopting too narrow an approach, most notably by its embracement of private initiatives in council housing.

All Government support for local authority improvement programmes is now conditional upon tenants accepting one of the following three options: (1) LSDT - large scale transfers to a social landlord; (2) ALMO - establishing an arm's length management organisation, and (3) PFI or via the Private Finance Initiative. These choices do not provide a level playing field. Each of those three options places profit over people and edges closely towards privatisation.

The GMB has lobbied the Government hard for the inclusion of a fourth option; that tenants who choose to remain under the management of the local authority will not be financially disadvantaged.

Despite a vote in favour of the fourth option at last year's Labour Party Conference, Ministers remain stuck to their narrow and short-sighted policies. The GMB is looking forward to seeing the report from the House of Commons Council Housing Group, chaired by Austin Mitchell MP. Their inquiry into the fourth option makes us allies in a common campaign. Like us, they agree that the argument for councils

keeping their housing stock must be a real option.

By moving this report we can strengthen our argument and exert greater pressure on the Government to create a level playing field in the area of housing. I ask Congress to read this report and recognise the importance of our proposed strategy, how it can improve living conditions and affordability for many British citizens and boost society at large. Please back the CEC Special Report on Housing.

SOCIAL POLICY - HOUSING

HOUSING

COMPOSITE MOTION 28

(Covering Motions 305, 308, 309, 310 and 311)

305 - Public Sector Housing (GMB Scotland)

308 - Labour & Housing (London Region)

309 - Social Housing (Northern Region)

310 - Housing (Southern Region)

311 - Housing (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region)

Congress must address the issue of affordable housing. In 95% of the country, first time buyers are now priced out of the market, with few homes to rent in the social housing sector. Our priority must be to build houses for need and not for greed. In January, John Prescott announced the Government's totally inadequate response.

Congress recognises that local authorities have made a major contribution to the provision of high quality affordable social housing. Congress calls upon the Government to halt its current policy of forcing local authorities out of housing and to provide the necessary funding directly to local councils to ensure a future for high quality, affordable council housing.

This Congress resolves to oppose the extension of the plan to sell off publicly owned property, originally begun by a Conservative Government and Labour's proposal to extend this into allowing Housing Association tenants the right to buy. The aim of social housing was to provide social safety to remove people from absolute poverty and homelessness to a first step on the property ladder. Therefore Congress 2005 now calls on the GMB to demand that our Labour Government:

- makes capital investment available so as to ensure the long-term future of Public Housing as a social priority
- allows a fourth option for Council Housing - direct investment as an alternative to the Government's three options of transfer, PFI's and ALMO's.

We also urge the Labour party to implement Party conference decisions i.e. the passing of the NPF position on the introduction of the "fourth option" allowing local Councils once again to be decent affordable public housing. We are still waiting for our union's response to the 8 motions submitted to the 2003 Congress to set out our position.

Congress believes that Public Sector Housing is in deep crisis and that the current interventions by Government are insufficient to meet "Tenants desire for affordable, high quality, social housing to meet the needs of those on lower income."

Congress recognises the contribution of the GMB in the fight to stop the privatisation of Council Housing and the support that the union has given to groups formed to oppose stock transfers. We note the success of the national organisation 'Defend Council Housing' and the financial backing the GMB has generously given to this alliance of trade unionists and tenants. We now call on Congress to agree that the GMB should formally affiliate to 'Defend Council Housing' and play a more active role within that organisation.

(Carried)

BRO. H. RAJCH (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I move Composite Motion 28.

I think the previous speaker outlined the position very well, but we do applaud what the Government are proposing and how they see the issue of housing. However, we are completely opposed to the privatisation of council housing. We have always taken that position and that is a position we have held very strongly. We are very strongly opposed to privatisation, because that is what the Government want to do. That, effectively, is the reality. That is why the Government are not accepting the fourth option because they want to get rid of the entire social housing stock and see it under private control.

