

FOURTH DAY'S PROCEEDINGS

WEDNESDAY 14TH JUNE 2006 MORNING SESSION

(Congress assembled at 9.30 a.m.)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, come to order. Has anyone lost a mobile phone? It was left on Richard Ascough's desk. Own up now because you already owe a tenner. Ian, £10; it has gone off twice. Could we have the health and safety announcement, please?

(Safety film shown)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE PRESIDENT: Roll call. Liverpool Region, is Ian Lowes in the building? He is present; that is fine.

Colleagues, could I thank GMB Scotland for supplying the miniature whiskey bottles and thank Nestlé for supplying the chocolates. There are sufficient supplies for everyone, including regional guests.

Tonight, colleagues, here in the Spanish Hall it is the President's night so, hopefully, we will all have a

good time.

I would like to thank the regions who had their social last night, it was great. Thanks to everybody.

I am moving through today's business, colleagues, and for the business that was over from yesterday as we get slots I will call it. I do not know if people have seen the press but we are in every newspaper in the country in relation to issues that the Prime Minister promised us yesterday. The CBI is going mad, and others. Well done to all of you yesterday. It was a great day for the GMB.

I have a couple of announcements: "Mary, please can you read out all the following numbers from our raffle: 516 to 520. The prize is a digital camera." This is Kate from Birmingham Region.

Yesterday the Musical Keys for Cerebral Palsy Disabled Children, the bucket collection raised £310. Many thanks from the London Region. In the true tradition of Congress, the Central Executive will double it. *(Applause)* I will tell the finance officer this afternoon.

Will you please make sure that all mobile phones are off, or on silent? Where is Iain McNicol? You have to pay the price today.

I call Rehana Azam to move her report, the Process Section Report, pages 85-90.

PROCESS SECTION REPORT

Overview

Since 2005 Congress, our members within the Process section still face Job insecurity with continuous attacks on core terms and conditions. The GMB fights on, challenging global business to ensure our members terms and conditions are protected. However, the increased practice within global business of assessing core activities in the UK compounds the difficulties members face within this sector and manufacturing on a whole. The threat to our members' pensions – wages in retirement - has continued with many employers within the sector closing final salary pension schemes and introducing inferior replacements.

The first conference organised for the sector since 2002 is due to take place in March 2006. The conference motions demonstrate the concerns of our members that people leaving the industry or retiring are being replaced predominantly with agency and temporary labour.

The membership figures within this section as of January 2006 was 40,032 (January 2005 stood at 42,773), the loss of membership in line with the decline in the industry.

One continued challenge facing the industry has been to meet the EU proposals on REACH (the Registration Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals). The GMB alongside other trade unions have been lobbying both the UK Government and European Parliament to ensure the legislation will provide its intended protection of workers' health and environment without creating wholesale job losses as a consequence.

Unions took a leading role in the call for greater pension security two days after the general election by addressing a trade union organised rally in London. The rally was to highlight the concerns of our members regarding lack of protection over pension funds, and union leaders were invited by David Blunkett, then appointed as Works & Pensions Minister, to bring these concerns to Whitehall. During this meeting the unions highlighted problems with the under-funding of the financial assistance scheme and the importance of protecting members' pensions when companies enter administration. Particular attention was drawn to the Federal Mogul/Turner & Newall pension collapse.

1. Process Section National Committee

The Section National Committee has continued to meet on a regular basis over the last year, and continues to promote the issues affecting members within the section. During its meetings since last Congress the committee has covered the following key areas of work:

- Recruitment & Membership Development
- Health & Safety
- REACH (Registration Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals)
- Pensions

All meetings of the Section National Committee were minuted. All minutes were approved by the CEC and circulated via Regions.

The current membership of the committee comprises of:

Brian Benton - Birmingham & West Midlands
 David Boyle (Section President) - Lancashire
 Bob Welham - Lancashire
 Ged Philbin - Liverpool, N Wales & Irish
 Tony Treacher - London
 Shaun Clarkeson (Section Vice-President) - Midlands & East Coast
 George Emmerson - Northern
 Tom Rankin - GMB Scotland
 Steve Palmer - Southern
 Brian Farr - South Western
 Maureen Taylor - Yorkshire & N Derbyshire

The National Committee is served by Rehana Azam, National Officer

2. Process Section National Conference

At the time of writing the Sectional Conference has been organised for the 20th and 21st March 2006. The sector is welcoming this conference since the last one held was in 2002.

No conference took place during 2004. The Section National Committee took the decision that due to the 50% cost reduction needed to keep in line with Union decisions on financial controls, this particular Conference could not be delivered in a meaningful way as the previous conference had been delivered on a very low budget and a further 50% reduction on costs was not viable.

The 2006 conference will debate motions from Pensions to Agency/Temporary workers. The guest speakers will be Reinhard Reibsch – EMCEF, and a Columbian Trade Unionist amongst others from the GMB.

3. Process Section - Government Consultation

The Section has been involved in making representations and responding to Government initiatives, legislation, and regulations. Lobbying has been conducted in the following areas:

- REACH (Registration, Evaluation & Authorisation of Chemicals Regulations)
- A Sustainable Chemicals Industry
- Pensions

The Section has continued to work with the Chemicals Industry Association (CIA) and the Chemical Leadership Council on promoting the image of the industry, encouraging employers to promote equality of access to employment for young people, women and black and ethnic minorities, all of which are severely under represented in the industry.

4. REACH

The new EU chemicals policy, REACH, has implications for every chemical company in the UK and all its regions. This is a database that has been set up on the initiative of European Parliament to register, evaluate and assess every chemical product distributed over 1 tonne. The GMB is currently working with a host of agencies and organisations, including government departments, to ensure this register is as effective as possible in protecting our member's health and safety whilst at the same time ensuring that our members' terms and conditions do not deteriorate despite the increased regulation. With the

TUC we are seeking to host a conference for TU reps. We are also in the process of negotiating with the DEFRA Minister and the DTI to secure funding to develop training for TU reps in the industries directly affected by the new regulations.

5. National Negotiations

CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION

The majority of companies within this sector sign up to the CIA arbitration mechanism. The number of arbitrations that are held depends upon the number of stage 4 grievances being conducted at any one time. The GMB's responsibility in this area is therefore also dependent upon this figure.

The GMB and CIA also work together on the Chemical Sector Skills Council (COGENT). This body focuses upon training and personal development within the industry

ASTRAZENECA

SA91 2005 Pay Negotiations

2005 pay negotiations continued by trying to deal with the same difficulties that were highlighted in the previous negotiated settlement. The company are going through a major effectiveness and efficiency exercise which formed part of the previous pay settlement. Therefore this year pay negotiations were carried out in an environment in which the employer aimed to attack our members' core terms and conditions. After a number of protracted meetings the negotiating team managed to secure a pay increase with no conditions attached with a settlement of 3% increase on salary including related payments. Through consultation with members the unions managed an overwhelming 97% of member return on the offer which was balloted and accepted. The opportunity also allowed the GMB to improve its membership development and organisation within AZ.

Broadbanded 2005 Pay Negotiations

Although the trade union continue to make representations for our members within this group we have raised with the employer that we will be organising membership growth to achieve collective bargaining arrangements. The GMB has suggested to the employer that it adopt voluntary arrangements for collective bargaining.

Lancashire Region has supported the Union's organisation by setting up a new broadbanded branch with enthusiastic representatives taking up the role as Branch officials. Membership has been growing gradually however we aim to build upon this so that we can guarantee collective bargaining arrangements for all employees within AZ.

Salary increases for this group continue to be based on three key factors:

- Personal Performance
- The Business' ability to pay
- Market rates

ROHM & HAAS

The GMB is currently exploring the possibility of establishing a national trade union forum within this company so that our stewards are able to meet regularly to discuss policy and procedure and other matters of general concern to GMB members.

FEDERAL MOGUL/TURNER & NEWALL

At the time of writing, the GMB's largest Federal Mogul site at Rochdale have just announced closure with the loss of 160 jobs. This reflects the national situation with respect to Federal Mogul and their owner Turner & Newall.

2004 saw the massive pension collapse of Turner & Newall with a deficit estimated at £875m. As the American parent company filed for bankruptcy protection in the United States, the Administrators of the UK operation won permission from the High Court to freeze the company's pension scheme and block further contributions. The failure to save this pension scheme will result in the single largest ever wind-up of an under-funded scheme in the UK.

Extensive discussions have continued on this complex issue over many months involving Federal Mogul's US management, the US creditors, UK administrators, Independent Trustees and the three

trade unions involved. Representations have been made to Government to try and secure a package from the US that would enable the scheme to remain open. Unfortunately, in December 2004 these negotiations broke down with the offer from the US being withdrawn over concerns that the financial liabilities of the scheme in future years would be too great and would affect the financial liabilities of the entire Group.

In the light of these developments representation was made to the Department for Work and Pensions for the scheme to enter the Pension Protection Fund (PPF). At the time negotiations were still continuing with the American co-proponents, to either:

- a) wind up the scheme and to put Turner & Newall into a controlled realisation, or
- b) agree a compromise deal

The Company in the meantime have established a stakeholder scheme with two to one contribution rate, employees paying 3% and the Company paying their maximum of 6%.

The T&N pension scheme will enter a period of assessment under PPF rules in the near future. Taking this into consideration and bearing in mind that this will be the biggest pension scheme to enter PPF so far, it is the joint unions' intention to hold a further meeting towards the end of February in order to review progress.

The anticipated date of the take-over would be March 31st and this would mean the Company Voluntary Arrangements (CVA) must be issued no later than the last week in January but not before the 3rd week and this would automatically take the pension fund into PPF assessment period and transfers out of the fund would not be allowed after that date. After the 31st March, the administrators will cease any management of the business and will only deal with the distribution of assets. The chances of finding another sponsor for the pension are non-existent. The assessment period for the PPF will automatically commence when the CVA's are sent out and must last for one-year minimum.

DUNLOP

Dunlop has just announced redundancies at their Washington plant which is being dealt with regionally. The largest issue facing members across the company as a whole is its intention to close the final salary pension scheme and harmonise the three existing schemes into one hybrid. The proposal would be a reduction on the current arrangements. Initially this was to take place without consultation as pensions are not included in core terms and conditions but unions have fought for consultation over this issue and negotiations are currently taking place.

Paper and Corrugated Sector

CONFEDERATION OF PAPER INDUSTRIES (CPI) PARTNERSHIP

DTI

The Confederation of Paper Industries, Amicus, GMB and the TGWU agreed, during the summer, to ask The Department for Trade and Industry to sponsor a project to completely review the paper making national agreement. The DTI has now agreed to sponsor the project.

The paper making industry and the trade unions have agreed to work in partnership to develop a modern agreement that benefits both employers and employees. Such an agreement will support the industry's need to improve competitiveness whilst ensuring that working practices and conditions meet today's needs. A steering group comprising industry chief executives and senior union representatives, and headed by an independent chairman, has been established. A joint working group has been formed to work through the detail and redraft the agreement.

To ensure the agreement fully reflected the needs of the industry, a series of discussions took place around the country, involving managers and representatives, and chaired by the independent body ACAS. Because the number of people attending the discussions was limited there was also a questionnaire for people to give their views. The questionnaire was distributed during November and the discussions took place in November and December. The outcome of the questionnaire has not yet been released but will be available February/March at which point discussions will resume.

CPI PAY NEGOTIATIONS

Prior to meeting with the CPI to discuss the pay award for 2006, Officials and lay members of the three unions met to prepare the claim for 2006. It was agreed that there should be a three point claim, given

that discussions are on-going in regard to the modernisation of the main papermaking national agreement. The following claim was presented to the CPI: Substantial Wage Increase and to address the issue of a percentage increase for members as a fall back figure; Increase in Call out Pay; Increase in Paternity Leave. The CPI set out their case as to why a "substantial" pay offer could not be made this year, citing massive increases in energy prices and costs which could not be passed onto the customer. During the negotiations with the CPI, the union side, while acknowledging the difficulties faced by the paper industry, particularly the increases in the price of energy, argued that the unions would work with employers in approaching the government in relation to high energy prices, and that our members still faced rising costs themselves. The CPI finally increased their offer to £10.70 per week based on the national minimum rate for a grade 4 worker. This equated to a 2.9% increase on minimum National Rates or 2.5% on local rates. This provision will apply to adults, young people and trainees.

The Agreement has also been updated to take account of the National Minimum Wage legislation. It was agreed that the other claims made by the trade unions regarding call-out and paternity leave will be referred to the on-going discussions on a new partnership/modernisation of the agreement. Equally, the current discussions with the CPI on the modernisation of the National Agreement in the Papermaking Industry will be addressing other employment issues during 2006.

CORRUGATED PACKAGING ASSOCIATION (CPA)

There are national trade union forums on policy and procedure with the following companies; DS Smith PLC, SCA Packaging and Smurfit/Kappa.

CORRUGATED SECTOR PAY NEGOTIATIONS

The final improved offer made by the CPI (Corrugated Sector) for the settlement of the 2005 wage award was accepted in a ballot vote of members. The negotiations ensured that under the cash award for 2005 no employee covered by the Agreement would receive an increase that was less than 2.8% on local basic rates.

Unions are looking into carrying out a review of the corrugated sector national labour agreement similar to that being undertaken with CPI.

DS SMITH

The GMB negotiated their position on the Information and Consultation Forum where we now have 4 GMB members representing the Union nationally. The Information and Consultation Constitution that has been negotiated by the unions is now being used within the industry as a benchmark.

SCA

SCA have announced the closure of one of its sites in Darlington.

SMURFIT/KAPPA

The European Monopolies Commission gave permission for the two companies to merge and this has taken place. As a result the new company has become one of the largest firms in its market.

(Adopted)

SIS. R. AZAM (National Officer): Congress, in March the Process Section held its first conference in four years. The 2006 conference debated motions on pensions, health and safety, agency and temporary workers, and one of our guest speakers was the Colombian trade unionist, Henanda Henandez. Henandez' contribution to our conference put everything into a global perspective and we were privileged to spend some time in his company. As you can imagine, after four years without a conference our members within the sector gratefully received the opportunity to discuss and debate the effect of them.

Pensions continue to dominate the debate in the process sector. The GMB took a leading role in calling for greater pension security two days after the General Election by addressing a trade union rally in London. The rally was held to highlight the concerns of our members regarding the lack of protection over pension funds. Union leaders were invited by the then Works & Pensions minister to bring these concerns to Whitehall. During this meeting the unions highlighted problems with the under-funding of the financial assistance scheme and the importance of protecting members' pensions when companies enter administration. The GMB drew

particular attention to Federal Mogul, Turner, and the pensions collapse.

Congress, the biggest threat to the security of British pensions and pensioners over the next 50 years is not the stock market, not the slumps in house prices, not even the closure of final salary pension schemes, the biggest threat we face is that working people do nothing. Around 12 million workers who could be participating in an occupational pension scheme are not doing so, which means that only 43% of workers are making provision for their old age through pension savings. It is not just down to the quality of the schemes on offer, many companies within the process section provide above average pension benefits for their workers. Despite this, over half of those who could join such a scheme to give themselves the best chance of a retirement increment do not do so. In the meantime, countless schemes across the country are worsening. Companies are going bankrupt leaving thousands of workers who have saved in some cases all their working lives becoming steadily more disappointed at their retirement prospects.

There are several things that our members in the process section are being urged to do. Firstly, they must get to know what is happening in their own schemes. Some members will be painfully aware of what is happening but nine out of ten, by the time we hear that there is an issue with the scheme, are already in trouble. Secondly, our members must be encouraged to get involved in their schemes, become trustees and take a role in the running of their pensions. Thirdly, those involved in schemes must encourage others to take an interest. The more union members in a pension scheme the harder it is for employers to push through changes. All of these measures will allow our members to take a proactive approach to their pensions, stopping the rot before we learn that it has already set in.

Another continuing challenge facing the sector has been to meet the EU proposals under Registration, Evaluation, and Assessment of Chemicals, or REACH for short. The REACH regulations have implications for every chemical company in the UK and subsequent sectors. The European data will register, evaluate, and assess every chemical product distributed over a tonne. The GMB has since last Congress continued lobbying both the UK Government and the European Parliament to ensure that legislation will provide its intended protection of workers' health and environment without creating wholesale job losses as a consequence of increased regulation. The introduction of REACH will be a good step forward in regulating the use of chemicals and work considerably to improve our members' safety at work.

I do want to take this opportunity to thank Kathleen for all the support that she has offered the process sector in the last year. Congress, I would also

like to thank the Process Committee, our President, David Boyle, Sean Clarkson, our Vice President, who supported me during my first conference, and for the work that all our representatives have done this year, in particular those stewards who have represented our members often under extreme and difficult circumstances which continue to dominate the manufacturing sector. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Rehana. Colleagues, I think it would be remiss of me if I did not mention a very important event in Rehana's forthcoming life. In case anybody has not noticed, she is due to be a new young mother, so this time next year she will be. Congratulations to you both. *(Applause)* I know this Congress wishes you and the baby well.

Can we now turn to pages 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, and 90? No questions? *(No response)*.

(The Process Section Report was adopted)

UNION ORGANISATION: GENERAL

OPPORTUNITIES IN EMPLOYMENT WITHIN THE UNION GMB

MOTION 14

Congress recognises the changes that were made in relation to being employed as an Organiser, insofar that now you must apply for a post of Recruitment Officer, after constant review and training success in that field would allow for an individual to move onto an Organiser's post.

This substantial element of qualification is a bar to many experienced people who conduct all the business on behalf of the Union within many workplaces. There are a vast number of Full-time Joint Trade Union Convener in a multi Union environment. A role which often prevents them from being involved in recruitment directly, thereby not attaining enough experience in direct recruitment.

As an Equal Opportunities Union Congress calls upon the CEC to review this current process and to ensure that equality of opportunity is open and available to all, to put into place a system that will benefit the Union as a whole, and a clear and understandable process for those who have the aptitude and ability to progress.

**EAST AYRSHIRE PUBLIC SERVICES
BRANCH
GMB Scotland**

(Referred)

BRO. F. McNEILL (Scotland): This motion is calling for a change in the process of the appointment of officials and the appointment as a recruiting officer that has been the only means of access to the GMB for a number of years. The structure no longer meets today's needs of the GMB. We need flexibility in terms of appointment. As the motion states, this process is a bar to many experienced people who conduct the business of the union within many workplaces. There are many shop stewards and convenors in the workplaces across the UK with excellent skills, carrying out the work of the GMB day in and day out. A rule which often prevents them from being involved recruiting directly appears to be a barrier to gaining opportunity of employment within the GMB.

Congress, we are asking you to review this process on the basis that we have equality of opportunity which is open and available to all and with a tap into the talent pool of lead activists within the great union of the GMB, ensuring that we have a flexible approach that allows us to appoint officers on the basis of what the region needs to exist, and not on a narrow base that is not in the best long-term interests of our members. Congress, please support the motion.

BRO. T. COPELAND (Scotland): Sleepy Hollow Branch. This is my virginal congress so be patient. I would like to second Motion 14. Congress, this motion is calling on a flexible approach to appointments and to employment within the GMB and not to limit the ability to appoint the best people in these positions by making recruitment officers the entry level. Widen the scope, widen the opportunity, and widen an ability to appoint on the basis of regional needs. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Thank you.

SICKNESS MONITORING

MOTION 16

Congress, this motion calls upon the CEC to introduce sickness monitoring into the employment terms and conditions of paid staff and officials of the GMB.

We are very concerned that an increasingly high percentage of officers and other staff within the GMB are constantly absent on sick leave. These absences are reflected in the reduction of service and representation for members and the increase in workload for those officers who do have a good attendance record.

We also note with further concern that these "sick" employees are not monitored in relation to their sickness absences and in effect they can remain on sick leave indefinitely without any fear of reproach. The other effect of the sickness absences is the drain in "financial resources" by the amount of sick pay that is being paid out. We believe that those resources would be better spent on service and representation for us the members.

The absence of sickness monitoring (managing attendance) for GMB employed workers is a luxury that we as Local Government employees do not enjoy; we are regularly subjected to sickness monitoring and other initiatives, which our employers contend are in place to improve attendance and service delivery.

We therefore believe the GMB should be seen to be a caring employer with the appropriate initiatives in place to support its employees and improve attendance and in doing so, improve the standard of service to a level its members deserve.

115 MANCHESTER BRANCH
Lancashire Region

(Referred)

BRO. S. GEOGHAN (Lancashire): It is our duty, Congress, to protect the monies collected from our members. It is our duty to ensure that GMB staff do not inadvertently abuse their position and accidentally play on the incredibly lax non-existent capability machinery of the GMB. I think it is time that it cut loose these parasites because they are wasting your money and mine. It is time something was done about this. I support Motion 16.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Does anyone wish to come in on the debate?

BRO. R. ALDERMAN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I find what has just been said absolutely disgraceful; absolutely disgraceful. Our full-time officers and senior people work their cobbles off for us. That motion wants throwing out big style. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Someone else?

BRO. J. DOLAN (Scotland): The last speaker there, for a trade unionist to come up here and attack sick people is nothing short of scandalous. We do not allow companies to do it and we should not be doing it. Leave the sick to get better.

THE PRESIDENT: Anyone else? Paul McCarthy?

BRO. P. McCARTHY (Acting Regional Secretary, Lancashire Region): The CEC is asking for reference back for both Motion 14 and Motion 16. Motion 14 asks for changes to the way we recruit organisers and says that our current procedures discriminate against experienced lay members who lack background in recruitment. The CEC could take issue with the wording of the motion but we are asking for reference back because the union is midway through a complete review of its human resources and its operations. This includes a proposal to change the entry level from recruitment officer to organising officer and we are in discussion with the ONC on that at this moment. It also includes looking at how we train officers on recruitment and organisation. If the motion is referred, the point it makes can be considered in this review.

Motion 16 makes generalisations which are not accurate across the whole of the union's workforce. However, there is a comprehensive policy on sickness and capability for GMB employees; we need one and it is one for the task of the HR review and the recently expanded HR function. The CEC ask you to accept reference of the motion so that the concern expressed can be picked up in the review.

Congress, please refer Motion 14 and Motion 16. I have to say on a personal note that "parasite" is not a word I would like used again.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. *(Voice from the floor)* Sorry, the debate is over. I can see you. I am going to ask GMB Scotland first, do you wish to have the right to reply? No? Okay. Lancashire Region, right to reply? No? You have changed your mind. Where is the mover? Do you want the right to reply? No? Okay. *(Voice from the floor)* Now, you have been coming here long enough to know.

BRO. S. GEOGHAN (Lancashire): I do feel strongly about this motion. I do feel it makes a point but the wording, maybe I was using it for effect and I was wrong to use words like that. I regularly represent genuinely sick people and I would not like my councillors to describe my workforce as parasites. I apologise. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: I am very proud of you. Thank you. You were big enough to apologise and that takes a man. Now are you going to refer? Are you going to take reference back? Yes?

(Motion 14 was referred)

(Motion 16 was referred)

GMB OFFICES AND DISABILITY

MOTION 18

Congress demands that the CEC ensure that all GMB offices are DDA compliant.

ESSEX PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. M. FOSTER (London): Congress, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 is supposed to protect the disabled by demanding that all places of work should be DDA compliant. Some of our members have raised concerns that across the organisation some of our offices do not meet that requirement. Colleagues, I remind you that the Act was designed to protect the disabled and give them equal opportunities to those without. As a union for justice and equality, it is incumbent on us to be the first to uphold that Act, an Act that is supposed to protect the right to all employees.

This motion calls for the GMB to ensure that we and all employees implement the requirement of the DD Act. I move.

BRO. V. WEST (London): As has already been said at this Congress by both visitors and ourselves, the GMB has a strong record on advancing the causes of diversity and equality. If we are to ensure that that record of achievement continues, if we are to ensure equality is action and not words, then we must ensure that all our office buildings are DDA compliant so that all our members have equal access to all our services. I second.

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Vaughan. Congress, can I suggest – it is very dark over in the corners – if members of Congress want to come in on a debate could they move themselves down so that we can see them here. It is rather dark in those areas. I did not see any hand up over there at all. Okay.

RULE BOOK CLARITY

MOTION 20

Congress believes that the Rule Book should be transparent not opaque and assist in the smooth running of the organisation it serves. Further it should be fully accessible to the membership.

Congress accepts that our current Rule Book wording and format falls far short of delivering on these points. Therefore, Congress instructs the CEC to commission both the translation of the Rule Book into plain English and change of format to loose leaf files which will be easier to

update following rule changes and far more cost effective.

136 ROSSENDALE BRANCH
Lancashire Region

(Referred)

BRO. P. STIRLING (Lancashire): Congress, this motion calls for a much needed overhaul of the core values of our union, i.e. the rule book, not to destroy it, not to put it out of reach, but to assist the membership in assessing and understanding what the rules are and what they mean. In recent times even individuals with legal expertise have struggled either to understand or oversee the application of our rule book. In the 21st century it is simply not good enough to have what could be plain English, easy to understand, easy to reply, easy to interpret, couched in archaic terminology that has lawyers reaching for the nearest dictionary. Furthermore, many of our members have basic literature skills but even people with wide vocabulary still struggle. It was meant to help our organisation to function correctly and it has been used as a tool actually to oppress the membership, and prevent activists in some instances, and that serves no good purpose.

It is an expensive exercise, we know, but as we have rule change congress every three years it would be cost-effective to produce a plain English loose-leaf format that would mean only the individual pages would need reprinting as opposed to the new books and, who knows, the clarity might mean we can actually streamline the volume by getting rid of some obsolete rules or contradictory ones that serve no useful purpose. If ever there was a more opportune moment this is it, new General Secretary, new optimism, new sense of purpose, so why not a new rule book that everyone can understand? Congress, I move. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. A seconder?

(Motion 20 was formally seconded)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMPLIANCE

MOTION 22

Congress calls upon all National Officers and Negotiators not to enter into agreements which are to the detriment of our members ie, No Strike Agreements.

No strike agreements are in conflict with and a contradiction of Rule 46. All members, officers and committees must comply with the Rules of the Union and must not take decisions by themselves without reference to either the

Regional Committees or the Central Executive Council. If they are in any doubt or require clarification of any Rule they should seek advice prior to any agreement which could be a contradiction of any Rule in the Rule Book.

SCOTTISH SECURITY BRANCH
GMB Scotland

(Withdrawn)

SIS. L. MILLAR (Scotland): This motion calls on all our negotiators, local, regional, and national, not to enter into agreements which are or could be detrimental to our members and, in particular, to no-strike agreements of what is commonly called avoidance of dispute procedure binding arbitration. The President in her speech to Congress on Sunday made it quite clear by saying, no more sweetheart agreements. These agreements only serve to undermine our ability to bargain effectively on behalf of our members. Employers use these agreements to continually undermine our union. Members become disillusioned, question the roles of the union, and ask why we have a union.

Congress, we need to send a clear, strong, signal to the employers and our members, that the GMB will not sign up to sweetheart deals. We now have a new leadership, new vision, a campaigning union, and a bright future, politically, industrially, and socially. These agreements must be resigned to yesterday. They have nothing to offer in healthy industrial relations, quite the reverse. Sweetheart agreements are designed to protect employers, they undermine our union, and create dissatisfied members. If we are to organise and grow we need to be clear with our message: no sweetheart deals. I move.

BRO. A. MCAUGHTRIE (Scotland): Congress, this week's discussions have been focusing on work disorganisation, campaigning on issues and ensuring we deliver our members' agenda. Sweetheart deals and no-strike agreements do nothing to giving confidence to our members. The reality is most of these agreements are entered into before any members are even recruited and given no input into what it is they want. Usually the first they are aware of the agreement is at the annual wage negotiations when dissatisfied and call for a ballot only to be told that an agreement is based on the so-called infamous no-steal clause. These agreements are a recipe for disaster for growth and lead to loss of membership.

Congress, support the motion and ensure these types of agreements are consigned to the history books. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Does anyone wish to come into the debate? No? Thank you. Can I ask Richard Ascough to reply on behalf of the CEC?

BRO. R. ASCOUGH (Regional Secretary, Southern

Region): The CEC is supporting Motion 18, with a qualification, seeking referral of Motion 20, and seeking withdrawal of Motion 22.

Turning first to Motion 18, the qualification is that the Disability Discrimination Act already requires that all premises, not just GMB offices, used by the union comply with the DDA. The motion only calls for compliance in GMB offices when the duty is wider than this. I can add that I am already going to be closing one of our offices in Plymouth because that does not meet the requirements, and they will be relocating to an office that does.

Motion 20 on rule book clarity, Congress 2005 approved the special report, A Framework for the Future of the GMB. Recommendation 16 of the report proposed that a working party should be established to review the rule book. The CEC believes that referring Motion 20 will allow the issues raised in the motion to be examined in more detail. Of course, only Congress can approve any rule changes.

Turning to Motion 22 on accountability and compliance, the CEC is seeking withdrawal. So-called no-strike agreements are not in conflict with rule 46. Existing GMB policy is to resist no-strike agreements. However, GMB negotiators must have flexibility to organise and recruit in those areas where strikes are forbidden by law, such as workplaces covered by section 127 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994. This was a position taken when Congress 2005 passed Motion 186. I have to say and we have to make clear the difference between sweetheart agreements, which I know under the new leadership of the union we will have no truck with, and those areas where we organise and where by law there cannot be a strike agreement.

GMB remains totally committed to the repeal of this and similar legislation. This is one of the demands in the Trades Union Freedom Bill which GMB is supporting. However, the present position is that we organise workers in this area and we cannot ignore the law as it stands and expose our members to the risk of selective and mass dismissals, and expose the union to unlimited claims for damages.

In concluding, the CEC is asking you to support Motion 18 with the qualification I have referred to, seeking referral of Motion 20, and I know it might seem difficult but for the reasons I have outlined seeking withdrawal of Motion 22. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Richard. Does London Region accept the qualification? *(Agreed)* Thank you.

(Motion 18 was carried)

THE PRESIDENT: Lancashire Region, are you prepared to refer? *(Agreed)* Thank you.

(Motion 20 was referred)

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 22, accountability and compliance, is GMB Scotland prepared for withdrawal?

SIS. L. MILLAR (Scotland): After being given the details, Mary, and the fact that we have a new General Secretary, we are prepared to withdraw under this.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague.

(Motion 22 was withdrawn)

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: THE ENVIRONMENT

CLIMATE CHANGE

COMPOSITE MOTION 26

(Covering Motions 187 and 188)

187 – Climate Change (London Region)

188 – Climate Change (Yorkshire & N. Derbyshire Region)

This Congress recognises that specific reports confirm the threat we face from climate change and notes the severity of the threat of climate change.

This Congress believes that concerted international measures are necessary to offset the worst potential effects of climate change and that public pressure and mobilization can help to secure such change.

Therefore, this Congress welcomes the sizeable demonstrations in many countries led by the Campaign against Climate Change and the coming together of environmentalists and trade unionists to oppose the dangers climate change poses and call on Congress to affiliate to the national organisation 'Campaign Against Climate Change' who attempt to unite the movement and organised a successful national demonstration in London in December 3rd, 2005.

We further agree to keep our members informed of events organised by the Campaign Against Climate Change and encourage maximum participation.

This Congress

- notes that the worst effects of climate change disproportionately affect poor and working class communities across the world and recognises climate change is a work place issue. It urges all representatives to

campaign for the introduction of company emission reduction targets.

- condemns the governments of the USA and Australia for failing to support the Kyoto treaty. However, we also note the emission reductions contained in Kyoto are only a small first step.
- calls for binding global emission reduction treaties based on large and rapid reductions in emissions.
- calls on the government to introduce a rapid switch to renewable energy sources, legislate to reduce wasteful energy consumption in housing and industry, and to instigate a switch from private car, truck and plane travel to walking, cycling, tram and rail, combined with policies to provide local jobs and services to reduce the need to travel.
- will organise for the largest turnout on the international demonstrations for November 2006 during the next talks on Kyoto, by organising transport from the Regions and informing members and agrees to pay £1000 to the Campaign against Climate Change to support the demonstration.

(Carried)

BRO. H. SMITH (London): Congress, President, I beg your grace and authority to make my sentiment known to Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: Granted.

BRO. H. SMITH: I would like to pay my respects and appreciation for the support I have received from my London Region branch. First of all, my Branch Secretary, Ed Blissett, my Branch Organiser, Colin Gleeson, my Educational Tutor, John Cope, retired and active member, Simon Reed, Health & Safety Education Officer, Dean Gillingham, shop steward and colleague, Steve Matson, another shop steward and colleague. Congress, this gives me the opportunity to express my experience and appreciation for the other regions of GMB, sisters and brothers I say to you, pick up yourselves, you are massive. Thank you. I will now go into my motion, Composite 26, 187, Climate Change.

1987 Kyoto Treaty, 2006 and beyond. Congress, this globe is our bread basket. Let not our bellies go hungry. This beautiful planet must not be held to ransom. Most of all, America and Australia must not be a millstone of the other nations who can see the light of progress. The solidarity of the European Union must not be undermined. Let not the flames

of passion and the spirit of our pioneering founders be smothered. Congress, this is not a Utopian idea. We as trade unionists have the power to change. We owe it to ourselves and most of all we have a duty to the future generations that will come after us as trade unionists; we carry a strong voice that can inspire change. You do not have to be an environmentalist to notice the change. That is a positive benefit for mankind. As a whole, governments globally have a social and economic responsibility to maintain the vision.

Congress and President, let us support the campaign for the international demonstration in November 2006 during the pending talks on the Kyoto Treaty, with our organisation, our GMB regions, to support the demonstration on climate change. I move. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Henly.

BRO. H. SMITH: One more grace, please.

THE PRESIDENT: Don't take liberties!

BRO. H. SMITH: I wish that the endorsement of this book, *The Air of Freedom*, becomes like a combination or a similarity to the rule book. There are times as shop stewards and trade unionists that we find ourselves in deep consideration and the information in this book can become a comfort and support at times like those. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Henly, when you go back make sure you get those £10 notes off of Ed Blissett and Colin Gleeson! Can I have the seconder, please?

BRO. H. RAJCH (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I think everyone accepts now that the earth's climate is changing, the ice caps are melting, global temperatures are rising, the predictions indicate low lying areas are going to flood; that is generally now accepted. There is an urgent need to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases which cause the blanket effect and which are making the planet warmer, and to reduce the carbon emissions now. We need to invest massively, I think, in renewable energies, from wind, wave, solar, and tidal sources. That is the way ahead for the future, save renewable energy. A European Union report came to the conclusion that wind and wave power alone could generate all Britain's energy needs. That is fantastic and that is where we ought to be looking to the future, safe and clean energy production. I know it is not always sunny in this country but there is a regular tide and it is usually windy. I think it is realistic to look at that.

In Denmark currently, for instance, 20% of their energy need is from wind farms. In Blackpool they have a sort of wind farm offshore which is constantly

helping produce energy. Lots of other things need to be done, we know that. Public transport, rail has to be renationalised. When you think that from London to Doncaster on a walk-on fare it is £136, you realise why the roads are always blocked. But governments and big business need to be forced to take climate change seriously, especially the USA which produces apparently 25% of world CO₂ emissions.

We can save the planet. I do not believe we are all doomed. I think we can do things and I would like to see the GMB supporting activities. People are more active in the Campaign Against Climate Change and we need to support that activity. I urge you to support Composite 26.

INCINERATION OF WASTE

MOTION 189

Congress welcomes the various initiatives being undertaken regarding the recycling of waste as an alternative to landfill. Congress also agrees to campaign against and support opposition to any extension of incineration sites.

LEICESTERSHIRE 2000 BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Carried)

BRO. A. WHITE (Midland & East Coast): The consequence of incinerating household and industrial waste has been a matter of urgent concern to the Midland & East Coast Region for some years. It has been the subject of local campaigns in Hull and elsewhere in the region. At the 2001 Brighton Conference in Motion 277 our region raised the risk of dioxins released by waste incinerators and the need for proper environment-friendly waste recycling plants. The issues were raised then about the high toxicity of dioxins that were also stated as a cancer causing agent. The emission standards of incinerators are still current, and so is the additional problem of the disposal of ash from waste incinerators. At least in one case ash has been made into blocks and used as hardcore for road-building but these blocks tended to break down releasing more dioxins.

We note that new laws responding to EU directives are pushing industry towards planning recycling as part of the life cycle of products but the day-to-day hazards to our members who have to deal with waste remain; also technical advances have not yet removed the risk of respiratory diseases and cancer to local people. I move.

BRO. V. RABBETTS (Midland & East Coast): I work in the food industry and one of the by-products as you already heard is dioxin which gets into the food chain. It is found mostly in meat, fish, and dairy products. Dioxin affects our health in various ways.

It has reproduction effects on both males and females and also causes several forms of cancer, diabetes, and tumours. There are several other health problems that have already been linked to dioxin. The only way to ensure that dioxins do not increase is to stop burning waste. Would you please support this motion at least to stop any more incinerators being built? Thank you.

BRO. J. TENNISON (London): Speaking in support of Composite 26, this is just to say a little bit more about the Campaign Against Climate Change, which is a relatively recently founded organisation and has broad support across the political spectrum. Michael Meacher is one of the joint honorary presidents; he is one of the former environment ministers. We recently attended a conference in London with over 300 people in attendance and the Campaign Against Climate Change last year organised a demonstration with over 10,000 people on it. It was the biggest demonstration about the issue of climate change that there has been in British history.

I think the important thing to remember about climate change is that Britain cannot do this alone. The Campaign Against Climate Change demos primarily target the US government at the moment precisely for the reason that Britain alone cannot tackle climate change; it is an international problem and needs international solutions. The US is the biggest CO₂ producer and failing to sign the Kyoto agreement is primarily responsible for failure of international action on this issue. I think the 4th November demonstration offers a brilliant opportunity for the GMB to raise its profile on this vital issue. I would urge you to support Composite 26.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Anyone else? Can I call Kath Slater?

SIS. K. SLATER (CEC, Clothing & Textile): The CEC is supporting Composite Motion 26 and Motion 189 with the following qualifications.

On Composite 26 the CEC is very supportive and has undertaken a number of initiatives on the climate change agenda. The GMB is a leading member of the Trade Unions for the Sustainable Development Action Committee, TUSDAC, and has challenged its energy through this body. The GMB supports this Government's adoption of Kyoto and higher domestic targets for both CO₂ emissions and the use of renewable energy. We have been actively promoting the use of a range of renewable technologies, including clean coal and carbon capture, wind, tidal, wave power, and a range of micro generation in the UK. Through TUSDAC we have been campaigning for the DTI to link energy policy to UK jobs and investment in manufacturing. Too often in the past the UK has failed to invest in technology and allowed

other countries to take the lead, creating jobs abroad and then exporting their products back to the UK.

The GMB is not in a position to commit £1,000 to the Campaign Against Climate Change. However, we will continue to undertake work in this area through TUSDAC within the Trades Union Movement.

I now come to the CEC qualification on Motion 189. The GMB is concerned with the problems of flue emissions through waste incinerators and has opposed their construction in residential areas. However, with the sharp rise in energy prices and the requirement to reduce landfill, the need for electricity generation by waste incineration on sites away from residential areas may need to be reconsidered. Clearly, this could only be on the

proviso of adequate and improved safeguards to local communities and wildlife. With these qualifications, the CEC is supporting Composite 26 and Motion 189.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kath. Does London Region accept the qualification? *(Agreed)* Thank you. Does Midland & East Coast Region accept the qualification? *(Agreed)* Thank you.

(Composite 26 was carried)

(Motion 189 was carried)

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now ask Charlie Leonard to move the report from Liverpool, North Wales and Irish Region (pages 105-114). Charlie?

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

1. Membership and Recruitment

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Total membership | 51,093 |
| Women membership | 22,531 |
| Section membership (by each Section): | |
| Clothing & Textile | 1,934 |
| Commercial Services | 2,648 |
| CFTA | 3,891 |
| Energy & Utilities | 2,543 |
| Engineering | 5,310 |
| Food & Leisure | 5,717 |
| Process | 3,272 |
| Public Services | 25,778 |
| Grade 1 members | 33,340 |
| Grade 2 members | 11,244 |
| Sick, retired & unemployed members | 6,509 |
| Total number recruited 1.1.2005 – 31.12.2005 | 4,681 |
| Gross increase/decrease 1.1.2005 – 31.12.2005 | 1,979 decrease |
| Net increase/decrease 1.1.2005 – 31.12.2005 | 1,599 decrease |
| Membership on Check-off | 33,026 |
| Membership on Direct Debit | 6,474 |
| Financial membership | 48,225 |

RESPONSE TO THE ORGANISING AGENDA

For some time now the Union has utilised experienced lay representatives to assist in dealing with miscellaneous and composite branches for the purpose of representing members in grievances and disciplinaries. This frees up Officer time to concentrate further on servicing, recruitment and organisation. Also our education programme is tailored toward this end in order to instil confidence and to equip new representatives and experienced representatives with the skills to do more representation and grievances, freeing up Officer time.

