

FIRST DAY'S PROCEEDINGS

SUNDAY 11TH JUNE 2006 MORNING SESSION

(Congress assembled at 10.30 a.m.)

OPENING OF CONGRESS

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, come to order, please. Good morning. Welcome everyone to sunny Blackpool. We can say that with a smile this year. Colleagues, you have in your wallets written details of the safety instructions. Please make sure you read them. We are also about to hear a safety video, so please listen carefully.

(The Public Safety Announcement was made)

I want to remind all officers, delegates and visitors that mobile phones are to be turned off or put to silence. If not, it will be £5 to Mary's favourite charity. It may go up each time someone is caught, especially if they are caught more than once. So beware!

BANNER CEREMONY

THE PRESIDENT: Delegates, I call Congress to order for the Opening Ceremony. This year we have asked Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region to form the Banner Party. Would Congress please be upstanding.

(Congress stood as the Banner Party proceeded to the platform to the accompaniment of "Jerusalem")

I thank Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region delegates who have done such an excellent job. Thank you.

WELCOME TO DELEGATES AND VISITORS

THE PRESIDENT: It gives me great pleasure, Congress, to invite all our delegates and visitors to Congress this year and to remind new delegates that I know how nervous you are going to be feeling, wondering when you are going to be called if you are moving or seconding resolutions. Please remember, we have all been there. Do not forget, do not think that I do not get nervous when I am speaking from where I am sitting, and that includes Paul Kenny or anyone else. It is your Congress and we will do all we can to make it as comfortable, easy and as pleasant for you.

I would like to announce who is on the platform. We have Debbie Coulter, our Deputy General Secretary, Malcolm Sage, our Vice President, Paul Kenny, the General Secretary and Dolores O'Donoghue, who is new at these tasks. So if anything

goes wrong, we will blame Dolores because we always blame the new girl. Welcome, Dolores. You and your team have done a great job. *(Applause)*

I would like to welcome the General Member Auditors: David Boyle, Ed Hamilton and Les White, who will be counting any votes this week. Les, would you like to stand and make Congress aware as to where you are? Thank you.

I would also like to welcome some other guests. At the moment we have in the hall Bill Smith, John Cope and John Whelan. They are around, believe you me, somewhere. As to the other guests, we will be letting Congress know as and when they arrive. I know that Glenys Wilmot MEP will be arriving later. Later on we will be hearing from some foreign guests.

I welcome the verbatim shorthand writers, Michael Thear and Phyllis Hilder. I also welcome the sign language interpreters, Nigel Cleaver, Jo Ross and Zane Hema.

I ask delegates to ensure that you have all of your important documents, by which I mean your programme, the order of business, although during the week that order of business may change, all motions and rule amendments remaining on the Agenda, all composite motions, Standing Orders Committee Report No. 1, the Standing Orders Guidelines for Congress business, including time limits for speakers, the Representation Statement and the Decisions of the Recall Congress 2005. Will all delegates please make sure that you have those documents.

I also ask all delegates to wear their identification badges.

ROLL CALL

THE PRESIDENT: I call on Debbie Coulter to call the Roll.

(The Deputy General Secretary called the roll)

THE DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY: If Regional Secretaries would notify the Congress Office of any further alterations that would be very helpful.

APPOINTMENT OF TELLERS

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, the next item is the Appointment of Tellers. Debbie?

THE DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY: The following tellers have been appointed.

Birmingham

No. 1 - Sandra Tanner will count Southern.

Lancashire

No. 2 - Jimmy Talbot will count South Western.

Liverpool

No. 3 - Derek Sutcliffe will count Yorkshire.

London

No. 4 - Barbara Benham will count Birmingham.

Midland

No. 5 - Shaune Clarkson will count Lancashire

Northern

No. 6 - George Murray will count Liverpool.

GMB Scotland

No. 7 - Dorothy Ann King will count London.

Southern

No. 8 - Jack Cheeseman will count Midland.

South Western

No. 9 - Russell Mardon will count Northern.

Yorkshire

No. 10 - Colin Gill will count GMB Scotland.