Our preferred system is for tenants to stay with the councils. We want them to keep their secure tenancies, to pay affordable rent and to have a landlord who is accountable through the ballot box. That is the sort of thing that tenants want as well. When we speak to tenants, we find that that is their preferred option as well.

As to the money for repairs, we want that work done not by contractors but by public sector workers. The Government have recognised that funding is necessary because a desperate need exists for improvement in council housing stock.

The preferred option, the fourth option, is direct investment, which is something that is needed. We also want councils actually to build new homes as well.

Let me tell you about what happened in Barnsley, which is where I come from. We worked with a national organisation called Defend Council Housing. The GMB has been working with that group for some years now very successfully. We have had many good campaigns. The point is that where tenants have the opportunity to ballot on the options and hear the arguments from us and Defend Council Housing, people vote against transfer. We have been winning ballots against the transfer of housing stock. In Barnsley we successfully managed to keep 800 homes within the council ownership, even though the council was hoping to privatise those homes. Defend Council Housing and the GMB worked together and achieved a no vote. Then the local authority set up an ALMO without a ballot. The chair of the ALMO in Barnsley tells me that he is confident that we will get the two star rating required to qualify for extra funding which has the potential for bringing in £170 million extra for council house improvements. That is a fantastic sum of money. If it can be made available by setting up an ALMO, why can't the Government just give it directly to the council so it can carry out the necessary improvements without having to win this two star status that is required.

However, we are also worried that the ALMO will eventually lead to privatisation by inviting private companies to join the ALMO at the moment so it becomes private. So it will not be just arm's length but it will be owned by a private company.

For the GMB to be involved in housing campaigns is fantastic potentially, not just to raise our profile but to work with tenants and other trade unionists. As a result, we can win and stop privatisation of our council housing stock. We can also raise the profile of the GMB at the same time.

BRO. D. HALL (London): I second Composite Motion 28. The previous speaker has set out the GMB's position extremely well. My branch has asked me to ask if anyone has checked Alan Milburn's Labour Party subscriptions recently, as most of his ideas seem to come from the Tories so we believe his membership may have lapped. I wonder if he has spent many breaks with his family reading old Tory Party manifestos? That was a slightly rhetorical question.

With a Labour Government in power, I find it strange to be at this rostrum seconding a motion such as this.

I further surprised myself the other day when I caught myself thinking that the old Tory Party's policy of selling off badly needed council houses to the tenants was more of a Socialist policy than Labour's current plans to transfer the remaining stock into private hands. Call it stock transfer, ALMOs or - this is the long-running bad joke - PFI. Privatisation is what it amounts to, let's face it.

My sister took up the opportunity to buy her council house and, like many of us, we would not

be grudge her or others in doing that. We all want to feel secure and to have a future. The Tory Government would not provide that, so it was almost Hobson's choice when offered the opportunity to buy their own home, if they could. Of course, such a policy has robbed future generations of the support that social housing gives in the hope of leaving homelessness behind. These houses will be sold or rented at prices few can afford, a situation we have recently seen in London.

What should those people who Labour once stood up for do now? Perhaps they will ship them out of town or encourage employers to become their landlords. This sounds familiar. It is something I read about in history books of the 19th Century. The Tories are out of office but now our family jewels are not being just sold but given away and by a Labour Government. The safety net for our communities is being placed at the mercy of the private market. A select committee of the very department which proposed this plan is now vehemently opposed to it because the budgetary and management reasons given for the transfer have proved to be entirely false again and again. This policy will not benefit tenants in any way which could not be bettered by direct investment and local involvement.

I beg your indulgence for one second. It seems incredible that the Government have made strides in the Working Tax Credit, the Family Tax Credit and policies to reduce unemployment and poverty without taking account of these principles.

Whilst welcoming the GMB's Special Report on Housing, I ask Congress to support this composite motion and support public sector housing.

BRO. R. REEVES (Southern): I speak in support of Composite Motion 28.

President and Congress, this composite motion is about the Government's provision of a fundamental need - that of somewhere to live for those who cannot afford to buy their own home, which means most of our members. The best way to do this is through local provision by the democratically elected and accountable body, the council. Such a system has worked for years. However, we have witnessed many attacks on the system in the name of financial feasibility. It is a con! The money has to be found for such creative accountancy sooner or later.