Since Congress 2005 within the Region we have continued to free up Officers' time by spending less time on committees and have been extremely pro-active in promoting lay representatives to take up positions. It is felt that this exercise benefits the Region in a number of ways, most notably it frees Officers up to concentrate on recruitment and retention but also allows lay representatives to gain valuable experience from sitting on various committees and acquiring greater confidence which will assist them in day to day representation of members. Lay representatives are also actively encouraged at the various meetings within the Region, including Regional Council, Committee, Sectional Conferences and Equalities meetings to become actively involved in the Region to attempt to

recruitment more members and also to retain those in existing membership. It is felt within the Region that as a result of this lay representative involvement there is more focus on recruitment and retention within the workplaces.

RECRUITMENT TARGETS AND CAMPAIGNS

The Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region has embarked on a campaign for 2006 "A Plan for Growth". Over the years different recruitment activities and campaigns have been tried with varying degrees of success, i.e. concentrating on Greenfield and Brownfield sites, leafleting, responding to issues, campaign-led issues and the targeting of particular areas and the targeting of particular sectors, i.e. National Health Service, Local Authorities. Officers have mostly led these campaigns with assistance from their lay representatives, and indeed dedicated time has been allocated to Officers' diaries in respect of recruitment activities. These initiatives have ranged from a complete week out of an Officer's diary to one day a week.

Our Region intends to allocate diary time for the purposes of recruitment, but to do this in a more planned manner. Therefore our initial campaign for 2006 will consist of targeting classroom assistants in schools, which is an area where we have had success but we haven't visited for some time and as there are many issues relating to classroom assistants and pay, it is believed that it is time to revisit this area. Therefore Officers are organised in teams of no less than two and they are responsible for planning visits to the schools. To that end, time is allocated to the Officers for the sole purpose of planning, which is then followed up by visits to the schools. It is hoped that, along with this exercise, more planned recruitment activity will be a major feature in the Region's recruitment plans for this year. Running alongside this a number of other initiatives are used for the purposes of retention and these include the following:

- Regional magazine *CoastLines* always emphasises the need for people to remain in the Union if they leave jobs or are made redundant.
- Legal claims – Members with outstanding legal claims who have ceased Union membership are contacted in order to remind them that the claim will only be pursued if they are a financial member of the GMB.
- Members who leave the Union are contacted by the Region on at least two occasions in attempt to retain their membership. Also, apparent leavers are now being contacted by the Officers at the earliest stage in order to retain membership.
- Where we have large scale redundancies and closures and where we believe a legal challenge can be made to the employer in terms of consultation or the lack of it under the redundancy regulations, meetings are arranged with members who are in this position to encourage them to stay in the Union while the legal claim is being pursued. This has resulted in some success in respect of retention.

Since Congress 2005 regular meetings with Officers have taken place to plan strategy for recruitment and retention in order for growth to take place across the Region. An example of these meetings was held in the Regional Office between all full-time officers and the key local activists within the Public Services.

Following this meeting a strategy has been put in place for Public Service recruitment throughout 2006 which will be planned targeted recruitment within schools utilising both Officers and lay representatives and including members of the Regional Committee.

Consolidation

Officers are encouraged to cross reference a list of employees with members and identify the nonners. Increases in membership have been achieved at some workplaces, including Liverpool City Council Leisure Centres, Ineos Chlor and Stanley Casinos.

Issue Led Campaigns

On a few occasions, especially on the back of a pay review, we have consulted members in the early stages of the pay review, which has effectively improved communications where in one case resulted in an increase in membership, an example being Group 4 Security Services (UK) Ltd at John Lennon Airport. Another example of this was in Ibstock Brick, where we picked up members as a result of an industrial action ballot over pay. We have also had success within the Security Industry in respect of

the SIA at their SIA and the requirement for licensing. This has proved a good opportunity to provide information and support for our members within this particular industry. We can offer members advice on applying for the license and what to do if turned down. This initiative led to an interest in people joining the GMB.

Migrant Workers

The Region is currently looking at how we can encourage migrant workers into membership as we have seen a marked increase of employers who are utilising this group of workers, most notably within Arriva/Stagecoach and Toms (formerly Taveners).

Organisers and lay representatives continue to push for GMB involvement in inductions and this has proved successful in recruiting new members. Examples include Brothers of Charity, Chester & District Housing Trust and Chester City Council.

We now have available in the Region for distribution 'Know your Rights' leaflets in several languages which can be distributed to migrant workers within the industries where they are employed. We have also co-opted a full-time Officer onto a Committee made up of TUC affiliates and Government bodies for the purposes of information and further recruitment opportunities.

Equal Pay

In line with GMB National Policy, the Region set up an Equal Pay Unit and a communication was sent to all members across the Region. A further letter was sent to all NHS members. The responses are being monitored.

As a result of these initiatives and others the Region has continued with recruitment in the following areas:

Local Authorities – campaigned within the Region across all local authorities and have done since 1997. Clearly with the focus switching to single status implementation by 2007 and also the current dispute with regards to the local government pension it is hoped that this will lead to further recruitment opportunities.

Local Government/Single Status - Single status is at various stages of implementation across the Region ranging from initial proposals to implementation and second stage appeals. Senior Representatives in Liverpool and North Wales have received the training from Head Office and this will take place in Northern Ireland in the near future.

Housing Transfers- Ellesmere Port residents voted 'No' to stock transfers. In Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council there have been two ballots. The first delivered a 'No' vote following complaints from tenants. A second ballot took place and the outcome was reversed and the stock transfer will take place in 2006.

NHS - The Region's NHS was delighted when the Government conceded that Agenda for Change should apply to contractors providing Soft Facilities Management Services given that our members had taken industrial action over this issue at Aintree Hospital (ISS are the contractors). The strike lasted three days and was solid and generated considerable media interest.

Liverpool John Lennon Airport – the Region continues to grow with its membership in this workplace, both within the direct employed staff but also with the many contractors employed within the Airport

Energy and Utilities – the Region continues to recruit in this area, most notably within Morgan Estates. However, within this sector we are currently dealing with a number of redundancies in a number of companies. A major exception within Energy and Utilities is the Urenco Group which within the Region is based in Capenhurst where the GMB's membership has increased so that we have now become the largest union on site.

We play a lead role in the campaign against the introduction of water charges and privatisation of the industry in Northern Ireland. We have successfully won the support of all the local political parties and voluntary organisations for our position. However, in the absence of a devolved administration in Northern Ireland the decisions will be taken by a Direct Rule Minister.

ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT SITUATION, ENGLAND, WALES & NORTHERN IRELAND

The Region has suffered a year on year loss in the total of financial members. This is for a number of reasons. We have been hit hard by Textile losses in Northern Ireland and redundancies, particularly within the CFTA and Engineering Sections. It is felt that the new emphasis on the campaigning style of the Union which we initially saw in Newcastle 2005 will now cascade down to the Regions and out to members and non members alike. The campaigning style shown towards bad employers, it is felt, will have a positive impact in terms of future recruitment, retention and organisation. It is those opportunities that we must seize to take the Region and the Union forward.

In Northern Ireland investment has primarily been in the retail and commercial sectors with an expansion of retail outlets and an increasing level of new build contact centres.

The Government under the Direct Rule Ministers seek to change the Northern Ireland economic model by reducing public expenditure and outsourcing services. With the Irish Congress of Trade Unions we have consistently argued for an economic peace dividend with the savings in resources previously used for security being directed to regenerate the rebuild the local economy and to focus on a growth of knowledge based industries. Sections of the business community, supported by Government, seek to reduce and outsource public services favouring any and every form of privatisation which provide an opportunity for a 'fast buck'.

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

The current national unemployment rate is 5% and the national claimant rate is 3%. Across the region the claimant rate is as follows:

| | |
|------------------|------|
| Merseyside | 3.9% |
| North Wales | 2.3% |
| Northern Ireland | 2.6% |

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

| | | | |
|-----------|------|-----------|------|
| Liverpool | 5.2% | Derry | 5.1% |
| Knowsley | 4.2% | Strabane | 4.7% |
| Wirral | 3.2% | Belfast | 3.9% |
| Halton | 3.2% | Moyle | 3.1% |
| | | Coleraine | 3.1% |

The figures clearly indicate the decline in manufacturing industry related employment. Despite the problems, the Region's target for 2006 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 | 3 |
| Membership Development Officers | - |
| Regional Organisers | 14 |
| Recruitment and Organisation Officers | - |
| Regional Recruitment Officers | - |
| No. of Branches | 212 |
| BAOs | - |
| New branches | 2 |
| Branch Equality Officers | 11 |

3. Benefits

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| Dispute | 680 |
| Total Disablement | 4,000 |
| Working Accident | 5,342.72 |
| Occupational Fatal Accident | - |
| Non-occupational Fatal Accident | - |
| Funeral | 14,406.50 |

4. Journals and Publicity

Two editions of our regional magazine *CoastLines* were published in 2005 and mailed directly to all members in May and November. We keep to a regular format and group news stories according to the three distinctive parts of the Region i.e. Merseyside, North Wales and Northern Ireland. *CoastLines Cymraeg* is an A4 newsletter in the Welsh language which includes stories from *CoastLines* of particular interest to members in North Wales. Although the circulation list for this is not large we do know that it is appreciated by those who have expressed an interest in receiving communication in the Welsh language.

An A5 glossy three colour eight page leaflet 'Protecting People at Work' has been produced to improve the quality of information in the new members pack as well as for recruitment purposes. This leaflet includes information on benefits and services as well as rights at work and advantages of union membership. A special Asda recruitment leaflet with photos and contact details of local reps was designed to complement the national Asda leaflet. Simple but direct anti-racism posters were produced in response to a request from a particular workplace.

Tribunal victories, particularly a number of significant protective awards, have provided some positive press coverage. The official opening of a learning centre on Deeside Industrial Park received a prominent write-up in the North Wales business press and Andy McGivern's case against Labour over its refusal to allow members in Northern Ireland to set up constituency parties continues to be reported at both local and national level. Strong arguments for increased protection for GMB members working in the security industry have been included on a regular basis in reports of an increase in armed attacks on delivery vehicles in Northern Ireland. Survey style national press releases create interest particularly in North Wales and Northern Ireland. We have been able to respond to requests from Welsh language radio and TV thanks to Welsh speaking activists. The signing of the agreement to end of the two tier workforce in the Health Service was particularly well covered on Merseyside where we were able to link it to disputes and industrial action at Liverpool hospitals earlier in the year. Conferences do not often attract much press attention but the Belfast Women's Conference and Modern Apprentices Seminar received good coverage in Northern Ireland.

We have used LexisNexis to monitor national and regional press coverage on a weekly basis as well as using individual websites.

The regional website was reviewed and updated at the beginning of the year. We have responded to requests from workplace reps and learning reps to set up message boards to allow an exchange of views and experiences to continue after initial training has been completed. We are now expanding the Equal Rights section including the addition of pages for young members.

Four light weight pull-up displays, two with the Regional Office telephone number and two with Northern Ireland contacts, have been purchased and used at the Women's Conference and Black History Month event in Liverpool and Modern Apprenticeship Seminar in Northern Ireland.

The Region has advertised in the Morning Star on a regular basis for conference editions and also in brochures for the Merseyside Youth Games, Liverpool Women's 10K, Liverpool Corporate Cup, Merseyside Disability Guide and the Eastern Drugs and Alcohol Year Planner 2005 in Northern Ireland. A full page advert aimed at encouraging young people to join the Union was placed in the Liverpool Healthy Schools Parent/Pupil Handbook for 2005/6. We have also advertised at Widnes Vikings Halton Stadium.

The following charities have been supported through sponsorship and fundraising: Northern Ireland Children's Hospice, Ty Gobaith Children's Hospice North Wales, Weston Spirit and the Tsunami Appeal.

5. Legal Services

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

| | |
|--|-----|
| Applications for Legal Assistance | 604 |
| Legal Assistance Granted | 604 |
| Cases in which Outcome became known | |
| Total | 611 |
| Withdrawn | 197 |

| | |
|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Lost in Court | 2 |
| Settled | 401 (£2,398,305) |
| Won in Court | 11 (£59,826) |
| Total Compensation | £2,458,131 |
| Cases outstanding at 31.12.2005 | 1,062 |

(b) Employment Tribunals (notified to Legal Department)

Claims supported by Union 297

Cases in which Outcome became known

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Total | 162 |
| Withdrawn | 63 |
| Lost in Tribunal | 3 |
| Settled | 76 (£550,103) |
| Won in Court | 20 (£12,750) |
| Total Compensation | £562,854 |
| Cases outstanding at 31.12.2005 | 135 |

(c) Other Employment Law Cases

| | |
|---------------------------------|----|
| Supported by Union | 3 |
| Unsuccessful | - |
| Damages/Compensation | £- |
| Cases outstanding at 31.12.2005 | 3 |

(d) Social Security Cases

| | |
|---------------------------------|----|
| Supported by Union | 20 |
| Successful | 6 |
| Cases outstanding at 31.12.2005 | 3 |

The Region was pleased to announce the discontinuation of the legal admin fee as from 1st January 2006. This will only apply to new cases. The Region continues to work closely with its Regional Solicitors, EAD and P A Duffy in Northern Ireland and they have handled numerous PI and Employment Law cases over the last 12 months with some notable successes.

6. Equal Rights ENGLAND & WALES

The Region re-launched both the Equalities and Race Committees in September 2005 by inviting all branches for nominations and writing to all those committee members currently serving.

The response for further nominations was at this time poor but nevertheless almost all of the current committee members attended. We did, however, receive a nomination for LGBT delegate who seems to be very enthusiastic about his new role. It was discussed and agreed in great detail that both Equalities and Race Committees needed to expand and encourage members from ethnic backgrounds to participate. To support this we have updated both Committees' websites and we hope to expand the websites further when it is decided which campaigns they wish to support. We have also advertised in the Region's magazine publicising the relaunch and events that have taken place and requested further activists to come forward. Hopefully this will be a regular feature in our quarterly magazine. It was also realised that we as a Region need to empower these Committees and support their needs to ultimately allow them to become more self-reliant.

A further joint meeting took place in December 2005 and in the New Year the full relaunch will take place, when the Race and Equality Committees will become independent by having their own individual 6 weekly meetings. At this time both Committees will act independently of each other with a joint meeting taking place twice yearly.

The Region had the honour of hosting the first ever GMB national event to celebrate Black History Month. The event held at the Liverpool Adelphi Hotel was the result of a resolution passed at the GMB National Race Conference in 2004. The aim of the event was to highlight the contribution that black, minority and ethnic communities make to British Culture. Liverpool's location was ideal as it has an historic role in the slave trade triangle.

The event was publicised as a family day out and was free to all of the public. A lively programme included live music from across the UK, ranging from hip hop to reggae, Chinese dragon dance, children's activities, workshops and the very popular Liverpool Slave Trail. The day was a success, thanks to the generosity of Branches and Regions who all played a part in supporting this event.

The Region also supported the TUC's Anti Racism March held on 23rd October 2005.

The Race Committee and the Region plan to offer support for the GMB campaign to 'Stop the BNP'. Mick Rix has already visited the Region to talk to officers and key activists about the campaign.

The Equal Rights Committee also hopes to support the Worst Kept Secret campaign which is currently running within Liverpool on domestic violence. It is hoped to invite a speaker to attend a future meeting.

Equality and Diversity training has taken place for Officers and key activists, it is further hoped to role this out to all Committee members in 2006. The Region sadly received little response for delegates to attend the national Equalities event in 2005 but hopefully this was due to the timing of the event rather than lack of enthusiasm.

The Region has organised two Women's Conferences in 2005, the first in Belfast in January and the second in Liverpool in October. These built on two similar events held in 2004 and the Women's Conference is now firmly established as an annual event in the Region. The aim is to encourage more women to play an active role in the Union and the conferences provide a stimulating and supportive experience for all who attend. Our National President Mary Turner chaired both events, European Kathleen Walker-Shaw contributed in each case and Acting General Secretary Paul Kenny addressed the Liverpool gathering. GMB Officers and workplace representatives played an active part in leading discussions and guest speakers covered a wide range of subjects such as equality, age discrimination, medical negligence, the Open University, health & safety, domestic violence, education, confidence building and much, much more. The Regional Education Officer will now use these conferences as a springboard to arranging other women's development initiatives within the Region.

The RMA has met every six weeks throughout 2005, where members discuss issues which not only affect their lives, but members of their communities also. All of the Committee are active on most issues. The major campaign in 2005 was for the restoration of the Pension link. This was also part of the Pensioners' Manifesto which included health and care, transport and mobility, neighbourhood and community and TV and free internet.

ETHNIC BREAKDOWN – ENGLAND & WALES

Regional Equal Rights Committee

| | |
|------------------|---|
| White UK Members | 8 |
|------------------|---|

Regional Race Committee

| | |
|------------------|---|
| White UK Members | 7 |
|------------------|---|

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| White Non UK Members | 1 |
|----------------------|---|

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Black Members | 4 |
|---------------|---|

Retired Members Association

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

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

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

NORTHERN IRELAND

Our representatives on the national bodies have continued to participate regularly in meetings and events. Locally we have strengthened and developed our links and contacts with organisations operating the equality fields.

We have engaged in a number of seminars under the auspices of City Bridges, an organisation that promotes relationships between workers in Ireland, North and South. The seminars have focussed on equality issues including harassment, bullying and disability and have included joint working with a number of trade unions including SIPTU, T&G and CWU and progressive employers' organisations

such as Business in the Community. The Region's Education Officer, European Officer and members from Liverpool and North Wales played an active role in the project.

With Belfast Trades Council and the Community Training Resource Centre we have been engaged in awareness campaigns on Rights for Migrant Workers.

Equality Legislation within Northern Ireland is probably the strongest and most robust in Europe. We have been involved with Public Sector employers in reviews of their policies and practices and undertaking Equality Impact Assessment of proposed changes. An Organiser from GMB is regularly invited by the Equality Commission as a speaker on workers rights and the Trade Union Equality agenda and recently addressed their conference on promoting Lesbian and Gay rights in the workplace.

We had strong representation at workshops and seminars run between the ICTU and Disabled Organisations to discuss the most recent legislation and development. We are represented on the ICTU Women's Committee, Disability Committee and Global Solidarity committee and will be engaging in the relaunch of the Youth Committee and the establishment of new committees for Lesbian, Gay and Migrant Workers.

Our retired members are a very active body, meeting regularly and participating in a wide range of campaigns including:

Doorstep Crime/ Doorstep Selling & Distraction Burglary - The Consumers Affairs Branch held a Seminar to raise awareness on this issue. Details have been circulated to our retired members. We wish to raise general awareness amongst our retired members and link into regional and national initiatives which are currently being debated to form new legislation on this issue.

Council Tax Protest - Information has been circulated which will heighten our understanding of this important issue that affects many pensioners across the water.

Transport Briefing Paper - This document contains an update on free local bus travel and current bus travel across the UK and also explains what the budget announcement this year has meant in relation to pensioners travel.

Campaign for Pensioners Charter - Documentation has been circulated in relation to this charter. A number of dates and lobbying events are also advertised.

Hospital Telephone Charges - Their campaign against the excessive costs of personal telephone charges to and from patients in local hospitals led to Ofcom initiating an investigation and ceasing any expansion of this service until that investigation is complete.

STOP- We participated in the launch of the STOP campaign which highlights the abuse suffered by the aged and seeks to put in place policies and procedures to provide additional protection for vulnerable citizens.

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

During the past year the Region has tried three initiatives to attempt to engage the interest of our young members into becoming active within the section. The three initiatives were as follows:

TUC School Presentations - The TUC publicised this course twice within 2005, we did have a delegate for the initial training course, but the TUC cancelled this at very short notice due to low response, later on in the year the course was run again, sadly even though this was circulated to branches and to the young members database we received no response.

Liverpool and North Wales Young Members Seminar - The second initiative we tried was to set up the above seminar. This would have been in a similar vein as the Region's very successful Women's Conferences; this was publicised through branches and our own young member database, but again despite our hopes the seminar had to be cancelled due to lack of interest.

International Summer School - The third initiative was an invitation from the Lancashire Region who had invited delegates to an International Summer School event that they had planned and hosted. Participants were from several other countries but as far as we are aware, we were the only region to send a delegate. Sadly our delegate returned home early, very disillusioned and upset, because of what can only be reported back as inhospitality and inappropriate behaviour by some of the delegates.

Nationally there has been no activity that we have been made aware of and again, as reported in previous reports, we believe this reflects not only the position in most other regions, but the national position also. Furthermore, we believe that we need to re-launch NYMAC in order to give regions a firm platform on which to promote young members' activities and issues.

NORTHERN IRELAND

The relaunch of the ICTU Youth Committee provides the opportunity for us to reevaluate and re-establish our Youth Committee. We hope to see substantial progress on the next year.

A conference on Modern Apprenticeships was held in partnership with Amicus, Belfast City Council and Bombardier. It was well supported and attracted favourable comment.

8. Training

| | No. of Courses | Male | Female | Total | Total Student Days |
|--|----------------|------|--------|-------|--------------------|
| (a) GMB Courses Basic Training | | | | | |
| Introduction to GMB (2 days) | 11 | 80 | 37 | 117 | 234 |
| GMB/TUC Induction (6 days) | 5 | 56 | 17 | 73 | 438 |
| (b) On Site Courses | | | | | |
| Women & Learning (1) | 1 | - | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Public Speaking (2) | 6 | 36 | 7 | 43 | 86 |
| Learner Reps (5) | 1 | 6 | - | 6 | 30 |
| Information and Consultation (2) | 1 | 20 | 5 | 25 | 50 |
| Full Time Officer Training (1) | 5 | 46 | 12 | 58 | 58 |
| (c) Health & Safety Courses | | | | | |
| Basic Health & Safety (2) | 8 | 70 | 26 | 96 | 192 |
| Health & Safety Inspection (2) | 1 | 20 | 8 | 28 | 56 |
| Men & Women's Health Awareness (1) | 2 | 18 | 20 | 38 | 38 |
| Health & Safety Exposition (3) | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 9 |
| (d) Other Courses | | | | | |
| Women's Conference (2) w/d | 2 | 4 | 73 | 77 | 154 |
| Bullying and Harassment (1) w/d | 1 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 5 |

| | | | | | |
|--|----|----|---|----|-----|
| European Overview (3) w/d | 1 | 9 | 6 | 15 | 45 |
| Hazards Conference (3) w/d & w/e | 1 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 12 |
| (e) TUC (STUC & ICTU) Courses | | | | | |
| Reps Training Programme (10) | 15 | 16 | 8 | 25 | 240 |

9. Health & Safety

The Region has looked to develop health and safety initiatives including men's and women's health seminars that promote a proactive approach to issues that members face regarding their health and welfare. This is something we intend to build on and develop further.

We have developed a positive working relationship with HSE in regard to our activist health and safety courses and involve HSE at some stage of the delivery of such courses.

A 2-day health and safety inspection of the workplace course has been added to courses we offer, to try and further develop the skills of activists.

Our regional Women's conferences are also platforms we utilise to engage more female members towards a proactive health and safety approach.

Our 10-day reps induction programme asks representatives to research, structure and present, a health and safety topic to their peers. This underpins our commitment to using health and safety as a way of building solid organising initiatives within the workplace.

We have participated in health and safety exhibitions as well as Hazards Conferences.

(Adopted)

(The Report was formally moved)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Page 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, and 114?

(The Liverpool, North Wales and Irish Regional Secretary's Report was adopted)

SOCIAL POLICY: GENERAL

CIVIL LIBERTIES

MOTION 225

This Congress believes:

1. That since the London bombings in July 2005, the Government has understandably felt the need to review existing legislation, to ensure it meets the needs of the increased threat of terrorism.
2. That the Government is currently enacting or had proposed measure including:
 - a ban on various far-right Islamist organisations including Hibz ut-Tahrir.
 - creating an offence of indirect incitement to or glorification of terrorism, further widening the already huge legal net created by the

use of 'terrorism' to mean any revolutionary opposition to a foreign government.

- deportation of foreign nationals who advocate terrorism.
 - extending the length of time for which a suspect can be detained without trial to 90 days. The Government has also concluded new extradition agreements with Libya and Jordan, states which are notorious for their use of torture against dissidents.
3. That following the 7/7 atrocity in London, the Government has stepped up its drives to introduce more and more repressive legislation.
 4. That the Government's defeat in the House of Commons on the last of these issues in November 2005 shows that it is highly vulnerable to pressure, but this should not obscure the fact that the assault on civil liberties is continuing (e.g. the period of detention without trial has been extended, just by less than the Government would like).
 5. We should not consider the period of 28 days as a victory.

This Congress resolves:

1. To oppose the Government's attacks on civil liberties on the lines set out above.
2. That GMB should monitor the progress of all the above mentioned bills through Parliaments and to lobby the Government to respect individual civil liberties in these and all future legislation it makes.
3. To take a prominent role in national campaigns against legislation which poses a significant or excessive threat to civil liberties.
4. To promote these campaigns to all regions and support branches in communicating the details to their members.
5. To work with other organizations such as No2ID and Liberty who already campaign against the erosion of civil liberties.

LEEDS GENERAL BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire .Region

(Carried)

BRO. M. DOMINGUEZ (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, the recent raid on the house in Forest Gate in East London and the shooting of an innocent Charles de Menezes at Stockwell Tube Station has opened the door for questioning the Government's anti-terrorist legislation. Congress, it is important to realise that these laws have a serious implication for trade unionists, anti-capitalists, and socialists. Protests outside Parliament have already been curbed and those who participate in the struggles to advance the interest of ordinary people such as ourselves could be deemed as terrorists if we pose a real threat to the Government or, indeed, its foreign policies on Iraq and the Middle East.

Congress, it is clear that a climate of fear has increased since 7/7 and racism towards the Muslim community and asylum seekers in general has increased. Indeed, the Government is starting to do more and more repressive legislation, such as the detention of subjects for 28 days, but new extradition agreements have not dissipated the climate of fear, rather the contrary, it has polarised it creating a real mistrust of the Government and the police.

Congress, it is only right that we oppose the Government's attacks on civil liberties. The potential is there to play a leading role in a national campaign that opposes legislation that threatens our civil liberties and at the same time promotes the defence of jobs, housing, and public services for all. We must promote these campaigns in our regions and branches and through this work with other organisations and trade unions we can cut across racism and fear, and only through collective action can we defeat the anti-terrorist laws and hopefully stop the attacks on civil liberties. Thank you. I move.

(Motion 225 was formally seconded)

ONE LAW FOR BOTH RICH AND POOR

MOTION 226

Congress asks that there should be one rule of law for *both* the rich *and* poor and it be applied evenly across *all* sections of society.

When one section of the community are singled out for disproportionate attention by the police and other authorities, then they (not unnaturally) grow to *disrespect* the law, not respect it and the Prime Minister will never have a hope in hell of fostering respect for anyone's rights and responsibilities when it is glaringly obvious that the law is applied differently across the UK; in one way for rich people and companies and in another way for the poor and benefit claimants.

It is no longer acceptable for the instruments of the state to be applied unevenly across society, for such skewing of the application of the law becomes the bedrock of *disrespect* for the institutions that others hold so dear and also because it fosters a disrespect for the law that is seen not to be applied fairly.

NOTTS VOX BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Carried)

BRO. V. THOMAS (Midland & East Coast): I am all for people showing respect to one another but do not let us kid ourselves, this amounts to showing those who commit benefit fraud and anti-social behaviour how to be respectful. These are two subjects. Respect cannot be beaten into offenders even if it feels good trying to. What is not widely acknowledged is that disrespect certainly can be beaten into those who are not just offenders but those who are berated for their poverty, for being sick or disabled, for being carers, and those whose only crime is to be unemployed. Respect is a two-way street and if you are not giving any you are not likely to be getting any. This is not an excuse for anti-social behaviour or benefit fraud and there is no excuse for berating benefit claimants, either, when claimants struggle to exist on benefit. It is not enough for the Prime Minister to tell benefit claimants, "If you can't afford it you can't have it."

We are one of the wealthiest nations on earth. The term for this is "social justice". We have a right to it. If I am not getting social justice, do not come knocking on my door wanting respect. Respect means when you have another benefit crackdown you do not at the same time, as Patricia Hewitt did in 2005, go out of your way to weaken the rules on bribery and corruption for companies using export credit guarantees. Companies using these no longer

have to guarantee that their overseas business is not generated by bribery and corruption. Incapacity benefit claimants should be so lucky. Respect means cracking down on the £13bn a year of VAT and fuel duty fraud. Respect means cracking down (if that is the term you like to use) on the £6bn of unclaimed benefits. Any child could tell you £6bn of unclaimed benefits is a bigger problem than the £3bn of benefit fraud and error.

It really is difficult to believe anything other than it is open season on benefit claimants when we read that the welfare food scheme has been amended to remove entitlement to infant formula based on receipt of pension credit. Congress, if there is anyone out there who qualifies for pension credit and who still needs baby formula, they should be awarded the Order of the Red Banner for services to the motherland, not hounded by John Hutton, the Social Security Minister. Different treatment under the law causes disrespect for the law. Congress, I move.

BRO. C. WORTHINGTON (Midland & East Coast): I urge everyone to support this motion for having one law for all. As the previous speaker explained, the current trend in this country is for people who are less well off to be thought of as scroungers, troublemakers, and a burden to society. The types of people falling into this category very often are people that are there through no fault of their own at a time when human rights for criminals within our justice system are being protected, three square meals a day, comfortable bed, and access to TV, necessities some people cannot even afford.

This Government is currently running a respect action plan. What respect can they expect when they are for ever cracking down on the less advantaged of our society? Come on, let's have one law that encompasses everybody, one law for rich and poor. Please support this motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? No? Can I call Roy Dunnett?

BRO. R. DUNNETT (CEC, Energy & Utilities): Colleagues, speaking on Motion 225, with qualifications. Our policy in the GMB is to promote a balance between the protection of the public and individual civil

liberties, which is often a fine line to tread. It is existing GMB policy to oppose the introduction of compulsory ID cards on the basis that this poses a threat to civil liberties and could open the door to other civil liberties being compromised, and the public would suffer as a result.

To that extent Motion 225 and the list of actions it is asking for are in line with existing policy. However, the qualification is that the motion also refers to extremely complex issues regarding the Government's approach to the threat of terrorism, particularly following the terrorist attack on the capital. These issues, for example the length of detention without trial of terrorist suspects, understandably evoke strong emotions and diverging and often polarised views. In this respect the motion is too simplistic in its approach.

Colleagues, it is our right to travel freely and unhindered without the threat of being blown up so if the forces of law and order perceive any such threats they must take action to prevent such acts, yet in taking these actions they may well suppress or restrict the civil rights of those who are threatened. It is always a fine balance as we have seen in recent events in London, Forest Gate.

Colleagues, the GMB under its new General Secretary, Paul Kenny, will never support any individual or organisation which advocates extremist or racist views, no matter where they come from, be it the BNP or any other group or organisation. Colleagues, our commitment in the GMB is that we will continue to fight to extend our rights, whether it be in the field of employment or civil liberties. Congress, please support the motion with the qualification I have given.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Roy. Does Yorkshire & North Derbyshire accept the qualification? *(Agreed)* Thank you.

(Motion 225 was carried)

(Motion 226 was carried)

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now ask Allan Garley, South Western Regional Secretary, to put his report. Allan?

REGIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT - SOUTH WESTERN REGION

1. Membership and Recruitment

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--------|
| Total membership | 42,449 |
| Women membership | 17,955 |
| Section membership (by each Section): | |
| Clothing & Textile | 1,562 |
| Commercial Services | 3783 |

| | |
|---|---------|
| CFTA | 2655 |
| Energy & Utilities | 2,798 |
| Engineering | 2,080 |
| Food & Leisure | 4,974 |
| Process | 6,047 |
| Public Services | 18,550 |
| Grade 1 members | 30,694 |
| Grade 2 members | 7,999 |
| Sick, retired & unemployed members | 3,756 |
| Total number recruited 1.1.2005 – 31.12.2005 | 4,706 |
| Gross increase/decrease 1.1.2005 – 31.12.2005 | (2,083) |
| Net increase/decrease 1.1.2005 – 31.12.2005 | (486) |
| Membership on Check-off | 30,490 |
| Membership on Direct Debit | 6,627 |
| Financial membership | 40,270 |

Response to organising agenda

The South Western Region continues to fully appreciate the hard work and endeavours of Branch Officials, Shop Stewards, Staff Representatives, Activists, Full Time Officials, and Regional Staff. Thanks to the efforts of all, the Region has again been able to consolidate its financial membership and produce a break even budget. Whilst there remains some work to do in the tidying up exercise of the Regions' membership data, the fact is a higher proportion of the Regions' Membership Base is now making a financial contribution to the Organisation. Well done to everyone for their effort and endeavour.

The Regions' Workplace Representatives continue to be highly valued and the Union could not function without the army of voluntary representatives which make up our great Union.

The protection of our members' health in the workplace, the fight for equality, better pay, decent pensions and challenging unfair practices which some employers continue to attempt to impose must continue to be the priority for the GMB. The Region will continue to offer support and assistance in the challenges ahead, including further resources being made available in the area of education and training to build on what already is a first class provision. The South Western Region has always been rightly proud of its education provision and Bro. Clive James Regional Education Officer, has again developed a Training and Education Programme that is "second to none" for Regional Activists.

Whilst a number of difficulties remain, and challenges that need to be addressed, there is, I believe, since the last Congress and the adoption of Paul Kenny as Acting General Secretary a new found desire amongst the Union Membership, Lay Officials and employees to take on these challenges and work for the good of the Union. It is quite clear over recent months there has been a mood change and a commitment change, with everyone working for the good of the Union, and a recognition that we are entirely reliant upon each other to produce a growing Union, built to offer the best services to members that can be achieved.

There is little doubt that Paul Kenny, Acting General Secretary has made a significant contribution to the Unions' growing and positive agenda.

RECRUITMENT TARGETS AND CAMPAIGNS

One of the most important initiatives introduced and activated since the 2005 Congress is the National Organising Team and the establishment of the Regional Organising Teams.

The National Organising Teams remit is to look at every and any aspect within Regions' that has an impact on organising.

The South Western Region is very much on board with the strategy and members' of the Regional Organising Team include Regional Organisers and the Regional Education Officer in addition to Senior Organisers.

Recruitment Campaigns have been underway in DHL the AA and ASDA, in addition to 3663. The Region has also put resources in to the Schools Campaign, with very successful results.

For the future Group 4 Security and Southern Cross Health Care remain firm targets in addition to maintaining recruitment in the Schools Campaign.

The above list is not exhaustive and the Region recognises and appreciates all of the recruitment activities that have taken place in all of the Sections of the Union.

There is a recognition, the answer to the membership decline of the past is in our hands, but that we need to change how we operate.

The challenge of the future is not to manage decline but to take steps to halt and reverse membership loss, by identifying and eradicating the failed recruitment and organising practice from our past.

There is no doubt the future needs to focus on workplace organisation, by increasing the activity of our membership and giving them a role in building the GMB at the workplace, bringing about mobilisation, recruitment and organisation.

There is a requirement to increase Officer resources spent on recruitment and organisation, directing and targeting more effectively as well as equipping the Regions' workplace representatives with the skills they need to service and organise in the workplace.

Finally there is a requirement to focus on sustained membership growth, integrating recruitment and organising work with industrial issues and workplace organisation and the involvement of everyone in the Regions' organising and servicing work.

In this way the Region can deliver a premium service to its members, from a modern Union.

The recommendation for action, adopted by the South Western Region.

PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- Change performance measurement from league tables to a rolling average figure over the preceding year to replace competition between Regions.
- Each region to contribute to increasing the national rolling average by 2000 per month by increasing its rolling average recruitment figure substantially.
- The adoption of regional targets with collective performance measurements.

ORGANISING TEAMS

- To divert resources into organising in each region under the control of a dedicated Senior Organiser.
- To organise these resources into an Organising Team including an appropriate mix of skills and experience.
- To require Servicing organisers to allocate regular time (i.e. one week per quarter) to the Organising Team on a rolling basis, to work on Project Board priorities at the direction of the Senior Organiser.
- Organising Teams to include RHSO's to assist in identifying consolidation targets.
- To consciously break with the "Recruitment Team" sales culture by full integration of the Organising Team into every aspect of regional activity, using servicing work as an opportunity to build membership.
- To change the entry point for new officers, renaming the Recruitment Officer grade as Organiser.

ORGANISING PROJECT BOARDS

- A Single Organising Project Board in every region to ensure disciplined targeting of resources, with a clear, open and transparent method of selecting projects, regularly reviewed.
- Organising Project Boards to include collective quarterly numerical and be an open display.
- Organising Project Boards to include no more than six main projects and the numbers expected to deliver in the quarter – and no more than 5 developmental targets.

- Most targets to be consolidation – but in workplaces with membership density below 60%. Above 60% we should expect existing workplace organisation to improve density further – with external support and training.
- Consolidation targets to be identified using organisers own workplace maps, and centrally produced information on membership levels, existence of check off and numbers of post holders.
- Targets to be prioritised using the Aim Organising Test (Access, Issues, Momentum)

ADMINISTRATIVE

- To ensure each local office co-ordinates calls from potential members with allocated organisers to follow up leads within 24 hours.
- To have an agreed and understood policy on services available to new members joining with pre-dated problems.
- To adopt a systematic policy of contacting apparent leavers which involves the relevant servicing officer and establishes the scale of the problem of apparent leavers.
- To ensure the shift in resources to organising is understood by front line staff and put across to members.

TRAINING

- Follow on training in workplace organisation to be targeted at reps in consolidation targets. Training to be standardised, based around the five key principles and delivery to include organisers involved in the workplace.
- Regional Training programmes to be reviewed and standardised, shifting the focus from dependency on officers to workplace organisation.
- Regional training programmes to be open for entry at every level to allow retraining of representatives in targeted workplaces.

OVERVIEW OF REGION'S ECONOMIC & EMPLOYMENT SITUATION

All sections of the GMB have suffered job losses, the main casualties since the last Congress is CFTA, Engineering, Energy and Utilities, Manufacturing and Process.

It is to the credit of all that despite the job losses a number of the above sections have seen an increase in membership, i.e. Engineering and Energy and Utilities.

Manufacturing of course continues to bear the brunt of factory closures and redundancy and the Region continues to highlight the urgency and need of "state aid" and public procurement to be used as a tool to not only prevent further job losses, but provide the platform for a strategic co-ordinated Manufacturing Strategy which could provide a positive increase in employment for the Manufacturing and Service Industries.

The South Western Region wishes to highlight the fact that across the EU, £1,000 billion a year is spent on public contracts. This level of spending power could have a massive influence on promoting social, employment, ethical and environmental issues and other sustainable development goals.

For over ten years, GMB has actively campaigned at European and National level for these key considerations to be included when public money is spent – emphasising that lowest price is not necessarily best value.

GMB believes too little heed is paid in public contracting to employment and social rights, keeping public services public, observing and promoting labour standards and fair trade, respecting and promoting British manufacturing, equality, disability and other non-discrimination goals.

Some governments (including ours) like to blame Europe for limiting the scope to consider these issues in the contracting process. Yet GMB knows that the same governments insisted on this narrower scope when they were agreeing the laws at European level. The UK Government's position was that the EU Public Procurement Directives were not the place to deal with Labour Law.

The EU has recently revised the European Directives on Public Procurement and they are currently being transposed into national regulations, to be implemented by January 2006.

GMB had a major success in changing these laws at EU level to allow public authorities to reserve contracts for supported employment factories for disabled people. GMB members in supported factories and workplaces deserve a regular supply of stable, good quality work worthy of their high skills. We are working with the Government in implementing this amendment into UK law to ensure that it achieves our aims.

The Union also worked at European level to improve the scope to consider social, employment, ethical and environmental issues at various stages of the contracting process. There is no doubt that the scope is there and GMB calls on the Government and Scottish Parliament (implementing separately) to maximise its inclusion and use in the national regulations. Furthermore, we call on public and local authorities to give the provisions full force in their contracting procedures.

South Western Region wants to see:

- Quality public services – kept public.
- Solidarity with the quality and stands of British manufacturing and an end to our jobs being sacrificed in a race to the bottom when competing with countries failing to respect working conditions, labour standards and quality and technical specifications.
- The promotion of quality jobs for disabled people.
- Respect for and promotion of collective agreements and working conditions.
- Promotion of skills and training, together with investment in research and innovation.

The GMB hopes that we can attain a high level of support on this issue which would give a commitment to our workers and be beneficial to the wider populace and the economy both locally and nationally. The struggle must continue to ensure the Labour Government delivers its responsibility of developing an effective manufacturing strategy.

2. General Organisation

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Regional Senior Organisers | 2 |
| Membership Development Officers | 2 |
| Regional Organisers | 10 |
| Recruitment and Organisation Officers | 0 |
| Regional Recruitment Officers | 1 |
| No. of Branches | 175 |
| BAOs | 0 |
| New branches | 1 |
| Branch Equality Officers | 32 |

3. Benefits

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------|
| Dispute | 5,000 |
| Total Disablement | Nil |
| Working Accident | 4,103 |
| Occupational Fatal Accident | Nil |
| Non-occupational Fatal Accident | Nil |
| Funeral | 9,214 |

4. Journals & publicity

The Region has maintained its established contact with all areas of the media through press releases, interviews, newspaper articles and appearances in radio and television. The Region has sustained its focus, through the TUC, Labour Party and the National Welsh Assembly for Wales, on the need to retain manufacturing within Wales and the South West. The Region endeavours to ensure, via various publicity routes that Public Services and all other regional issues affecting GMB members' are given full exposure via the media as and when possible. The Region has been extremely active in the affairs and business of the Wales TUC and Wales Labour Party. Similarly, the Region maintains its activity in the business of the South West TUC and South West Labour Party.