Let me re-emphasise the fact that Tellers must remain in the Congress Hall whilst Congress is in session and the delegates must be in their seats when a vote is taken.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Debbie. There is a little bucket at the back of the hall for all of them.

CONFIRMATION OF THE STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

THE PRESIDENT: We now come to the confirmation of the Standing Orders Committee.

THE DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you, President. Just to confirm the composition of the Standing Orders Committee, which is as follows:

BIRMINGHAM & WEST MIDLANDS	Brian Adams
LANCASHIRE	William Pope
LIVERPOOL, NORTH WALES & IRISH	Andy McGivern
LONDON	John Onslow
MIDLAND & EAST COAST	Andy Fletcher
NORTHERN	Gerry Ferguson
GMB SCOTLAND	Mary Finn
SOUTHERN	Alan Durrant
SOUTH WESTERN	Gareth Lewis
YORKSHIRE	Peter Bagnell

THE PRESIDENT: I now ask Gerry Ferguson to move Standing Orders Committee Report No. 1, which begins on page 26 of the Final Agenda document.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 1

The business of Congress will be conducted in accordance with the Agenda, the Programme and the Guidelines for Congress Business, subject to changes at the President's discretion.

TIMES FOR CONGRESS

The Standing Orders Committee wishes to draw the attention of Delegates to the starting times of the morning and afternoon sessions set out in the Congress programme as follows:

Sunday 11 June	10.00 am - 12.30 pm 2.00 pm - 4.00 pm
Monday 12 June to Thursday 15 June	9.30 am - 12.30 pm 2.00pm - 5.00pm

The Standing Orders Committee recommends that the President be authorised to close each session when appropriate, without further reference to the Standing Orders Committee or to Congress.

TIMES FOR SPEAKERS

The Standing Orders Committee recommends the following Time Limits for Speakers.

General Motions and Rule Amendments:

Movers up to	4 Minutes
Seconders up to	2 Minutes
Other Speakers up to	2 Minutes

Officers' Reports:

General Secretary up to	10 Minutes
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Deputy General Secretary up to 7 Minutes
 Movers of Section Reports up to 5 Minutes
 Questions up to 1 Minute

Officers' and Section Reports, and questions to them, should relate only to matters of general policy, and not to details of negotiations.

Special Reports and CEC Statements:

Mover up to 6 Minutes
 Secunder up to 3 Minutes
 Other Speakers up to 3 Minutes

It would help the business of Congress enormously if, wherever possible, motions could be formally seconded, and if replies to questions and debates were kept to a minimum.

The Standing Orders Committee draws Delegates' attention to the two rostrums and asks speakers to be ready by the vacant rostrum when it is their turn to speak. Chairs will be provided at the front of the hall for speakers awaiting their turn.

QUESTIONS ON BALANCE SHEET AND AUDITORS' REPORT

Questions on the Balance Sheet and Auditors' Report must be submitted in writing to the Congress platform no later than 10am, Monday 12 June.

MOTIONS OUT OF ORDER

The Standing Orders Committee has ruled that the following Motions are Out of Order for the reasons specified:

Motion 34: Branch Secretary

The motion calls for Union employees to be excluded from holding the post of Branch Secretary, by supporting a Rule Amendment Motion. The objective of the motion requires amendments to Rules 37.4 and 39, and is out of order for this reason.

Motion 48: Retired Members

The motion calls for retired members to be seen as fully financial when they have paid their lifetime retired member rate. It is not clear what objective the motion is seeking to achieve, but it would in any event require amendments to a number of rules including 18.2, 47, and 49A.5, and is out of order for this reason.

Motion 201: Political Affiliation

The motion calls for an end to organisational affiliation to the Labour Party, which would require an amendment to Rules, including 20.10, and is out of order for this reason.

RA 369: Rule 39 Branch Secretary

This Rule Amendment proposes to amend Rule 39 to exclude Union employees from holding the post of Branch Secretary. This would create a conflict with Rule 37.4, which provides that Regions may in some circumstances direct an Organiser to conduct the duties of a Branch Secretary pro-tem. There is no corresponding amendment to Rule 37.4, and it is out of order for this reason.