The answer is in the motion: return the responsibility to the councils, cut the ties which prevent them from operating in such a way and let the councils do their job. Please support.

BRO. A. KIGHTLY (Northern): I speak in support of the CEC Report on Housing.

Congress, the Northern Region welcomes the CEC report and, in particular, it welcomes the sections in the report on the role of local authority housing and the Government's over reliance on ALMO's and stock

transfers to housing associations.

Across the Northern Region the Government are currently promising billions of pounds to bring homes up to decent standards by the 2010 deadline. Local authorities, which for years have been starved of capital funds to improved homes, are now being promised millions if they can get a 2 or 3 star rating from the Housing Inspectorate.

So, how do you get a 2 or 3 star rating? Is it the quality of design or construction? Is it by giving the tenants what they actually want? No, colleagues. Councils across Britain are being told not to listen to what their tenants want but to do what the Inspectorate and Government want.

What do the Government want? They want stock transfers to private companies or ALMO's and all maintenance and repair obligations are transferred or tendered to private companies.

President, in a recent survey by a local authority in the north-east 98% of the tenants voted to stay with their local authority, yet the private consultants engaged by the council to advise them on the process advised on a transfer to an ALMO, and the Housing Inspectorate insisted that the council set up a partnership with a private company for repairs.

After all that the council still failed its inspection. Why? It was because the inspector believed that the council was being too protective of its own workforce, and we thought the Tories were bad!

The Northern Region believes that our local authorities should be provided with a level playing field and the Government should have faith in their public services delivered by public service workers and that we should give tenants what they want - high levels of council housing.

BRO. T. KELBIE (GMB Scotland): Colleagues, we in GMB Scotland ask Congress to support the Report and that the GMB demands that a Labour Government provides real and substantial capital investment to local authorities to ensure the long-term future of public sector housing as a social priority.

For too long Labour administrations in England and Scotland have continued the programme instigated by the Tories to abdicate their responsibilities for the provision of more affordable public housing. Local authorities are being coerced and blackmailed into housing stock transfers and PFIs with almost no direct capital investment from central Government or the Scottish Executive for years. They could find the money to set up PFIs and accommodate stock transfers. If you look at Glasgow a billion was written off as an incentive to transfer the public housing stock. Why couldn't the Government use that money by investing it in Glasgow's public housing stock without the need to transfer it to private housing associations?

I have asked that questions directly to various

politicians, including John McFall, and not once have I received a straightforward answer. Why? The answer is simple. They wish to relinquish their responsibility and accountability to the citizens who prefer to live in public sector housing. It is true that not everyone prefers to live in public sector housing, but those who do should not be ignored.

Our local authority housing is in deep crisis because of a lack of direct and adequate investment. During and after the recent election Tony Blair stated that he had learnt the lesson from past terms as Prime Minister and he is now listening. Well, Tony, listen to this. In Dundee in 2004 the citizens, your electorate, voted against housing transfer. They preferred the security and accountability of social housing provided and managed by their Labour local authority. They also work on the concept of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard, which will modernise housing throughout Scotland but they need the direct capital investment to realise the aim.

We want to retain our social housing stock, but we need a standard of quality that will provide the best public housing for our people who either cannot afford to buy their home or prefer the security of a home provided and serviced by a fully accountable local authority. If you really are listening, Mr. Blair, then provide the capital for public housing. I ask Congress to demand what we ask.

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to speak to Composite 28? *(No response)* There is no CEC speaker because the CEC is supporting. Colleagues, we did try to get a special guest speaker on housing but I am afraid to say it became impossible.

I will now put Composite Motion 28 to the vote.

(Composite Motion 28 was carried)

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to the Special Report. Lancashire wish to make a contribution.