The Region continues to produce its bi-annual Regional Magazine NEXUS, which is always well received by our members. NEXUS is a well balanced journal covering topics of interest to our members such as equal rights, legal and health and safety issues, along with news from the branches. The magazine is delivered to all members within the Region and also used as a recruitment tool.

SPONSORSHIP

The Region has maintained its policy of using determining factors with regard to sponsorship being granted, the main factor for sponsorship requests are publicity for the Union and the promotion of Union Membership. The Region has continued with a reduced budget for sponsorship.

5. Legal Services

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

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Applications for Legal Assistance | 739 |
| Legal Assistance Granted | 669 |
| Cases in which Outcome became known | |
| Total | 722 |
| Withdrawn | 266 |
| Lost in Court | - |
| Settled | 456 (£2,670,951) |
| Won in Court | £ |
| Total Compensation | £2,670,951 |
| Cases outstanding at 31.12.2005 | 1,039 |

(b) Employment Tribunals (notified to Legal Department)

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Claims supported by Union | 123 |
| Cases in which Outcome became known | |
| Total | 239 |
| Withdrawn | 114 |
| Lost in Tribunal | - |
| Settled | 125 (£235,140) |
| Won in Court | £ |
| Total Compensation | £235,140 |
| Cases outstanding at 31.12.2005 | 250 |

(c) Other Employment Law Cases

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Supported by Union | - |
| Unsuccessful | - |
| Damages/ Compensation | £ |
| Cases outstanding at 31.12.2005 | - |

(d) Social Security Cases

| | |
|---------------------------------|----|
| Supported by Union | 32 |
| Successful | 11 |
| Cases outstanding at 31.12.2005 | 1 |

6. Equal Rights

The Regional Equal Rights Advisory Committee continues to meet on a regular basis and has in the last twelve month period held joint meetings with the Race Committee as it was felt that they would benefit by holding regular joint meetings as many of the issues were of interest to both committees and it was agreed that this was the way forward to progress all equality issues within the Region.

The Region did not hold an Equal Rights Conference in 2005, but decided to put their efforts into becoming involved in regional projects and issues, with several members of the Committee having roles within the Wales TUC, South West TUC, Labour South West and the Wales Labour Party.

The South Western Region has always encouraged new shop stewards to attend the various conferences that take place in the region and once again in 2005 we sent a good elevation to the Wales TUC Women's Conference and the Wales TUC Race Conference. At both of these events our new delegates took part and spoke from the rostrum which was a new and worthwhile experience for them and we have also had a good presence at the South West events.

There are several projects on going in Wales at the present time, besides the Equal Pay Campaign, our National Regional Equal Rights delegate Jill Richards is one of the lead members of a sub group dealing with domestic violence and in the latter part of 2005 several campaigns have commenced one dealing with domestic violence and two other new issues, the trafficking of women and children for prostitution and migrant workers.

On international Women's Day on the 8th March 2005 in Cardiff a lunch was held in Cardiff with a guest speaker who spoke to the guests on "honour killing".

Both Committees will continue to support all Equality events within the Region and raise the profile of the GMB.

Regional Equal Rights committee has 11 members:
8 Female and 3 Male

Regional Race Advisory Committee has 15 members:
10 Male - 5 of ethnic minority
6 Female - 2 of ethnic minority

7. Youth

In August Mel Whitter, one of the Regions' active Young Members' was privileged to represent the GMB on a solidarity delegation of young trade unionists visiting Colombia. The Delegation was arranged by Justice for Colombia, a coalition of British Trade Unions and NGOs working in support of the Colombian people and trade union movement in their campaign for basic human rights and their struggle for peace with social justice.

During November the Region again supported the Welsh Labour Students Conference and Welsh Young Labour Event.

The Regions' policy of taking the GMB and Trade Union membership and rights, straight into schools is now into its second year and has proved to be a successful initiative.

8. Training

| | No. of Courses | Male | Female | Total | Total Student Days |
|--|----------------|------|--------|-------|--------------------|
| (a) GMB Courses Basic Training | | | | | |
| Introduction to GMB (10 days) | 6 | 55 | 19 | 74 | 740 |
| (b) On Site Courses | | | | | |
| 3 Day Remploy Representing Members | 1 | 12 | 2 | 14 | 42 |
| 2 Day Risk Assessment, Rizla | 1 | 6 | 3 | 9 | 18 |
| 2 Day Drain Aid Company | 1 | 9 | 3 | 12 | 24 |
| 3 Day Local Authority Rhondda Cynon Taff | 1 | 12 | 4 | 16 | 48 |
| (c) Health & Safety Courses | | | | | |
| 5 Day Health & Safety | 4 | 22 | 16 | 38 | 190 |
| (d) Other Courses | | | | | |
| 2 Day Transco | 1 | 19 | - | 19 | 38 |
| 3 Day Risk Assessment | 3 | 22 | 5 | 27 | 81 |
| 3 Day Representing Members | 2 | 18 | 4 | 22 | 66 |
| 5 Day Employment Law | 3 | 25 | 12 | 37 | 185 |
| (e) TUC (STUC & ICTU) Courses | | | | | |
| TUC Various X 10 Days | 8 | 48 | 22 | 70 | 700 |

9. Health & Safety

The South Western Region continues to provide a valued Health and Safety Service to our Representatives and Members.

Education – Since the Regions' last report to Congress the Health and Safety Department have worked closely with our Education providers in ensuring that all our Representatives attend and benefit from our full Training Programme. The last year has seen more Safety Representatives apply to attend the IOSH certificate courses than ever before.

The Region is very proud of the service provided by our dedicated Health and Safety Representatives. The Region also continues to respond to in-house training needs specific to industry based issues, this activity has also aided our recruitment campaigns.

Recruitment – Raising the profile of the GMB at the work place through Health and Safety Representatives understanding and dealing with workplace issues has certainly played a major role in our retention and recruitment activities. The Regional Health and Safety Officer has been invited onto the Regional Organising Team.

(Adopted)

(The Regional Secretary's Report was formally moved)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Allan. Page 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, and 169? Congress agree to accept?

(The Regional Secretary's Report was adopted)

THE PRESIDENT: Can I call on Sharon Holder to move her report, page 92.

PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION REPORT (NHS)

Having reached agreement on Agenda for Change in November 2004, a number of NHS Trusts are still dragging their feet implementing the better terms & conditions overall that this national agreement provides for NHS workers and, therefore, GMB members.

The financial difficulties being experienced by a minority of Trusts are being directly blamed on the cost of implementing Agenda for Change by some authorities. However, evidence suggests this assertion is incorrect and financial mismanagement is the real reason for many of the problems.

Despite the slow progress, full implementation should be achieved by the end of the year, subject to key concerns on unsocial hours and Trust interpretation being resolved.

Equal pay, back pay claims are being pursued in the absence of a collective agreement to reach a settlement in the NHS. Litigation would seem the only route now at the disposal of GMB members.

NHS pay and the three-year pay deal, reached in 2003, has now ended and national pay claims have been submitted. In an unprecedented move, the Secretary of State for Health, Patricia Hewitt, has written directly to the Chair of the Pay Review Body – the independent body recommending pay for nursing, midwives and other health professions like ambulance personnel – seeking to influence the decision of the Review Body by engineering a cap on NHS pay awards for 2006/2007 at 2%. Strong criticism at national level has been expressed against this act of interference.

The Secretary of State's action has also had an impact on negotiations for non-medical staff. NHS employers are refusing to negotiate on pay until the outcome of the Pay Review Body's decision is known, effectively, undermining negotiating rights under the Agenda for Change agreement for those groups.

(Adopted)

SIS. S. HOLDER (National Officer, Public Services): In the time I have available I intend simply to update Congress on a couple of key concerns. It has been another hard year for the public sector workers in the NHS. The continuing implementation of pay reforms in return for improving productivity and efficiency is a development of new ways of working, leading to better health services and patient care. The growing uncertainty and anxiety being created with central government policies, like the choice agenda, increasing private sector involvement, failed PFI projects, financially destabilising some hospital service trusts, increases in "marketisation", competition, and fragmentation of the NHS, all pose a real potential to damage financially the NHS and therefore GMB members' future in the NHS.

The continuing reform programme to shift the NHS towards a more patient-led service means public sector NHS workers are constantly responding to change. How are they seemingly being rewarded for their efforts? Congress, earlier this year in an unprecedented move by the Secretary of State for Health, Patricia Hewitt sought to engineer a cap on NHS workers' pay by writing to the Independent Pay Review Body for nurses, midwives, and other health professions, included in that coverage GMB ambulance service membership, insisting any pay award they recommend should be capped at no more than 2%. Fortunately, the Independent Pay Review Body retained their independence and recommended NHS workers should receive more. Recently in a statement made by the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, it would appear future pay rounds are likely to be subjected to more of this influence and the breaking up of national bargaining effectively wiping out agenda for change. This really is not what NHS workers want to hear from this Government.

Congress, we should urge all politicians to consider seriously the potential consequences for another failed policy. If NHS staff, all 1.3 million of them, do not support future reforms and deliver service improvements and better patient care, those consequences could be dire for the service and for the Government. The NHS remains probably the most high profile public sector in the UK social economy and no one could have failed to notice following record investments the media coverage on the cash crisis affecting the service.

There is no doubt, Congress, that a problem exists and we should not underestimate the further challenges NHS workers will undertake with trusts being instructed to get their house in order. I fear that this includes redundancies. What is still under debate is how serious the problem is, as are the reasons why. Estimates suggest that of the £1.2bn overspend taking account of NHS organisations in surplus this figure is actually around £500m. The National Audit Office and the Audit commission, however, have warned based on similar non audited

figures for the previous year even that figure could turn out to be a considerable underestimate.

What has brought about the deficits? Some NHS organisations would have you believe pay reforms associated with agenda for change is the major cause of the cash crisis. We reject that assertion. The Department of Health have concluded that calculations for the full implementation of AFC may have been out by around £130m but have agreed to address the under-funding in adjustments to trust tariffs, and have done so. What is emerging, however, as the real reason is a new accounting system which means end-of-year deficits are automatically taken off the following year's budget; with rising costs this acts like a double whammy. Coupled with historical deficits carried forward, the financial situation of some trusts is exasperated. Other reasons include PFI, poor leadership management and financial management, or mismanagement, and lastly, a new national tariff system which only applies average payments for services paid to NHS trusts by PCTs.

Congress, we strongly believe a number of recent announcements on redundancies and the reasons given for those redundancies are actually in anticipation of the effect payment by results will have on trusts. Some trusts are using the so-called cash crisis as a disguise for changing working practices and making staff redundant. Congress, we continue to take steps to establish a fuller picture of the situation and, moreover, challenge those trusts that are simply using the perceived cash crisis as a substitute for change.

Just before ending this report I would like to put on record my thanks to national office staff who support the process of national negotiation but, more importantly, I would like to pay tribute to the stewards in not only the NHS but also the care sector, and the MoD for which I also have responsibility, who continue to raise the profile of their membership and without whose support our work could not be done. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sharon. Page 92? Any questions? *(No response)*

(The Public Services Section Report (NHS) was adopted)

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: PUBLIC SERVICES

METHICILLIN RESISTANT STAPHYLO- COCCUS AUREUS

MOTION 173

Congress, aware that MRSA is a very dangerous virus, calls upon all GMB members

and families to be constantly vigilant that cleanliness is of the utmost priority, especially should you be visiting hospitals.

GUILDFORD G38 BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. A. HUTCHINGS (Southern): Firstly, I would like to pay tribute to all our members in the National Health Service that have to fight infection control; they do a first-class job. Whenever you visit a hospital as a patient or go in just to visit people, I think you must all be aware that MRSA is a very dangerous virus. Hospital acquired infections can have very serious consequences for us all and may be costing the National Health Service over £1,000m a year. Each year in our hospitals there are well over 100,000 hospital acquired infections. In many National Health Trusts there is a growing mismatch between what is expected of infection control teams in controlling hospital infections and the staffing and other resources allocated to them.

I think we should all be aware of some basic facts. The top five ways hospital acquired infections can attack are blood infections after surgery, urinary infections, chest infections, and skin infections. The main things about hospital acquired infections are that around 1 in 11 hospital patients at any one time has an infection in hospital; there are well over 100,000 hospital infections each year; they cost the National Health Service a lot of money; patients then have to spend extra days in hospital; and the old and the young are most likely to catch such an infection. Hospital acquired infections may kill.

I speak with some experience on this having had many operations over the years. One operation went wrong. This I accepted but I had an infection that required three months treatment with very strong antibiotics. It was touch and go whether I would lose part of my foot. This was a very worrying time but I am pleased to say this was saved. I have not had much luck with my stays in hospital. After one operation I developed a deep vein thrombosis; I did not have to go 35,000 feet up in an aircraft, I had one after an operation. Now for an operation I cannot have anaesthetic that knocks me out, I have to have an epidural which freezes the body so that I am awake for the operation. In April 2005 I had an operation under this procedure, quite a serious one. It was a very strange experience holding conversations with the surgeon and the staff while my body was being worked on. I must add that at all times in my stays in hospital I have received the utmost care from my trade union colleagues.

I think it falls on all of us to be aware that when we visit hospitals we should make sure that we carry out all the required safeguards and use the antiseptic wipes at the main entrance, it does not take too long. Equally, National Health Trusts must

continue the fight against this deadly virus. I move.

(Motion 173 was formally seconded)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, new delegates will not have known him but a lot of members in this hall will. This was the last motion sent in by a colleague of ours called Brian Weller. Brian was dedicated to the NHS and every year, as many of you know, he has come up here, a really caring guy, and it is with regret that he died so suddenly. Anyway, this is his last act and I thought Congress should know that.
(Applause)

INVESTMENT BY PRIVATE INVESTMENT TRUSTS

MOTION 174

Congress shall conduct a campaign for legal changes to prohibit private investment trusts contracting or sub contracting with public bodies in private finance initiatives (PFI's) or public, private partnerships (PPP's) projects, and to prohibit private investment trusts from purchasing interests in such projects. Bidders for PFI and PPP projects should be limited to publicly accountable enterprises, ie Public Limited Companies (PLC's).

LEICESTERSHIRE 2000 BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Carried)

BRO. A. WHITE (Midland & East Coast): Congress, this motion calls for a campaign for legal changes to prohibit private investment businesses contracting or subcontracting with public bodies in private finance initiatives (PFIs) or public private partnerships (PPPs). PFI and PPP projects should be limited to publicly accountable enterprises, that is, public limited companies.

his motion picks up a thread from the debate at the TUC Congress last September, the TGU and the GMB put forward an emergency motion on the Gate Gourmet dispute. The owners of Gate Gourmet were Texas Pacific Group (TPG). According to Private Eye of 30th September 2005 TPG is just one of a host of largely anonymous private equity groups including many of the companies running public services under private finance initiatives. They are estimated to control one in five private sector jobs but are not subject to anything like the controls imposed on public companies (PLCs). They do not have to produce accounts or report on issues like directors pay, and are often based in favourable tax havens. You may remember the own goal scored by the Inland Revenue when it sold its own buildings to an offshore company based in the tax haven of Bermuda.

The attack on public services fragmenting and

commercialising them has had two phases. TPG benefited from the first Tory phase with the privatising of utilities. They bought the Gate Gourmet catering business from the privatised British Airways. This motion aims to prevent venture capital businesses, from private investment groups like TPG and Blackstone also mentioned in the Private Eye article, benefiting from the second labour phase, the PFI bonanza. The National Audit Office reported in April 2006 that a secondary business market has been established in PFI schemes. More and more are trading their shares to new investors, as the Guardian reported on April 21st 2006. Venture capital and so-called private equity groups should be prohibited from buying interest in PFIs. As a major union representing many public service employees, the GMB cannot afford the ruthless and unregulated private investment businesses, including American union busters like TPG, from exploiting this open sector. I move.

SIS. C. CLARKSON (Midland & East Coast): The private finance initiatives were launched by the Conservatives in 1992 and adopted by the Labour Party in 1997. They re-branded them “public private partnerships”. Contracts for road maintenance, street lighting, and the building of new schools and hospitals have all been covered by PFI contracts and concessions. Labour councils were given little or no choice and were made to award PFI contracts for building and maintenance of council houses. PFI concessions covered over 725 projects with a capital value of £46bn.

There is now a resale market of shares in PFI concessions. The construction firm Jarvis and Amey sold part of their PFI businesses in 2004 and 2002, respectively. The Guardian of May 4th noted the worries surrounding the growing market in second-hand PFI contracts sold on to buyers who have little or no interest in public services and are unknown to the Government. Large public businesses like Jarvis and Amey have reporting requirements set by government and the Stock Exchange. The private businesses now buying up second-hand PFI shares believe they are above the law.

We have already seen the damages these private businesses can do. They gutted the Rover car group and are milking the AA commercial operations dry. We have suffered from their anti-union campaigns. PFI project financing laws depend on social limited or non resource financing. It is also based on the high credit ratings of the UK Government. The country cannot afford these companies profiting from public funds and as trade unionists we cannot allow them the freedom to attack workers’ terms and conditions and deny workers their rights. This is privatisation through the back door. I second.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Congress, I

remind you that Emergency Motion 2 is on the final agenda on page 121 and Emergency Motion 5 (which is on the blue paper) was given to delegates on Monday following adoption of the Standing Orders Report No. 2, so you have had those. Can I ask for the movers of Emergency Motion 2, Birmingham & West Midlands Region, on Redundancies?

REDUNDANCIES IN THE NHS

EMERGENCY MOTION 2

Congress, with the number of envisaged redundancies that have come to light nationally within the NHS over the last few weeks. At South West Birmingham Hospital Trust in Birmingham we heard this week that there would be roughly 950 redundancies (12.5% of the workforce) this is due to financial restraints.

This Congress deplores these job losses and calls upon the National Public Services Officer to take all steps possible to oppose such actions both regionally and nationally.

A02 AMBULANCE BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

BRO. A. HACKETT (Birmingham & West Midlands): We call upon our union through the National Public Services Officer to take all reasonable possible steps to oppose regionally and nationally any redundancies within the NHS. On a personal basis, I was one of 200 made redundant on March 31st 2006 from Sandwell & West Birmingham Hospitals. I am one of the lucky ones as I am now employed back within the NHS. On 18th April 2006, Sandwell & West Birmingham Hospital Trust informed the DTI that 800 jobs would be made redundant. Since then I have been able to represent our members at twice-weekly meetings in the role as the accompanying rep. At the first meeting I was informed that the Trust had to save £19.5m. Some of this is down to lack of funding but the majority of this £19.5m is down to budget being overspent. The people responsible for this overspend are the Chief Executive, directors, deputy directors, general managers, and their deputies.

Last Friday I was issued with this document which leaves 566 whole time equivalent posts that will be lost and surprise, surprise, none of the people responsible are on the list. To make some of the redundancies the Trust is closing at least four wards. This is a loss of roughly 100 beds. Some of the catering will be outsourced plus some departments will now only be available on one site. This is not just something that is happening in the West Birmingham Hospital Trusts but in hospitals all over the country. It is not just our members who are being made redundant that will suffer; it is you and your families who will also feel the impact. It is you who will have

to wait longer for emergency operations. Within some hospitals some services will just cease, which will mean further travelling and a longer wait for an appointment. We must all fight these redundancies. I move this motion.

(The Emergency Motion was formally seconded)

HEALTH

EMERGENCY MOTION 5

Congress, in the NHS some of us have gone through and some of us are still going through a job evaluation process.

The process is nationally agreed and its main philosophy is to reward health service staff by paying people their job worth in relation to the demands of their job.

Now the process has come towards an end, and staff have been assessed and assimilated. In the last month hospital trusts have attempted to downgrade staff.

GMB should commence a campaign of action to prevent this growing breach of terms and conditions and lobby the national negotiating councils and government to ensure that the staff in the NHS having been assimilated are not forced into a position of lower grade.

YORKSHIRE & NORTH DERBYSHIRE REGION

(Carried)

BRO. M. JACKSON (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I move Emergency Motion 5.

Colleagues, why do you think that the Government agreed to *Agenda for Change*, which brought in the job evaluation process and a new set of terms and conditions for NHS staff? They did not do it out of the good of their hearts. They did it for a reason. The main reason behind it was the equal pay claims. The equal pay claims compared a cook with a painter and they got an extra £3 per hour for that for each individual member. In my trust it cost the management a fortune. Nationally, it cost millions and millions of pounds and they could see that equal pay claims would bring the National Health Service to a halt.

So they came up with *Agenda for Change* and worked in partnership at the national level to come up with an agreement which is not brilliant but it has some problems. They came up with the scheme in partnership with the unions. We got behind it and decided fully to participate and get people on to the new terms and conditions.

What happens when we assimilate is that managers agree job descriptions with groups of staff and they then both sign up to it. Then the job

description goes to a matching panel to be matched up. It is managers and staff-side reps who are matching these jobs up. Again, it is all done in partnership. What has happened at my trust is that even though we have gone through the whole national process, as we should have done, and we followed all the guidelines and training etc., the managers are now saying that they cannot afford to pay the cost so they are suggesting that people are going to be made redundant, they downgrade staff and make staff work to different conditions.

The suggestion is that *Agenda for Change* has cost us £1.5 million a year in incremental rises. As Sharon said earlier, that is rubbish because the scheme is fully funded by the Government and they are even giving us more money. We have a written document to prove that this is what they are trying to do or a written proposal that we have forwarded to Sharon in the hope that she can advise us on it. What we have from other trusts is just anecdotal evidence that this situation is happening throughout the country as well.

We call for other hospital trusts to inform and send Sharon any documentation that they have on what is happening with *Agenda for Change*. At the trust I work for the position is the same as that facing our Birmingham colleagues. The senior managers, chief executives and directors who are causing these funding issue problems. For instance, in my hospital a ward was closed last year saying that they needed to save money. I do not know where they came up with the figures from, but they suggested that we were going to get 2% less patients through our trust last year. What happened is that we dealt with 11% more patients. So management are making these projections, closing wards and then the wards have to be re-opened and are being staffed by agency staff. Not only does that reduce the quality of care but it also makes for increased costs because it costs a fortune to employ agency staff.

So managers at my trust, which is Barnsley Health, are now suggesting that nurses be downgraded, to make some nurses redundant and make medical secretaries and clerks look after four consultants instead of one. They suggest that we forfeit our nationally agreed pay increase and do not have an incremental pay increase this year. What management have done is to target nurses and secretaries. What they cannot see is that these are female dominant professions. Doctors at our trust and nationally received a 25% pay increase -----

THE PRESIDENT: Colleague, can you wind-up, please.

BRO. JACKSON: I can, yes. They are not downgrading them or making them redundant. They are proposing increasing the number of consultants in the trust that I work for.

THE PRESIDENT: Colleague, please wind-up.

BRO. JACKSON: So we are going to end up back with an equal pay claim in the sex discrimination court. These national negotiators -----

THE PRESIDENT: Please will you wind-up now!

BRO. R. ALDERMAN (Yorkshire & Derbyshire): I second Emergency Motion 5. President and Congress, this closet Tory Government wants our Health Service to be run by bureaucrats and bandits of privatisation. They only look at their budgets and not at patient well-being or Health Service workers. They do not see the difference between a hospital bed and a vacuum cleaner, and they think a bed pan is for cooking chips in. They are constantly renegeing on agreements made by themselves and the trade unions which prevents Health Service workers receiving a decent living wage. As my colleague said, job evaluation was brought in to achieve this situation which all the health authorities agreed on. They now say that they cannot implement the agreement because of those magic words "budget restraint". Instead they are threatening the Health Service workers' terms and conditions, degrading and, of course, redundancy.

President and Congress, the situation is an absolute disgrace. It is an attack on our Health Service members. This situation should not be allowed to happen. Health Service workers deserve more and they should get it. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on this section of the debate?

SIS. H. JOHNSON (Midland & East Coast): I would like to speak in support of Emergency Motion 5. This is a subject that is very close to my heart. I worked as a project manager on *Agenda for Change* for five trusts in the Hull and East Yorkshire Region for two years. So I think I am quite familiar with the actual agreement.

I want to be clear about one thing. Job evaluation under *Agenda for Change* was never about achieving massive pay rises for members of staff which is what other unions led their members to believe. It was about achieving a fair day's pay for a fair day's work.

The process within the agreement for job evaluation is clear. Jobs should be evaluated, matched, consistency checked and verified. Everything should be completed before the staff were assimilated onto the new terms and conditions. For any trust to attempt to change the grading of a post after assimilation to me is a clear admission by that trust that they are in breach of the agreement. It also raises the question in my mind that if mistakes have been made and posts have been graded too high, how many more mistakes have been

made where posts have been graded too low? At the end of the day, the GMB should support any member who believes that their job has been incorrectly graded under *Agenda for Change*. It was not a tool to be used so that trusts could save money because of their current financial situation. Please support.

SIS. J. SMITH (London): Congress, I am speaking in support of Motion 173, the MRSA – Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus. Let me tell you, like the mover, I have experienced the same problems through my husband. He went into hospital to have bilateral knees. Some of you have seen me with him today and he looks the picture of health but, believe me, there are parts of his life that even today he cannot remember.

Going on to speak about the cleanliness in the hospital, we have now got, as you go into the wards, the alcohol gels which you are supposed to use when you go in and come out. They are also on the bottom of the beds. I think this resolution needs to go further because it is not just down to the visitors in using this gel. Since that time, I have visited many people within hospitals. You only have to look at the staff, the consultants in particular. That gel is on the bottom of the bed. They go from one patient to the other. Do they use the gel? No. Therefore, that is another way in which this germ is carried from one patient to another. I move that this problem goes deeper than just to the visitors. Howsoever, I support all motions relating to the NHS.

THE PRESIDENT: I call Sharon Holder. Let me tell Congress that I, too, four years ago had MRSA severely, so I understand what it means to suffer under it.

SIS. S. HOLDER (National Officer, Public Services): I am speaking to Emergency Motion 2, Redundancies in the NHS and Emergency Motion 5, Health.

Congress, let me deal, first, with Emergency Motion 2. The GMB is very concerned with the reports of wholesale redundancies in the NHS caused by the financial crisis. We have good reason to be concerned. This Government is pouring billions and billions into the Health Service. We are now seeing record levels of investment, some 9.4% of national income compared with the European average of 8%. By 2008 health spending will be three times more than what it was in 1997. After decades of neglect that is something that we can be proud of.

So is there a crisis? Projections show that 61% of NHS bodies have a balanced budget, 15% with a surplus and 24% with a deficit. But the so-called crisis concerns less than 1% of NHS spending. I would not call that a crisis, would you? The scale of the losses is still unclear. Some claim that 13,000 jobs would go. That was quickly rubbished by the Government. The NHS employers have pitched in

arguing that the reports of mass redundancies were misleading. Even the Archbishop of Canterbury expressed his concern.

So why are deficits occurring at this time of plenty? Congress, NHS bodies are legally required to balance their books but there are five main reasons why this is not happening: poor leadership, financial mismanagement, our old friend PFI, the new payments by result tariff system and perverse accounting procedures. GMB suspect that some trusts are using the so-called crisis as a cover for workforce restructuring.

Congress, the NHS Staff Council has made representations to the Department of Health on this issue of job losses in the NHS. GMB wants the Department to sort this mess out and quickly.

Whilst it is important that the NHS books should balance, this must not be at the expense of other NHS goals. Health Service workers' jobs should not be put at risk either because of mismanagement failures or policy muddles.

Moving on to Emergency Motion 5 on Health, Congress, this emergency motion on downgrading staff in the NHS is likely to have arisen in a particular foundation trust due to its financial situation. Whilst the GMB should condemn this despicable practice, we should not give the situation the oxygen of publicity at this stage as it may act as a precedent for other unscrupulous employers to follow.

The *Agenda for Change* agreement, its bespoke job evaluation scheme and the career and pay progression tool are not optional extras for individual NHS trusts to pick and choose from. *Agenda for Change* and everything that goes with it, including guidelines on how job evaluation should be applied is mandatory on NHS trusts. They have no choice but to apply the job evaluation scheme in full.

The qualification is that we need to establish the full facts and, in the meantime, we must not underestimate the freedoms that foundation trusts have been awarded which, in essence, makes them private companies within the NHS.

Secondly, it may also be too early to start a campaign until we establish the extent of the problem. This issue will be raised with the NHS Acting Human Resources Director and also the Secretary of State for Health. We are asking you to support Emergency Motions 2 and 5 with these qualifications.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sharon.

Does Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region accept the qualification?

BRO. J. NELSON (Regional Secretary, Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: I will now put Motions 173 and 174 and Emergency Motions 2 and 5 to the vote.

(Motion 173 was carried)

(Motion 174 was carried)

(Emergency Motion 2 was carried)

(Emergency Motion 5 was carried)

SOCIAL POLICY: NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

KEEP OUR NHS PUBLIC

MOTION 240

This Congress resolves to affiliate to the 'keep our NHS public' Campaign.

WILTSHIRE & SWINDON W15 BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. J. NEWMAN (Southern): I move Motion 40, "Keep Our NHS Public", with the full support of my region.

I am standing here finding it absolutely and simply incredible that sixty years after the NHS was founded we have another Labour Government busily privatising it, setting up internal markets, introducing PFI and all of that stuff that we are opposed to. The point is that PFI which sells off public assets to private contractors, effectively, is privatisation. Whatever Mr Brown said last year, that is the fact of the matter. The Tories started that policy, but the fact is that every hospital PFI has happened under a Labour Government, and that is the beginning of the end of the NHS as a public service.

The situation goes further than that. In relation to the Government's so-called reforms, why do they call something a "reform" when it is reactionary and has nothing to do with reforming anything. This Government's reforms threaten the ethos of the NHS and the planned and equitable way in which it delivers care to patients. At the heart of these changes is the creation of a market that welcomes profit-driven international corporations who answer to shareholders, not patients. This market will compel hospitals and health professionals, who traditionally co-operate to deliver health care, to compete with each other and the private sector. Far from supporting the NHS, the private sector is in competition with it and it is already draining away resources and staff. There is absolutely no evidence that these so-called reforms will improve the Health Service. Despite increased spending on health care and Government commitment to patient choice, the end result of these reforms will undermine the choice that is most important to patients; i.e., access to comprehensive, trustworthy and local health services.

We, therefore, call on all organisations, health care workers, patients and especially the GMB and this Congress to campaign to protect the NHS from further privatisation and fragmentation, and to keep our NHS public. I move.

(The Motion was formally seconded)

SUPPORT SERVICES

MOTION 241

Congress deplores the action of hospitals who have removed services from our members for financial gain. The cost of telephones, television and parking is now out of the reach of both patients and their families. Once again we have a two tier system between the have and have not's. We urge the CEC to act on these matters.

HENDON BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. B. BENHAM (London): I move Motion 241. President and Congress, the National Health Service was founded on the principle that treatment was provided on the basis of need, not on the ability to pay. That principle is as important today as it was in 1948, so why is it, colleagues, that the NHS trusts up and down the country breach that principle with impunity by charging extortionate amounts of money for the use of televisions, telephones and car parking.

Entertainment, communication and the ability to get to hospital and receive visitors are just as important to patients and families on low or no incomes as they are for the far better off, but the NHS trusts shamefully exploit the better-off and deny poorest and, possibly, the most needy by charging over the top for television, telephones and car parking. Patient telephone services, when run by private companies, can cost up to as much as 49 pence a minute for outgoing and incoming calls.

OFCOM found in a recent survey one person who has spent £270 calling her husband while he was in hospital for just over a month. A patient claimed to have spent more than £100 in under a month but had received few calls because of the cost. These costs are way beyond the means of the poorest so they must do without the luxury of telephone communication. Do you remember the 10 pence phone trolley? It did the same job as the 49 pence per minute phone systems now but the system did not rake in fortunes for the trusts.

Car parking charges are, if anything, a bigger rip-off. Hospital trusts raise more than a million pounds a year from car parking, and some as much as £1.5 million. Does it go on patient care? Not likely. Car parking services are usually run by private

contractors who skim off the lion's share. Trusts will reel off a list of reasons why car park charges are needed. One favourite reason is to stop the misuse of hospital car parks by other motorists. They will also say that there are exemptions for patients. That may be so in some trusts but not in any that I know. However, the people who suffer from car parking charges are patients' visitors. A visitor is sometimes as important to a patient as his or her treatment. Car parking charges prey on the most needy and vulnerable, and in doing so they create a two-tier Health Service, a Health Service with mod cons for those with money and basic treatment for those without. We must do all we can to end it. Please support.

SIS. W. MITCHELL-MURRAY (London): Congress and President, I strongly urge you to support this motion. If you look round this room, anyone of us at some time will either end up in hospital or visiting someone who is in there.

Let me tell you a story. Six months ago I thought my father was having a heart attack. I called the ambulance. They said it would take half-an-hour. I said, "Okay, I will run him to the hospital myself". I got my father into the hospital and loads of tests were carried out on him. Fantastic. I fell asleep slightly because I was so drained by the experience and worrying about my children who I had left at home on my own and worried about my father. About half-an-hour later I must have jumped up out of my sleep and a couple of bed pans appeared. I said, "No, it's not that. My car". I had left my car in the car park. I had to run what seemed like a bloody mile to go and rescue my car. This is a tax on the sick. We should not be put under extra pressure when we have enough to be considering. I urge everyone to support this motion. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I think we should also be looking at the costs which patients are now having to pay if they withdraw money within their hospital from the cash machines. The point is that it can cost up to £2 to make one withdrawal, and that is as much as pensioners got in their last pension rise for a week.

NHS DENTAL TREATMENT

COMPOSITE MOTION 33

(Covering Motions 242 and 243)

242 – NHS Dental Treatment (Midland & East Coast Region)

243 – Provision of National Health Dentistry (Midland & East Coast Region)

This motion concerns the post code lottery that has resulted because of the de-registration of countless thousands and possibly millions of

people from being registered with a National Health Service dentist.

Congress calls for adequate opportunity for all to obtain dental treatment under the National Health Service and demands serious action and quickly from the Government to return the right of everyone in this country to receive decent dentistry on the NHS and free at the point of delivery, rather than the mess which our Government is responsible for having instigated.

(Carried)

BRO. V. RABBETTS (Midland & East Coast): I move Composite Motion 33, National Health Service Dental Treatment.

In moving this Composite Motion, I am speaking from personal experience. When I received a copy of this composite in the post, I also received a letter cancelling my appointment with my National Health dentist telling me that they were not any more seeing any National Health patients, although they would continue see private patients and patients with insurance schemes. They also informed me that three dentists were leaving the practice, along with five other staff, because of the reduction the practice received in money from the National Health Service. The funny thing is that only one of the dentists was seeing National Health patients. I am now on a list to see a National Health dentist if one opens up a surgery in the local area.

I also saw reports in some major newspapers earlier this year about a couple who flew from Exeter to Newcastle to see their National Health dentist because it was cheaper than seeing a dentist locally. Perhaps I should have registered with a National Health dentist in Newcastle last year during Congress week as well as demonstrating outside of the AA offices.

All joking aside, it is time that the Government took action to ensure that everyone in the country can get a National Health dentist whenever they want one, not to have to go on a list in case one becomes available. I move.

BRO. A. WHITE (Midland & East Coast): I am seconding Composite Motion 33. My region would like to acknowledge the help and advice it has received David Lascelles in preparing this composite.

The mover said it was a blow to NHS legislation, after 50 years, to find that not only are you not registered with your local dentist but also that the manager of your local primary care trust informs you in writing that you are not entitled, either. Countless numbers have now found themselves victims of a post code lottery. For instance, treatment may be available in the Sheffield PCT area, but not in north Lincolnshire. One GMB member in north Lincolnshire

had to pay £1,000 for dental work because he had been continuously refused treatment on the NHS. Private dentist practices can charge very high fees, like lawyers, high enough to make it worthwhile for some trainee dental hygienists to pay the full cost of their courses. They can be expected to be rewarded many times over after qualification. At the same time, NHS emergency treatment is being sub-contracted to agencies which have often been found to provide sub-standard work. One GMB member had to travel about 45 miles for emergency dental treatment only to find out that his new filling had fallen out by the time the effects of his injection had worn off.

The Midland & East Coast Region hopes that the full weight of the GMB will be brought to bear on this scandal. I second this composite.

AGE DISCRIMINATION IN HEALTH

MOTION 244

Congress is concerned at the report from the National Institute for Clinical Excellence which is proposing new guidelines for doctors, suggesting treatment should be related.

Congress believes that all medical treatment should be based upon clinical need, and we call upon the CEC to vigorously oppose such proposals.

LEICESTER HOMECARE & GENERAL BRANCH

Midland & East Coast Region

(Carried)

SIS. L. BLACKMAN (Midland & East Coast): I move Motion 244 on Age Discrimination in Health.

Congress, the National Service Framework for older people leads to wayward standards to tackle age discrimination and to ensure that older people are treated with respect according to their individual needs. Yet a recent recommendation from the National Institute for Clinical Excellence suggests that access to NHS treatment should be age-related. It would appear from this recommendation that health is more highly valued in some groups than in others.

The need for a National Service Framework for older people was triggered by concerns about widespread infringement of dignity and unfair discrimination in older people's access to care. The first two standards are:

“Standard 1: NHS services will be provided regardless of age on the basis of clinical need alone. Social Services will not use age discrimination in their eligibility criteria or policies to restrict access to available services.”

“Standard 2: NHS and Social Services treat older

people as individuals and to enable them to make choices about their own care.”

In explaining how they arrive at these standards, the NSF said that they took into account that age discrimination could apply to any age group. For example, inoculation for babies and Influenza jabs for the over 60s. This is appropriate because it is necessary at that stage of their lives. This would not be discrimination. On the other hand, the decision not to provide treatment because of age alone is discrimination, but where age is an indicator of benefit or risk then discrimination is appropriate.

Colleagues, my region rejects the statement. We believe that its inclusion weakens the Standard and gives the green light to Government to discriminate against senior and vulnerable citizens by providing care on the basis of age. We believe that the statement as phrased where age is an indicator of benefit or risk, then age discrimination is appropriate, should be amended to read: “All treatments should be given on the basis of clinical need regardless of age, sex, religion, ethnicity or sexual orientation”.

We also believe that if *this* report is not firmly opposed and amended, then there is a very real danger that for some people age discrimination in health and social care will seriously affect their health and quality of life and, for some, their life expectancy will be reduced.

I must tell you that your RMA conference in 2005 carried a similar motion. I was first alerted of *this* Report by the National Pensioners’ Convention of which I am the East Midlands Regional Secretary. I would suggest that those of you who have a computer should go into their website and you will really be surprised what you can download. I certainly make sure that all my region’s branches know about it, and I suggest that you go back and do the same. Please support.

BRO. V. THOMAS (Midland & East Coast): I second Motion 244 – Age Discrimination in Health.

I am gob-smacked that we are even having to debate this issue. I do not work in the NHS but I imagine that the National Institute for Clinical Excellence, whose acronym is NICE, is staffed by some pretty clever people, many of them doctors. Surely, we can leave doctors to know what is best for us, can we not? Like hell we can!

I am not going to use extreme analogies by pointing out that Dr. Mengele was a qualified medical practitioner. It would be unfair to our National Health Service doctors who work tirelessly and long hours in the care and treatment of patients to do so. However, it does highlight the ultimate destination of policies which seek to discriminate against particular sections of the community. I appreciate that sometimes clever people can be so convinced that they are right that they leave the plot. When this

happens, it is incumbent on organisations like the GMB, who are willing to say how it is, to confront, challenge and fight, if necessary, for the rights of those sections of the community who are starting to be singled out for anything less than equal treatment which we all expect.

Congress, these new NICE guidelines are anything but nice, but sound more like a policy drafted by Harold Shipman. We want equal treatment for all, and nothing less. That is why I second this motion.

POSTCODE LOTTERY

MOTION 245

Congress agrees to mount a campaign against this government policy in regards to allowing a postcode lottery throughout the UK, including Northern Ireland in relation to all new cancer drug treatments.

B43 BIRMINGHAM CITY GENERAL BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. KEMPSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): I move Motion 245 – Postcode Lottery.

Congress, it is with great regret that motions like this have to be brought up when we are in the third term of a Labour Government. Doctors, consultants and health care professionals should be the only people to determine new therapies and treatments, not accountants. This motion is about the way in which cancer patients are treated. Conference may be aware that there is a committee called NICE – the National Institute for Clinical Excellence. This committee makes recommendations on all new drugs and therapies for cancer patients. Eighty per cent of the criteria is based on cost of new treatments. Congress, this approach is, in effect, creating NHS rationing for cancer patients and for the most vulnerable in our society. We have had to witness female patients having to lock themselves in NHS premises to receive life-saving drugs which the consultants and cancer specialists say they need, only to be refused by PCTs across the country on the ground of cost.

Congress, we call on the GMB to campaign to get the NICE committee removed and that cancer specialists, health professionals and doctors decide all new treatments and therapies in the future. Support Motion 245.

(The Motion was formally seconded)

BREAST CANCER TREATMENT

MOTION 246

Congress agrees to call upon the CEC to lobby

the Government to ensure that Breast Cancer sufferers receive the best possible treatment in the fight against this life threatening disease.

54 DARWEN BRANCH
Lancashire Region

(Carried)

BRO. S. FORBES (Lancashire): I move Motion 246 – Breast Cancer Treatment.

Conference, we seek the support of Congress to call upon the CEC to lobby the Government to ensure that breast cancer sufferers receive the best possible treatment to fight against this life threatening disease. This disease has no discrimination. It can affect both women and men, as was highlighted in the recent case where a man won the right to be treated with the drug Herceptin, which was to be paid for by his local NHS trust. This drug can double the patients chances of survival.

Herceptin is expensive and is not routinely prescribed by NHS trusts in England. This is a drug which has had a high profile during the past 12 months as many women have appeared in court demanding the right to treatment regardless of cost. The ground-breaking case for a man followed two rejections by private health insurers before Maidstone Weald Primary Care Trust put men on equal footing with women in Kent. Male patients are currently put forward for use of the drug based on their individual clinical needs.

Both men and women are considered by their area's individual treatment panel, which looks at special requests for the funding of treatment, which could include drugs, specialist equipment and consultation at other hospitals. We are aware that women in Scotland will receive the breast cancer drug Aromasin six months earlier than women in England. The Scottish Medical Consortium approved Aromasin to treat the early stages of breast cancer. This drug can reduce the chances of the disease returning by 69 per cent.

These examples highlight the problems. Let us fight for equal treatment for all patients, regardless of the area health authorities' approval. Let us not put cost before patients' treatment. Every sufferer deserves the right to the best treatment available. Surely, this is a cause that the Government must take the lead on. Equal treatment on the NHS is the GMB's minimum demand. Conference, support this motion.

SIS. L. HOLMES (Lancashire): I support Motion 246 – Breast Cancer Treatment.

President and Congress, how many of us play the National Lottery, hoping to be very very lucky on Saturday nights and come up with those six lucky numbers that would change our lives for ever? There are thousands of men and women who are having their lives played with, just like the Lottery, every

single day. There are those who receive treatment and those who do not, but is one life more than another. We all pay into the National Health Service for a quality service which should be delivered but which has failed us badly. Notice I said "has". On 9th June a news article said, and I read: "Breakthrough! Herceptin - Post code lottery. We welcome the end of a year long post code lottery as a Government health watchdog recommended that women with the early stages of HER 2 Positive breast cancer were given the drug Herceptin on the NHS. Chief executive, Jimmy Hughes, welcomed the speed with which the drug has been assessed, adding that a year of uncertainty and post code lottery is at last coming to an end". However, he said: "All women with breast cancer will need to know that testing from the HER 2 genetic type breast cancer will be available quickly." Mr. Hughes stressed the need to bring more treatment from the lab bench to the hospital bed saying that "Herceptin had highlighted challenges for the NHS in ensuring that patients receive new, targeted and effective treatments. Attention must also be given to primary care trusts to find such funding."

As I have said, it is not for everyone. The conclusion that everyone receives this treatment has not arrived yet. So I urge you, please, to support this motion.

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

SIS. T. VAN-GELDEREN (London): Congress, President, I support all the resolutions but I want to talk to them in a general way, and specifically to the motion on breast cancer. I speak as someone who last year was part of the Trade Union Healthy Women Team who walked the 60 kilometre walk in London and raising £6,000. It is a shame that we have to do this for charity. As someone who has a number of friends who have had or are currently undergoing treatment, as I am sure some of the delegates in this hall will be in the same position, I want to draw attention to the fact that when we pass these resolutions, we should be clear on one thing. At the moment the trusts are making the position clear that every time a new drug becomes available something else has to go. It may be other forms of cancer treatment. We heard last week that the fastest growing form of cancer is bowel cancer for which a new drug exists but it will hardly be available because the NHS does not want to spend money on it. But it is not just other cancer treatments. It may be the issues which do not have the same media effect, such as hip operations and so on. In passing these resolutions, and I fully support them, let us be clear that we are also demanding that this Government makes the money available to the NHS across all the trusts for all the things which we need as ordinary working people for everyone so that we do not have this post code, gender, age

discrimination lottery. If we need it, we should have it and we should not have to witness the trusts having to decide who gets the treatment because there is not enough money available to pay for it.

BRO. M. JACKSON (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): My branch speaks in support of Motion 240 – Keep Our NHS Public.

I would like to say to Congress that we have PFI and PPP, which are bad enough, but we have also got ISTCs, and they are appalling. They really are appalling. Not only is this Government proposing that we build private hospitals in amongst our NHS hospitals, but the NHS budgets are top sliced to fund the building of these projects. When they are being built they take in the cream of the patients. For instance, for a knee replacement, if they are going to charge £3,000 through a tariff, your private hospital will get a 25 year old lad who has had a footballing knee accident, which will take him three or four days to recover and he will be off on his bike home. Conversely, the NHS hospital will be getting a 90 year old who needs a hip replacement and it will take the patient weeks and weeks to get over the operation because she/he will have other underlying age problems, such as chest or back problems. In order to get that patient through the same operation as the 25 year old, it will cost the NHS a fortune but it will only be receiving the same price as it received for the 25 year old. So the keel is not even. So we must campaign to ensure that ISTCs are not built in our region. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to the vote, colleagues. As these motions are all being supported by the CEC, I will ask you to vote en bloc. I ask you to vote on Motions 240 and 241, Composite 33 and Motions 244, 245 and 246.

(Motion 240 was carried)

(Motion 241 was carried)

(Composite Motion 33 was carried)

(Motion 244 was carried)

(Motion 245 was carried)

(Motion 46 was carried)

ANNOUNCEMENT

THE PRESIDENT: Before I move on, colleagues, the charity Balloon Race for Breast Cancer Relief on the Equal Rights stand £2, and the balloons will be released on Monday, 3rd July. Please support this good cause. Thank you.

ADDRESS TO GMB CONGRESS BY PETER HAIN MP, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WALES AND NORTHERN IRELAND

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, it gives me great pleasure to welcome Peter Hain MP, Secretary of State for Wales and Northern Ireland and for him to address Congress.

Peter Hain MP has been an MP since 1991 and was appointed Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in May 2005 and is also Secretary of State for Wales. Peter achieved international prominence as a result of his work in the anti-apartheid movement. Peter played a leading role in the campaign to secure a ‘Yes’ vote in the 1997 devolution referendum in Wales. Peter has been a long time friend of the GMB since and before he was elected to Parliament.

Colleagues, I am not suspicious, but Peter has never addressed the GMB Congress before, have you?

THE RT. HON. PETER HAIN (The Secretary of State for Wales and Northern Ireland): No, I have not.

THE PRESIDENT: Welcome, Peter.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE: Mary, thank you very much. Good morning, everyone. Mary is fantastically respected right across the labour and trade union Movement. I do not know anyone else who does her unique combination of tough and charming like she does.

By the way, Mary, perhaps you might have advised delegates not to heckle me during my speech because I have my four armed protection officers from Northern Ireland who keep an eye on me wherever I go.

I have just flown over from my official residence in Belfast, which is Hillsborough Castle. I made sure the croquet set was locked away. *(Laughter and applause)* It is very special for me being invited to address you because I have been a member of the GMB for 30 years and I am proud to be one of the group of Labour Members of Parliament whose constituencies have an agreement with the GMB.

Let me also congratulate Paul on his election. It is good to have you officially in post and in-charge, Paul, even though you have been running the show for a while. I guess Gordon feels a bit like that. *(Laughter)*

I always refer to Paul as “my union boss”. He has heard me say this before, but just before I go into Cabinet at 9 o’clock every Thursday morning – I will do the same tomorrow morning – I ‘phone him on my mobile to get my instructions for the meeting. To journalists present, that is a joke. *(Laughter)*

The only disagreement that Paul and I have is that he is a Fulham supporter. I bet you did not put that in your election manifesto, Paul.

All of us in the labour and trade union Movement may have joined for different reasons but we share the same values of community, solidarity, social justice, equality, liberty and human rights. Our belief is in a society based on mutual care and co-operation, not selfishness and greed. Those are the values, as Mary said, which brought me into politics. I was brought up in South Africa, my parents were put into jail, they were issued with banning orders and eventually forced into exile when I was a teenager. Then I continued their campaign in the anti-apartheid Movement in this country, particularly stopping all white cricket and rugby tours. That great campaign led to the eventual victory when Nelson Mandela came out of prison and was elected President in 1994. I want to take this opportunity to thank the GMB and the entire British trade union Movement for all the support you gave in that freedom struggle and to remind everyone that it was the labour and trade union Movement which helped to liberate black South Africans, not the Tories nor the right wing because they never ever supported that struggle. Indeed, they fought hard against it. *(Cheers and applause)*

Those are the values which inspired the early trade unionists in Britain as well, the people who, more than two hundred years ago, formed the craft associations and the trade groups to try and build the foundations of the trade union Movement that we know today; the same values that inspired the Chartists to fight for the vote for working people; the same values that inspired the Suffragettes to fight for the vote for women. Those are the reasons and values why I joined the Labour Party.

I am privileged to be in The Cabinet because of you. It is because of unions like the GMB and millions of trade unionists right across the country who have given support to the Labour Party so that we were able to win three successive General Elections. It is because of you that people like me are privileged to be in The Cabinet, so thank you all. Mind you, it is a funny old life in The Cabinet, especially at the moment. I was giving an interview on ITV1 from a Swansea studio one early Sunday morning – it was about 7.20, so I cannot imagine that anyone was watching it – and as I was up I decided to go to the gym. I went into the gym, but what I did not know was that the programme was repeated on ITV2 an hour later. There I was on the running machine feeling absolutely knackered and up I came on the screen and in front of me they were saying “Peter Hain live from Swansea”. The man running next to me looked down and he said, “You don’t look very live to me”. *(Laughter)*

Conference, I am proud of what we have achieved as a Labour Government. I am proud of the extra 2.3 million jobs that we have created; I am proud of the strong economy that we have built, the strongest economy ever in Britain’s history. No Labour

Government, in fact, no government of any party, has ever had such a strong economy, more jobs, low inflation, low mortgages, low interest rates and, crucially, continuous growth during the entire period of our period of Labour Government, which is now going into its tenth year. Nobody has every achieved that, and I am proud of it.

I am also proud of the fact that, whilst other countries that we traditionally benchmark ourselves against in Europe and elsewhere, when they have been cutting public spending or holding public spending stagnant, we have been increasing public spending year after year after year at record levels, and I am proud of that, too.

I am proud of the fact that we introduced a minimum wage for the first time ever in our Party’s history, a demand that Kier Hardie made when he was our first Labour leader over a hundred years ago. We brought in that minimum wage. I remember people saying at the time that it was too low. Of course, we wanted to get it higher and we have done so. But when we brought it in at the time I remember hundreds of women workers in my constituency having their wages doubled, even at £3.60 an hour. I remember what it was like under the Tory years in the south Wales valleys. I remember an advert for a security guard: “£1.90. Bring your own dog”. It made me wonder what the rate would have been if he had not had a dog. That kind of oppression and exploitation has been swept aside by the minimum wage and by the tax credits. As a result of the minimum wage, 1.3 million workers, mostly women, have been lifted out of poverty as a result of the minimum wage, and millions more, millions of children and millions of old people have also been lifted out of poverty by our Government’s policies.

We can be proud, too, of what we have done on the international agenda. We have been the most progressive Governments, your Labour Governments, in pressing for bigger and bigger overseas aid and development budgets and in lifting debt off the poorest countries of the world, in making sure that we lead the way towards trade justice so that people in poor countries of the world can trade their way to the prosperity that they deserve.

I am proud of what we have achieved in Northern Ireland as well. There are more jobs, more prosperity, more peace and stability than ever in Northern Ireland’s troubled and bitter history. Mind you, there is a mural in a Republican area of Belfast saying, “Hain is Insane”, and there is another one in a Loyalist area of Belfast saying, “Sinn Hain”. You cannot win them all. Indeed, Ian Paisley called for my resignation late last year, which I took as a badge of honour.

I see there is to be a big debate about the GMB, the T&G -- I know you are making a decision this afternoon -- and Amicus joining up as the same union. I reckon it might be easier to get Ian Paisley

and Gerry Adams to join up as the same government in Northern Ireland. *(Applause)*

Paul gave me a tip before I came on the platform. I know there is discussion about, maybe, the GMB coming to Belfast in 2008. Can I tell you that that would be a fantastic decision. It is a great place to come. You will be helping to build the solidarity across the community divides that the trade union Movement has done during the years in Northern Ireland in the most difficult conditions. I hope, Paul, that you will think about coming to Cardiff the year after.

I think we should be proud of the Labour Government, too, and all of us should be proud, about what we have done on trade union rights; the right to union recognition, equal rights for part-time and temporary workers, and now a Work & Families' Bill extending paid maternity leave to six months, a Childcare Bill coming through providing for universal childcare for 3 – 14 year olds, banning smoking in workplaces, now taking forward the Warwick Agenda to get even more employment rights and protection at work and, crucially, introducing legislation to ban and punish those responsible for corporate manslaughter. *(Applause)*

I know that the GMB always wants more from us as a Labour Government. You are entitled to demand more from us. It is your job to do so, to represent your members in the way which you have been doing at the rostrum as I have been listing for this last hour. I know that there are big issues of pay and conditions, which always confront union representatives. You have big struggles with Asda, and I give you my total support in that struggle with Asda. *(Applause and cheers)* You have to deal with difficult issues like dealing with Remploy. I see the banners in the gallery. I have met Remploy workers and I will continue to give my support to Remploy workers and GMB workers in Remploy as well.

I know, too, that you have continuing issues with the AA, asbestos claims and all the rest of it. There will always be issues to fight on because that is what you need a strong trade union like the GMB to do.

I know that our Labour Government is not perfect. I am glad I am speaking after Tony so he did not hear me say that. I know that we do not deliver everything, but not even the GMB Central Executive Council is perfect. *(Calls of "Ooooooh")* Not even your leadership delivers everything you want because life is not like that.

The real issue is not that there are not criticisms of our Labour Government, not that we have not made mistakes, not that we have done some things that you might have objected to, and which I might even have objected to as a member of The Cabinet. The real issues much more unite us than divide us. We have achieved a tremendous amount together since Labour was formed by the trade union Movement over a hundred years ago. The real issue

today, at this critical moment in our Labour Government's life, is what is the alternative? The alternative is a Tory government, a majority Tory government or a minority Tory government. That is why it is absolutely vital why we keep the link between the Labour Party and trade unions like the GMB. It is vital also that we work together with give and take and listening to each other to eliminate what I call "the disease of oppositionalitis" in our Movement.

Do you know something? We are not very comfortable being in Government. We are idealists. The longer we are in power the grumpier we will get. But I will tell you that the longer we are in power the tougher it gets. I had this put to me graphically by a GMB delegate at the South West Regional Conference in Weston-Super-Mare a few months ago. He got up and he said, "We spend year after year after year in the trade union Movement attacking the Government as a bunch of tossers, and then we come to an election and we tell everyone to vote for the tossers". That is not very Cabinet Ministerial language, but I think it puts across the point very well.

So we have much more to do. We should not only be proud of what we have done but we have much, much more to do together.

Who else but a Labour Government will protect us from the ravages, the very threat to the future of our planet from climate change than your Labour Government? Who else will protect us from the global competition that we face from China and India where engineering wages are 60 pence an hour and where they are producing four million new university graduates a year? Who else is going to help first-time buyers get on the housing ladder when they face incredibly high house prices? Who else is going to bring forward the radical pensions policy that we announced the other week in order to give protection in the future for people in retirement and to deal with the pensions crisis? Who else is going to reform the House of Lords and make it democratic for once and get rid of all the remaining hereditaries? Hereditary peers are only evidence, Mary, that I have ever seen of life after death. *(Laughter)* It is only Labour Government which has the progressive policies to provide people with security in the difficult times and the years that we have ahead over the big challenges we face as a society.

A very big choice is opening up. For the first time, probably in 15 years, in Britain now there is a big choice between progressive governments and small governments; a big choice between a government that uses progressive taxation to fund public services and a government that cuts public services to fund tax cuts. That has got to be the big choice in the coming years until the next general election.

Let me tell you that we face the biggest threat

that we have faced as a labour Movement since 1992. We can still win a fourth term of Labour Government together, but the real obstacle is ourselves. Are we hungry enough for power any more? The Tories certainly are. They have their friends in the media attacking us on an hourly and daily basis. They are lining up all of their papers to have a go at us – sometimes we are helping them – and they are making a big attack upon us at the present time. They are trying to make sure that we cannot raise funds, including from the trade union Movement, in order to fund the next general election campaign.

The question I would ask you as delegates and as fellow members of the GMB is do we still, together, have the same stomach for the fight that the Tories have now rediscovered, because if we do not have as much, if not more hunger, for the fight then they will beat us in the future at some point. That is the situation we are facing. We will only win again if we command the progressive agenda. It is only if we renew our relationship between the Government and the Parliamentary Party, between the Government and grass roots, and start listening to the grass roots much more, and only if we renew our relationship in partnership between the Government and the trade union Movement as well, and only, too, if we renew our local Labour Parties. I know that all of the local Labour Party meetings, like I guess most GMB branch meetings, are incredibly exciting. You cannot wait to get to the next one. I remember a branch secretary going down a list of members, discovering a member who had not been attending a meeting for years and years and years, who knocked on his door and said, “Why weren’t you at the last branch meeting?”, to which the reply was, “If I’d know it was the last branch meeting, I would have been there to celebrate”. *(Laughter and applause)*

I remember the argument which took all of half-an-hour between the chair and the secretary of a local labour executive meeting on whether you could count apologies in the quorum. Think about that. It could only be in a local Labour Party meeting.

I am grateful for the support which the GMB has given to the Labour Party over the years, as you do to the Party locally and nationally. I am grateful for the work that your Deputy General Secretary, Debbie Coulter, does. She is highly respected on the National Executive and throughout the trade union Movement. I am grateful for the work that my GMB Regional Secretary in Wales, Allan Garley, does, and for the work that Charlie Leonard does in Northern Ireland as well. It is tough now. It is tough for us together. After 12 years after the next general election it will be tougher than ever. We have to beat David Cameron’s smiley new Tories. We have to beat the Liberal Democrats as well because they did big damage to us at the last election. We have to beat the British National Party wherever they appear as well. *(Applause)* We have also to rediscover our

passion for our Labour values of community, solidarity, social justice, equality, liberty and human rights, and we have to rediscover our passion and hunger to fight the Tories and beat them again.

So Mary, Paul, Debbie and all of you, keep struggling, be proud of your Union, be proud of your members and let us all work together for a Labour victory next time. Thank you very much and good luck. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Peter, thank you very much. I can still write tomorrow’s headlines. I and many people in this hall know of your proud record on internationalism and the campaign that you ran against racism and the GMB has carried that campaign on. I promise you that we will fight injustice internationally as well as locally. There is no place in politics for the BNP in this or in any other union, and there is no place for the Tories, either.

Peter, on behalf of Congress, as a GMB member, I would like to present our Silver Badge. *(Presentation made amidst applause)* Do not tell Gordon, but *here* is a bottle of whisky, made by our members and we will join you in your room later. *(Applause)*

PRESENTATION OF CONGRESS LOCAL GIFT

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, that was a rather good break. We are now coming to a really nice part of the agenda. This year I would like to welcome Karen Dickinson from Southern Region, P29 branch, who will accept the Congress Local Gift on behalf of Piam Brown Ward of Southampton Hospital. Congress has selected an NHS ward for its charity donation. The Piam Brown Ward is based in Southampton General Hospital and is the Wessex Regional Paediatric Cancer and Haematology Unit. The ward treats all children from birth to 18 years of age who are suffering from any type of cancer, of which leukaemia is the most common. The Piam Brown Ward is very much a family orientated unit, where the staff provide support to the patient and also to the whole family.

Karen, would you come and accept the cheque on behalf of Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: Where is the cheque? We’ve lost it!

SIS. K. DICKINSON (Southern): President and Congress, on behalf of the children and the staff in Piam Brown Ward, I would like to thank the GMB for the tremendously generous support you have shown. This ward is a prime example of how the NHS can work at its best, with the standard of care and compassion shown to these children, which is hard to comprehend if you do not see it for yourself. I would challenge anyone in this hall to go into the ward and not to be emotionally moved or affected by what you experience. The courage of the children and the courage and grief of the families, as well as the

compassion of the staff, would bring tears to any of your eyes. This money helps the ward to provide the extras which the NHS cannot, such as outings for the children, IT based education, extra support for the MacMillan nursing team for community visits and palliative care support. All of this makes a difference to the quality of care given to the children and their families. The GMB does try to make a difference and this gift will help. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: We seem to have lost the cheque. So I am giving you a little note which says that we owe

you £2,000. It is signed by Paul Kenny and Mary Turner. You know you will get it. *(Presentation made amidst applause)*

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: ENERGY AND UTILITIES

THE PRESIDENT: I will now move to the General Secretary's Report, pages 71-73. I call Gary Smith to give his report.

ENERGY AND UTILITIES SECTION REPORT

Introduction

Colleagues should be aware that Gary Smith has been appointed as National Officer; his responsibilities include Energy & Utilities. The Section Committee has been meeting and at the time of writing the report, plans are well under way for the Section Conference to be held in March 2006. It is appropriate that we acknowledge and thank Section Committee Members, Officers and the Lay Representatives across the Section for their hard work over the past period.

The Energy & Utilities Section Committee consists of:

| | | |
|-----------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Bill Whitfield | - | Northern Region - President |
| Peter Sillito | - | Liverpool, N Wales & Irish Region |
| Mike Walton | - | London Region |
| Malcolm Sage | - | Midland & East Coast Region |
| Brian Adams | - | Midland & East Coast Region |
| Peter Foley | - | Northern Region |
| Peter Kane | - | Northern Region |
| Alex Walsh | - | Scotland |
| Mick Ryan | - | Southern Region |
| Ellis Broderick | - | South Western Region |
| N Clayton | - | Yorkshire & N Derbyshire Region |
| Pamela Ross | - | Yorkshire & N Derbyshire Region |

WATER INDUSTRY

After a considerable period of time, Phil Davies, National Secretary, was able to convene the first National Meeting of Water Industry Shop Stewards. This was well received and gave the Shop Stewards a chance to share experiences. It is envisaged that further such meetings will take place in the future.

OFWAT

The GMB did participate in the previous regulatory process in 2005. The Union has now been asked to contribute to discussions over extending the regulatory period from a five year time frame.

RENEWABLES

The UK Government signed up to reduce emissions into the atmosphere in line with the protocol at the Kyoto Summit on "Climate Change" in 1997. The 2003 Energy White Paper set higher targets for the UK that included reducing UK emissions by 20% below 1990 levels and for 10% of energy production in the UK to be from renewable resources by 2010. The GMB agrees with this policy but has been promoting the need to manufacture renewable and micro generation in the UK and to provide adequate skills and training to the workforce to enable the UK to reach these targets.

GOVERNMENT ENERGY REVIEW

The Government's Energy Review has implications for thousands of our members across the Energy Sector.

The GMB is participating in the review and the Union is consulting with lay members and the Section

Committee over our submissions. The Union will continue to argue that our Energy Sector should be publicly owned and controlled. The recent coverage about the possible energy crisis facing the country and the huge rise in prices for consumers has served to demonstrate the failure of liberalisation and privatisation. The policy decisions taken by the Union and our opposition to the developments in energy such as the "dash for gas" have been entirely vindicated by recent developments around the Energy Sector. The GMB will continue to argue that the country needs a balanced energy policy which will include nuclear, renewables and clean coal.

NUCLEAR INDUSTRY

As per previous Congress reports the Nuclear Industry remains in a state of flux following BNFL's proposals to sell British Nuclear Group. At the time of writing the Government's position is still unknown, however the Westinghouse facility has been sold. The GMB is involved in discussions with the Nuclear Decommissioning Agency in relation to future pension provision for the industry. Obviously these are crucial negotiations; the union will also be involved in ongoing talks with the Nuclear Decommissioning Agency (NDA) about the clean up and decommissioning process. As the remit of the NDA is to introduce competition to all nuclear sites we are involved in trying set a criteria for any company wishing to bid for work within the industry, in order to protect our members. The bulk of our membership is based in Cumbria. Pay negotiations are ongoing for 2006/2007.

MAGNOX

Pay negotiations are about to commence.

BRITISH ENERGY

Report by Phil Davies, National Secretary

My short stay as National Secretary of the Energy & Utilities Section brought me into contact with the shop stewards at British Energy at a time when a new pay structure was being negotiated.

The company is a large and important provider of energy to the UK domestic and commercial markets. British Energy shop stewards are some of the best shop stewards that we have within the GMB and without their help and advice my stay within the Section would have been far more difficult.

The UK energy issues are complex and crucial to the UK economy and over the next few years the Energy & Utilities Section will become more and more important.

I would like to thank in particular our shop steward, Adrian Cirket who was a real powerhouse of activity.

Following negotiations, the Company made a final offer of 3.8% on pay which was accepted by members. 2005/2006 Pay negotiations are about to commence.

NATIONAL GRID (TRANSCO)

As per previous Congress reports, National Grid completed the sell-off of four of its networks. These networks are: Scotia Gas; Scotia Gas Networks; United Utilities and WW Utilities. The negotiations for the networks will now be conducted primarily at a regional level.

The transfer of employees was covered the TUPE and recognition was secured with the new employers. Prior to the transfer our members settled for a 3.5% pay deal and a £750 one off payment. The deal was only secured following a ballot for industrial action. The employees who remained with National Grid also voted to accept a 3.5% deal and a £750 one off payment. Pay talks for the National Grid Industrials is about to commence. There are ongoing discussions about pay and conditions for the Staff employed by National Grid.

BRITISH GAS

At the time of writing the Union is in dispute with British Gas in relation to Staff pay negotiations. The Company have signalled their intent to break with a collective agreement relating to Staff pay. This would mean that Staff are likely to receive less than what they might have expected under the agreed formula. The Company have suspended further discussions as we have made it clear, as a Trade Union, that we will be balloting our members on any new offer.

Pay negotiations for British Gas Industrials are about to commence. In 2005 our members settled for a

3.2% increase and a number of other improvements.

In late 2005, British Gas Industrials workforce were balloted for strike action in relation to Pensions. After one day of strike action the dispute was settled; 1,700 current employees will join the pension scheme, together with £35 million extra funding, together with written guarantees on the future security of the pension fund was secured.

RWE NPOWER

Pay negotiations are now under way.

OFGEM

The GMB is taking a proactive approach to OFGEM's gas distribution price review. The Trade Union has put in preliminary submission. Lay representatives have been involved in the work with OFGEM and it is envisaged that they will play an important role in developing the GMB's position over the next twelve months. Amongst the considerations in the GMB's submission are pensions, employment, training, skills retention, health & safety and security of supply. It is anticipated that representatives from the Union will be meeting with other interested parties such as those involved in Fuel Poverty Campaigns and Energy Watch as part of our response to the Regulator.

TRAINING IN THE ENERGY AND UTILITIES SECTOR

In the past it was traditionally left to each individual water company to organise its own training and training schemes. Although this method has worked well in the past it does not deliver formal recognised national qualifications for our members in the Water Sector.

Over the last two years the GMB, along with a number of water companies, contractors and training organisations, have been working towards standard national qualifications at both level 2 and level 3 that are recognised across the whole sector. These national qualifications would also include a new Modern Apprenticeship and would be in both water and waste water areas.

The GMB has also been involved in putting together a similar structure for the revised Electricity Sector Modern Apprenticeship.

(Adopted)

BRO. G. SMITH (National Officer, Commercial Services, Energy & Utilities): President and Congress, it gives me great pleasure to be moving this sectional report this morning.

Let me begin, Congress, by saying a few words of thanks to Kerry Harding at Wimbledon who organised our very successful section conference in this town in March. I want to say thank you to Charles King for his continued support and research for the section, and I really must pay tribute to all of our excellent activists within the section, not least our chair, Bill Whitfield, who did a cracking job at the Conference.

Prior to January the conference did not have a specific or nominated national officer. Responsibilities were divided amongst a number of the national officer team. I hope, in that the General Secretary has asked me to take on the national role, it demonstrates the Union's on-going commitment to what is a large and very loyal membership.

Since I took up the role, energy has never been out of the headlines. As you will be aware, the Government have announced an energy review. The GMB has contributed to that review and we have made the point, and we will continue to make the

point, that the energy crisis besetting the country was entirely avoidable. It is rooted in privatisation and liberalisation.

I think we should also acknowledge at this Congress that the fuel price rises that we have witnessed in the past period have plunged millions of people in this country into fuel poverty, and more rises in gas prices are predicted. It is absolutely obscene that we are talking about gas shortages this winter when today Britain will actually be exporting gas. Having spoken to our colleagues in the coal industry in Yorkshire yesterday, it is absolutely appalling that we are considering, and indeed continuing, to close coalmines in this country at a time when we have such acute problems in the energy sector.

Our country needs a planned energy policy and the strategic interests of the country should not be left to the anarchy of the market.

During the past few months I have been heavily involved in the gas industry, be it arguing against off-shoring of British Gas staff, being involved in negotiations and facing up to the challenges in gas distribution, the development of competition in that

particular sector, following on from the decision by the National Grid to sell off four networks.

I want to pay particular tribute to our gas industrial membership who, under Brian Strutton last year, undertook successful strike action not to defend their own pensions but to ensure that their colleagues had access to the pension scheme in the future. It was a marvellous and successful display of solidarity.

In the electricity sector, colleagues, I have been heavily involved in negotiations in both generation and transmission and I hope we can use our strong bargaining position within the sector over the next few years to improve our members' terms and conditions of employment.

President and Congress, I want to say a few words about what is always a very contentious issue, and that is the nuclear industry. There will be a discussion and debate, as you know, on some of the motions. Let me say to you, Congress, that our members within the industry are going through a hugely difficult time at the moment, not least with the break-up of what we would know as BNFL, and the impact which that is having on the bargaining structures and the potential impact it will have on jobs down the line. We are involved in very difficult negotiations about pension provision for nuclear workers at the present time, and I would like to thank Heidi Benzing at the pensions department for her terrific input and support in these complicated and difficult negotiations.

I hope, Congress, that we send out today a clear and unambiguous message of support to our members in the nuclear industry. Let me emphasise that if there is any confusion about the GMB's position going forward it will be exploited by our enemies and, potentially, by some of the other trade unions in the sector.

In the water industry, colleagues, I am absolutely delighted with the GMB's recent interventions. We have had national headlines around our campaign within the water industry, and I am determined that we will continue to fight to see water return to its rightful place under democratic public ownership. I would like to use this opportunity to send solidarity greetings to our colleagues in Northern Ireland and Scotland who are currently fighting water privatisation. Given what is going on in mainland England, it is absolutely unbelievable that they are contemplating privatisation in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

I will conclude by saying this. When it comes to energy we should not be embarrassed to say that the GMB was right. We opposed the *Dash for Gas* and I hope that we retain our commitment to a balanced energy policy involving clean coal, renewables and, yes, nuclear. I am very pleased to move the report.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Gary. I move

to pages 71, 72 and 73. Does Congress accept those pages, colleagues? (*Adopted*)

I remind Congress that Emergency Motion 3 is in the Final Agenda, page 122. Emergency Motion 3, Compulsory Water Meters, is to be moved by Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region. I am also calling Composite 19, GMB Scotland to move and the Northern Region to second; Motion 145, Nuclear Energy, to be moved by the Irish Region; Motion 147, Power Industry, to be moved by Lancashire Region, and Composite Motion 20 to be moved by Lancashire, and seconded by Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region to second.

EMERGENCY MOTION 3

COMPULSORY WATER METERS

Congress calls on the CEC to mount a campaign of opposition to legislation which was passed by Parliament in March 2006 regarding compulsory water meters, made worse following the announcement of droughts in the south of England.

287B BRANCH
Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region

BRO. E. MARNELL (Liverpool, North Wales & Irish): I move Emergency Motion 3. Why are the water authorities calling for compulsory water meters? They are calling for them because of a drought in the south of England. Let me say that water meters do not conserve water. There is 800 million gallons a day lost through leakages, and in the south alone Thames Water loses 200 million gallons a day. Seven Trent loses 110 million gallons a day and United Utilities lose 110 million gallons a day. All three executives in these companies are paid in excess of £800 grand a year, including bonuses.

So what are the options? One option is to improve maintenance. If they had enough maintenance workers, they could go out on the day of the reported leakages rather than taking a week, two weeks or even three weeks before they attend. Secondly, what about desalination plants? For Christ's sake, we are a friggin' island nation! We have all the water we want out *there*. Thirdly, new reservoirs. Their argument for not having new reservoirs is that the costs of the land is too much. Fourthly, pipelines from the north. You might laugh at that, but at the end of the day if it was oil you would build a pipeline across a continent, never mind anywhere else.

When you look at what is going to happen if they are allowed to get away with their approaches, water will probably be dearer than oil. The water authorities' reply to all of these options are that they are too costly. However, without all of these options being implemented the situation will just not change.

This situation, therefore, exposes the real reasons behind compulsory water metering. It is for the fat cats to get fatter because, initially, they will say that it will be cheaper for certain people like those living in single person accommodation. It might be, but remember what happened to gas and electricity.

That is what you were promised then, but after the companies got the monopolies on these franchises all the prices went up. So the people who thought they were saving initially, their costs went up, too.

Recently, the Government made a statement, saying that the reason for compulsory water meters was to make people aware of the importance of water. I do not think it is the people who need to be made aware of the importance of water. I think it is the water authorities. I move.

(The motion was formally seconded)

BALANCED ENERGY POLICY

COMPOSITE MOTION 19

(Covering Motions 143 and 144)

143 – Energy Policy Review (GMB Scotland)

144 – Balanced Energy Policy (Northern Region)

Congress welcomes the Government's long overdue Review on Energy Policy. Congress recognised that fuel bill price hikes are a financial burden on our members.

We are all aware of the gap in energy supplies in the UK, Congress recognises that the dash for gas to produce electricity needs to be reviewed.

With North Sea Oil in steep decline, nuclear power stations coming to the end of their lives and the coal industry virtually gone.

Given the uncertainty of energy supplies, we need a balanced Energy Policy based on home grown supplies and taking account of all sources: renewables, nuclear, coal etc. in order to safeguard our energy supplies in the future. Urgent action needs to be taken.

Congress calls on the CEC to fully participate in this Review.

(Carried)

BRO. A. WALSH (GMB Scotland): I move Composite 19, a Balanced Energy Policy.

As Gary has said in his report, the GMB is currently participating in the Government's consultation exercise in reviewing energy policy. This

review should be concluded later this summer. As Tony Blair said yesterday, it is vital to secure energy supplies for our country's future. Recent price rises in gas and electricity are totally unacceptable. Both industries and domestic customers have suffered. In my area, which is Ayrshire, Caledonian Paper Mill, the heaviest and largest energy user in Scotland, has seen its electricity bill more than double in three years. Last winter production was transferred to sister plants in Scandinavia and central Europe because energy costs are significantly lower. Many jobs could be in jeopardy in the future.

EnergyWatch has estimated that up to three million households will suffer fuel poverty by the end of this year. That is a national scandal which will affect many of our members across the country. Utility companies claim that prices have increased due to higher fuel prices and the situation could get worse. OFGEM is concerned that projects to boost gas imports from Europe into the UK have hit problems, and the National Grid is concerned that UK demand will outstrip supply this winter.

In 1990 under 2 per cent of gas was used to generate electricity. This year that figure is 39 per cent. We have a problem. North Sea gas is declining and we will have to import more from abroad. This country should never be held to ransom from Europe regarding our energy supplies.

The Government have set a target for all electricity suppliers to source more than 15% of their power from renewables by 2016. By March of last year, the DTI set aside £100 million for research and development in hi-tech areas. This should help in the development of new and renewable energy sources. Clean coal technology can be used to cut greenhouse gas emissions from the atmosphere. However, these initiatives on their own will never meet the increased demands for energy. Twenty per cent of energy is generated by nuclear power stations. GMB in Scotland hopes to see a life extension given to Hunterstone B Power Station until 2015 as this will safeguard GMB jobs. However, such an extension of life will not solve our supply problems as UK nuclear power stations are being decommissioned.

Bold decisions will have to be made to secure our energy needs for the future. An ambitious programme of renewables, new clean coal technology, including nuclear power stations should be started. Congress, do not fudge this issue. As it is right to support the jobs and skills in shipbuilding, it is equally right to support the jobs and skills in the nuclear power industry where many GMB members work. If we want to keep Britain's lights on and give a much needed boost to the UK manufacturing industry, then please support this composite for a secure and balanced energy policy.

Finally, colleagues, remember to put the lights out when you leave the hall today in order to

conserve energy. I move.

BRO. J. KANE (Northern): I second Composite 19. We, the Northern Region, welcome the energy review that the Government are currently undertaking. The current situation in this country cannot continue as it is at the moment. We are all suffering from massive energy price rises. It has to stop. It is a terrifying prospect that we are becoming reliant on unstable Soviet governments selling us gas. It is wrong and it has to stop. We cannot allow ourselves to be in the position of those countries where the lights have been switched off. This is the UK. That situation cannot happen. We must act and plan now.

I welcomed the comments from the Prime Minister yesterday. For us in the nuclear industry, it was very positive. To ensure that this great nation of ours continues to be a world leader, we must have an energy supply. We at Sellafield have always asked for a balanced energy policy. We have always asked for coal, nuclear, gas and renewables. A balanced energy policy will give this country the stability it needs. It could bring many job opportunities for our members, not just in the construction of the infrastructure but in the operation of the various different energy sources.

In seconding this composite, I call on the CEC to participate fully in the Government's energy review and to push for a sustainable and secure energy policy for the UK. Thank you.

NUCLEAR ENERGY

MOTION 145

Congress deplores the secret lobbying of government by a cabal of people, including Brian Wilson, David Bellamy and No 10 insider, Geoff Morris and a number of pro-nuclear journalists.

Congress notes this lobby is desperately seeking a way round the issue of who pays for a new generation of nuclear plants. The economics of this are of the madhouse. Congress also notes the many problems that follow the nuclear option, not least waste disposal, insurance liabilities, etc.

Congress would condemn any talk of rigging the energy market to cover costs for private investors. Congress notes that a 10 reactor programme would need a kind of rigged market to cover some £20bn capital costs.

Congress also sees that the nuclear lobby invokes the UK's vulnerability to the Russians with the option of gas. Therefore they say nuclear is the only viable option.

Congress says this is wrong. Coal currently supplies some 30% of the market. Therefore the need to develop advanced coal technologies with carbon capture and storage is a must.

Congress therefore demands the government immediately press ahead with the development of a national programme of advanced coal and carbon capture technologies. This, along with a roll out of wind, wave and solar energy negates the need for the dash to a new generation nuclear programme.

182 BRANCH

Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region

(Lost)

SIS. D. WALKER (Liverpool, North Wales & Irish): I am proposing Motion 145 on nuclear energy.

Prime Minister, Tony Blair, has given the strongest signal yet that he backs the building of a new generation of nuclear power stations in the UK. The Prime Minister told the CBI's annual dinner that the issue was "back on the agenda with a vengeance". He said that Britain faced the prospect of being largely reliant on foreign gas imports for its future energy needs and that he had seen the first cut of the Government commissioned energy review. However, the commission's chairman, John Porritt, said: "It would be damaging of the Government's credibility if it were to pre-empt the conclusions of its own energy review by making premature and insufficiently considered announcements on nuclear power." The commission recently produced a report that stated nuclear power was not the answer to tackling climate change or security of supply. Even with the most optimistic build rate, a programme of 10 nuclear reactors would only deliver a 4 per cent cut in CO₂ emissions by 2024, which is too little, too late.

Mr. Blair has also decided that there will not be a separate White Paper after the energy review, suggesting that there will no legislation to bring in nuclear stations, reducing the opportunities for a focused backbench rebellion in the Commons. He will face familiar questions on the cost and safe disposal of nuclear waste, and strong criticism from his own Sustainable Development Commission.

Just last week we saw the publication of the report on a radioactive leak at Sellafield. Acid containing about 20 tonnes of uranium and 160 kg of plutonium escaped from a damaged pipe at the thermal oxide reprocessing plant at Thorpe. The spillage at the UK's largest atomic complex was discovered by BNG officials in April 2005 but it is understood to have gone unnoticed for eight months. The accident has caused £50 million and the facility remains out of action although BNG hopes it will be able to obtain regulatory approval to restart the facility later this summer.

BNG, which is to be sold to the private sector next year, told the court that all the leaked radioactive material had been contained within Thorp, that no one had been injured and that there had been no risk to the public. An inquiry report into the accident makes clear that the breaches relate to failures by the company to make and comply with written instructions and ensure that safety systems were in good working order and leaks were detected.

However, Mr. Blair has made it clear that we will build a further 10 reactors and he has already entered into commitments with French and American contractors to build them. Existing British nuclear power stations will leave a legacy of tonnes of nuclear waste by 2010. This waste will remain a hazard to our health and security for many generations to come. The 10 proposed new nuclear stations, if built, will produce radioactive waste nine times stronger than currently exists.