BRO. J. McDONNELL (Lancashire): I will be brief, President. We call on our newly elected Labour Government to develop a housing policy that ensures social justice and provides affordable social housing for all, which will result in a total regeneration of our society by which we can include the building projects to reflect the social and economic needs that will suit different areas of the country. We want local authorities to be empowered to build and to build now. It is the only way to address the legacy that the Conservatives have left with their short-term profit ideals which have cost the working people of this country dear in years gone by. Lancashire Region supports the document.

BRO. W. GOULDING (Liverpool, North Wales & Irish): I speak in support of the Special Report: A Fair Deal on Housing. This Report is concise on the issues facing

the housing needs of today in Britain. There is a need for affordable housing in rebuilding social provision and regenerating our communities. A need also exists to address the definition of the phrase “the key worker”. We must always remember the much needed protection for our members in tied accommodation. These are key issues for our members today.

The Report deals with the issue of a fourth option, which is very much needed. The Government need to come off the fence, be up front and honest. Give us the fourth option now and a level playing field or tell us it is not an option. Do not lead us on!

BRO. R. REEVES (Southern): I support the Special Report: A Fair Deal on Housing.

President and Congress, I was very impressed with the Report. It is a good response to the debate we had at the last Congress. It is comprehensive and well thought-out.

I have just one comment concerning the protection of workers in tied accommodation. I have lived in tied accommodation for forty years and I am coming up to retirement. I am one of the few lucky ones who have rights to retirement accommodation. In 15 years or so, I may need to move to sheltered accommodation, so I think it should be possible to do this if the need arises. Such accommodation should be of a high standard. I am arguing for flexibility based on the preferences of those affected. Please support.

SIS. E. BLACKMAN (Midland & East Coast): I am supporting the Special Report.

President and Congress, in supporting this document on housing, my region congratulates the CEC for preparing a thorough and hard hitting critique on the state of housing in the UK. The format is excellent and the areas of concern clearly identified, throwing into sharp focus the need for a coherent national housing policy.

My region supports the fourth option on housing because, whilst we reluctantly accept that housing associations have a part to play in social housing, we believe, overall, that the services they provide are at a significant cost to the taxpayer. We believe that housing associations are less accountable to their tenants and, in the long term, their properties are susceptible to privatisation which could result in declining housing standards.

We agree with the CEC that direct provision and investment in social housing is a fundamental plank in our welfare state, and we urge any resistance to any move by Government to abandon such a plank to an illusory saving to the taxpayer in the form of housing associations.

We welcome the proposal to extend affordability to cover low paid workers and say to Government that, surely, a pre-requisite of any efficient service

or industry must be a settled, energetic workforce as opposed to one that is stressed out because of long and exhausting journeys to and from work.

We also agree it is essential that regenerating communities goes hand in hand with economic development. The failure to grasp this simple truism has resulted in a whole generation of people existing in sink estates with little or no prospects of obtaining a decent job.

With such a scenario, colleagues, it is hardly surprising that BNP is on the rise yet again. We welcome the proposals on workers in tied accommodation. We believe it to be long overdue and it should be part of all national agreements wherever possible.

Colleagues, for many years I have called for the return of a Labour Government. I am glad that they have been returned but I must say that the posturing of New Labour has probably got Ny Bevan turning over in his grave. That is why I say to our members that they must take whatever action they are able to take to ensure that the Government take cognizance of this report and action it as soon as is practically possible. Otherwise it will remain merely an exercise in rhetoric. Please support.

BRO. D. BERRY (London): I support the Special Report. It is a good report but I believe the strong focus on the retention of council housing and the fourth option is the right one. I believe that is a campaign waiting to be won. It is a great opportunity for us.

The transfers of housing stock to ALMOs, PFIs or all other options have proved to be expensive. Although we know them as ALMOs, they are the Alamo of housing stock. It is interesting to note that, even in Sedgefield, after obtaining the information under the Freedom of Information Act, the local council has said that if the Government policy of clawing back subsidies to the council was changed, they, too, would want to retain their council housing stock. It would be interesting to see what the view of the Sedgefield MP is. The fourth option is there to be won. It has proved to be viable by the House of Commons Accounts Committee. It is supported by tenants, trade unions and the Labour Party Conference. It is one of those campaigns where I believe that with one last push we will be there.