A new report from the Government produced by the Office for Civil Nuclear Security, charged with protecting 31 sites across the UK, revealed that staff shortages and security problems are hampering attempts to protect nuclear plants from terrorist attack. A question mark remains over the affordability of large scale investment in nuclear stations and whether the private sector will want to shoulder the cost without economic incentives. Ten reactors are expected to cost £15 billion to £20 billion. The DTI has insisted that there will be "No taxpayers subsidy".

Nuclear power stations are financially very risky projects and almost always cost more than initial estimates. No country in the world has nuclear stations that are not in some way funded by regional or central government.

A new study by Belgian and Kyrgyzstan scientists has shown that villagers in Kyrgyzstan are receiving radiation doses up to 40 times the internationally recommended safety limit, mostly from the food they grow.

Congress, let us have a fair energy review. Support this motion and send a clear signal to Tony Blair that there are alternatives to massive increases in nuclear energy and that the GMB wants a fair energy review and not another Blair dictat.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Denise. Secunder?

BRO. K. ROWLEY (London): I am from the Norwich General branch, and I am seconding Motion 145. This will be my last ever speech at a GMB Congress, and I feel honoured to be asked to support another region's motion as worthy as this. I am also thinking of a speech that I would have liked to give tomorrow, so I may become a bit more emotional than usual.

Brothers and Sisters, do you not think that this is one of the all-time great ironies that one of the arguments being put forward in pitching for nuclear

power is that it is part of the solution to global warming? It is like a doctor prescribing a box of Cuban cigars for a bad cigarette habit.

Is there really no viable alternative to fission power? I think there is. But this new love affair with the hot stuff comes at a time when we are telling the Iranians, for example, that they cannot have a reactor programme because it could provide them with the means to make an atomic bomb. This is staggering hypocrisy. Our Government is also likely to order a new generation of Trident missiles. We are adding grist to the nuclear mill just as the threat of global nuclear gangsterism is growing. There is already an awful lot of spent nuclear waste out *there*. Gordon Brown has estimated that it will cost £90 billion to clean up the present generation of reactors, as they are decommissioned.

In the 1980s the rolling stock carrying nuclear flasks on trains in eastern England had axle problems. The axles used to overheat to the point of bursting into flames. While we sleep today the stuff is moving silently around our railway network. On average, there are 30 accidents involving such trains each year.

Yet humankind has the intelligence and technological knowhow to capture CO₂ emissions and lock them away. We have the keyholes for unlocking wave, wind and solar power. It is not beyond us to fashion the keys. If we start now we can make a difference but we need to be wilful to make that difference.

Brothers and Sisters, support this motion and we can walk away from the open arms of the nuclear lobby in all of its forms. Goodbye. *(Applause)*

(The Vice-President took the Chair)

POWER INDUSTRY

MOTION 147

Congress believes now the debate on nuclear power has raised its head again, 20 years after it was totally rejected by the country as a whole, we have a different problem now if it's agreed to. Then we had the manpower and companies to fabricate, install and maintain them, but not anymore.

There's not a major manufacturing engineering company in the country, so once again it means importing more labour from abroad to install and maintain stations, no matter what system is installed, as we will require some system to generate power.

So maybe it's time to try and establish a major construction system and have a proper training scheme that the country as a whole can benefit

from.

243 MANCHESTER NO. 1
Lancashire Region

(Carried)

BRO. P. PERRY (Lancashire): Congress believes that charges of power and energy in the home market are mainly due to the deterioration of existing power plants plus the reduction in the supply of North Sea gas and the increase in power imports from the Middle East and Russia. Because of all the modern equipment that we have, the consumer demands more power. The sooner the debate on the energy supply is resolved, one way or the other, the better because I do hope it is resolved before the lights go out. The longer it carries on the crisis deepens. The sooner a decision is made, we can get on with the job of constructing new plants so that we are not dependent on imports from elsewhere. It will then provide the much needed work for the manufacturing industry, which is bleeding for the want of work, in this country. It would also be necessary to increase existing training programmes to cover all aspects of construction work, maintenance and the building of turbines which would all be essential to any system of power, whichever one we provide. The training would enable us to keep labour in employment in this country and stop importing skilled labour from other countries. I move.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Can I have a seconder for the motion? *(Formally seconded)*

ENERGY PRICES

COMPOSITE MOTION 20

(Covering Motions 148 and 149)

148 - Energy Prices and Supplies (Lancashire Region)

149 - Price Review (Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region)

This Congress expresses alarm at the devastating effect on the Manufacturing industry by the ever-increasing oil and energy prices.

In particular, the UK's dysfunctional gas market has led to severe price shocks affecting the ability of manufacturers to compete effectively and to reductions in output with consequential job losses or lay-offs.

This Congress calls on the Prime Minister to intervene into energy pricing and supplies which we the GMB believe is threatening to undermine the competitiveness and viability of the UK manufacturing industry.

Congress also calls on the CEC to campaign on behalf of its members and the public at large against the ever increasing price rises being imposed on Gas, Electricity and Water. These increases are having a terrible effect on people's ability to pay their bills.

(Carried)

BRO. A. WALSH (Lancashire): I move Composite 20, Energy Prices.

Across the UK business has been hit hard by the rise in energy costs over the past few years. Whatever these businesses produce, they play a vital part in keeping people in work and the economy healthy and strong. OFGEM estimates that throughout the winter of 2004/2005 consumers in the UK paid £3.5 billion more for their gas and electricity than they had the previous year. Some of these companies are now paying up to 50% more for their gas than their competitors in France and Germany and double the amount of that in Spain. This is a staggering amount of money and I wonder how much more of this our industries can take before they face the prospect of either laying off workers or, worse still, taking their business overseas. Something has to be done before it is too late, otherwise the 2.3 million jobs that the Labour Party has created will have a serious dent in it. Thank you.

BRO. W. GOLDING (Liverpool, North Wales & Irish): I second Composite 20. We all know about the soaring cost of energy in our homes with our gas and electric bills going through the roof. The rising cost of energy hits everyone but particularly those on low fixed incomes like pensioners and the long-term sick. The older you are the less mobile you are so the more energy you need to heat your home, but it is not just the domestic users who are affected by energy price rises. It is the impact on the manufacturing industry which could be devastating. Without urgent Government action tens of thousands of jobs in UK manufacturing are at risk, with a number of companies already moving production overseas in the past six months.

Spiralling prices combined with questions of security of supply are already causing a number of companies to think again about investing in the UK, but why is the problem so much worse in the UK than the rest of Europe? The main cause has been deregulation and liberalisation of the industry, starting with Thatcher and still continuing with this Government. While we had North Sea oil and gas regulation, the result was lower prices than the rest of Europe. Now we have used up reserves earlier than anticipated. At the same time the coal industry has been run down and there has been a failure to invest in renewable energies or nuclear plants. As a

result, the UK is dependent on UK imported gas and oil with prices far higher than in other places in Europe.

The Government maintains that further EU energy liberalisation is the answer, but there is little incentive for the rest of the EU to push through such liberalisation and the UK experience appears to be even more resistant. A number of employers are now joining trade unions in a call for the Government to stabilise prices and security of supply. An example from our region is INEOS Chlor, the UK's largest producer of chlorine, caustic soda and associated derivatives. The light has come on. I second.

(The President took the Chair)

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

BRO. J. KANE (Northern): I welcome the opportunity to speak against Motion 145. I did not want it removed because it gives us the opportunity as workers in the nuclear industry to dispel the rhetoric that circulates about the industry. The Greenpeace rhetoric says that unaccountable and unelectable persons have taken money out of the nuclear industry and put nothing into it. Let me say that 12,500 people work at Sellafield, more than 3,000 of whom are GMB members. Once we were a proud coalmining community. We lost our coal mines in 1986. This situation did not occur as a result of the hand of God from Maradona but the iron glove of Margaret Thatcher, who shut our last coal mine. That situation made an ever greater dependency on the nuclear industry. But if anybody thinks that we would put the health, safety and wellbeing of our families at risk for a pound note, I think I would question my own values if that was the case.

We hear the rumours about waste. The GMB put forward a policy in 1995. We will take the waste. Two-thirds of it is generated at Sellafield and we will take it. Give us the community benefits which go with it. We made it very clear in the policy that any waste must be monitorable and retrievable so that a future generation can make the final decision. One hundred years from now we could be sending it to the Moon. I do not know.

Again, we have talked about leaks. If it leaked for eight months, what was the environmental impact? I heard them talk about it. It was a contained purpose built cell. That is why it took eight months to detect. The problem is that people want to come to Sellafield and see. They want to look at the nuclear industry and at its benefits. If they want carbon emissions reduced, work on nuclear. Thank you.

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BRO. A. CIRKET (Southern): I have the privilege and honour of being branch president at Dungeness A and B nuclear power stations. I have worked there for 28 years which is the same length of time that I have been in the GMB. You will hear a lot during the nuclear debate and I do not want to go down the same line of saying why you should be in favour of it or what the other issues are in energy supply.

What I will do, briefly, is to tell you what it is like to work for British Energy. It is very similar in all the other companies within the nuclear industry. The first thing I should point out is that Union membership is somewhere around about 95% - 96% of the workforce. I do not imagine that there are too many people in this room who can say that they have the same level of membership. The GMB is the largest Union in the nuclear industry. Last year we had at my site, Dungeness B, not one lost time accident. None at all. The safety record that we have is beyond comparison with virtually every other heavy industry site. Remember, we are dealing with steam, chemicals and all sorts of things, big plant, all the time.

The workforce fully supports safety and the Union's involvement. I am here today not only from

my region but with the full support of my company. In every aspect of the business they negotiate with the trade unions. I would like you to vote and show your support for the people who we represent within the nuclear industry.

BRO. B. HULLEY (Southern): President and Congress, yes, nuclear power is clean and, yes, it is jobs for our members, but I would ask you to consider, colleagues, the legacy that this will leave for future generations. Oppose any motion that advocates the building of nuclear power stations. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: I call Billy Whitfield.

BRO. W. WHITFIELD (CEC, Energy & Utilities): I am speaking on behalf of the CEC on Emergency Motion 3, Composite 19 and Motion 145. The CEC is supporting Emergency Motion 3, supporting Composite 19 with a statement and opposing Motion 145.

The CEC is supporting Emergency Motion 3 on water meters as this is also existing Union policy. The CEC has grave concern that if compulsory metering was introduced that all our families and the British public in general would suffer with the cost.

On Composite Motion 19, the GMB supports the energy policy since the early 1980s which has been a balanced energy policy based on a mix of indigenous coal, gas, oil, combined with the technical approach using nuclear and all renewables. The last Tory Government deregulated the gas industry and this created the *Dash for Gas*. Unfortunately, through this the labour Movement has continued with the Tory's free market policy, resulting both in the demise of the UK coal industry and the early depletion of the gas reserves we had in the North Sea which should have lasted us well into the 21st Century.

As gas is now responsible for 40 per cent of the electricity production, we now rely on higher priced imported gas from Russia and North Africa. As we saw during the winter just gone, these countries have the ability to turn off the tap at will which increases the prices.

The CEC is recommending opposition to Motion 145 on nuclear power as this does not comply with the balanced energy policy that I have outlined.

Our response to the Government's energy review, which is on the GMB's website, the GMB supported the building of a new range of nuclear generation on existing sites, to maintain the existing 20% - 25% of generation and the employment of many of our members, along with the range of renewable technologies, including clean coal, carbon capture, wind, tidal, wave power and a range of microgeneration within the UK.

Once again, Congress, the CEC is supporting Emergency Motion 3, supporting Composite 19 with the above statement on the balanced energy policy

and oppose Motion 145.

THE PRESIDENT: Does the mover of Composite 19 accept the statement?

BRO. A. WALSH (GMB Scotland): Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 145. Denise, you have the right to reply.

SIS. D. WALKER (Liverpool, North Wales & Irish): Congress, anyone who got the *Morning Star* today in the letters section you will see paragraph 5.2 of the official British Nuclear Group's statement on the accident. It states: "The event has demonstrated that despite high quality construction serious faults can occur at Thorpe. Given the history of such events so far it seems likely that there will remain a significant chance of further plant failures occurring in the future even with comprehensive implantations of this report."

I have been to Sellafield and I am glad that it is our members who are looking after the nuclear waste, believe me, but I do not want to see accidents happening in the future, which would put the likes of us and our members at risk.

We are asking for a balanced energy review, that the money which is being invested in the nuclear plants should not deprive the other technologies and that we should look at the alternatives now.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Denise. Congress, the CEC is supporting Emergency Motion 3; Composite 19; Motion 147, Power Industry; Composite 20.

(Emergency Motion 3 was carried)

(Composite Motion 19 was carried)

(Motion 147 was carried)

(Composite Motion 20 was carried)

THE PRESIDENT: The CEC is asking you to oppose Motion 145.

(Motion 145 was lost)

A DELEGATE (from the floor): On a point of order, President.

THE PRESIDENT: It was lost. I can see from the floor. You cannot see the whole picture. I had this debate yesterday.

THE DELEGATE: President, I have a point of order.

THE PRESIDENT: There is no point of order. All right, what is your point of order? There is no point of

order. You did not call a card vote.

Colleagues, I just need to take a couple of minutes of your time. Those going out early will not know that they have an extra 15 minutes for lunch. This afternoon, we will have a 2.15 start. Before I close Congress, because I think you are all extremely good at staying on, the Jimmy Knapp collection will take place as you leave the hall, colleagues. Please give generously.

Colleagues, on the platform is Don Rishton, who is the General Secretary of the General Union of Loom Overlockers. The union voted at their last AGM to embark on a transfer of engagement to the GMB. *(Applause and cheers)* The union is 121 years old this year and it looks forward to joining a major force in the trade union Movement. It was a great decision, Don. Welcome.

BRO. R. REEVES (Southern): I would like to call into question your decision about the last vote that was lost. You have previously spoken on two occasions that you could not properly see people putting their hands up at the back. Now you say you can. It is contradictory.

THE PRESIDENT: I did not. I said that I could not see the odd person putting their hand up in *that* corner over *there*. When the mass hands go up, I can see them. Colleague, the vote was lost and I am not arguing with you any more. *(Applause)*

Congress will resume at 2.15.

(Adjourned for lunch)

AFTERNOON SESSION

(Congress reassembled at 2.00 pm)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE PRESIDENT: Will Congress come to order, please? I remind Congress that the President's night is in the Spanish Hall here in the Winter Gardens and access will be via the main entrance in Church Street. All you have to do is show your Congress credentials to gain access. The doors open at 7.30. Billy Bragg will play a solo set and there will be a disco and a buffet. That invitation includes our visitors upstairs as well. Also, Congress, we have managed to get extra lighting in the corners over *there*. We sent for the EEPTU! Oh, they have gone; they are with Amicus. Barbara, thanks for doing that. I bought you a drink but you did not arrive, so I drunk it! I still have the whip.

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS AND AUDITORS REPORT & CEC RULE AMENDMENTS

RULE 47 - CONTRIBUTIONS

1 Upon entering as members of the Union, members shall pay a contribution in accordance with this rule.

Members of the Union shall pay £2.25 per week, and be termed Grade 1 members UNLESS they are part-time members employed for 20 hours or less, or juveniles under 18 years, or recruited as unemployed and not subsequently employed, when they shall pay £1.18 per week and be termed Grade 2 members PROVIDED that any Grade 2 member may elect to pay the contribution rate for, and be termed a Grade 1 member.

The above Grades are for the sole purpose of determining contributions to be paid and benefits which may be received and for no other purpose.

CEC RULE AMENDMENT 379

Rule 47 Clause 1,

Line 3: Delete "£2.25", insert "£2.30"

Line 6: Delete "£1.18", insert "£1.23"

Clause will now read:

1 Upon entering as members of the Union, members shall pay a contribution in accordance with this rule.

Members of the Union shall pay £2.30 per week, and be termed Grade 1 members UNLESS they are part-time members employed for 20 hours or less, or juveniles under 18 years, or recruited as unemployed and not subsequently employed, when they shall pay £1.23 per week and be termed Grade 2 members PROVIDED that any Grade 2 member may elect to pay the contribution rate for, and be termed a Grade 1 member.

The above Grades are for the sole purpose of determining contributions to be paid and benefits which may be received and for no other purpose.

(Adopted)

RULE 47 - CONTRIBUTIONS

3 Branch Committees shall have power to fix the amount to be paid by lapsed members as re-entrance fees. The amount to be not less than £2.25 and not more than £10.00 for Grade 1 members, and not less than £1.18 and not more than £5.50 for Grade 2 members, except in particular circumstances, when the amount may be increased, subject to the approval of the Regional Committee.

CEC RULE AMENDMENT 380

Rule 47 Clause 3,

Line 2: Delete "£2.25", insert "£2.30"

Line 3: Delete "£1.18", insert "£1.23"

Clause will now read:

3 Branch Committees shall have power to fix the amount to be paid by lapsed members as re-entrance fees. The amount to be not less than £2.30 and not more than £10.00 for Grade 1 members, and not less than £1.23 and not more than £5.50 for Grade 2 members, except in particular circumstances, when the amount may be increased, subject to the approval of the Regional Committee.

(Adopted)

RULE 67 - POLITICAL FUND

8 The Central Executive Council shall give effect to the exemption of members to contribute to the Political Fund of the Union by relieving any members who are exempt from the payment of part of any periodical contributions required from the members of the Union towards the expenses of the Union as hereinafter provided and such relief shall be given as far as possible to all members who are exempt on the occasion of the same periodical payment.

For the purpose of enabling each member of the Union to know as respects any such periodical contribution what portion, if any, of the sum payable by him/her, is a contribution to the Political Fund, it is hereby provided that the annual contribution to the Political Fund of the Union shall, for Grade 1 members be the sum of £6.75, for Grade 2 members the sum of £3.54, and for members paying the reduced rate under Rule 49 the sum of 15p. The contribution to the Political Fund shall be payable in three equal instalments on the first contribution nights of the quarters ending March, September and December.

Any member who is exempt as aforesaid shall be relieved from payment of the said sum of £6.75, £3.54 and 15p respectively. The Central Executive Council shall have power to suspend at any time payment to the Political Fund for any quarter or quarters, in which event, that portion of the member's contribution allocated to political purposes shall be credited to the Central Fund.

CEC RULE AMENDMENT 381

Rule 67 Clause 8,

Line 11: Delete "£6.75", insert "£6.90"

Line 11: Delete "£3.54", insert "£3.69"

Line 17: Delete "£6.75, £3.54", insert "£6.90, £3.69"

Clause will now read:

8 The Central Executive Council shall give effect to the exemption of members to contribute to the Political Fund of the Union by relieving any members who are exempt from the payment of part of any periodical contributions required from the members of the Union towards the expenses of the Union as hereinafter provided and such relief shall be given as far as possible to all members who are exempt on the occasion of the same periodical payment.

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Any member who is exempt as aforesaid shall be relieved from payment of the said sum of £6.90, £3.69 and 15p respectively. The Central Executive Council shall have power to suspend at any time payment to the Political Fund for any quarter or quarters, in which event, that portion of the member's contribution allocated to political purposes shall be credited to the Central Fund.

(Adopted)

RULE 67A - POLITICAL FUND (NORTHERN IRELAND)

5 The Central Executive Council shall give effect to the statutory exemption of Northern Ireland members to contribute to the political fund of the Union by making a separate levy of contributions to that fund from those Northern Ireland members who have provided written consent of their willingness to contribute, namely, for Grade 1 members the sum of £6.75, for Grade 2 members the sum of £3.54, and for members paying the reduced rate under Rule 49 the sum of 15p payable in three equal instalments on the first contribution nights of the quarters ending March, September and December.

No moneys of the Union other than the amount raised by such separate levy shall be carried to the political fund.

CEC RULE AMENDMENT 382

Rule 67A, Clause 5,

Line 5: Delete "£6.75", insert "£6.90"

Line 6: Delete "3.54", insert "£3.69"

Clause will now read:

5 The Central Executive Council shall give effect to the statutory exemption of Northern Ireland members to contribute to the political fund of the Union by making a separate levy of contributions to that fund from those Northern Ireland members who have provided written consent of their willingness to contribute, namely, for Grade 1 members the sum of £6.90, for Grade 2 members the sum of £3.69, and for members paying the reduced rate under Rule 49 the sum of 15p payable in three equal instalments on the first contribution nights of the quarters ending March, September and December. No moneys of the Union other than the amount raised by such separate levy shall be carried to the political fund.

(Adopted)

THE PRESIDENT: I call the General Secretary, Paul Kenny.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: President, Paul Kenny to move the annual accounts for 2005 (the income and expenditure booklet that is in your sheets) and to move the CEC Rule Amendments 379, 380, 381, and 382 on contributions.

First of all, I will deal with your written questions on the accounts. The first question is from Michael Blench, Northern Region, and reads as follows: "Regarding page 8, paragraph 8, audit and professional charges, £117,000, and page 12, paragraph 16, expenditure and administration, £77,000, the following questions. 1. Is the superannuation fund being used to fund the costs of auditing the GMB? 2. When the fund is spent will the GMB pay the retired members their superannuation? 3. Why is the cost of running the fund so high? 4. Will the auditors send a balance of the funds to each engineering branch from 1991 to 2006?"

The answer, Michael, is no to the first part, the superannuation fund is not being used to pay for the union's audit, although a small part of the union's audit costs obviously relate to the fund itself. The fund will not be spent until the last beneficiary dies.

The fund is actuarially valued every five years to ensure it is sufficient to meet the level of superannuation provided in the rule and set by this Congress. The retired members who benefit from this fund will continue to receive the £64 each

Christmas, which is four times as much in real terms as it was before the amalgamation. The cost of running the fund is an estimate to cover salary, pension, and administration costs of the staff involved in processing claims and managing the fund. An exercise was carried out last year which showed that under certain assumptions the union's costs were not being fully recovered from the fund. However, for this year and future years the CEC has taken the decision that the cross-charge from the general fund should actually be reduced by £25,000; this review will be ongoing.

The last part is not a question, it is a proposal, and colleagues are aware of Congress' procedures for moving motions. The information on balances has already been issued in the annual accounts for each year. However, the finance director will visit the sectional committee and give a more detailed question and answer session on the fund and we will ask the auditors to accompany him.

The next question is from Ian Burkett, Midland & East Coast Region, on income and expenditure account, pages 16 and 17, summary of branch income and expenditure. Ian says: Could you please explain why, when you look at regions that have comparable income levels but have a vast difference in branch officers' salary and commission, does branch management costs vary from nil to £69,000? Ian, that is a very interesting question and if you look at page 16 with a little bit of arithmetic you can see that branch costs range from just over 11% of contributions in one region, which is Liverpool, up to 22% of contributions in Lancashire where there has always been a great many fulltime branch secretaries. The £69,000 figure, incidentally, mostly relates to a special write-off of branch office costs which followed on from a recent audit investigation. As Congress may be aware, Paul McCarthy and colleagues are continuing to investigate the past financial affairs of the region and the CEC is closely monitoring the situation.

Now I would like to move on to the acceptance of the annual accounts. It has been quite a year. I sat up here, actually, in Newcastle at the end of Congress last year thinking we had had a pretty good week, things were looking pretty good, we were moving forward, when a sheet of paper was put under my nose that showed the latest projections as we finished Congress was that the union's income was about £900,000 less than the budget. That meant we were heading for a deficit in the year of nearly £2m. These accounts tell the story. We turned it round and changed that almost certain deficit into a surplus in the management accounts of £650,000.

I want to thank and pay tribute to the regions, the senior management team, indeed all of the colleagues at regional and national level who achieved what was and is a fantastic feat. That showed us we have the power and the will to succeed

when we work together honestly in pursuit of a common goal. We did it by attacking waste, stopping unnecessary expenditure, and just using the common sense we talked about last year. What we did not do and what we are not going to do is compromise the work of the union. You may have noticed a bit of change in our campaigning profile: BHL have noticed it, certainly the AA have noticed it, and Asda are still noticing it. We will keep that up, and more.

We certainly have not moved resources away from organisation. We had a couple of dreadful years but now every region is on track pushing to beat their own historical averages. For the last three months in this union underlying membership has grown month by month, something we have not managed for decades. Growth is the key. Last year this union grew by more than 3,500 members, a fantastic achievement, a backdrop of success and of campaigning, and vision, the signpost I talked of on Monday about where we can go.

Growth is the key not just for giving us more power at work for our members but obviously for financial stability. We have not sat by, we have been attacking our costs, finding and cutting out waste regionally and nationally, and we are working as one organisation using our combined strength to gain the best terms from our suppliers for paper, printing, phones, utilities, every single one of our running costs; last year we promised you we would, and we have been doing it.

I am incredibly pleased on behalf of the senior management team in the CEC to stand here and say we have cleared our debts to the bank. We do not owe anything to anyone. *(Applause)* In doing that we wiped out interest charges that we were paying to the bank, money that we could put back into that organising culture.

We have built up an HR function to stop the waste of members' resources from tribunal awards against us, something else last year we said we would face up to and deal with. I am proud to report to you that we have made an operating surplus in 2005, that is two years in a row after 20 years of deficits, but in making that surplus we were able to increase our contributions to the union's pension fund by £1.5m, nearly 50%.

As I say in the introduction to the accounts, the GMB will honour its pension promises to its employees. We are not a fly-by-night employer. Over the last 6-8 months I visited every region and talked to officers and staff about the pension fund. They know that there are no easy answers to the pension deficit but with your support the CEC will find a way through to a lasting solution. This year started well, income is slightly up on budget on the back of good recruitment and organisation figures, but the work on Asda and local government pension schemes, and other campaigns, mean our expenditure budgets are tight. This will put pressure on the senior

management team to ensure that they find the money for organising the campaigning from within their budgets. It means extra work for them but the commitment that the executive have given, and the senior management team, is that no part of the union's work in defending the members will be sacrificed as a result of our current position.

One thing we are not going to do is jack up contribution rates unnecessarily in order to deal with the problems. We will put our own house in order. I am afraid if truth were known something perhaps we have done in the past is gone too easily to Congress and to members to look for money rather than facing up to and solving some of our financial problems. The CEC proposal this year is to increase contributions by 5p a week across the board. I know some people will say that seems a little unfair, 5p for part-time rate and 5p for a fulltime rate. The union is about representing and campaigning for our members, all of our members wherever they work and however many hours they do. Five pence across the board is clearly to demonstrate the minimum amount of money we need to advance that organising agenda. It is needed to cover future costs in campaigning and salary growth but it is not a substitute for tight management, careful planning and organising, and nor will it ever be.

Colleagues, we have started as we mean to go on, no more deficits, solving problems, not sidelining them, cooperation and hard work to rebuild our great union. Please adopt the accounts and accept the CEC rule amendments 379, 380, 381, and 382. I commend the report to Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Anyone wish to make any comment? No? Let us move on. Can I now put 379, 380, 381, and 382 to the vote?

(CEC Rule Amendments 379, 380, 381 and 382, and the Annual Accounts & Auditors Report were adopted)

UNION ORGANISATON: GENERAL

LAY REPRESENTATIVES

MOTION 19

Congress asks the CEC to ensure that GMB Lay Reps are financially supported to ensure they are not out of pocket when representing our members. Most employers only grant time off without pay, and not all Branches can afford to pay active Reps.

ESSEX PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH
London Region

(Withdrawn)

THE PRESIDENT: London Region, withdrawn? Have you informed Standing Orders?

BRO. E. BLISSETT (London): We have informed Standing Orders, Mary.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ed.

UNION ORGANISATION: FINANCES AND CONTRIBUTIONS

BRANCH ALLOCATION

MOTION 40

Congress instructs the CEC to ensure that Rule 36 is adopted for all Branches, commencing from the next Branch elections.

MANSFIELD CENTRAL BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Carried)

BRO. I. BURKETT (Midland & East Coast): I am here to move Motion 40 asking the CEC to ensure that Rule 36 is applied to all branches after the next branch elections. At first glance this appears to be an attack on branches but in reality the reverse is true. I will explain why. When I became a member of the GMB I really joined Roy's union. Incidentally, some of you will remember the late Roy Simpson, a member of the CEC for many years. He extolled to me, "Join my union and we will look after you, ensure that you are treated equally, fairly, and will not let employers treat you wrong." This, to me, was a good reason for joining. When I became active within the union I realised I had not only joined Roy's union, I also discovered I had joined Roy's branch, which I found a bit strange.

I could relate to Roy as an experienced shop steward but my vision of the branch was a collection of people sharing their lives together and improving the working rights and conditions of all their members. For branches to flourish you need the continuing influx of fresh people but I quickly realised there appeared to be an inherent block to progression. If you take a branch secretary it will have an adverse effect on the branch's finances because the commission structure changes. What happens? You continue with the same branch officers and the effectiveness of the branch lies in the hands of the few and not the whole branch. I am proud to belong to a great union that has long had a track record for fighting for fairness in employment rights, fair pay for equal value, so how can we proudly campaign for this against our employers when we operate a two-tier system within our own union?

How can it be fair for some branch secretaries receiving no commission and the branch 10% when other branch secretaries are receiving 7.5% commission for themselves as well 10% for the branch? Some really long-standing branch secretaries receive even more commission; some

larger branch secretaries are receiving commission in excess of £50,000 a year. What would people think if they knew that? How has a union which leads a campaign on fairness and equal pay for equal work allowed this to continue? We must end the unequal treatment to ensure our branches flourish and grow, and hence the union as a whole, as well as ensuring that no one can turn and point the finger at us.

It is for these two reasons that I call upon Congress to support this motion so we can move forward as a union that we can all be proud of. I move.

BRO. M. WIDDISON (Midland & East Coast): Congress, as a relatively new branch secretary I admit to being shocked to discover branch commissions were not paid equally. One of the core beliefs of the Trades Union Movement is equality. As we move forward as an independent trade union we need all to work together with equality amongst the branches. We challenge inequality in the workplace and we are against two-tier workplaces. We should challenge two-tier inequality within the union. Look at the logo behind me, GMB for Justice and Equality. I second.

LAY MEMBER EXPENSES

MOTION 42

Congress takes note of the large increase in fuel and associated running costs for motor vehicles. Congress also notes lack of public transport in some rural and semi-rural areas and also the constant ongoing reduction in provision for this service. This gives rise to our activists having no alternative but to travel on union business by car. Congress therefore instructs the CEC to increase the mileage rate to an Inland Revenue rate of 40p per mile.

W50 WELLINGTON BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region
(Lost)

BRO. J. STOKES (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, the current rate of motoring expenses does not cover the full cost of travel with rising prices of petrol and motoring costs. These rates have not been increased since they were introduced by John Edmonds when motor transport was relatively cheap. Public transport in many areas, especially rural areas of the country, is not an option because it does not exist, or is inadequate. Where I live personally in Telford, a town of 137,000 people, in some areas buses start at 9 in the morning and stop at 4 preventing people making meetings and catching connecting train services. In other rural areas people live over 20 miles from the nearest train station, therefore the only option available is to use their own car.

I urge Congress to follow the Inland Revenue expenses on this of 40 pence a mile and which Inland Revenue give without argument. I urge Congress to support this motion and give our lay members a fair deal. I move. Thank you.

(Motion 42 was formally seconded)

TRAVEL EXPENSES

MOTION 43

This Congress calls on the CEC to review the travel expenses under Rule 34. That – where a delegate gives a lift to another, his/her travel expenses should be increased by 50% to cover the cost of petrol to carry that extra person.

130 OLDHAM BRANCH
Lancashire Region

(Lost)

BRO. M. WILLIAMSON (Lancashire): The motion states: “... where a delegate gives a lift to another, his/her travel expenses should be increased by 50% to cover the cost of petrol to carry that extra person.” I have here the NJC car allowances for 2006/2007. We have the AA (we are allowed to say it) cost of motoring 2006. Rather than bore you with all the facts and figures and everything like that, the heart of the motion is to encourage car sharing, to follow a green policy, and actually to save the union money. I move.

BRO. K. JACKSON (Lancashire): Before I start the motion, this is my first time at Congress and first time up here. There is a growing band of first time people and it is good to see that. Could I just thank my colleagues in the region. The Irish have a saying, strangers are only people that you have not met yet. I have met some real nice people this week and I hope to bond some wonderful friendships in the future.

Back to the motion. I believe that this motion if passed today will not cost the union a penny, in fact it will save the union money and encourage members to car-share more and more. This motion is not about the monetary aspect of it, it is about doing our little bit to try and save the planet. We have had motions this morning about global warming and we passed those admirably, but what we need to do now is look inside ourselves to see where we can improve things. This motion, Congress, will not cost the earth but it will go some way to help to save it. I second.

GMB INFLUENCE

MOTION 44

Congress agrees that GMB Investment Holdings should strategically purchase stock in firms where GMB members are in long term disputes.

This technique allows the GMB to encourage shareholder democracy, combined with other union holdings and influence all aspects of company policy that affect our members' job security, pay and pensions.

HOUNSLOW BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. C. WHITMORE (London): I wish to move and take some small liberties with Motion 44. Congress, this union has a proud tradition of fighting for its members and, as Paul Kenny said in his address to us, we cannot always be bound by the rules where our opponents do not fight fair. Paul also spelled out for us the view that there are two types of power in our world, the power of organised capital and the power of organised people. It is the purpose of this motion to seek to bring those two together to wield an additional weapon on behalf of our members in struggle.

Congress, consider also that our union, our great independent union, exists to be the voice of our members. That voice, strong, loud, clear, and always rooted in member-led and member-focused democracy, is what employers must hear. I will take the opportunity to say to the likes of Asda Wal-Mart, “Hate us you may but listen you must.” That voice rings out loud, strong, and clear, in workplaces across the UK and wider. It is heard in council chambers, at Westminster, and in Brussels. It is heard, too, in the oil fields of Venezuela and the banana plantations of Costa Rica in solidarity. What this motion seeks to do is to make sure that our voice is heard in all the places where decisions affecting our people are being made.

Congress, when the gloves come off and our members are in struggle there should be nowhere we are not heard. The experience of our brothers and sisters in the US shows us that a strategic use of processes of corporate governance and the tactical use of shareholder rights can be a useful addition, and I will repeat that, an addition, to the armoury we deploy in struggle. Congress, I move.

SIS. J. SMITH (London): Madam President, before I start may I please express my sincere thanks to everyone who donated to Musical Keys last evening and also to the CEC for doubling that amount. It is greatly appreciated. This is a voluntary organisation run by donations only. They give simulation and therapy to these children. Thank you all very much.
(Applause)

The mover of this motion has expressed to you the sentiments behind this resolution and the reasons for it. I am not going to go into any further detail because I think he has expressed it very well. We must endorse these sentiments in the interests of our members, jobs, security, pay, and pensions.

Congress, please support this motion.

PROMOTIONAL RATE £1

MOTION 46

GMB Congress agrees to £1.00 per week as a promotion discounted GMB membership rate, for a 12 month period, for temporary agency workers and for employees working on short term work permits.

GMB LONDON HOTEL & CATERING BRANCH
London Region

(Referred)

THE PRESIDENT: Raj, can you not hear me over in that corner? I said would you all come down the front beforehand. Carry on.

BRO. R. GILL (London): Thanks, Mary. President, Congress, what I need to talk about is the promotional rate for low-paid workers. In debates we discussed the question of migrant workers and we discussed the question of young people and trying to attract them to the GMB. The young people, I think, are the most exploited in terms of work by the multinationals of this world; they face tremendous problems in terms of low pay, harassment, bullying at work, and other problems associated with disciplinary action. If you look at the fast food chains like McDonalds, Pizza Express, Nike, I think we need to attract those kinds of young workers into the GMB.

What we are suggesting is a promotional rate for 12 months of £1 per week, which is £4 per month. If you look at the GMB part-time rate of £5.12 it works out about £61, and if the CEC agrees £4 per month rate that is £48. The differential is quite minimal; I think it is about £13. If out of this we get a substantial lot of members, for example 500, then we are not going to have any kind of great financial loss. In return on the positive side we will have recruited whole loads of members. As discussed in our great debate on migrant workers, some of those people face language problems and other kinds of work-related problems and it would be to the advantage of the GMB if we could agree to this. I call on Congress to support, please. Thank you very much.

BRO. R. SLADE (London): Congress, madam President, I apologise for the lateness but actually you only did call 43, but we will not argue about that.

I support this motion as I believe that we need a promotional rate. Paul just said we gained 3,500 people last year on the rate we have. I think that would be greatly increased on lower paid workers and young people. I second this motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Bob. I called 44 as well, Bob. Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? *(No*

response) I call Paul Kenny.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you, Mary. I am responding on motions 40, 42, 43, 44, and 46 for the CEC. The CEC is asking you, Congress, to support Motion 40 with a qualification, to oppose Motions 42 and 43, to support Motion 44, and we are seeking reference of Motion 46.

First of all, Ian, I understand very much what you say. Motion 40 calls for all branches to be placed on rule 36 status with effect from the next branch elections. Congress, more than 10 years ago you agreed a report called, Resourcing Local Activism, which provided that all branches should move to rule 36 as soon as the current branch secretary retired. This was a policy aimed at getting campaign resources into the hands of branches. Motion 40 simply reaffirms your policy, Congress, and you should support it.

The CEC qualifies its support only to say that we are reviewing progress in implementing the previous Congress decision. We shall take whatever action is necessary, including looking at recommendations that may come from the CEC task group report. I made the point and will make it again, if you will forgive me, that the funding going back to branches each year that is available is already through the £6m plus. There is quite a lot of money in the system to use for branch funds and to use for those organising activities that people were speaking about, and many, many, many successful branches already do it.

Motion 42 calls for a big increase in the mileage rate. Congress, it is not in the budget. We have not budgeted for such a big increase. The CEC believes that the present rate does reimburse members. It is our policy to encourage people to use public transport, particularly where there are cheap fares available, but we also do recognise that it is not always possible to get public transport as an option. However, we do feel at the moment that the case for increasing the mileage allowance to such a big hike from 25 to 40 per mile is not made out and we ask you to oppose Motion 42.

Motion 43, I thought it was a cracker; forgive me but I did. I thought it was a cracker. The argument seemed to be that it cost you more if you had two people in a car. That is how it looked from where we sat. On that logic, if you were driving a minibus you would claim six times the mileage. I understand from the mover and the seconder, who I thought put it very eloquently, that the purpose of the resolution was actually to help the environment, help the GMB, and get less claims. I have an alternative, and it is this. Why don't colleagues come to meetings together but only one person make a claim? That would help the union quite a lot, actually. We are asking you to oppose 42 and 43.

Raj, Motion 46 seeks to establish a £1 promotional

rate for agency temps and members on short-term work permits. I know from our discussions that this is aimed particularly at the hotel and catering trade, a section of the economy we have to break into. The CEC seeks reference for a very good reason. We need to investigate the practicalities of this. There are powers under rule 48 to introduce a special rate but it would have to be proved to be justified and we would need to take careful consideration and proper consultation with other groups within the union to see what is the impact and effect, and what its likely value would be.

Congress, in summing up, please support Motion 40 with the CEC qualification, oppose Motions 42 and 43, support Motion 44, and refer Motion 46. I make the point to you again, Ian, I think the issue you have raised about the amount of money that is in the system and how it is dealt with is already on the agenda very clearly from the task group and I do not think it is an issue that is going to go away. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Can I ask London Region, do you accept the qualification? *(Agreed)* Midland & East Coast, do you accept the qualification? *(Agreed)*

(Motion 40 was carried)

(Motion 44 was carried)

THE PRESIDENT: I now ask the lay members of Birmingham & West Midlands Region, do you wish your right to reply? No? Colleagues, the CEC is opposing 42.

(Motion 42 was lost)

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 43, travel expenses, Lancashire Region, do you wish a right to reply?

BRO. M. WILLIAMSON (Lancashire Region): Obviously, what Paul Kenny said should be normal practice. I did not raise that side of the argument but I think you are all wise enough to understand what is underneath this motion. I wonder how many of the delegates, 500 delegates, here today did not make a claim for expenses, expenses they are entitled to? I am not bringing that into question, but this motion is to enable delegates to come together on a voluntary basis to save union money. I know it is going to cost another 50%, depending on the size of some of the delegates, but then on the other hand it will depend on how much baggage there is. The other saving that comes along is the parking fees which some people end up having to pay because they cannot get on the hotel car park.

We do have a serious concern as a union and as to global warming, so quite clearly if you ain't got two cars running down the road it is going to be a saving;

it may be small but it contributes and it helps. I urge Congress to support this motion, give it a try, and see what happens.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 43, the CEC is asking you to oppose.

(Motion 43 was lost)

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 46, Raj, do you wish your right of reply? No? Are you going to refer? *(Agreed)*

(Motion 46 was referred)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Congress. Thank you, Paul.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 4

BRO. G. FERGUSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): Withdrawn motions. The SOC has been informed that the following motions have been withdrawn.

1. GMB Scotland has withdrawn Composite Motion 1, Possible Formation of a New Union.

2. London Region has withdrawn Composite Motion 2, Merger Timetable.

3. Midland & East Coast Region has withdrawn Motion 13, GMB Revolution.

President, Congress, I formally move SOC Report No. 4.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gerry. Do you agree Standing Orders Report?

(Standing Orders Committee Report No. 4 was adopted)

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, can I now move back to the agenda? We have been informed that Motion 48, Retired Members, Southern Region, has been withdrawn. Is that correct, Southern? *(Confirmed)*

(Motion 48 was withdrawn)

RULE 30 AUDIT

2 The accounts of the Union shall be examined by three members of the Union, elected every three years according to the procedures of the appropriate Rules for the nomination and election of Officials.

RULE AMENDMENT 361

Line 2: Delete: "three years"

Insert

"four years"

MIDLAND HEALTHCARE BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Carried)

BRO. B. HELEY (Midland & East Coast): This amendment is a simple and straightforward deletion and insertion. Congress, we are a democratic union. We believe in fair play and spend the majority of our time fighting to achieve it. Our election process needs a slight tweak to make it fair. Every four years, according to the rule, we hold elections for our branch officials which include branch auditors. Every four years we elect our regional council, including branch auditors. Even our CEC is elected every four years. So why when it comes to national member auditors it is only for three years? If everyone else is voted in every four years, then this should also apply to the national member. All that is required is to alter the wording and change 3 to 4. I move.

BRO. I. BURKETT (Midland & East Coast): In seconding this motion I recall as a branch auditor that it took me at least two years to understand what I should be looking for and what papers I needed to examine and what papers were missing, if any. Then I moved on and became a regional member auditor and it was at least another two years before I knew all the papers of the region. I can only assume that a national trying to understand all the complexities of the national papers will take just as long. To ensure that we get the maximum benefit from our auditing experience we should ensure we are in office for longer. Four years fits in nicely with CEC elections and shows conformity with all other elections in the union.

THE PRESIDENT: Rule Amendment 362. I cannot hear you, Paul. Come up and tell us. I cannot hear you.

BRO. P. McCARTHY (Acting Regional Secretary, Lancashire): I apologise but we have been waiting for Standing Orders. We have actually gone to Standing Orders on both of these, I believe.

BRO. P. McCARTHY: I actually do not know, Mary.

THE PRESIDENT: You are waiting for them to come back down. Okay. Does Congress agree that we hold fire on Rule Amendment 362 and move on in the agenda until the amendment concerned apparently is in Standing Orders? *(Agreed)*

RULE 49A - RETIRED LIFE MEMBERS

4 A retired life member shall not be eligible for any benefits of the Union save the following:

(a) Legal Assistance under Rule 27, provided that a Regional Committee may in its absolute discretion require the retired life member during the period of such assistance to pay Grade 1 or Grade 2 contributions depending on his/her Grade at the day immediately prior to the date of payment of the lump sum under this rule

RULE AMENDMENT 371

Clause 4A: Delete: "Provided that a Regional Committee may in its absolute discretion require the retired life member during the period of such assistance to pay grade 1 or grade 2 contributions depending on his/her grade at the day immediately prior to the date of payment of the lump sum under this Rule."

Insert:

"Provided that a member is of state retirement age and has been a member of the Union for 10 years and is a fully paid up life member then he/she shall not be required to pay any contributions while the Union is pursuing a legal claim on their behalf."

**5 BARROW BRANCH
Lancashire Region**

(Carried)

BRO. S. FOLLOWS (Lancashire): Congress, this rule states: "provided that a Regional Committee may in its absolute discretion require the retired life member during the period of such assistance to pay Grade 1 or Grade 2 contributions depending on his/her Grade at the day immediately prior to the date of payment of the lump sum under this rule."

I would like to insert: "provided that a member is of state retirement age and has been a member of the Union for 10 years and is a fully paid up life member then he/she shall not be required to pay any contributions while the Union is pursuing a legal claim on their behalf."

The reason I feel that this rule should be changed is that we are supposed to look after people, our members, from cradle to grave, or so somebody once told me. Some retired members I have represented have worked with asbestos. When they get diagnosed with, for argument's sake, mesothelioma, they come into the office and ask to put a claim in. "Of course you can put a claim in but then you can give me £2.25 a week for the privilege, and, oh, by the way, you will be dead in 12-18 months." These people have built up this union. The amendment states, "... have been in the union for 10 years, should not be asked to pay full subs for the legal assistance they are asking for". It should not be up to the regional committee's absolute discretion, or anybody else's absolute discretion, it is the retired member's right to have the legal assistance provided free. These members have fought for our rights for years. They have looked after us in and out of the workplace. They have paid their dues religiously for years but when they want help we want more money.

Congress, it is wrong. What does it say behind me? Justice and Equality. Some get it, some do not. Some equality! Please support this rule change. I move.

BRO. T. BARKER (Lancashire): I fully support the rule

change having worked in heavy industry all my life. I have seen many workmates who have been disabled and even died through various industrial injuries and diseases. We should not even be thinking of giving anyone the discretion to charge full subs for our retired colleagues' claims. Some of these members have paid subs for up to 40 or 50 years without claiming a penny and when they need our help we can charge them? I do not think so. Congress, please support this rule change. I second.

RULE 30 - AUDIT

2 The accounts of the Union shall be examined by three members of the Union, elected every three years according to the procedures of the appropriate Rules for the nomination and election of Officials.

RULE AMENDMENT 362

Line 2: Delete: "every three years"

Insert:

"every four years".

8 ASHTON BRANCH
Lancashire Region

(Carried)

(Rule Amendment 362 was formally moved and seconded)

THE PRESIDENT: Does anybody wish to come in on the debate? Vinnie?

BRO. V. BLOOR (CEC, Engineering): Congress, the CEC is asking you to oppose Rule Amendment 371. The CEC supports Rule Amendments 361 and 362.

Rule Amendment 371 seeks to put an end to the region's discretion to require payment of full contributions when a retired life member is getting legal assistance. The CEC firmly believes that this is an important power for the regional committees and it should be kept.

Colleagues, please support Rule Amendments 361 and 362 and we ask you to oppose Rule Amendment 371. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Vin.

(Rule Amendment 361 was carried)

(Rule Amendment 362 was carried)

THE PRESIDENT: Lancashire Region, do you wish your right to reply? We are opposing.

BRO. S. FOLLOWS (Lancashire): I am asking you to support this motion today because there are a lot of people who have stood on this platform that have been in this union for a lot of years and I would not want to ask them to pay contributions for any claim that they may need to put in. I see it on a regular

basis with people with asbestosis. You have seen people on this platform. The likes of Billy there, he comes up on a regular basis; he has fought for this union all his life. I think we should support these people. Hey, Billy, do not dare put a claim in or anything like that. John Toomey was actually going to second this motion but he is not here today and, God forbid, he does not need to put a claim in because he would be telling you, wouldn't he?

Yesterday, Congress, you applauded a lady that stood up here who was a retired member, Monica Smith. You gave her a standing ovation. She even sang you a little song. So when you vote now think of when you were applauding her yesterday and when you walk out of the hall look her in the eyes and tell her how you voted, and that you want to take some money off her if she puts a claim in, or her retired colleagues.

Remember, all you need to do is stick your hands up like you did yesterday and vote for this motion and support the retired members and this rule change. It is not going to cost a lot. I do not believe you have even opposed the CEC once today so it is about time we won one. Please, colleagues, support this motion and the retired members. I thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: I will now put Rule Amendment to the vote. The CEC is asking you to oppose.

(Rule Amendment 371 was carried)

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, my heartstrings have gone! I am getting you a violin for next Congress. *(Laughter)*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I have two announcements. One, yesterday you were very very generous. The bucket collection for Zoe's Place raised £300. Well done, and well done to the region.

Now I have Allan Wylie up here I think we should double it, don't you? *(Agreed)* I am taking it off the pensioners, Monica. Watch this one!

Today you were extremely generous and I thank you all sincerely on behalf of the Jimmy Knapp Cancer Fund. You raised £421.62, which is extremely generous.

That is another decrease of your allowance, Monica. We are going to double that one too. Thank you, colleagues.

UNION ORGANISATION: UNION BENEFITS

MEMBERS BENEFITS

MOTION 49

Congress instructs, the CEC to set up an investigation into the benefits now being paid to our members.

It has been some time since there has been any increase in some benefits our members may claim i.e. National Accident Benefit, Funeral Benefit, Strike Benefit, Lock Out Benefit etc., so Rule 47 to Rule 61 needs to be updated. Now may not be the time to modernise, but now is the time to plan for the future membership of this Union.

So in the interest of expedience and common sense, it would only be prudent to do an investigation now, as to whether or not we require to make any changes, deletions, or additions to our membership benefits, and what changes would need to be put in place, with regards to the Contribution rates, in order to cover any additional costs that such changes will incur. This investigation to be completed, and reported back prior to the next Rules Revision Congress.

BARKING B10 BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. J. FERGIE (London): I ask Congress to instruct the CEC through the General Secretary to set up the investigation into the benefits we now pay to our membership. It has been a considerable amount of time since we last looked at our members' benefits, National Accident, Lock Out, and most of all Funeral Benefit. We now need to update Rule 47 through to Rule 61. It may not be the time to modernise but now is the time to plan for the future of our membership.

In the interests of expediency and common sense, it would only be prudent now to do an investigation as to whether or not we require to make any changes, or deletions or additions, to these benefits, and what changes need to be put in place with regard to the contribution rates to allow for this to be implemented and cover any additional cost that may arise from such changes, and this investigation to be completed and reported back prior to the next rules revision congress. I move. Please support.

SIS. J. SMITH (South Western): Congress, this motion is not complicated. It is a motion which makes full sense. Firstly, as the mover explained, in the interests of expediency and common sense now would be an appropriate time to carry out an investigation into our membership benefits. Secondly, any improvement or modernisation in these benefits at the time when recruitment and growth is a priority would certainly attract new members.

Congress, take for example the current Funeral Benefit of £130 for Grade 1 members and £58 for Grade 2 members, with 10 years membership. These have remained unchanged for around 20 years, therefore in this modern day they are by comparison unrealistic and offer little material assistance to our

members. Please support.

UNION BENEFITS

MOTION 54

Congress calls upon the GMB to exercise its considerable bargaining power with our recommended insurers, to secure competitively priced annual travel insurance premiums for members aged over 65 years. Our members in this age range currently find it either, in some cases, impossible to get cover, or where cover is available, premiums are extortionate.

HULL HEATING WORKERS BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Carried)

BRO. S. CLARKSON (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, visitors, competitively priced annual travel insurance for our GMB retired members is something we should all be able to secure. Retired members have contacted their respective branches to notify us that after taking advantage of the GMB recommended travel insurance for many years upon reaching the age of 65 they have been informed that an annual policy is no longer available.

If our members in this age range do get cover, they tell us the premiums are extortionate. Members who have loyally supported their union for many years and supported the union's recommended supplier of travel insurance, feel they have been let down. The motion calls on the GMB to exercise its considerable bargaining power to secure competitively priced annual travel insurance premiums for our members aged 65 and over. Colleagues, please support this worthwhile motion. I move.

BRO. D. DEBENHAM (Midland & East Coast): Congress, it has been stated that the GMB being one of the largest unions must have a very effective bargaining position when going to travel insurers. We have once again used this bargaining position to get a deal with Towergate Partnerships which actually states it does insurance for over 65 year olds. This on the face of it looks like a good policy but it still works out that it is two to three times more for someone 65 years or over than those under. Whilst I take on board that the GMB believe it gets a good deal, we should still negotiate annually in trying to get our older members a better deal.

What I would also like to know is why it costs £54.50 at 65 years and in good health, then I have a birthday, 66, still no health problems, and my cost goes up to £134. Surely, if our health has been good up till then our insurance should not go up? I second this motion.

STRIKE PAY

MOTION 55

Congress agrees that the current provision for strike pay is hopelessly outdated and instructs the CEC to explore ways of imposing a levy on contributions that would be remitted back to the Regions for accumulation in a separate fund that could be used to alleviate hardship for members in dispute. The CEC should produce a report with recommendations within 6 months.

ISLINGTON APEX BRANCH
London Region

(Referred)

BRO. V. WEST (London): The last time strike benefit was discussed was 2003 when we agreed to raise this benefit to £10 per day or £50 per week and half that amount for Grade 2 members. Although these amounts are increased in line with inflation and Rule 51 allows the CEC discretion to increase the amount, London Region believes it is now time to have a thorough review. We are not at this stage advocating a specific increase but we do believe it is time for the CEC to look at this issue and to come back with proposals for ways in which the union can support its members in industrial struggle. Solidarity with members in Asda Wal-Mart, or Remploy, or anywhere else has to mean more than fine words. Solidarity has to include financial support for members in hardship pursuing legitimate industrial action. Industrial disputes put strain and hardship not only on our members but on their families as well. As a union we need to ensure that that strain and hardship is alleviated as much as possible.

It is now time to update our rule book so that one of the tools of this union, strike pay, is modern and fit for purpose. Support our members in industrial struggle and support this motion. I move.

BRO. M. FOSTER (London): Congress, the time has come for the CEC to undertake a comprehensive review of the GMB strike pay provision. The provision as currently outlined in Rule 51 is hopelessly outdated and leaves us with our hands tied behind our backs at times of industrial action. We are simply seeking to ask the CEC to report back with proposals to update the strike pay provision so that when our members take the ultimate action and go out on strike they have the full armoury of support at their disposal. I second.

FREE INSURANCE

MOTION 56

This GMB Congress notes that members have been sent letters offering free accident and disability cover insurance of £2,500 from Union

Income Benefit Holdings Plc.

These letters were signed by our Deputy General Secretary and if the offer was not taken up then members received a further two letters offering this free insurance.

Congress believes this kind of high pressure selling is unhelpful in building trust between the union and its membership and leads to the danger of members seeing GMB correspondence as just more junk mail.

Congress urges the Deputy General Secretary to avoid selling insurance forthwith.

BARNESLEY GMB BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

BRO. H. RAJCH (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, last year we had a letter urging us to take out free insurance to the value of £2,500 from our Deputy General Secretary and if you did not take it up first time you had a second letter, and then a third letter to send off this form for the free insurance. Members were coming up to me asking me what did I think, and saying, "There's gotta be a catch. Nobody gives you owt for nowt. There must be a catch in this. It sounds like a load of rubbish. What do you think I should do?" Eventually, I actually sent mine in on the third time, on my last chance. On the form, by the way, it says, "What time would it be convenient to call, daytime or evening, 5 till 9." Are you seriously saying we want insurance sellers to come round to our members' homes up to 9 o'clock at night? I do not think so. It is ridiculous. We went a bit too far, I think, in the whole campaign with this. Eventually a woman phoned me and asked me about my work situation, and as well as the free insurance did I want redundancy insurance, family insurance, a whole range of products she was trying to sell me for quite a long time. Eventually I told her no, I only wanted the £2,500 free life insurance and that was all I was interested in.

What I am saying is that it was like a really hard sell insurance thing that we were exposing our members to. I will not go on too long about this. I think people get the message. I think the important thing is the relationship between us and our members. We do not want to use our members' database or our lists to sell them things. Do we want to start a catalogue selling them shoes or clothes to bring in extra money? I know at the time we had a financial crisis and we desperately needed more money but that has been resolved now so we do not have to go at it in the same way. There is a serious issue, I think, about the relationship between members; members do trust us, they look to the union for advice, and they listen to what we have to say. The danger is that if we send them this kind of

junk that is how they will see us, so when they get a letter for an election for a convenor, or Deputy General Secretary election, they will just bin it and think it is just more GMB junk. That is the danger we have to be careful about there, I think.

I think we did go too far in this particular campaign of selling insurance. I think we should ensure nationally and locally that we do not allow professional sales people to gain access to our membership to sell them products; it is not what we are here for, it is not what our members expect, and it is certainly not what they deserve.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Henry. Would I try a hard sell on you? No, I would not.

SIS. L. LORD (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, the Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region six years ago developed its own in-house financial advice service for members, called Premier Financial Protection. During the past six years this regional service has expanded into six other regions of the GMB developing top quality services and access to all general insurance products. Information for my colleague that moved Motion 54: at this point in time we are actually in negotiation for travel insurance for over 65s. Many thousands of our members in the six regions have taken advantage of this service. There is no hard sell approach as clearly the GMB is the single largest shareholder in the business and this gives us the ability to control how the services are delivered. It would be sensible if the GMB adopted a policy of using services that we have direct control over and work within the principles and values that we hold. I beg you to support.

THE PRESIDENT: Linda, could you hang on a second, please? I need you to reply to something in just one moment. Congress, it is Linda's birthday today. I think it is only right that we wish her Happy Birthday. Happy Birthday, Linda.

SIS. L. LORD: Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? No? I call Debbie.

THE DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY: The CEC is seeking reference of Motion 55 and we support Motion 56, with a qualification.

Motion 55 seeks to generate extra funds for members for use as strike pay. The CEC is asking for reference so that we can investigate whether this is a viable option. We will report back to Congress next year.

Motion 56 demands that I avoid selling insurance. I am delighted to tell you that the CEC fully supports me in not making a career move into financial services! My name appears on the UIB mailing because I was the only one in office that particular

week after the CEC decision to enter into the agreement with UIB. Believe me, I know the level of complaints because most of them passed by my desk.

The CEC does want to enter a qualification. This mailing raised some £100,000 for union funds at a time when every penny counted and the response to the mailing was immense: 150,000 of our members contacted the company to take up the offer. That is an unbelievably high number. In today's world the demand to improve benefits means we have to stay in touch with the market and keep using the power of the union's membership.

With that qualification, we ask you to support Motion 56, please refer Motion 55, and support Motions 49 and 54. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Debbie.

(Motion 49 was carried)

(Motion 54 was carried)

THE PRESIDENT: London Region do you wish the right to reply? You have agreed to refer? *(Agreed)* Thank you.

(Motion 55 was referred)

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 56, Debbie's ship in the night. Does Yorkshire agree the qualification? *(Agreed)*

(Motion 56 was carried)

RULE 27 - LEGAL ASSISTANCE

CEC RULE AMENDMENT 378

Insert new clause 8:

"8 Legal assistance shall not be granted for a claim against the Union or any of its officials or employees in his/her capacity as such."

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

(Carried)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Under Rule 27 the union gives legal assistance to members in employment matters regardless of who their employer is. Officers and staff of the union who are also GMB members can apply for legal assistance to bring a claim against the union as their employer. This presents regional secretaries with a conflict of interest which they sometimes can resolve only by giving legal assistance where they might otherwise have refused it; for example, where the employee has not followed our procedures or where the merits of the claim are weak. In addition, the region often has to appoint a non GMB law firm which might not control legal costs in the same way as our usual solicitors do. What is the result? The union ends up paying large, sometimes very large, legal fees for the sole purpose

of suing ourselves.

Colleagues, this is absurd. I am pleased to report that our officers and staff representative bodies understand that things cannot go on as they are. The CEC has concluded that we should ask you to amend Rule 27 so that the union no longer funds claims against itself. However, we have agreed with representatives of our employees that we should develop an alternative conflict resolution model. We aim to put in place procedures that help resolve problems and reduce the risk of legal action that may include, for example, seeking joint independent legal advice on the merits of the case that may help the union and the employee find a solution to their differences.

Our target is to agree this new procedure within a short time frame. In the meantime, the right to seek legal assistance under Rule 27 will continue. If contrary to our hopes we do not reach agreement within six months each side will review its position: so, no more putting our employees in a better position than other GMB members but a commitment by management and the staff bodies to improve our conflict resolution procedures. Congress, please support the rule amendment. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Malcolm.

(CEC Rule Amendment 378 was formally seconded)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Does anyone wish to come in on the debate?

BRO. G. MURRAY (Northern): These employees are also our members. I would just like to know who is going to make the judgement as to whether they have a weak case or not. Surely it cannot be the people who the case is against? Can you clarify, please?

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Anyone else? Malcolm?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Yes, it will go to outside independent solicitors; they will look at the case and judge it. Thank you.

(CEC Rule Amendment 378 was carried)

ANNOUNCEMENT

THE PRESIDENT: I wish to inform you that the talks with Asda Wal-Mart have broken down. There has been no agreement so we go ahead with the strike ballot. *(Applause)* Please note, Asda have reinstated our member who was sacked because he had "vote yes" on his car. *(Applause)* It is not often sense prevails but it did.

UNION ORGANISATION: REPRESENTATION & ACCOUNTABILITY

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 37, Election Procedures, to be moved by Southern Region has been withdrawn.

(Motion 37 was withdrawn)

RULE 17D REGIONAL SECRETARY

D1 Notwithstanding anything in Rule 17D3, appointment of Regional Secretary shall be made by the Regional Committee on a vacancy arising. Such appointments and the procedure for such appointments shall be subject to the approval of the Central Executive Council.

D2 Appointments to Regional Secretary shall be open to any National Official, Regional Industrial Officer or Organiser of any Region or Section of the Union.

RULE AMENDMENT 349

Clause 1: Delete

Insert:

"The appointment of a Regional Secretary should be by a vote of the membership within the Region and not by the Regional Committee or a block vote of the branches."

Clause 2: Delete

Insert:

"The appointment of a Regional Secretary should be open to any member of the Union with the required qualification of the Union"

243 MANCHESTER NO.1 BRANCH
Lancashire Region

(Lost)

BRO. P. PERRY (Lancashire): As the election of the General Secretary position is one of the most important throughout the union we believe that the position of the regional secretary is of the same balance, of the same importance to a region, and a section of this decision should be by the members of the region and not by the Regional Council. As our branches do not have a representation on the Regional Council, we think it is totally unfair that these members should not have an input into such an important decision within the region; nationwide we have it for the general secretary so surely we can have it for our regional secretary. I ask you to support this motion.

BRO. S. GEOGHAN (Lancashire): The post of regional secretary is a vital role in the GMB. Paul McCarthy in Lancashire Region has proved just how vital this is. We believe this appointment should be by the members. The General Secretary is open to all; why not the regional secretary? The General Secretary is elected on a ballot of all members so why not elect the regional secretary by a members' ballot? This will strengthen democracy, give real support to the position, and lead to greater openness. Congress, I

second this motion.

RULE AMENDMENT 350

Clause D2: Delete: "Appointments to Regional Secretary shall be open to any National Official, Regional Industrial Officer or Organiser of any Region or Section of the Union"

8 ASHTON BRANCH
Lancashire Region

(Lost)

BRO. P. PERRY (Lancashire): This is about the same decision. I could go through the same thing about the selection of the General Secretary, accept the nominations and then go through general selection of the membership, but really the regional secretary, for members of the Regional Council to sit down and elect a regional secretary is totally unfair to the membership. The membership are the most important members of any society or union and they should have a say in everything that goes on, particularly when you get a regional secretary that is going to represent them and going to be the main spokesperson for them. It is unfortunate that they do not have representatives on the Regional Council. We have about 40 Regional Council members but about 150 branches, which is about one-third of the branches' representation on the Council. I ask you to support. I move.

(Rule Amendment 350 was formally seconded)

RULE 18 - QUALIFICATIONS FOR OFFICE AND DEFINITION OF OFFICERS

3 The third qualification for any member seeking election to the Central Executive Council under Rule 11 shall be that at the date of nomination and election s/he is a member of his/her Regional Council. This qualification shall not apply to any member seeking election to the post of General Secretary and Treasurer or Deputy General Secretary.

RULE AMENDMENT 352

Clause 3: Delete

Insert:

"Every member, in line with paragraph 1 can be nominated to stand for election to this Central Executive Council."

NORTH KENT.ENG.Z37 BRANCH
Southern Region

(Referred)

BRO. B. BURTON (Southern): This motion calls on Congress to allow members the right to stand for the Executive. There are provisos to this motion, that they have two years' service and three nominations. This is to encourage young blood, not for old gits like me to stand. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: I second that, I mean the old git bit! Thank you.

(Rule Amendment 352 was formally seconded)

RULE AMENDMENT 353

Clause 3: Delete: "The third qualification for any member seeking election to the Central Executive Council under Rule 11 shall be that at the date of nomination and election s/he is a member of his/her Regional Council. This qualification shall not apply to any member seeking election to the post of General Secretary and Treasurer or Deputy General Secretary".

8 ASHTON BRANCH
Lancashire Region

(Referred)

(Rule Amendment 353 was formally moved and seconded)

RULE 20 REGIONS AND THEIR MANAGEMENT

5 Nominations shall be sent by the Branches to the Regional Secretary not later than 28th February in the year when the elections are due, and an election shall take place in accordance with the election procedure prescribed by Rule 17G.

RULE AMENDMENT 355

Insert:

full stop after "elections are due".

Delete: the remainder of the paragraph

Insert:

"The elections shall take place by secret postal ballot sent to members' homes. A period of not less than 21 days will be allowed for the conducting of ballot. All financial members in the Region at 31 January will be entitled to participate in the elections. The election results will be counted by the Regional Auditors and the results announced to branches within 7 days of the close of ballot."

D41 MANCHESTER CENTRAL BRANCH
Lancashire Region

(Lost)

THE PRESIDENT: Hello, Kevin.

BRO. K. FLANAGAN (Lancashire): Hi, Captain. I'm at the helm. I know you all voted against the CEC before because you are still scared of Toomey, even though he is not here; aren't you? Good old Toomey, we wish him a healthy recovery, by the way. John Toomey has not been too well so I am sure we send him best wishes from this Congress. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: We did on Sunday when I missed him, Kevin.

BRO. FLANAGAN: Of course you did. I am just giving him a kiss from me!

Congress, I believe passionately - and those who have known me have stood at this rostrum and seen me speak, not just here but they had the privilege of being present at APEX and serving that great section as well - in the democracy of this Movement. I believe passionately what we stand for. I equally believe passionately in the openness and integrity of this Movement. I believe amendment to Rule 20 is probably one of the most critical you will look at today and it is one of the most central and pivotal in the rule book of this union.

I will tell you why. Rule 20, the management of the region and the election of regional councils, creates a bar - a bar - to free ability to be able to participate in CEC elections and other regional positions. If you do not get on regional councils, you do not go anywhere. Can that continue? Can we stand here with integrity and say we are an open, fair, democratic Movement if we allow a rule to continue to exist in our rule book that creates a barrier?

We know how it is used. We have moved on in Lancashire and we are undoing the damage that it has done in Lancashire. I know from hard experience. Six months before I was off the regional committee many years ago I was told I was off - I was told I was off - by senior players in this Movement, "Your days are over." They abused Rule 20, and abuse of Rule 20 is not acceptable.

So, let us not mess about, CEC. I know you will oppose it. I hope you will come back with amendments to it if you do oppose it because your integrity is in question. This Movement will not accept barriers to free and open participation in our Movement. It was meant to be a protection for lay members. The Regional Council is meant to be a way of getting people to service movement so therefore let us have free, open, one member one vote elections to the regional councils. If it is good enough to put men like Paul in position, why is it not good enough to elect your regional councils?

I do not think it is a rule that can stand any longer. It has never been challenged. I know why it has never been challenged because I have tried to challenge it. It has never been challenged because it falls outside the legislation. The legislation that protects CEC rules only applies to actual rules at national level. It does not apply to regional bylaws and regional rules. It is about time we got up to speed and changed it. It is not fair, it is not democratic, and it is not open. I am saying, change the rule. Why can we not have any member putting themselves forward with integrity to serve on regional councils? Why can we not have people who

can be elected by their peers in their own region on one member one vote?

Congress, seriously, this is the most pivotal rule in the rule book. It is time for a change and I ask you to show the strength of feeling this afternoon on that very rule. Congress, I move Rule 20 changes.

(Rule Amendment 355 was formally seconded)

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

BRO. R. LOWDEN (CEC, Engineering): I am speaking on behalf of the CEC, and am also a former APEX member. I am grateful to Southern Region for agreeing to refer Motion 37.

We ask you to vote against Rule Amendment 349 and Rule Amendment 350. They both say that any member, even if not already an officer, could stand for regional secretary but never provides for a nomination or an interview process so presumably the list of candidates could be very long indeed. On local elections for General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary an amendment requires a minimum level of branch nominations. The CEC firmly believes that we should continue to restrict our senior regional posts to people who have had experience as officers of the union.

Rule Amendment 349 also removes the safety net of the CEC's formal approval of appointments and risks a conflict with Rule 17A.1, which guarantees the CEC supreme authority over all officials.

Rule Amendment 352 and 353 remove the requirement that candidates for the CEC should be members of the Regional Council. This would break the vital link between our regional and national governance and it flies in the face of Congress 2005 to support the task group recommendation that the requirement remain. The CEC is confident that this requirement is permitted under trade union legislation. We were so advised as far back as 1985 and nothing has changed since then. Nevertheless, we are happy to take the opportunity as part of the work of the task force to review the position, so we ask the movers to refer these two motions.

Finally, we oppose Rule Amendment 355, which would have regional councils elected by one member one vote rather than by branch block vote. We see no good reason to extend Tory laws to our regional elections. The branch block system is quite respectable and should not lightly be cast aside. Please vote against this motion.

Would the regions please refer Rule Amendment 352 and 353, and will delegates please vote against Rule Amendment 349, 350 and 355. Thank you, Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ray. Could I now ask the Lancashire Region, do you wish a right to reply on

349? Kevin?

BRO. K. FLANAGAN (Lancashire): If these motions, 349 and 350, are not buried under a load of paperwork I am prepared to accept reference but I would also like to know some time in the future when you are going to come back to us on them.

THE PRESIDENT: Which one are you on?

BRO. K. FLANAGAN: Motions 349 and 350.

THE PRESIDENT: We are not asking for reference on 349; it is opposed, as is 350. On 352 does Southern Region agree to refer? *(Agreed)* Thank you.

(Rule Amendment 352 was referred)

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 353, Lancashire, are you prepared to refer? *(Agreed)* Thank you.

(Rule Amendment 353 was referred)

BRO. K. FLANAGAN: "Oh, dear, what can the matter be, the CEC can't find a good excuse to batter me." To use Tory laws as an excuse for Rule 20 and not accepting it? "Oh, dear, what can the matter be." CEC, I have heard some really good stories from this rostrum over the years and that has to be the best. CEC, could you not think of anything better? Are you telling me that the Tories are the protectors of democracy in our Rule Book? Come off it! It is

unacceptable. I am saying we will not withdraw it. You have not asked me to withdraw it, you are saying oppose it. I am asking the delegates here to show their strength of feeling about democracy in this Movement. I want you to put your hands up because this is a bad rule. It has been a bad rule since the day it was put in. Do not give me weak excuses like that. It is the worst excuse I have ever had. If you do it again, I will give you the full song in full volume next time!

THE PRESIDENT: Now, it took me years to stomach Toomey singing but I do not know about yours, Kevin! Can I now move to the vote on Motion 349? The CEC is asking you to oppose.

(Rule Amendment 349 was lost)

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 350, the CEC is asking you to oppose.

(Rule Amendment 350 was lost)

THE PRESIDENT: Now we come to the singer, 355. The CEC is asking you to oppose.

(Rule Amendment 355 was lost)

THE PRESIDENT: Sorry, Kevin, it was your ruddy singing! Colleagues, the next singer – he was doing the warm-up – is not here yet. Kevin, don't ring us, we'll ring you.

CEC SPECIAL REPORT: THE SECTIONS OF THE UNION

Congress '05 approved the Special Report, "A Framework for the Future of the GMB". Recommendation 13 comprised two parts:

"(i) there should be a reduction to three sections based around Public Services, Private Services and Manufacturing and that these sections should hold sectional conferences

(ii) the CEC Recruitment and Organisation Committee progresses this matter and in doing so considers the creative use of industrial conferences under the new sectional structure to encourage greater participation by the members in the work of the Union."

The Central Executive Council is not yet in a position to report on the second limb of Recommendation 13. This Report to Congress '06 contains rule amendments to establish the three Sections.

THE THREE SECTIONS

On reflection, the CEC considers that it would be preferable to retain the title "Commercial Services Section", which is already established within the Union's structure. The CEC therefore recommends that the rule should provide for merger as follows:

- Clothing & Textile Section; Construction, Furniture, Timber and Allied Section; Engineering Section and Process Section form the new Manufacturing Section;
- Commercial Services Section; Energy and Utilities Section and Food & Leisure Section form the new Commercial Services Section

- Public Services Section remains basically unchanged.

However, some members in the Food and Leisure Section, such as those in food processing, regard their natural home as the new Manufacturing rather than the new Commercial Services Section. Elsewhere, there may be groups of members who either have not been properly allocated in the past or who might not feel at home in the new Section to which their Section is allocated. So the amended rule should allow the CEC to make exceptions to the principle of straight merger.

NATIONAL COMMITTEES AND PRESIDENTS

Following the same principle, the existing National Committees of the Sections (including co-opted members) should merge to make up the National Committees of the new Sections, but there may be cases where one or more individuals will instead transfer to another Committee.

Those National Committees will hold office until the new CEC takes up office in December 2007. One option is to provide that the Presidents of the current Sections should serve as President of their new Section on a rotation basis. However the recommended option is for National Committees at their first meeting to elect a new Section President from those members who were Presidents of their current Section. If only one member of the new National Committee was President of his/her Section prior to merger, he/she would assume the presidency of the Section without election.

NATIONAL CONFERENCES

National Conferences should continue to be held biennially. The time is right to move to a consistent basis for the election of delegates and it is recommended that we adopt the Congress model of one delegate for every complete 2,000 financial members but with a maximum of 150 delegates. Given the wide range of membership in the new Sections, the draft rule requires Regions to pay heed to the geographical and industrial distribution of their members. Where the 150 limit would otherwise be breached, places would be allocated pro rata depending on Regions' financial membership of the Section.

OFFICERS

Rule 17C4 still refers to the Apex Partnership and should be amended. We should take this opportunity to bring the rulebook into line with Officers' titles and to delete obsolete references to District Officers and Branch Administrative Officers. This requires a series of amendments, particularly to rules 17 and 37.

REGIONAL COUNCILS AND REGIONAL COMMITTEES

The rules for the election of Regional Councils are flexible and do not need to be amended, provided Congress wishes to retain the system of general voting for Section delegates. However, rule 20.8 setting the size of Regional Committees is badly out of date. It is recommended that Regional Committees should comprise:

- the Regional President
- three delegates from each of the three Sections
- up to four more delegates, as determined by the Regional Council, to ensure fair representation taking heed of the geographical and industrial distribution of their members and of the interests of special groups.

This model would produce Regional Committees of a minimum of 10 delegates and a maximum of 14 (which seems the highest number feasible for an effective management committee of a Region).

RULE 36

This rule still refers to Apex Partnership and should be amended to allow for reflect existing Congress policy, which is that all branches should move to branch allocation once a new Branch Secretary takes up office.

RULE A4 REGIONAL CONFERENCES

RULE A5 BRANCH FINANCIAL SECRETARY

These rules are no longer required and should be deleted. Regions could arrange Section conferences if they wish.

RULE 10.19 CEC POWER TO ESTABLISH NEW SECTIONS

The CEC should retain its power to establish new Sections, but we can simplify this rule.

THE CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

The current structure of the CEC is designed to facilitate democracy across a combination of 10 Regions and eight Sections. A move to three Sections would allow for a considerable simplification of the CEC structure. It is recommended that the Task Group should review the size and structure of the CEC in light of the move to three Sections and other developments, with a view to bringing rule amendments to Congress in 2007 in time for the elections later that year.

APPENDIX: RULE AMENDMENTS

Rule 8 Congress of the Union

Clause 5, line five: delete "Regional Industrial Officer"; substitute "Senior Organiser"

Lines 6 to 7: delete "Regional Organisers (to include, for the purpose of this rule, District Officers and Branch Administrative Officers who are full-time employees)"; substitute "Organisers".

Rule 10 Central Executive Council

Clause 19: delete this clause and substitute

"19 The Central Executive Council shall have power to amend the Appendix to establish new Sections of the Union."

Rule 17A Officials – Authority over

Clause A2, line four: delete "Regional Industrial Officers"; substitute "Senior Organisers"

Rule 17C Regional Industrial Officers

Amend title of rule to read "Senior Organisers"

Clause C1, line 3;
clause C2, line 1 and
clause C3 line 1:

On each occasion, delete "Regional Industrial Officer"; substitute "Senior Organiser"

Clause C4: delete this clause

Rule 17D Regional Secretary

Clause D2, line 2: delete "Regional Industrial Officer"; substitute "Senior Organiser"

Rule 17F Officials – Disciplinary Procedures

Clause F2, line 1: delete "Regional Industrial Officers"; substitute "Senior Organisers"

Rule 18 Qualifications for Office and Definition of Officers

Clause 2, line 6: delete "Regional Organisers"; substitute "Senior Organisers, Organisers"

Lines 7 and 8: delete "District Officers"

Rule 19 Branch Administrative Officers – Appointment

Delete this rule

Rule 20 Regions and their Management

Clause 8: Delete this clause and substitute:

"8 At its first meeting, the Regional Council shall elect from its own number

- (a) a President
- (b) additional members of the Regional Committee as follows
 - three delegates from each Section and

- up to four delegates as determined by the Regional Council to ensure fair representation having regard to the geographical and industrial distribution of members and the interests of special groups
- (c) the Region's representative on the Appeals Tribunal panel
- (d) two other members of the Regional Elections Committee."

Rule 22 Regional Committees

Clause 6, lines 1 and 2: delete ", District Officer"

Rule 32 BMS Section Members' Superannuation Fund – Full Benefit Section

Clause 6, line 1: delete "Technical Craft Section"; insert "Manufacturing Section"

Clause 7, lines 2 and 5: delete "Technical Craft Section"; insert "Manufacturing Section" on each occasion

Rule 34 Payment of Expenses etc.

Clause 2, lines 4 and 5: delete "(excluding Branch Administrative Officers and District Officers)"

Rule 36 Branch Allocation

Clause 1: delete this clause and substitute

"1 Where Congress so specifies, this rule will apply to Branches in place of rule 35."

Rule 37 Branches

Clause 3, lines 7 to 10: delete "Where a Branch Administrative Officer is appointed, s/he shall attend meetings of the Branch Committee with the right to speak and vote. Where a District Officer is appointed, s/he shall attend meetings of the Branch Committee with the right to speak but not to vote."

Clause 4, lines 5 and 6: delete "(or if so directed prior to week ending 5th January 1985, a District Officer or Branch Administrative Officer)"

Clause 7, lines 2 and 3: delete ",but not whole-time Branch Secretaries, District Officers, or Branch Administrative Officers,"

Clause 11, lines 1 and 2: delete "(other than a District Officer or a Branch Administrative Officer)"

Clause 15, lines 2 and 3: delete "(other than a District Officer or a Branch Administrative Officer)"

Rule A1 The Sections of the Union

Delete clauses 1 to 8 and insert:

"1 Members of the Union shall be allocated to one of its three Sections:

- the Manufacturing Section
- the Commercial Services Section
- the Public Services Section.

2 Save where the Central Executive Council otherwise directs, members of

- the Clothing and Textile Section
- the Construction, Furniture, Timber and Allied Section
- the Engineering Section and
- the Process Section

at the adoption of this rule shall become members of the Manufacturing Section.

3 Save where the Central Executive Council otherwise directs, members of

- the Commercial Services Section
- the Energy and Utilities Section and
- the Food and Leisure Section

at the adoption of this rule shall become members of the Commercial Services Section.”

Rule A2 National Committees

Insert Clauses 2A and 2B:

“2A The Members of the National Committees of

- the Clothing and Textile Section
- the Construction, Furniture, Timber and Allied Section
- the Engineering Section and
- the Process Section

at the adoption of this rule who become members of the Manufacturing Section shall form the first National Committee of that Section. At its first meeting, the Committee shall elect the President of the Section from among those of its members who were President of their Section immediately prior to the adoption of this rule.

2B The Members of the National Committees of

- the Commercial Services Section
- the Energy and Utilities Section and
- the Food and Leisure Section

at the adoption of this rule who become members of the Commercial Services Section shall form the National Committee of that Section. At its first meeting, the Committee shall elect the President of the Section from among those of its members who were President of their Section immediately prior to the adoption of this rule.”

Rule A3 Section National Conferences

Clause 2: Delete this clause and substitute:

“2 Representation at National Conferences shall be on the basis of one regional delegate for every complete 2,000 financial members of the Section in the Region up to a maximum across all regions of 150 delegates. Regions shall take steps to ensure fair representation, regard being had to the geographical and industrial distribution of members of the Section in the Region. Delegates to National Conferences shall hold office for two years.”

Rule A4 Regional Conferences

Delete this rule

Rule A5 Branch Financial Secretary

Delete this rule

Rule A6 AA Staff Association

Delete this rule

(Adopted)

BRO. H. DONALDSON (Regional Secretary, GMB Scotland): Colleagues, last year’s Congress approved the report on the future of our union. Recommendation 13 was that we should move to three sections based around public services, private services, and manufacturing. This special report implements that decision. I will not rehearse the reasons for moving to three sections, they were debated fully in Newcastle last year. This report will implement that decision and highlight its key points.

First, we do not need to reinvent the wheel by sifting through every industrial and occupational

classification, a task we carried out some years ago. Instead, we suggest the broad-brush approach to establishing the three sections. The public services section will remain basically unchanged, clothing and textiles, engineering, process, and security sections will merge to form the new manufacturing section. Commercial services, energy and utilities, and food and leisure, will come together under a new commercial services section. This is a better title than “private services” which suggests something entirely different. That said, some groups of members might not fit well under a straight merger.

For example, food processing members might feel more at home in manufacturing rather than in commercial services. So, while keeping to a general approach, the rule change allows the CEC a leeway which we will use sparingly, I can assure you, to adjust the boundaries a little.