However, for some of us the fourth option will come too late. We have heard that we need to prepare for what happens when your housing stock is transferred. Make no mistake, the scheme not only the effect on the tenants but the effect on the employees working for the council. It claws a big hole in your council. The scheme knocks the heart out of local councils and jobs out of councils.

I now want to look at some other good things in the report. We welcome the extension of the definition of key public sector categories. It is about equity and supporting our members. The report

contains a really good section about innovation and regeneration being linked together so that we do not repeat the mistakes of the 1960s. In terms of the way houses are built, the report has an answer to some of the energy problems that we talked about yesterday. Building standards is another one. Builders want to build houses cheaply. We need to make sure that houses are not only cheap to build but that they are cheap to run.

Let me refer to a note of caution that we want to introduce into the Report, and that is about support for people in the housing market. The way we solved this problem last time was not through market intervention but by social building. Intervening in the market just sucks up public money. We just might as well give it to them to begin with. So I raise that note of caution.

The only issue which I believe is missing from the report, and I hope it is picked up by the CEC, is that many of our members do not live in the council housing sector but are in the private rented sector. That sector is now beginning to look like the Rachman era of the 1960s. We need regulation in that sector of the economy. The private sector is seen not as a way of providing housing but as investing. People are just investing in property, sticking tenants into them and ignoring them. I hope at some stage that issue is picked up in our housing policy as well. Thank you.

SIS. S. BIRCH (Birmingham & West Midlands): I am speaking to the CEC's Special Report on Housing.

We in the Birmingham & West Midlands Region welcome this report. It goes a long way to keep the issue of social housing on the political agenda. The Government and local authorities alike have been promoting their biased agenda and that agenda is based purely on the national and local government intent to abdicate their social responsibility. It is much easier for the Government to encourage housing stock transfer. They say they cannot afford to maintain the stocks of council houses within their authorities. Why? The answer is simple. Council housing stocks are deliberately being under-funded to create such a crisis.

Nevertheless, even though tenants are being threatened into accepting stock transfer by being told that it is the only way they will get their homes repaired or be able to have a new kitchen or bathroom, they have begun to fight back. Many authorities have voted overwhelmingly to refuse housing stock transfer. I refer to Birmingham, Bolsover, Cambridge and Barking & Dagenham are just a few of the local authorities which have refused to be blackmailed. More will follow.

The next ploy is PFI and ALMOs. I do not know about arm's length management, but most authorities do not want to touch housing stock transfer with a barge pole.

The ALMO is the first step on the road to privatisation. This Special Report makes reference to the fourth option. The fourth option is direct investment by local authorities. The Government's aim to use PFI and registered social landlords is a nonsense. Council tenants have what is known as a secure tenancy which are created in law. Such a secure tenancy gives council tenants a statutory right as well as the contractual right of a tenancy agreement. No amount of promises from a registered social landlord can the secure tenancy. Evictions under registered social landlords have risen by more than 36% and housing association evictions have risen by 64%.

Registered social landlord rents are 17% higher than council rents. The crux of this matter is that social housing provided by local councils at affordable rates is the fairest and most socially responsible way forward.

Social housing used to be the bedrock of the Labour Party's policy. It is time we reminded the Government of their obligations. I support this Special Report.

BRO. I. WILLIAMS (South Western): I am speaking in support of the Special Report: A Fair Deal on Housing.

Congress, like all reports that we debate, most of what is relevant can be found in either the introduction or the conclusion. However, if all reports were accepted without debate on such flimsy information, then we, as delegates, would not be doing justice to our presence in this conference hall or to the people who take the trouble to compile these reports on our behalf.

First of all, what is it that we, as the GMB, are looking at and for in this Housing Report. More important, what do we want and expect to come out of our deliberations?

First and foremost, we must consider whether the provision of affordable housing in the present climate a dream or a reality? The simple answer is yes. Affordable housing should be a reality and not tangled up in the world of dreams. Every single one of us, as the report indicates time after time, should be housed in decent housing, whether that housing is supplied by a local authority, a housing association or by some other regulatory housing supplier.