Secondly, all current members of section and national committees should continue to hold office. No one will lose his or her place on the national committee. We propose that the new committees should elect their president from those who are currently section presidents. This seems preferable to a rotational system.

Thirdly, section conferences should continue to be held annually but, colleagues, we should standardise how we elect delegates. We propose adopting the Congress model of one delegate per every 2,000 financial members of the section in a region. The report sets a maximum of 150 delegates which is already the limit for what will remain the largest section, public services. Where the 150 maximum might be breached the CEC would, as is now the case, use its general powers and allocate these places pro rata among the regions dependent on their section membership.

That is the core of the report and its rule amendments. President, Congress, moving to three sections will allow us to concentrate resources where they are most needed, and that is in the workplace. We appreciate that existing sections value their identity, especially where they are based on unions that transferred into the GMB. However, we cannot hide from the loss of membership which in some of the sections is so serious that the future of the section itself cannot be assured. It is far better to reorganise our recruitment efforts now based on strong sections that continue to represent the traditions of our membership. The special report covers the work of the task group and the decisions of Congress 2005. I commend the report to Congress and ask that you support it. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Harry.

BRO. M. RYAN (CEC, Energy & Utilities): Colleagues, Harry Donaldson has outlined the central provisions of the report. I will explain the changes that result from how the main rule amendments impact on other rules.

First, the report will delete all references to old sections, that includes references to officers' titles we no longer use, such as regional staff officer used for senior APEX officers in the regions. Next, Rule 20.8, which sets the size of regional committees. It is badly out of date; for example, it still refers to APEX partnership. One option is to base regional committees solely on the three sections. However, we came to the view that that would be too restrictive so we propose giving regions some

discretion on the size and the make-up of their regional committees. The new system provides for regional committees made up of the regional president, nine section delegates, that is three from each of the three sections, and an important development, up to a maximum of four more members as regional council decides. The Regional Council is best placed to know how many seats the region needs. The only condition is that the council should ensure fair representation. It must have regard not only to the geographical and industrial distribution of the regions' members but also to the interest of special groups. This will move our equalities agenda forward while allowing regional councils to pay heed to key groups of members. This will produce a regional committee of between ten and 14 delegates as each region decides for itself.

Colleagues, as is customary, all rule amendments will come into force at the end of this month. The transfer of members to the two new sections will take place as soon as possible after Congress. That will clear the way for sections national committees to merge and, where necessary, elect a president.

How will this affect current regional committee members elected for a four-year term? Rule 20.8 will continue as at present to provide that the first meeting of the newly elected regional council elects the regional committee. The regional councils were elected in 2005 and they then elected their regional committees. So, the change to our regional committees will not have any impact until the first meeting of the regional councils elected in 2009; by that means we protect existing members of the regional committees. If in the meantime a vacancy occurs on a regional committee, the vacancy will be filled under the unchanged clause 7 of Rule 20, i.e. under the current and not the new structure.

Finally, the report has obvious implications for the CEC itself. As the report makes clear, we are reviewing the size and effectiveness of the CEC. We intend to bring to Congress 2007 proposals that take full account of the move to three sections and our priorities in the years to come.

President, Congress, we are a union on the move. This report and the change to three sections is part of our overall plan designed to allocate more resources to the workplace. We appreciate that some of you will regret the passing of the existing sections. However, we must gear up for the stiff competition from other unions and we cannot ignore how badly our current sections have been hit by loss of membership. I second this report and hope that Congress will adopt it. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mick. I know I have London Region here but are there any other regions that wish to come in on the report?

BRO. G. WELLS (Lancashire): Congress and President,

I am speaking on the CEC's Special Report: Sections of the Union. For quite some time there has been a strong feeling that our rule book needed a fresh coat of paint and up-dating. Moving to three sections is a big step. Whilst I accept that Congress 2005 approved the document entitled: *A Framework for the Future of the GMB*, we believe that every path needs to be explored before the proposed rationalisation takes place. However, Lancashire Region supports the document.

BRO. A. KIGHTLY (Northern): I speak in support of the CEC's Special Report on the Sections of the Union. Congress, Northern Region welcomes the proposals in this report. They are sensible, practical and offer a logical way forward for our Union. The introduction of the three new sections consists of manufacturing, commercial services and public services, which will strengthen our organisation and allow us to recruit and organise in a more focused and streamlined way. Thank you.

BRO. S. MCKENZIE (London): I am speaking in broad support of the CEC's Special Report. I know that everyone is tired so I will try and be brief. This report, I think, is part of the rebuilding process in relation to internal union democracy which began last year with the re-introduction of the annual congress. The decline in internal union democracy led to terrible problems for the Union which you all know about far better than I ever can. I think that streamlining the structure to reflect the reality of the sad decline in some sections of the economy and, consequently, our membership and the growth in others is essential, otherwise representation becomes disproportional. We saw a dramatic decline in manufacturing and heavy industry in London decades ago and our growth has been mainly in the public and service sectors. This is the first part of the next stage in restoring Union democracy, which is absolutely essential and I urge you, please, to support.

BRO. J. DONNELLY (Liverpool, North Wales & Irish): I am speaking in support of the recommendations contained in the CEC's Special Report: The Sections of the Union. Congress, these decisions are not easy for any of us. A number of delegates will have arrived in the GMB through a series of mergers who have been keen to retain their long tradition and sense of identity. However, Congress, we must move on. This is not change for the sake of change but is restructuring that will make us more efficient and stronger. Surely, our real identity should be in a strong and independent GMB. Thank you.

BRO. R. REEVES (Southern): President and Congress, Southern Region fully supports the CEC's Special Report: The Sections of the Union. It is clear that

there are too many sections in terms of membership. Nearly half are in the public services sections. The other seven sections are much smaller. They are simply not viable. This report is well thought out and represents the way forward. Thank you.

BRO. D. KEMPSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, the Birmingham & West Midlands Region fully supports the CEC's Special Report: The Sections of the Union. There are a few points that we need to make in supporting the Special Report.

We recognise that Public Services is the fastest growing section with more than 42% of the membership, but this situation must not be at the cost of others, namely, manufacturing, food, energy, leisure and all other areas that the GMB covers. Moving to three sections will work well if we have full inclusion of all sections of our Union with no exclusions.

Another good point in the Report is the amended rule, should issues arise, about what sections a group may be in. Being flexible can only help. That said, Congress, the Birmingham & West Midlands Region fully supports.

SIS. A. LEADER (South Western): Congress, the GMB South Western Region fully endorses and supports the CEC Report: Sections of the Union. The South Western Region has discussed and debated these rule amendments to establish three sections at great length. In addition, Conference, the item of our branch consultation exercise felt it important to ensure that there is industrial identity and autonomy within the new sections, which is important, we believe, to recruit, be effective and, as the CEC Report "Workplace Organisation" states: "Our purpose is to grow the Union in the workplace". South Western Region supports.

BRO. P. SOPER (Midland & East Coast): Supporting the CEC's Special Report on The Sections of the Union. What I would like to be doing is standing at this rostrum rejecting *this* because the sections would have been too big but, sadly, as we all know, the massive losses of jobs in clothing, textile and engineering industries have reduced our numbers in each section. I am a firm believer in sections and I believe that *this* report is the only way in which we can protect the future of the Union's sections.

SIS. M. BOYD (GMB Scotland): GMB Scotland, responding to the CEC's Special Report: The Sections of the Union. Congress, this week is about change and renewal and this document sets out part of the process. Congress 2005 approved the Special Report: *A Framework for the future of the GMB*. The reduction to three sections has been an integral part of this. Whilst there is always emotion for ending sections, on balance GMB Scotland believes that this

document achieves that balance and creates a sectional basis relevant to a modern union of the 21st Century.

We also accept that the CEC is not yet in a position to report on the second limb of recommendation 13. We know of the comments and sensible approach to those groups of members who might wish a review of their section allocation, and we request that this be done with due sensitivity and in consultation with any affected groups. With these comments, GMB Scotland supports the Special Report.

THE PRESIDENT: Having heard from all the regions, I now put the Special Report to Congress. All those in favour, please show?

(The CEC Special Report: The Sections of the Union was Carried)

THE PRESIDENT: I now move back to the agenda, but first I have to make two announcements. The first is that Remploi Fighting Fund Prize Draw 491-495. That is a DVD player. The second prize is a Freeview box, 206-210. The third prize is a bottle of vodka, 171-175. The fourth prize is a hamper, 451-455. Please collect your prizes from the Disability stand.

Also Pellacraft have put a free raffle form on your tables. Please fill them in. It is for £250 and the draw is tomorrow. Thank you.

ADDRESS BY BILLY BRAGG

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, it gives me great pleasure to introduce our guest, who has just arrived on the platform, straight from London. Billy Bragg is described as "The UK's foremost political singer/songwriter/entertainer and folk hero. His musical range and style, lyrics and songs invoke passion, consciousness, honesty, peace and love. His first introduction to politics was being president at the great Anti-Fascist/Anti-Racist Carnival in the late '70s organised by Rock Against Racism against the National Front. Billy is an avid anti-Fascist and anti-racist activist and political activist. He helped to launch the GMB's Anti-Fascist/Anti-Racist Campaign targeting the BNP in Brighton last year and played his Hope Not Hate Tour this year on behalf of the GMB's Inspired Anti-Fascist Initiative.

Billy is a great and committed friend of the GMB and of the trades union and international labour Movement. It gives me great pleasure to ask Billy Bragg to address Congress. *(Applause)*

BILLY BRAGG: Thank you very much, Mary, and Congress for inviting me here today to have the opportunity to address you. Paul Kenny was asking me if I had ever addressed the Union's Congress before, and I have not, neither my own union, the

Musicians' Union nor any of the other unions which I have worked closely with in the past 20-25 years.

It makes me very proud to be speaking for the first time at the GMB Congress because my great grandfather, Frederick Bragg, worked in the Beckton Gas Works where Will Thorne organised the original National Union of Gas Labourers, and it was there in the 1880s where the first industrial union in this country was founded by Will Thorne. Basically, the men were working 12 hours in the retort sheds, turning coke into town gas. Thorne had been working there for a number of years and was seeking to organise the men around the issue of an eight hour shift rather than the 12 hour shifts they were working. He was very clever in that instead of having a strike he organised a series of public meetings. Almost 100% of the workforce from the Beckton Gas Works met in the Barking Road and then they marched with their banner and band to other gas works around London so that they could speak to the workers.

Eventually, Thorne was able to make the employees understand the strength of feeling and the support for his Union, and the owners of the gas works gave in without a fight. So what happened established for the first time the principle of the eight-hour day.

The establishment of the eight-hour day was really significant because many of the men who worked at the Beckton Gas Works, which is just between East Ham and Barking out there on East Ham Marshes, were laid off in the summer when there was not so much call for town gas and they found work in the London docks. It was those men who the previous winter had been organised by Will Thorne, who went on to begin the struggle for the Dockers' Tanner in 1889, which, again, was a very significant strike in that it was the first strike which necessitated actual membership to a union. You will have to trust me when I say that I have asked the GMB to look into this to see if we could find any reference to my great grandfather.

I do not think that union organise that today you organise with your members. However, when the 1889 dock strike took place, money came in from other unions throughout the world. It necessitated them building a union with membership in the way that we think of trade unions today. Those two strikes taken together, the gas workers' struggle at Beckton and the strike for the Dockers' Tanner were the foundation of the trade union Movement, as we know it today, and directly led to the foundation of the Labour Party.

So what happened in Beckton Gas Works in 1888 was pretty significant, including for my great grandfather. He worked there as a rope runner. I am wondering if anyone here knows what it means. I do not know what that means. I just read it from his obituary. He worked there as a rope runner until 1896 when he left to go and open a boozer in Barking

Town Quay. That is another story altogether, which I may be able to relate to you later this evening over a pint of what my great grandfather was selling.

The other reason why I am very very pleased to be here today to speak to you is the great work that the GMB has specifically has done during the past 20 years in supporting my industry, in encouraging people like myself to go out and take a platform.

The GMB London Region has sponsored a number of my tours in which we have gone out not just to do gigs but also to talk to people about issues of the minimum wage, applying to younger people, the rights of the Hillingdon workers and Asian workers. All of these issues I was able to take out on the platform and speak about them from the stage knowing that GMB members would be in the foyer of the gig so that when people came out with questions on what I was talking about GMB members would be able to talk to them and given them the requisite information.

Much as it would be great if singer songwriters could stand up *here* and sing songs and change the world, we cannot. Unfortunately, that is not within our power. The power of changing the world belongs to the audience. All we can do from here is to offer them another perspective so that they go away thinking, "Well, I never knew that before". If GMB members are in the foyer they can immediately connect with those people and help them to answer their questions.

The reason why I know you can change the perspective of people through rock music was because my first ever political experience was as a 19 year old in 1978 when I marched through the streets of East London to Victoria Park in Hackney to see the Clash play a Rock Against Racism gig. That was a great day. The Clash played in the afternoon and they were brilliant. I thought that was the height of political chic to see the Clash.

Afterwards, a guy by the name of Tom Robinson came out. Tom is now a DJ on 6 Music. I listen to him on some evenings when I am cooking the tea. He then had a great band and he had a song called *Sing if You're Glad to be Gay* which, believe me, in 1978 was a very brave thing to be saying. When he sang this song, all the men around me and my friends began to kiss each other on the lips. We had not realised but we had marched into the park and while we were standing watching The Clash, up behind us had marched a bunch of guys with a huge banner which said *Sing if You're Glad to be Gay*. I had never met an out gay man, so me and my friends, rather embarrassingly, kind of shuffled away.

I first thought was "Why are these gays here at this racism concert? This is about black people". It did not take long for the penny to drop with me to realise that the fascists, the racists and the conservatives are against anybody who is in any way different from their narrow definition of what

society should be. I came away from that gig that I should try as often as I could to be as different as I could and to get up their noses to challenge their narrow idea of society.

I mention that because that is the example I think of every night when I go out on stage. I was just a kid in a concert. When I came into Victory Park in Hackney I had one set of ideas, but when I left the park those ideas had been changed. The world had not changed. The world was just as it was when I went home on the Tube that night, but my perception of it had changed forever. That is why, throughout my career, I have tried not only just to sing about politics but to engage in politics.

Sometimes that has been relatively straightforward because we have all been engaged, be it during the miners' strike in 1984/1985 and during 1987 when we were trying to get Labour elected. Everybody was engaged. In those long and lonely years, during the 1990s when politics was not fashionable in pop any more, it was a little harder to be Billy Bragg because you cannot do political pop music without context. You need the context of what is going on, otherwise you are just standing there shooting your mouth off. So when I looked around me to try and find a way of bringing that context into my gigs, it was the unions, and particularly the GMB, who stepped forward who said "We have campaigns which we would like you to go out, to stand on that platform and talk about".

I have worked and travelled around the world. I have worked closely with people from different political parties. My experience abroad has been pretty similar to my experience in Britain, and that is that political parties change their spots overnight, often without asking their members.

My other experience is that wherever I have gone around the world to work with trade unions they have more or less been the same. They have been standing up for their members, their members' families and the communities in which they live. By and large, I have worked more with the union Movement than I have with left-wing political parties.

The actions that we took together out on the road reached their peak when we were able, again with the help of the GMB, especially Paul and the London Region, to convince Michael Eavis at the Glastonbury Festival, the biggest and most important cultural event that our country puts on, to allow us to have a tent where we just did union activities, where there were debates during the day time, where we put bands on during the evening and where we brought young people in and tried to explain to them what a union was about.

Why would you want to do that at a rock festival? Most rock festivals are full of branding. Kids are seeing Pepsi-Cola, Orange Communications, Dr. Martin's Boots, etc., and they associate those brands with enjoying themselves and being hip. So when

they come into the left field tent, which is probably as big as this hall, it has a steel floor, a bar and a huge PA, after it rains, which it does every now and then at Glastonbury, we get young people coming into the tent out of the rain to drink at the Fair Trade bar, to see some of the videos, to listen to the debates and to hear the bands. They go away and they associate that nice warm place out of the rain with trade unions.

I think that the GMB's presence at rock festivals like Glastonbury, and their leading role in that festival, is a really good way of putting our issues and ideas across to young people. They are doing an incredible job. They bring trade unionists in from all over the world to speak about their experiences. Things do get fractious sometimes. People have strong opinions. I can tell you this. I have been to a lot of rock festivals around the world and there is nothing like Glastonbury. Also, there is nothing like the left field at Glastonbury. It is a really great, great thing. If you ever have the opportunity to visit Glastonbury and see us in action, do not forget to bring your wellies because wellies at Glastonbury are very expensive if you have not already got some with you.

The reason why I really wanted to come to the rostrum to thank you today was for the support that the GMB has, particularly, put into the *Hope Not Hate Tour*, which was a tour I undertook in the weeks before the May elections. The reason why I wanted to take part was, obviously, as Mary was saying earlier, because of my support for the anti-Fascist struggle. As I said, I came into this through *Rock Against Racism*. To see the British National Party come back and be the new National Front, to me, is dreadful. I remember how my industry responded to that, and I hope we will respond to that again.

Above and beyond that issue, I am very proud where I come from. I come from a town in Essex called Barking. In 2004 the British National Party won a council by-election there. Previously it was a solid Labour ward. They won with 52% of the vote. This was a real shock to everybody. I only heard about it the night before. Someone rang me the night before to tell me. How this could happen in Barking, which has been Labour ever since the town was formed with a council in 1931, I really do not know.

You will know that in the weeks before the council elections, unfortunately, the Labour MP in Barking, for whatever reason, and I do not know why, said in the national newspapers that eight out of ten people in Barking were going to vote for the British National Party. That was never on the cards. No party would get that kind of vote. But it signalled to everyone who wanted to put the boot into multiculturalism, to the diverse society that we have in London, to the Labour Party and to the union Movement, every bar stool bore decided, probably for

the first time in their lives, that they were going to go out and vote in a council election. The result is that we now have 12 BNP councillors in Barking and Dagenham.

This situation is a real challenge to us because these are our people. This is not Debden or wherever it was in Hertfordshire where a BNP councillor was elected where there is no diversity or multiculturalism. These are our people. The people in Barking have always voted Labour because the Labour Party has always delivered for them with houses and social services.

What has happened in Barking is not actually about race. It is about resources. It is about the resources which ordinary working people need to have a decent standard of living. Barking and Dagenham have the lowest house prices in the whole of London. The prosperity that the market was supposed to deliver has not yet got to Barking, and Barking is not the only place in Britain like that. There are places throughout Britain like that where great prosperity runs alongside deprivation. The people in Barking, traditionally, have worked for either the Ford Motor Company at Dagenham or for the ancillary companies around Fords which is where my father worked.

When I left school in 1974, 30,000 people were working in Dagenham making cars. There are now 3,000 people making diesel engines. Everybody who has managed to get out and move on to other jobs has already gone. Those people who are still there are feeling deserted and they are feeling deserted by the Labour Party.

The things which they traditionally relied upon to keep their communities together, most importantly council housing. The Tories' right to buy council housing shot a huge hole through the availability of council housing in Dagenham and Barking. I have to say that Barking and Dagenham Council has managed to hold on to more council houses than any places. The fact is that because houses are so cheap in Barking and Dagenham has meant that many people are trying to come into the borough. There has been a huge increase and demographic change in the people in the borough. The British National Party has been very clever in targeting our borough.

We have the situation now where the BNP is the main opposition party in Barking and Dagenham. Surprisingly, the Tories and Liberal Democrats only chose to stand in four of the 13 wards where the BNP stood. So Barking and Dagenham Council now consists of 39 Labour councillors, one Tory councillor and a dozen BNP councillors. That is a huge challenge to all of us, I think. Let no one be in any doubt what they stand for. They may dress themselves up. They may not be the skinheads of all. They may not be marching through Lewisham with their flags and Nazi salutes, but they are led by a man who told the *Mail on Sunday* before the election that he believed that

the gas chambers at Auschwitz were built after the war. This is a man who is prepared to make excuses for Adolf Hitler. I cannot understand how anyone who believes that can, in any way, be a British patriot. Maybe that is another argument for another time.

The challenge which they lay down to us is one which, I think, we are all thinking about and considering. The question is how to deal with the BNP in Barking? The way that we deal with them, I believe, is to get to the top of our priorities those issues which the people in Barking have traditionally voted for. Those things, quite simply, are free health care, free education, decent affordable housing and proper pensions. *(Applause)*

When I look around at the political parties which are going to standing up for those issues, I do not really see them. The only people who seem to be putting this issue to the top of their agenda are the trade unions. Without putting too much pressure on you, you are our great hope against the BNP. If you and your members can get these issues to the top of the political tree, that will help.

You must remember that the GMB has done a huge amount of work on the ground since that original BNP councillor was elected in 2004. The GMB sent Mick Rix to Barking to help organise. He did a great job. Union members from all over London came into the borough talking to residents and leafleting. The Labour vote was up in Barking and Dagenham. I repeat, the Labour vote was up. That, I think, is attributed to the work which Mick Rix and the Union members who came to work with him did.

As I said, the people in Barking and Dagenham are very angry. They feel insecure and deserted. Unfortunately, they feel deserted by people like us who have always believed in those Welfare State issues.

I am very proud to have been given the opportunity to address you this afternoon. I want to say a very big thank you to the Union for the good work it did out in Barking and Dagenham. I know that

we can count on you to carry on standing up for those ordinary values which the British people built into the Welfare State in 1945 which, sadly, in the past few years, we have let go bye-the-bye. You are the only people keeping this flame alive and we are counting on you to help us in Barking and Dagenham and the rest of the country to defeat the Fascist racists of the BNP. Thank you very much. *(A standing ovation)*

THE PRESIDENT: Billy, before you sit down – you are welcome to stay with us during the next part of our debate – as a memento, please accept this gift. I know you have never had a drop of it before. The whisky comes from distilleries employing our members and one book of trade union posters. Also, this box includes glasses to put the whisky in, which were made by our members in Birmingham.

BILLY BRAGG: Thank you very much, Congress. Thank you very much, Mary. I do appreciate it. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: The next item of business will be for Andy Worth to move his Report. I will then be turning back to yesterday's agenda. Just to give you notice, I will be calling Motions 130, 131, 132, 133 and 134, to start with. I want to remind Congress that this year is 30 years since the Grunwick strike. Many of you in this room will remember that strike. In London Region you will find some of the notices. It is a celebration in memory of those black and Asian women who fought against the Tories, basically. The event will be at the Tricycle Theatre on 17th September, 11-4. Please visit the London Region if you would like to watch the film of the Grunwick strike. I do not need to see the film because I know what happened as I was there. It is worthwhile. We still meet some of these brave women who tried, vainly, to get rights. Thank you, colleagues.

I call Andy Worth to move his Report.

REGIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT - MIDLAND AND EAST COAST REGION

1. Membership and Recruitment

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--------|
| Total membership | 53,790 |
| Women membership | 19,571 |
| Section membership (by each Section): | |
| Clothing & Textile | 615 |
| Commercial Services | 3,399 |
| CFTA | 4,707 |
| Energy & Utilities | 2,943 |
| Engineering | 7,483 |
| Food & Leisure | 11,114 |
| Process | 3,489 |
| Public Services | 20,040 |

| | |
|---|--------|
| Grade 1 members | 38,651 |
| Grade 2 members | 9,141 |
| Sick, retired & unemployed members | 5,998 |
| Total number recruited 1.1.2005 – 31.12.2005 | 6,725 |
| Gross increase/decrease 1.1.2005 – 31.12.2005 | 1,782 |
| Net increase/decrease 1.1.2005 – 31.12.2005 | (756) |
| Membership on Check-off | 31,345 |
| Membership on Direct Debit | 12,799 |
| Financial membership | 50,589 |

Whilst the Region's financial membership dropped by 2.3%, as we continue to cleanse our membership system, we did see growth in the Public Services Section of 6.3%.

It is recognised that manufacturing in the East Midlands has taken some big hits in jobs and its knock on effect has had an impact on all other sections.

RESPONSE TO ORGANISATION AGENDA

This Region has responded to the Organisation Agenda with a proactive position of accurate membership records.

In order to be successful in any planning we have a clear starting point on which to measure success or otherwise. We have demonstrated by results we can recruit, however retention is letting us down. It is with that in mind, our Region has wholeheartedly grasped the collective nettle and is focusing our energies into reinvigorating our workplace representatives into organising themselves as a cohesive force within the workplace. This is to be done by a series of road shows (area forums) workplace face to face meetings with Shop Stewards and Full Time Officers backed up by a new Regional education strategy of educating our new (existing) rep on what are the basic skills required for an effective workplace representative, and not to pitch it too high and risk our volunteers switching off. There will be the opportunity to progress through a more comprehensive education programme if and when required.

It is felt in our Region, if the education programme develops basic organisational skills and knowledge it will follow that the workplace will develop into an organised self sufficient workplace unit where the relevance of the representation of the Union is placed higher than the relevance of their Branch or Full Time Officer support on workplace issues. This is evident where we have organised Shop Stewards Committees who meet regularly. Full Time Officers now have ownership of their worksheets to develop and grow and can be measured against their own personal Development Plans for 2005/6.

So, from organising from the ground floor so to speak, it then opens up time and space for Branch Secretaries and Full Time Officers to concentrate on Branch growth and relevance of strategic planning of worksheets to encompass all local, Regional and National targets.

RECRUITMENT TARGETS AND CAMPAIGNS

Using Workplace Audits and visits, we are better placed to direct our resources using the analysis of the Workplace Audit to prioritise our targets. This Region has, for some time, used the Officer's time and efforts effectively by pre planning targets and resources, culminating in our new Regional recruiting/organising strategy (planned for the whole of 2006).

We have three area teams, Northern, Central and Southern with each area dedicating one week per quarter on a rolling basis to pre determined targets such as Local Authorities, schools, using the National School Support Staff folder which, to date, have secured 784 new members in the Region, alongside that the Full Time Officers have dedicated one day per fortnight to target their own worksheet priority areas, along with an area Recruitment Officer. These days can be used for consolidation or organisational visits, pre determined to address the organising agenda. This is outside of their day to day servicing duties.

Our aim is to build on our ability to improve our organisational skills by referring to 'Fresh Start for Branches' and 'A Framework for the Future of the GMB'.

This is done by interface with our members direct who remind us of their needs and where we can improve. One of our successes is the 'Employment Law' Road Shows for our members and activists

and this is done in conjunction with Thompsons Solicitors throughout the Region.

REGIONAL AND LEARNING ORGANATIONAL ACTIVITY

At the end of 2005 we had achieved 16 new Union Learner Representatives (89 total) this as a result of drawing down funding for a ULR Co-Coordinator who works closely with our lay reps and Full Time Officers and is placed in our Education Department. A major success has been the Scarborough Adult Initiative for Learning (SAIL) Project in Scarborough, which secured paid release for our Union Learner Reps and is written into our agreement with the employers.

We identified in last year's report that our view for recruitment and retention is that 'one strategy fits all'. We are still of that view and we go further to suggest that the wheel is not broken but merely stalled, and we know how to start it again and that is by going back to basic organising within the workplace.

ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT SITUATION – EAST MIDLANDS

Population

Although the East Midlands is the fourth largest region in terms of area, it has the second smallest population of the English regions, at 4.2 million residents, 7% of the UK total. The region's population comprises of slightly more women than men, at 51% compared to 49%. The East Midlands has approximately twice as many people economically active as economically inactive.

Urban and Rural

The East Midlands is the third most rural region in England, with 29.5% of the population living in rural areas.

Population Trends

The region's population is projected to increase by 13% between 2003 and 2028, exceeding the English average of 11%. The pensionable age group will be the principle driver of this growth, increasing by 63.4% over the forecast period. This will have significant implications for health care and labour market participation.

Ethnic Minorities

In the 2001 Census, 9% of the East Midlands population classified themselves as coming from an ethnic minority background.

Migrant Workers

Migrant workers are concentrated in the Health, Education, IT, Hospitality and Agriculture sectors, and address shortages at two extremes of the labour market with skilled migrants filling vacancies in Professional Occupations, whilst lower skilled migrants play an important role in addressing shortages in temporary and casual employment in Elementary Occupations. Those with 250+ employees account for more than 45% of total employment in the region.

Employment

The structure of employment in the East Midlands is very similar to the UK, with a slightly higher level of part-time employment and a slightly lower level of self-employment. Female part-time jobs are forecast to account for the largest proportion of new jobs in the future, whilst male full-time jobs are forecast to decline.

Skills and Qualifications

The East Midlands can be described as being in a 'low pay low skill equilibrium' with a lower than average proportion of the workforce with higher level qualifications and an above average proportion with no qualifications.

2. General Organisation

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Regional Senior Organisers | 3 |
| Membership Development Officers | 0 |
| Regional Organisers | 11 |
| Recruitment and Organisation Officers | 3 |
| Regional Recruitment Officers | 0 |
| No. of Branches | 109 |
| BAOs | 0 |

| | |
|--------------------------|----|
| New Branches | 2 |
| Branch Equality Officers | 40 |

CHANGES IN ADMINISTRATION

This 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. Reference has been made in other parts of this report to the Organising Agenda within the Region.

3. Benefits

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------|
| Dispute | - |
| Total Disablement | - |
| Working Accident | £4,595 |
| Occupational Fatal Accident | £3,870 |
| Non-occupational Fatal Accident | £2,200 |
| Funeral | £15,651 |

4. Journals and Publicity

Whilst reviewing our communications to our members it was felt that the referral point must centre round our website which, after consultation with our members, it was recommended to re build it to make it more relevant to our members and to have it continually updated. We are still reviewing our twice yearly magazine 'Contact' to make it a members magazine and not an activist and officers role of honour, albeit that we still have to publicise successes.

A new updated version of our Membership Handbook has been completed and as a matter of course we issue the 'Frequently Asked Questions' document to all new Shop Stewards.

To date we have 55 Branches who have access to computers and there is an increase in Branch websites assisted by the Union Web Team in the initial set up process.

We now cascade press releases to the media by adapting the message to reflect the local officer teams on an individual basis to raise the officers and GMB profile in their locality. At one point we had a regular industrial question and answer slot on local radio phone in programme in the Hull area. Our activity in the community is also bringing our relevance to voluntary groups and we continue to sponsor worthwhile causes and groups in the community as a whole. Our aim is to have the media have the GMB as a first point of contact for all matters industrial, political and social.

OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE OF EMPLOYMENT

The occupational structure of employment in the East Midlands is more heavily weighted towards lower tier occupations, requiring few or no qualifications, and comparatively under-represented in higher tier occupations, usually requiring higher level qualifications. The occupational structure of employment has shifted significantly, as the decline of primary and manufacturing sectors has been accompanied by a shift from 'blue collar' manual activities to more service orientated manual activities.

EARNINGS

The analysis of the East Midlands labour market supports the view that the 'low pay low skill equilibrium' persists, with a low demand for skills coupled with high employment rates. A ready supply of workers with little or no qualifications enables some businesses in the region to maintain a competitive strategy on the basis of low cost.

The gender gap (as measured by the median hourly pay of full-time employees, excluding overtime) narrowed between 2004 and 2005 to its lowest value since records began. The gap between women's median hourly pay and men's was 13.0%, compared with the 14.5% recorded in April 2004. The median hourly rate for men went up 3.1% to £11.31, while the rate for women increased by 4.9% to £9.84.

The largest difference was in East Midlands where women's median pay was 15.9% less than men's.

5. Legal Services

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

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| Applications for Legal Assistance | 971 |
| Legal Assistance Granted | 942 |
| Cases in which Outcome became known | |
| Total | 1,206 |
| Withdrawn | 386 |
| Lost in Court | 1 |
| Settled | 818 (£4,774,956.29) |
| Won in Court | 1 (£19,722.09) |
| Total Compensation | £4,794,678.20 |
| Cases outstanding at 31.12.2005 | 1,473 |

(b) Employment Tribunals (notified to Legal Department)

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Claims supported by Union | 225 |
| Cases in which Outcome became known | |
| Total | 195 |
| Withdrawn | 71 |
| Lost in Tribunal | 3 |
| Settled | 98 (£220,259.03) |
| Won in Court | 23 (£25,994.24) |
| Total Compensation | £246,253.27 |
| Cases outstanding at 31.12.2005 | 461 |

(c) Other Employment Law Cases

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Supported by Union | - |
| Unsuccessful | - |
| Damages/Compensation | - |
| Cases outstanding at 31.12.2005 | - |

(d) Social Security Cases

| | |
|---------------------------------|----|
| Supported by Union | 32 |
| Successful | 16 |
| Cases outstanding at 31.12.2005 | 16 |

Legal Services within the Region are constantly being reviewed as they continue to be a big "seller" to existing and potential members.

We ensure that members and non-members know that our legal services are genuinely free, such as our welfare benefits service, which continues to be very popular. Many of our members use the service to help them obtain benefits they may be entitled to claim and our two trained representatives have proved to be an invaluable resource. They are on hand to assist with filling in forms, to make calls for our members and to help them in any way they can.

Since the implementation of the Disputes Regulations at the end of October 2004 we have noticed, we think because of these Regulations, a marked increase in our members rather than choosing to go via the Employment Tribunal route, opting to leave their employment by a Compromise Agreement.

Personal injury claims within the Region have dropped by almost 200 compared to the previous year's figures. We would like to think this is because of our improved health and safety service in the work place but is also due in part, to many "no win, no fee" solicitors advertising in local news papers. Also, insurance companies are passing road traffic accident claims through to their solicitors to deal with as these very rarely come through us now. Our solicitors will shortly be planning a Regional campaign to encourage members to use the GMB's solicitors which, of course, are totally free. This service also includes personal injury claims for family members (non-work related) and medical negligence, again for members and their families.

Thompsons have attended a number of Branch meetings throughout the year, addressing them on various topics. We have also jointly held with Thompsons, a dozen evening seminars where many activists and members attended and were briefed on a wide variety of employment issues. Our free will service also continues to be a very popular benefit.

Over the past year we have also abolished the administration charge for any new claims settled over £5,000, again passing the benefit on to our members.

6. Equal Rights

REGIONAL EQUAL RIGHTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

This last year has been a lot more positive both Regionally and Nationally. The Region's RERAC has met four times with one of these being a joint meeting with the Regional Race Committee. The two Committees have joint interests in a number of areas, one being disability. A very in depth discussion regarding disability awareness training took place at the joint meeting and both Committees agreed to seek permission from the Regional Secretary to hold a training seminar. This was granted and the seminar was well attended. Delegates found it very informative, being made more aware of hidden disabilities and the need for reps to receive more training on this subject to meet the needs of our disabled members.

Once again the Region's Equal Rights Officer, our NERAC member and an activist attended the Leicester Gay Pride event in June 2005. There was a lot of interest in the Employment Law leaflet we have produced in different languages.

The Refuge Campaign that was launched Nationally and within the Regions has been very successful in the Midland and East Coast Region. Officers, Staff, Branch Secretaries, Stewards, Activists and companies have all been involved in collecting mobile phones for the campaign. In some areas local pubs have put up posters with the GMB and Refuge working together. This has raised the GMB profile showing the GMB working with local communities. One pub held a raffle and raised £60.00 which may not seem a large amount but every little helps those who are victims of domestic violence. The campaign is still ongoing within the Region.

The Region's Equal Rights Officer attended the National Race Event on behalf of the Region. Branches donated very generously towards this event which was a great success. The event was held in Liverpool during Black History Month and the venue was very appropriate owing to Liverpool's history on the issue of slavery.

In November 2005 NERAC held a National Equality Event which was well attended by the Region, including the Equal Rights Officer, our NERAC member (David Lascelles) and two delegates (Desreen Vernon and Jason Webb). The theme of the event was women moving forward, and workshops were held and run by Regional Equality Officers on life coaching and confidence building, domestic violence and women workers in the security industry. It was fantastic to see a number of new activists at this event and the report backs from delegates were extremely positive.

To conclude this Region's report, RERAC and NERAC members are very keen to keep equality issues high on all agendas. We have increased the number of Branch Equality Officers within the Region. The Regional Equal Rights Conference will be held on 14 March 2006 with the theme being diversity and domestic violence.

REGIONAL RACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Region's Race Committee has met on four occasions, one of which was a joint meeting with the Regional Equal Rights Committee. A consistent issue for the Committee has been their concern about the impact of the reductions and restrictions in terms of the race structure/agenda since our economic difficulties. Most have been deeply concerned about the lack of a National Conference and Regional Conferences at which motions could be submitted. Although members fully appreciated the need to cut back in order to deal with our financial circumstances, they believe that this was a crucial factor not only in maintaining the democracy of the union but also in developing the race agenda.

Other issues for the Committee remain the huge increase in migrant workers across the Region and the huge difficulties we face in educating and organising both migrant workers and our existing membership at the workplace, specifically the facts and fiction on migrant employment and the huge scope for the union to develop strong organisation in the workplace to combat the negative effects of this issue.

The issue of migrant workers is also creating difficulties because of the confusion with the issue of asylum seekers, which has always created friction within communities. The activities of the BNP, and the recent escape from prosecution of the BNP Leader, Nick Griffin, have further aggravated the

situation which is now approaching boiling point. It will take much networking and co-operation amongst GMB activists and other like-minded organisations to eliminate the irrational reactions to migration and employment that are often due to right-wing propaganda and our old but common enemy, ignorance.

All our efforts therefore, are focused on these issues and the Region will gladly update accordingly over any further developments.

ETHNIC BREAKDOWN OF THE REGION'S EQUAL RIGHTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND RACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

| | Black | White | Asian | Other |
|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Male | 3 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Female | 6 | 6 | 1 | 0 |

7. Youth

For the Midland and East Coast Region, 2005 continued to be a year of debate on culture change and in particular how this would affect the youth. The Region strongly maintains that youth needs to be engaged by GMB on a level that builds organisation and commitment.

Strenuous efforts were made to try to re-establish a fully functioning Regional Young Members Advisory Committee. Unfortunately this has not been achieved which begs the question as to whether GMB approaches young people in a way that is relevant to them. If traditional trade union committee structures have no interest to young people then perhaps another approach should be considered. This Region knows that young people do care passionately about single issue matters such as poverty and racism but at present there seems to be a lack of understanding of how to translate this into union growth and organisation.

This Region was well represented at the Make Poverty History event in Scotland in the summer. In the Region, representatives attended a Make Poverty History event in Leicester as well as providing organisational and financial backing to the programme. When interacting with young people at this event, GMB pushed the link between free trade unions and campaigning for equality and justice with the emphasis on organisation. The challenge is to align this youthful idealism of wanting to change the world with the practical tools to do it. GMB should be able to do this as the potential for growth is enormous.

As long as the minimum wage rates continue to discriminate against young workers for no other reason than that of their age, then GMB must campaign against this blatant inequality. The naming and shaming policy of firms who pay lower youth rates has brought some success but only a change in legislation for a common minimum wage rate will solve this problem.

Regionally it is felt that a strong lead is required Nationally in GMB to push forward the youth agenda. On a positive note we hope that this is something that can be worked towards.

8. Training

| | No. of Courses | Male | Female | Total | Total Student Days |
|--|----------------|------|--------|-------|--------------------|
| (a) GMB Courses Basic Training | | | | | |
| GMB/TUC Induction (5 days) | 10 | 90 | 31 | 121 | 605 |
| Introduction to GMB (3 days) | 10 | 112 | 37 | 149 | 447 |
| (b) On Site Courses | - | - | - | - | - |
| (c) Health & Safety Courses | | | | | |
| General | 10 | 110 | 33 | 143 | 429 |
| (d) Other Courses | | | | | |
| Job Evaluation (1 day) | 1 | 7 | 2 | 9 | 9 |

| | | | | | |
|---|----|----|----|-----|----|
| Communicating with Confidence (weekend) | 1 | 13 | 10 | 23 | 69 |
| Communicating with Confidence for Women (weekend) | 1 | 0 | 8 | 8 | 24 |
| Discover GMB (weekend) | 1 | 13 | 3 | 16 | 48 |
| Asbestos Conference | 1 | 60 | 10 | 70 | 70 |
| Disability Conference | 1 | 10 | 8 | 18 | 18 |
| Northern College Courses | 12 | 6 | 6 | 12 | 45 |
| (e) TUC (STUC & ICTU) Courses | | 85 | 18 | 103 | |

9. Health & Safety Service

RECRUITMENT, ORGANISATION AND CAMPAIGNING

Organisers and Branches continued to make use of the Regional Health and Safety Service during 2005, 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 Buildings Taking Control" took place in Derby on 22 March 2005 with 105 participants. This was part of a successful GMB bid to the Workers Safety Advisor Challenge Fund.

ENQUIRIES

Since 1994 to end 2005, 900 enquiries have been recorded on the electronic data base in Regional Office. On this data base 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 COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) and Working Time in general dominated the type of inquiry placed with the Department during 2005.

TRAINING

During 2005 a total of 10 three-day Health and Safety courses were held at locations throughout the Region with a total of 143 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 on line version of the Most Asked Questions and, in a members-only password-protected area, the full version of the GMB 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.

(Adopted)

BRO. A. WORTH (Midlands & East Coast): Formally move.

THE PRESIDENT: I will go through the pages. 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129 and 130. Do you agree to accept the Report, Congress?