As a Union and as a labour Movement we have promoted the ethics of the Welfare State and its provisions, as of right, for the protection of our members, families, friends and the public at large. Our Movement is renowned for looking after the weakest and less well-off in our society. Access to decent housing is a vital ingredient to ensure that the society which we wish to build in this 21st Century is one based on health and wellbeing. Good quality housing is one way of being able to achieve our wish. As a union, we suffered 18 years of Tory misrule. We fought hard to return a Labour

Government in 1997 and to keep this Government in power. We helped to throw out a lot of bad Tory legislation. The time is now right to break, once and for all, the restraints placed on local authority housing building programmes. We must fight to get the vast reserves of money released and make sure that, once released, they are used for the benefit of those wishing to turn their dreams into reality. I ask you to support the Special Report.

BRO. R. ALDERMAN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I speak in support of the Special Report.

In Bradford 26,500 council houses were transferred across to Partnership Working, as they called it. The only problem was that we had the same local authority housing muppets who got us into our housing crisis in the first place transferred over. The Director of Housing went across on £109,000 along with senior managers on £38,000, £48,000 or £50,000. So the annual bill of the team of directors is nearly a quarter-of-a-million pounds. The point is that such sums of money should have been reinvested into affordable council housing. It has been the biggest scam going. I ask you to support the report.

THE PRESIDENT: I call Brenda Fraser to speak on behalf of the CEC.

SIS. B. FRASER (CEC, Clothing & Textile): I am responding on behalf of the CEC on the Special Report: A Fair Deal on Housing Quality - Affordable Housing for All.

President and Congress, first of all, I would like to thank everybody for their very high quality contributions. The fourth option to ensure quality affordable housing is central to this report and it should be an official Government policy following the decision made at the Labour Party Conference in October. Our intention is to ensure that it is enforced.

The London Region raised a valid point about private tenants. I am sure the CEC will look at what was said about tied housing from Southern Region. Thank you.

(The Special Report: A Fair Deal on Housing Quality - Affordable Housing for All was adopted)

(Composite Motion 28 was carried)

PUBLIC SERVICES - HOUSING STOCK TRANSFERS

MOTION 306

This Congress calls upon the CEC to lobby the government on ensuring a level playing field for local authorities when they are looking at

problems over housing stock transfers so that transfers and PFI are not the only option.

2 BRANCH

Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region

(Carried)

BRO. W. GOULDING (Liverpool, North Wales & Irish): I move Motion 306. Even where local authorities support the idea of social housing, New Labour under the present legislation are forcing local authorities to blackmail their own tenants. There needs to be a change to allow social housing provision to be given to all young people starting out on their careers. This can be done through the fourth option, which will ensure real choice for tenants. Therefore, I urge Conference to support the motion.

BRO. D. SUTCLIFFE (Liverpool, North Wales & Irish): I second Motion 306 - Public Services - Housing Stock Transfers.

This motion asks for the CEC to lobby the Government. How long have we been waiting for the level playing field. We waited for it under CCT. We are still waiting for it under Best Value. We are now waiting for it on housing. We now have the ALMOs, PFIs and the housing associations. Another option is that of staying in-house. Why is this an option? There is no option without the fourth option.

The fourth option allows local authorities to borrow money to do up the housing stock to the Decent Homes Standard. My authority could not afford the £60 million to do it. We ask the CEC to press the Government to be upfront and tell us if there is going to be a fourth option before more housing stock is given to the private sector. I ask you to support this motion.

(Motion 306 was carried)

THE PRESIDENT: I want Billy Hughes to come forward for just two seconds. The charity that the Northern Region was collecting for raised £6,231. *(Cheers and applause)* Billy, that will make it up to £7,000. *(Presentation amidst applause)*

Congress, we have had a long day but a very good day. Have a very pleasant evening. I will see you all in the morning at 10 o'clock.

(Congress adjourned)