(Regional Secretary's Report - Midland & East Coast Region was adopted)

EMPLOYMENT POLICY: RIGHTS AT WORK

BULLYING IN THE WORKPLACE

MOTION 130

Congress we call upon you to eradicate the culture of bullying and intimidation in the workplace and to reaffirm its support for mutual

respect between management and colleagues.
A15 ASDA BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region
(Carried)

SIS. S. TANNER (Birmingham & West Midlands): I am speaking to Motion 130 – Bullying in the Workplace, and I do so on behalf of my Asda colleagues.

We call upon Congress to eradicate the culture of bullying and intimidation in the workplace. There is a particular point during every year at Asda when the in-store propaganda machine goes into overdrive and my colleagues are reminded of the Utopian working conditions created by the company. Multi-coloured notices are pinned on the walls of the canteen and hang from the ceilings, reminding them of the Shangri-La which is the Asda workplace. They are urged to be honest and positive in their thoughts and to appreciate the joys of employment at Asda to the fullest extent. This can only mean one thing. The company is about to run another “We’re listening” survey. Just like the horse chestnut season, the “We’re listening” survey comes around every year. Just like the horse chestnut season it amounts to a load of conkers.

Well, they have been listening to and they feel that Asda realities do not ring true. What about the heavy-handed way in which Asda deals with colleague absence? How many of their colleagues are too frightened to take time off even when they are genuinely unfit for work, lest they trigger a disciplinary hearing? How many of their colleagues are pressurised into returning to work when they are not well enough to do so? How many times has Asda been guilty of unfairness over dependency leave and not following a family friendly policy? Our members’ needs must be properly considered during those times when it is necessary to support their nearest and dearest.

Is this not part of the bigger picture in which too many managers are disrespectful to colleagues? We find that Asda has failed to recognise that the old world/new world changes brought about a discrimination especially in regard to bank holiday working conditions when premium rate colleagues seeking overtime are overlooked in favour of those on standard rates. We find that this sort of insensitivity has created unnecessary stress in the workplace and we ask Congress to support their determination to improve these employment conditions.

We also ask Congress to recognise aims to recruit freely and without hostility in stores and to be present at colleague inductions. We suggest that Asda needs to recognise the partnership arrangement with the GMB, that its policy must be co-operation rather than condemnation. We stress that only then will Asda’s claim to be a model employer carry credibility. We say, “Over to you, Asda.

We’re listening”. Please support.

(The motion was formally seconded)

CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT AND TUPE

MOTION 131

Congress call on the Government to set into motion laws to fine employers who do not issue Contracts of Employment to new employees, after the two months period as stated in law. The fine should be imposed after two months further grace.

Some employers are also abusing TUPE regulations by not passing on all information to the next employer thus not complying with Employment legislation in its entirety.

This may cause unnecessary loss of income to employees, any delay may cause bank interest charges and this should be paid to employees with final settlement.

GMB LONDON SECURITY BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. TAGGART (London): I move Motion 131. President and Congress, before I address the motion, I would like to say that I am 50 this year – I know I do not look it especially since I have slimmed down a bit – but this is my first Congress, to which I am proud to be a delegate. *(Applause)* Also, as a GMB steward, I welcome my father here as a visitor, who is 87 years old, a retired life member, a veteran of Dunkirk and also a former GMB steward. *(Applause and Cheers)* I also want to remember to you my grandfather, Dennis Taggart, who was a Gold Badge holder, a branch president in Sunderland and also a GMB steward. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Where is your dad?

BRO. TAGGART: Actually, he was in the gallery but I think he has gone to the pub. *(Laughter)*

THE PRESIDENT: He is the best judge. *(Laughter)* Carry on.

BRO. TAGGART: Motion 131. The motion seeks to address two areas relating to contracts of employment and TUPE. We call on the Government to provide some incentive for employers to issue a contract to new employees in the first two months as stated in law; i.e., in the form of a fine. To be generous, we believe that this should be imposed after a further two months which gives the employers more than enough time to issue the

contract. As I am sure many of you are aware, employers are still very tardy in issuing contracts. There does not seem to be much of a pattern to this. It happens in large companies and amongst small and dodgy employers. I am sure that many employers confuse the trial period with the time to issue the contract. Also, many employees are reluctant to seek a tribunal in their trial period, for obvious reasons. It is usually during this period that the pattern for employment is set and these guidelines need to be set down in contract form. Employees are more vulnerable during this period and employees need to answer to a higher authority. Also, many areas of work have moved into the area of short-term contracts. As our Government has hardly done much to discourage this behaviour, we feel it should bear some responsibility to make sure that contracts are issued in accordance with the law.

In relation to TUPE, I have had some personal experience of TUPE regulations having been TUPE'd twice during the past six years. We all thank God for the TUPE regulations. It is good European legislation which is completely the opposite of the neo-Liberal Balkenstein/Frankenstein tat. However, it prevents an employer taking over a contract, getting rid of everyone and lowering the wages. At least it prevents them doing it for a time, anyway. Because this is part of their nature, they are sometimes a little slow in handing over the documentation to the new contractor, such as tax code details, to the company which takes over the contract, who in many cases are the previous owner's competitors. Again, as usual, the people who suffer are our members, especially as they are also going through the difficult period of transferring employers. The old employer does not worry much about this because he no longer employs his own employees. Again, we believe that little incentive might be needed to remind the employer of his responsibility to his most valuable asset – us, the workers. How often are we asked to subsidise our employment even though in dire need ourselves. We believe that any losses, particularly those caused by recurrent and rapacious bank interest and penalty charges should be paid by employers with the final settlement. I move.

BRO. R. GILL (London): Congress, in seconding Motion 131, let me just underline a number of points made. With regard to the contract of employment point, a summary of the law states that your rights are governed by your contract of employment and the law. Your contract does not have to be written, but if you are employed, once you have worked for your employers continuously for two months, you are entitled to a record of your important terms of employment.

As somebody who has worked in the security industry for 19 years where contracts are won and lost on a regular basis, and somebody who now works

as a whole-time branch secretary in hotel and catering, there is a continuous problem in terms of employers issuing contracts. We waste our time in trying to chase these up because the employers know that it is a waste of our time to take them to a tribunal. It is an anomaly in the law that we need to correct.

With regard to moving to the TUPE situation, another issue in the private industry is where contracts are won and lost. There is scope for mischief making by the employers where the employers do not declare the proper terms and conditions to the incoming company because they have just lost a contract. It is an issue. Also it gives the employers the opportunity to cherry-pick their employees, be it somebody they do not like or consider to be a troublemaker.

In supporting this motion, I ask Congress to help in tightening up the regulations. I ask for your full support on this motion.

TRANSFER OF UNDERTAKING PROTECTION OF EMPLOYMENT

MOTION 132

Congress supports that given the present crisis regarding pensions which is affecting many of our members and the growing number of members involved in transfers between companies following takeovers that members pensions built up at the date of any takeover should be protected by law and to become part of the TUPE Rules.

REDCAR ENGINEERING
Northern Region

(Carried)

BRO. P. SAWDON (Northern): I move Motion 132 on the Transfer of Undertaking Protection of Employment – TUPE to you and me. Congress, this motion is quite straightforward. It is about extending the rights which TUPE now affords our members to pensions. With an ever-growing number of companies being taken over, often many times in a worker's life, there has to be some protection provided. Currently, if a member of ours works for a company doing the same job for 20 years with the owner of the company changing hands five times, then all his terms and conditions will be protected by TUPE except his pension rights. That could mean that, through no fault of his own, he has done his work, done his job, been an excellent employee but because big business got involved his pension is in five different funds thereby worth much less than if it had been in one fund and in continuous ownership with various benefits. It is, clearly, not fair or acceptable and must not carry on. Perhaps when the TUPE regulations were first introduced takeovers were not

so common. The problem with pensions was not then so great. Now, however, the issue of pensions has become a big problem. It is time to stop the nonsense and for our members to be properly protected. It is time for our members to be protected by law and time that pensions become part of TUPE regulations. Congress, I urge your support on Motion 132.

(The Motion was formally seconded)

TWO TIER WORKFORCE

MOTION 133

Congress notes that the “Two-tier workforce” legislation is too little too late and difficult to enforce. Congress also notes that it is considered discriminatory to pay an individual less for doing the same job as a colleague on the grounds of sex, race, trade union activities, and sexual orientation and so on. Congress believes that this should be extended to the effect that it would be unlawful to have any worker doing the same job on worse terms and conditions than any other, apart for legitimate reasons such as incremental pay awards, and that the GMB should campaign for this to become law.

ISLINGTON APEX BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. GLANVILL (London): I move Motion 133 – Two Tier Workforce. A few years ago the GMB welcomed the two tier workforce regulations which prevented contractors who took over local government staff and contracts from employing a two tier workforce where staff, who transfer from a local authority, retained their terms and conditions of employment protected by TUPE. What has happened is that new staff have been employed on terms and conditions which, in most cases, are substantially worse; worse pay, worse holiday entitlement, worse sick pay. The list goes on.

Pension provision still remains outside the scope of both TUPE and the Two Tier regulations, thereby allowing employers, effectively, to cut our members’ financial planning for old age. In many cases, we have yet to see whether the regulations have any teeth, when contracts which were awarded prior to the regulations come into force are re-tendered and companies which currently have two, three, four or even more tiers unify the terms and conditions for their staff.

Most importantly, we must now recognise the sharp and unethical business practices not only in out-sourced public sector contracts but in all sectors of the economy. Can it be right that within the private sector workers can be doing the same job,

working alongside colleagues but employed on widely varied terms and conditions of service. Current legislation on equal pay goes part of the way in protecting workers from these practices. Equality legislation protects you if you are able to demonstrate that you are being treated differently from a colleague of a different race, sex or disability, but if you cannot your employer can still discriminate against you. It is now time to change these inequalities. The two-tier workforce in whatever sector is discriminatory and must be abolished. The GMB must press and campaign for legislation that abolishes these sharp practices. Thank you.

BRO. M. FOSTER (London): President and Congress, as my colleague has stated, the two tier workforce legislation is out-dated. At best, it is woolly and, in many situations, ineffective. Some of our members working alongside their colleagues are on totally different terms and conditions with different pay, subject to different disciplinary procedures, grievance procedures and appeals procedures. This does nothing more than allow the employer to manipulate the workforce and can often set up one employee against another. This is nothing more than the divide and rule tactic that the employer will be only too keen to exploit.

I urge this Union to vigorously attack the current two tier legislation with a view to bringing it back into the real world. I second.

END OF THE ‘TWO TIER’ WORKFORCE IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR

MOTION 134

Congress abhors the development of a two tier workforce within the private sector. This is especially prevalent within the context of the staff at the sharp end of private business, responsible for generating the majority of the profits of private companies, suffering in terms of pensions, holiday pay and sickness benefit.

The present case is that those indirectly involved in the industrial process enjoy not only a better level of remuneration, but better and longer holiday provision, more advantageous sickness provision and a far better pension on their retirement.

We urge that this Congress does all within its power to raise the issue of the development of two tier workforces within the private sector, including inadequate pension provision and inferior sickness and holiday benefits.

HOUNSLOW BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. C. KERR (London): Congress, I move Motion 134 – End of the ‘Two Tier’ Workforce in the Private Sector.

Congress abhors the development of a two tier workforce within the private sector. This is especially prevalent within the context of the staff at the sharp end of private business, responsible for generating the majority of the profits of private companies, suffering in terms of pensions, holiday pay and sickness benefits.

The present case is that those indirectly involved in the industrial process enjoy not only a better level of remuneration, but better and longer holiday provision, more advantageous sickness provision and a far better pension scheme on their retirement.

This Congress notes that despite promises made by Tony Blair as long ago as at the Labour Party Conference in 2002, little or no progress has been made to abolish the two tier workforce within the private sector.

This Union must remain vigorously opposed to two tier workforces and continue to campaign for legislation to outlaw such practices and highlight the companies which practise such policies. This Government must start listening to the voices of the working people, not the interests of big business. Please support this motion.

BRO. D. TAGGART (London): I second Motion 134. In any situation where there is a two tier workforce the employer is not tempted to improve the lower tier to a level with the higher. Usually by a slow process involving transfer of contract or through disciplinary procedures, the employer tries to erode the advantages gained. With the Code of Practice on Workforce Matters, the Government have moved to prevent the emergence of a two tier workforce in cases where public sector employees are contracted out to a service provider, ensuring that the new recruits receive comparable treatment to transferred staff. Why should workers in the private sector settle for less? Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? *(No response)* George.

BRO. G. EMERSON (CEC, Process): I am speaking on behalf of the CEC. The CEC is supporting Motions 130, 131, 133 and 134, each with a qualification.

First, let me turn to Motion 130 on Bullying in the Workplace. The CEC supports the principle behind the motion but, unfortunately and factually, the GMB cannot achieve what the motion seeks to achieve. Congress, if only the GMB could eradicate bullying and intimidation in the workplace. The CEC supports the motion but with that qualification.

Turning, secondly, to Motion 131, on Contract of Employment and TUPE. Strictly speaking, the obligation on the employer is to provide what the law calls “a statement of employment particulars” rather

than a contract of employment. However, the motion is correct in saying that there is no financial penalty on an employer who fails to provide even basic information to the new employees within two months of starting work.

Turning to Motion 133 on the Two Tier Workforce, the CEC is supporting with a qualification, in that the position in relation to equal pay legislation also needs to be taken into account. Equal pay must remain a priority for the GMB.

Turning, fourthly, to Motion 134, the End of the ‘Two Tier’ Workforce. Again, we are supporting the principles behind the motion. The position in relation to equal pay legislation also needs to be taken into account. I repeat that equal pay must remain the priority for the GMB.

President and Congress, the CEC is asking you to support Motions 130, 131, 133 and 134, but with the qualifications I referred to. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Would Birmingham Region accept the qualification? *(Agreed)*

Does London Region accept the qualification? *(Agreed)*

Does London Region accept the qualification on Martin Swabey’s 133? *(Agreed)*

Does London Region accept the qualification on not-so-Martin’s good one, 134? *(Agreed)*

(Motion 130 was carried)

(Motion 131 was carried)

(Motion 132 was carried)

(Motion 133 was carried)

(Motion 134 was carried)

VOLUNTEER WORKERS ARE WORKERS

MOTION 136

This Congress asks that people who work as volunteers in the not-for-profit or charitable sector be defined as workers for the purposes of employment law.

NOTTS VOX BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Referred)

BRO. V. THOMAS (Midland & East Coast): I move Motion 136, Volunteer Workers are Workers. I do not need to recount for this Congress the struggles that we have all had for employment rights. They are well-documented. Now we have the benefit of hindsight, and hindsight is a wonderful thing, the things that we take for granted today, if they ever entered the everyday conversation, were in the past scoffed at or

ridiculed. Even the vote to the man-in-the-street; that is, the man-in-the-street. When it was suggested to some of those men who had just got the vote that women should also have the vote, the scoffing and laughter got louder.

But it did not stop there. Existing rights have to be defended and new rights have to be established. Why? Because for every action there is an equal opposite reaction. As we have gained employment rights we have seen companies, organisations and even government departments out-source almost everything they can. The companies and sub-contractors providing out-sourced services often do not provide the same level of health and safety and employment rights. But it does not stop there.

It is not enough that companies circumvent obligations which have been won in the area of employment rights. We now have off-shoring. This, effectively, acts as a coup de grace to all and every employment right in this country when the jobs go abroad. So where is this trend going now? The Government are embracing out-sourcing with sub-contractors with a vengeance by looking to set up partnerships with the community and voluntary sector. Yes, that is right. The Government now want to use volunteers, and we were feeling so good with ourselves having achieved the implementation of the National Minimum Wage. However, the economy could not function without this vast army of volunteers. For example, in the area of north Nottinghamshire, which is where I come from, which covers the towns of Mansfield, Worksop and Retford, there are some 40,000 volunteers which makes volunteering one of the largest employment sectors in the local economy. I do not believe that the situation is any different where you live.

Motion 136 is asking for recognition to acknowledge the contribution that volunteer workers make and to provide them with the legal protection that paid employees and workers enjoy. Congress, recognition is not too much to ask. I move.

BRO. D. HOCKING (Midland & East Coast): I second Motion 136. President and Congress, volunteer workers give their services for no remuneration, but should that mean that workplace rights are overlooked? A lot of our members carry out voluntary work and have told me of corners being cut because of extremely tight budgets, thus resulting in a higher risk to health and safety. This is not on. No pay equals no rights. No way. I support.

CARERS ARE WORKERS TOO

MOTION 137

This Congress asks that people in receipt of Carer's Allowance be classified as workers and not benefit claimants for the work that they do

for the disabled.

NOTTS VOX BRANCH Midland & East Coast Region

(Referred)

BRO. V. THOMAS (Midlands & East Coast): I move Motion 137 – Carers are Workers Too. I have written a speech for this motion but I have to say that I have thrashed over it. I started to have second thoughts about it. Some members of the CEC have some worries about this motion inasmuch as they are concerned about the sensitivities of people who are on carers' allowance becoming employees because they are, basically, caring for relatives. I do not think that some people would want to be the employee of a relative. These are sensitivities.

This motion is about equal rights. It is an equal rights issue. No one is forced to do anything. No one is forced to contract with anyone else. We have carers' allowance, one area of which is publicly funded. Public sector, local authority, care workers are also publicly funded, but one could be earning three times as much as the other. A person who is claiming a carer's allowance is working. It is care work but it is work. This issue is an equal rights issue.

I cannot quite get my head round why it would need to be referred but in the pre-Congress meetings we agreed that it could be referred. I do not think it needs it. We have already talked about a two tier workforce. Excuse me, but it is a three tier workforce here. Just because they are not classified as workers, does that mean we are just going to ignore them? No. I do not think so.

We have already accepted this for justice and equality. It says: "We should continue to lobby Government to introduce funding regimes which support investment in better pay and conditions for traditional women's jobs across the child care and social care sectors. Society must pay for the true value of these occupations." Let us start calling them "occupations". That is not too much to ask.

My real concern here is that if this motion is referred it will end up in a black hole. Let me say that if this motion does end up in a black hole, I will be going in to fetch it out again. Thank you.

BRO. C. WORTHINGTON (Midland & East Coast): I second Motion 137. I ask you all for your support of this motion. We just want carers to be given the credit they deserve for the job which they do in caring for others, and that credit could come in no better form than having the recognition as a worker. In the UK more than 320,000 people go out to a paid job. They are classed as workers. They come home and for more than an average of 50 hours a week they look after someone else for which they are benefit claimants. This cannot be right.

Predictions say that in 20 years time there will be 7 million people in the UK aged 75 or over. Who

will look after them? Of course, families will try and look after their own. Most of them will do it without question, but all we are seeking is that people who do the caring are not just dismissed as benefit claimants but as workers.

If this Government is as big on respect as it claims to be, why can we not afford to show the carers the respect they deserve and recognise them as workers. Please support this motion.

THE PRESIDENT: I will give an assurance to the movers and the seconders that there will be no hole that these motions will go in. They will be looked at and we will report back. That is if you accept reference, mind you. Does anyone wish to come in on Motions 136 and 137?

BRO. J. ROBERTS (Lancashire): I fully support Motion 136 and I ask you to support it. Anyone who has worked in the charitable field as a volunteer knows that it does not become part-time. It becomes part of your life because of the dedication you put in. I urge you, really, to support this motion.

THE PRESIDENT: I call Barry Montgomery to speak on behalf of the CEC.

BRO. B. MONTGOMERY (CEC, Engineering): I am speaking on behalf of the CEC to Motions 136 and 137. The CEC is asking the movers of both motions to refer, though it supports the sentiments behind them. Volunteers and carers provide an invaluable service to society with little or no recognition. People volunteer for many reasons. For example, to improve career prospects or because they are passionate about a particular cause. However, there is a danger that some organisations will exploit individuals, taking them on as volunteers when the demands or obligations placed on them equate to those of an employment contract. In such circumstances, an employment tribunal is likely to find that such a contract exists but the onus is on the individual to pursue a claim with all the associated difficulties.

Combining care and paid work is extremely difficult. Around 1.8 million people are in employment when they start caring. A fifth subsequently have to leave their jobs. The Work & Families Bill extends the right to request flexible working to carers of adults. The limited scope of the Right to Request Scheme may mean that this has limited difficulties and little effect. Giving volunteers and carers workers' status may offer some protections such as the National Minimum Wage, statutory holidays and a maximum 40 hour working week. However, this could also have unwanted consequences by imposing contractual obligations on both parties. Many volunteers and carers may not wish to bind themselves

contractually. Where unpaid work is being provided to relatives, friends and neighbours having the status of "workers" may be inappropriate without adequate State support to fund their employment. The question arises as to who is the employer. This might be the State, but without that vulnerable relatives will become the employer of the carer which neither may want. Further investigation is warranted, colleagues, as to whether protection against exploitation of volunteers and carers can best be achieved by this or any other means. That is why we are asking you to refer these two motions. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Does Midland & East Coast Region want to exercise the right of reply?

BRO. V. THOMAS (Midland & East Coast): Motion 137. We have already accepted this – justice and equality. Obviously, as far as I am concerned, I will go with the Union. We will look at this, think about it, talk about it and chew it over, but this is about equal rights. You cannot, ultimately, come to a conclusion, in my view, that anything other than that carers should be classified as workers, not when we have already accepted this. We want equality and justice. Just because there is legislation and just because it has been a tried and tested practice that these people should be benefit claimants – for goodness sake, getting people off benefit and getting them into work is Government policy – so, yes, let's talk about it, but if you come back with anything other than a "Yes", you make a mockery of *this*. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Are you accepting reference?

BRO. THOMAS: Yes, I am accepting reference.

THE PRESIDENT: On both? On Motion 136 as well?

BRO. THOMAS: Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: Does Congress agree to accept reference? (*Agreed*)

(*Motion 136 was referred*)

(*Motion 137 was referred*)

RIGHTS OF FOREIGN WORKERS

COMPOSITE MOTION 17

(*Covering Motions 135 and 185*)

135 - The Rights of Eastern European Workers (Yorkshire & N. Derbyshire Region)
185 - Foreign Labour (Lancashire Region)

Congress accepts and welcomes our colleagues

from member states who choose to come and work in this country, but Congress cannot accept when companies from outside the British Isles win British contracts and then use non British labour, when our own GMB members, who are equally if not better skilled remain jobless.

Congress needs to apply pressure on the Labour Government to ensure that foreign labour will not be used at the expense of our members.

Congress we call upon you to start a campaign to stop the exploitation of Eastern European Workers at the expense of jobs for British workers. The Eastern European Workers need the same right on terms and conditions as the British Workers.

(Carried)

BRO. G. WELLS (Lancashire): I move Composite Motion 17 – The Rights of Foreign Workers. President and Congress, let me begin by saying that this composite is not, and I stress “not”, an attack on European workers who come to this country to seek legitimate employment and many end up making this country their own and, in turn, become members of the GMB trade union. But it is, however, an attack on companies, and I make no apologies for that fact, who, from within the European Community, successfully win British contracts in the UK and then import their own skilled labour while our members who are equally, if not better skilled, remained on the dole. To compound and make matters worse, many of our members are close to where the work is. It is a sad situation when our members, having served a recognised apprenticeship, end up on the sidelines. These companies are nothing short of industrial vagabonds, who have little or no regard of trade unionism. Why should they? They contribute nothing to our economy and when their contracts come to an end they are gone until the next time.

For years British workers, many of whom are GMB members, have travelled within the European Community to ply their trade, but the big difference is that they only work where there is a skill shortage in that country, and our members have no choice but to accept that situation. Politicians in Germany, France, Spain and the rest of Europe protect their own. Why can't our Labour Government do likewise?

Therefore, this Congress calls on our Government to introduce a level playing field in relation to foreign companies who win contracts in the UK and introduce a criteria where foreign labour will only be used when there is a shortage of that particular skill. This motion is also about protecting skills not just for our generation but for the generations that follow. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Graham. Can I have a seconder?

(Composite Motion 17 was formally seconded)

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? *(No response)* In that case I call Elaine Daley.

SIS. E. DALEY (CEC, Commercial Services): I speak on behalf of the CEC supporting Composite 17.

The United Kingdom, like most other industrialised countries, has long relied on migrant labour to build and sustain our economies. Migration is by no means a 21st Century phenomenon. Likewise, the associated social, political and ethical issues that we face today are similar to those our parents and grand parents faced before us. We have come a long way from the days when it was acceptable to see signs saying “No blacks, no Irish, no dogs” in boarding house windows. But let us not be complacent.

Today's migrant workers may come from different parts of the world but the difficulties and hostilities they face remain. Migrant workers play and continue to play a vital part in the trade union Movement. As trade unionists, we uphold the right for all to work and seek a decent standard of living either in their home countries or, where opportunities are lacking at home, to seek them elsewhere. We must extend the hand of friendship to migrant workers who come to our shores. Eastern European and other migrant workers do not cost British workers' jobs but they fill vacancies. Their exploitation undermines the National Minimum Wage and health and safety laws, but the responsibility for this lies with employers.

It is incumbent on us to recruit and organise, to protect them from exploitation and to prevent employers creating unhealthy divisions by undermining the terms and conditions of domestic workers. We commend the London Region and the Midland & East Coast Region for their work with Eastern European and other migrant workers, successfully highlighting the abuse and exploitation that exists with these workers.

The GMB has raised the issues under the Posted Workers' Directive. We believe that all foreign workers should be paid the agreed trade union rate so that they neither undermine UK workers nor are they exploited. Please support Composite 17.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Elaine. Does Lancashire Region accept the statement? *(Agreed)* I now put Composite 17 to the vote.

(Composite Motion 17 was carried)

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, we have now caught up with business from yesterday, you will be pleased to

know. I would now like to call the General Secretary, Paul Kenny, to move the Statement to Congress on the Merger.

CEC STATEMENT TO CONGRESS: PROPOSED MERGER

The creation of a new union through the merger with TGWU, Amicus and the GMB has been under consideration by the union for the last year.

The merger working party and others who have been involved in this process have sought, through the sharing of information, to develop a blueprint of how a new union could be developed.

The CEC wish to thank all those involved in the process including our colleagues from TGWU and Amicus.

However the CEC, after consultation with the regions, regional councils and branches, do not believe that continuing on with the merger process would command the support of the wider membership.

The CEC recommends to congress that the GMB continues to develop a new union in line with the CEC task group recommendations but this we will do independently at this time.

We extend our very best wishes to the TGWU and Amicus in their future discussions.

(Carried)

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: How wonderful to see the dedication of GMB delegates, staying here right to the very end for just the odd bit of business. It is fantastic. It is a credit to see.

I move the CEC Statement on the new Union or the merger, depending whichever way round you want to put it. Frankly, colleagues, it is make your mind up time. We started off last year with the prospect of thinking about a new union. I think when we first voiced that phrase, it was pretty clear at the start that we were thinking about ourselves. But we were invited to consider the prospect of a new union, and given our vision of the future and the quite clear massive hunger that there was in the GMB for change and success, we entered into this process. It became clear fairly early on, colleagues, that while there may have been a massive hunger for change and success in the GMB, there was not an appetite for a three-way merger.

Neither the T&G nor Amicus, which are proud organisation, whose members, no doubt, are as proud of their unions and we are of ours, nor the GMB, none of our three unions, needed a merger for financial reasons, which is incredibly strange given the past history of amalgamations of trade unions in this country. The decision to explore the possibility of a new union was really based on a simple premise, which was would the new union be better for members in terms of lay democracy, better in terms of rights and privileges for branches and the rights of branches and of regions? We were clear always that in any process the criteria of no undermining of the democracy and autonomy of our branches and regions would be acceptable.

We also wanted to be clear in our minds that the new union would do better than we could do on our own in the branches, in the regions and in the workplaces. The consultation exercise has told us that our members believe that the answer is no. *(Applause)*

Last year the CEC and I gave you a promise, and I do not break promises, that we would explore the options and report back to you, to the regions and to the branches and to you, Congress. This we have done. There will obviously be some disappointment about any decision to withdraw from new union discussions. However, it is right and appropriate that that decision is finally yours, as the Congress, the supreme body of our Union. Colleagues, frankly, without overwhelming support for the process of a new union, our union will be back on a self-destruct route, losing focus and purpose while the next two years went by.

The CEC has listened to regions, and that has resulted in *this* Statement. I hope everybody has a copy of that statement issued to them. Having listened to the regions, our vision is not detracted or diverted. This Union must, is and will grow. There is no option other than that. Tough decisions may have to be taken to achieve better workplace organisation and growth. The quiet life is not for us. Make no mistake, colleagues, doing nothing is not an option. We must make a decision today. We cannot continue on in a void of yes, maybe, maybe, maybe, maybe!

Colleagues, the CEC Statements suggests and recommends to you that we wish our colleagues and comrades in the T&G and Amicus the very best in their deliberations and discussions. We wish them

every success in those discussions for the benefit of their members. We extend our best wishes to them, but the CEC recommends to Congress that the GMB withdraws from those new union discussions and that we grow this Union on our own. *(Cheers and applause)* I move the Statement.

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I put the Statement to Congress. Do you accept the Statement? *(Accepted)*

I believe the Statement is carried, but I should ask for opposition to it. Is there any opposition?

BRO. J. NEWMAN (Southern): I speak with the full support of the Southern Region delegation. I recognise and so does the document we saw earlier in the week that much work had already been done by the Joint Working Party on the new union. However, the CEC's Statement which came out today was not anything like the conclusions which that document came to. The document says: "An agreement in principle for a ballot of all three unions to confirm the first stage of the merger" without any changes in rule books, without any changes in any other structure at all but simply a ballot of the members of all three unions to confirm the first stage of the merger by the end of 2006. To the Southern Region it is absolutely essential that an issue like this should be put to the entire membership of the Union, even recognising that ballots cost money. I believe and the Southern Region believed that that is what was being said both in the document that you saw earlier this week and also by Paul Kenny when he made that commitment that the members would make the decision. It would not have involved any further commitment or a change in anyone's rule books, but now it looks as if we are being guilty of the very thing that some people have accused the other parties of, in particular, Amicus; that is, of imposing dictates from the top of the Union, specifically, the regional secretaries, not accepting grassroots democracy and not accepting the involvement of the average membership. I recognise that consultation happened with branches, but it seemed to me that an issue of this importance ought, at least, to have been put to the membership and should now be put to the membership in a proper ballot to allow them to make a decision to break off negotiations or to continue with them without the outcome being absolutely known.

The truth is that that our rule book has a theory of a branch led democracy, and our rule book enshrines that, as I believe the Transport & General's does, but that needs to be matched by the lay members at regional and national level actually putting that into practice. I am not blaming the full-time officials. I am not blaming the regional secretaries. I am not blaming National Office. However, I am saying that the lay members at regional and national level have to put into practice

what our rule book says. Let us tell the truth to our members about what has already been achieved, and Southern Region is now calling for a full ballot of the membership in accordance with the Working Party recommendations. Thank you.

BRO. B. TAYLOR (Northern): I am speaking without the support of the Northern Region. First of all, over the years unions have always amalgamated. If you look in your rule book you will see quite a lot about lists of amalgamations or transfer of engagements from textile workers, metal workers, boiler makers, furniture and timber workers and tailor and garment workers.

I have the same comment as the last speaker. I, too, have gone through the two reports that we have been given. First of all, I think the most important point that was made in the reports at the beginning was that the new union would be a powerful and progressive force for the good of society. I would have thought that we would have wanted to be part of that at the beginning and not at some future date when we think we might need to amalgamate. It is a great opportunity. In some respects, it could be an opportunity missed.

I agree with the last speaker. It is the membership who should be asked to make the decision on this. Again in the report it says: "The GMB has a clear history of rejecting centralised control." Then it goes on to say: "No new union founded on such principles would be likely to find support among our members." I think that is quoted in the press today in the cuttings which have been sent round. It might be true, but at least we should ask the membership and not decide here today. We are only a small group. We are the custodians of the Union at Congress, but the membership must make that final decision. In the past we have always been on about democracy and the ballot box. This is a good example to see what the members think through the ballot box. Thank you.

BRO. V. WEST (London): I speak in support of the CEC Statement. *(Applause)* Congress, you may remember that yesterday I was dressed in a tribute to John Balushi on a mission from God, a mission to oppose a merger with the T&G and Amicus. Well, today I am wearing the white suit because I have seen the light. That light is reflected in the CEC Statement. *(Applause and cheers)* London Region, through its branches and its regional council, has fully discussed the proposals and our conclusions were clear, unequivocal and unanimous. No merger on these terms. *(Applause and table thumping)*

The GMB is not anti-merger. Indeed, our history is a history of mergers. Just look around the room at the banners depicting our heritage. The point is that those mergers were based on principles, principles of growth, accountability and, most importantly, lay

democracy. My own branch is an APEX branch was the consequence of a merger of MATSA, APEX and the Greater London Staff Association, but that branch still has its own autonomy, its own accountability and controls its own finances. The proposals for a new union would destroy that centralising control into the hands of the few at the expense of our members and activists. London Region saw the light some years ago. We saw that the future depended on growth, not decline, new members, not lazy consolidation.

Last year the CEC Task Group took that agenda on and at this Congress we have already discussed the way forward in adopting the reports on *The GMB at Work, a Framework for the Future* and *Sections*. Do not let us now throw that blueprint out for a merger which will offer nothing to our membership. We are anti-T&G; we are not anti-Amicus, but we are pro-GMB's plans for the future.

Brothers and Sisters, walk in the light with me. The mission is to grow the GMB, to defend our members and to seek a brighter and successful future, firmly based on those principles that I outlined earlier – growth, accountability and lay democracy. Support the CEC Statement. Walk in the light, and my mission, like the Blues Brothers, will have been successful. *(Cheers and applause)*

BRO. W. GOULDING (Liverpool, North Wales & Irish): I cannot put the position any better than the last speaker of how I feel about the proposed merger. I am speaking in support of the CEC Statement. Colleagues, whilst I commend people for their right to have their say and holding different views, I cannot agree with any delegate telling my region, or any other region, that their regional secretaries dictate to them what way they vote. *(Cheers and applause)* We consulted fully with our regional council, regional committee, retired members' association, equal rights and our branches. As far as Liverpool, North Wales and Irish Region is concerned – I am speaking on behalf of the region – we are totally in favour of the CEC Statement. Vote "Yes" in support of the CEC Statement.

SIS. R. HAYWARD (South Western): I am proud to be a GMB member and speaking in support of the CEC Statement. *(Cheers, applause and table thumping)* Paul Kenny, the then Acting General Secretary, announced to our 2005 Congress that in his opinion the only way the GMB would enter into any amalgamation or merger with other unions would be if it benefited all GMB members, and in no way would it be a bolt-on arrangement.

Colleagues, let us look back over the past year since our Newcastle Congress. No one can say that we have stood still. We now have a healthier financial position. Indeed, I can never remember a better financial situation in the GMB. Colleagues, financially,

the GMB has no need to merge. So what about this new union's national and regional structures? Why should the GMB run the risk of regional autonomy, including financial autonomy, disappearing and being replaced by centralisation? This proud Union was built on and thrived because of our regional autonomy, our regional democratic structures and our regional financial autonomy. This is the way forward.

Conference, we have not gone backwards since last year's Congress. We are moving forward at a tremendous rate. It is not just what has been said in the past at Congress that is important, but it is the activity that is going on between Congresses. That is where all the real work takes place. The General Secretary's Report to Congress on Monday highlighted the successes of that hard work, in particular the successes of recruitment and growth, plus a vital element. We have a progressive General Secretary. So I ask the question: why would a growing, vibrant and proud Union need to merge? I will answer that. We do not! Congress, please support the CEC Statement. *(Applause, whistles, table thumping and cheers)*

BRO. W. HUGHES (Northern): Worthy President, I have just come to the rostrum to put the record straight. As the President of the Northern Region, the brother who came to the rostrum said that he was speaking without the support of the region, and I applaud him for that, because I like to think that I promote what our General Secretary says. "If you have got nothing to fear, you have got nothing to hide". This is the place to get it off your chest. It is no good sitting there saying to yourself, "I should have said this" and "I should have said that". You have got the freedom of speech in the GMB. If you have anything to say anything, say it here and get it off your chest. *(Applause)*

I would like to correct one statement that was made, and that is he thought we should have gone to the membership. Let me tell this Congress today that it came from the membership. One of the first things the task group had, and I was proud to be a member of the task group, was one hell of an argument, but our worthy President, who was present, steered the way clear. That subject was at the top of the agenda. Should we merge or should we not? The membership said in the early days of last year "We don't want to merge". That was said loud and clear. I have to put the record straight.

As with many other items that will come up for debate, including changes in rules – I said the other day that no one likes changes – if we have to modernise this Union, we must accept changes. Believe you me, of all the things you will hear in the future, once again, I can assure you that they came from the membership, not *these* people *(indicating the top table)* but the membership. *(Applause)*

SIS. M. BOYD (GMB Scotland): God, how do you follow that? I believe that the discussions on the potential merger were those of individual's personal opinion; i.e., my members. We are here to represent our members and their concerns. I spoke to most of our members and listened to their opinions and views. They came back with these views and questions for debate. Will a merger benefit members? Will it give them better representation, or will they have to rely on yet another call centre for advice and help? Will they have to do without the personal representation they have now in industries and workplaces, where they have stewards at hand? Do we need more political influence, more Members of Parliament, who mostly favour the employers and not the employees? Will we become a conglomerate, a large impersonal company, complete with an executive and management team instead of an independent, caring organisation? Finally, how much will the cost of membership be for this new super union?

As GMB members, we are proud of our history and our present. So let us remain an independent, hardworking trade union and a caring organisation, not a company. I support the CEC Statement. *(Applause)*

BRO. P. SOPER (Midland & East Coast): I speak in support of the CEC Statement on the merger. As a boilermaker, I am well aware of mergers. The GMB and the Boilermakers had a clear history of rejecting centralised control. This discussion paper takes away democracy. The Union has spent the last two years getting itself back on to a good footing. I believe that we have a new leader who can take us forward. I agree with opposition to the merger.

As a negotiator, if you want to give them an olive branch, we have formed three sections. If Amicus wants to join our manufacturing section and the Transport & General wants to join our commercial section under the banner of the GMB, they are quite welcome. *(Applause)*

BRO. J. McDONNELL (Lancashire): In the Lancashire Region we have had our ups and downs, I can tell you. But I have been a member of the GMB since 1958. The old fellow was in the Boilermakers. The grandfather was in the Boilermakers and I am proud to be associated with this great Union. I can tell you that we did have votes. We went to the branches with the first proposals. We went to the regional council with the second proposals. We debated it here and it was a unanimous decision every time. Lancashire Region is united in supporting the CEC's decision.

I can assure you that the Congress is the supreme body of this Union. I urge you all to go back to your regions with your chests held high that the GMB stands as it is, as one. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: I call the General Secretary.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: I am not sure. Is that a draw? Let me clear something up. I think some of the speakers, some of the emotion and some of the passion illustrates the messages which have been coming back through to the CEC from regional councils, branches and CEC members in the regions. Occasionally -- I hope we do not make a habit of it -- the CEC gets things wrong. It mis-times or does not read the mood of the membership. However, I do not think that the CEC got it wrong. I think the CEC got it right. *(Applause)*

I want to say to John, who I know is just as passionate about the GMB -- I know he is. He has been in the GMB for many many years -- but he is passionate about trade unionism across a much bigger scene. I know that Bernie came from the Boilermakers, but I think you are confused. What was circulated to delegates earlier in the week was the latest information that we received, and we only got it late last week. In fact, the CEC got it on Saturday. The reason was so that there could be no allegation or accusation that you, as the delegates of the supreme body to this Union, did not have every scrap of information at your fingertips when you made your delegation decisions. That would have been a stitch-up.

As for the issue about regional secretaries, frankly, I can get a bit nasty if anyone starts attacking the GMB and our democracy. In fact, I can get very nasty. As to the delegations in this hall, the speakers who have just come to the rostrum and the people who will vote in this debate, there is not a regional secretary amongst them. This is a lay members' decision. The Executive took a decision based on the information relayed to them. I said that some people would be disappointed. We still have a vision, and I think we should pursue that vision. I really do. I do not see any reason to knock other people. I do not want to get into that game. As I said, the T&G and Amicus are proud unions with long histories, and they wish to pursue something else. My very best wishes go to them. We should send our best wishes to them. But if the CEC or I, as a General Secretary, am to be truly, and I mean truly, representative of the members, of the activists and of the delegated authority that Congress delegates have, then we have to listen to what people say. It may not always be what the Executive thinks but it should always be what we believe is right for the Union and what the members tell us to do. Ultimately, it is what they tell us to do.

I believe that you have a flavour in this last debate. You saw some of the passion and heard some of the interesting quotes, but I think you all got a real flavour that the CEC and certainly I have picked up in the past months.

Colleagues, the CEC Statement is clear. We wish the T&G and Amicus the very best, but for the present time we think that the GMB should plough its

own furrow, build this Union, get on with the job, create a new vision and create a better life for our members. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, this is the last item of business. Just to remind you before I call the vote, the President's do is tonight. There will be an early start at 9.30 in the morning.

I now put the CEC Statement to you. All those in favour, please show? Those against? Abstentions?

(CEC Statement to Congress: Proposed Merger was carried.)

(Applause and cheers)

THE PRESIDENT: I now close Congress for the day.

(Congress adjourned)