COMPOSITE MOTIONS

Agreement has been reached on the Composite Motions printed in the Final Agenda.

EMERGENCY MOTIONS

The Committee has ruled that the following Emergency Motions are in order:

Emergency Motion 1: "Emergency Motion – 2003 and 2004 Elections Lancashire Region", standing in the name of Lancashire Region.

Emergency Motion 2: "Redundancies in the NHS", standing in the name of Birmingham & West Midlands Region.

Emergency Motion 3: "Compulsory Water Meters", standing in the name of Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region.

MOBILE PHONES

If mobile phones are brought into the Congress Hall, they must be switched off at all times when Congress is in session.

FILM CAMERAS

The Standing Orders Committee has given permission for film cameras to be used in the Conference Hall. The Committee has been assured that filming will be carried out with no interference to Delegates.

BUCKET COLLECTIONS

Requests for permission to hold Bucket Collections should be submitted in writing to the Committee by mid-day on Monday 12 June. (It is a term of Exhibitors' agreements with GMB that they will not request permission to hold a collection.) The Committee will consider the request and notify the applicant of the outcome. Where permission is granted, those requesting the collection must organise, count and bank the collection, if necessary liaising with the Congress office for support from Congress Stewards. They must then notify the Congress office of the amount collected, so that the President can inform Congress.

By agreement reached at Congress 96, Regional Committees will each contribute a further sum to the national Congress gift. So permission will not be granted for a collection to augment the Congress gift.

BRO. G. FERGUSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): I formally move Standing Orders Committee Report No. 1. You will find the Standing Orders Committee Report beginning on page 26 of your Final Agenda.

I formally move adoption of that report and, in doing so, the Committee would like to thank the delegates and their regional secretaries for agreeing 35 composite motions which also appear in your Final Agenda on page 99.

Colleagues, please note the long standing Guidelines for Congress Business on page 20 of the Final Agenda. This will help you, especially the new delegates, in the understanding of the procedures and the guidelines that the President and the Standing Orders Committee work to.

I will read out the withdrawn motions, and repeat them, so that you have a chance to write them down. The SOC has been informed that the following motions have been withdrawn: (1) Lancashire Region has withdrawn Motion no. 1 on Mandating. (2) Southern Region has withdrawn Motion no. 15 on Full Time Diversity Officer. (3) Southern Region has withdrawn Motion 231 on Television News Channels Presentation. (4) London Region has withdrawn Motion 264 on Stop the War. (5) Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region have withdrawn Rule Amendment 316, Rule Amendment 346, and Motion 34.

Would delegates please note that if any motions are to be withdrawn during Congress, the following procedure should be followed. Delegates should notify their regional secretary; the regional secretary then informs the SOC in writing that the motion has been withdrawn; the SOC will report the matter to Congress so that all delegates will then be aware of the position and be able to follow their agendas.

Emergency Motions. The SOC have accepted the

further emergency motion as being in order for debate. Emergency Motion 4 is entitled Swan Hunters Shipbuilding standing in the name of Northern Region. This emergency motion has not, as yet, been distributed but it will be distributed this morning. The SOC is recommending that this motion be heard this afternoon in the debate on shipbuilding and engineering.

Bucket Collections. The SOC has given permission for Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region to hold a bucket collection for Zoe's Place. The SOC recommends that this collection be taken at the close of play of the Tuesday morning session.

The SOC has also given permission for Midlands & East Coast Region to hold a bucket collection for *When you Wish Upon a Star*.

Also a bucket collection will be taken for the Jimmy Knapp Cancer Fund. The SOC will confirm the times that these two collections will take place. We will inform you in due course.

In relation to a change of Composite Motion 5, the SOC has accepted a change to the arrangements relating to the moving and seconding of the following composite motion. Composite Motion 5, entitled Equal Pay, will now be moved by the Northern Region and seconded by the London Region. Composite Motion 13 on Employment Rights will now be moved by the Northern Region and seconded by the Lancashire Region. The SOC would like to thank the regions concerned for their co-operation.

President and Colleagues, I formally move my SOC Report No. 1.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gerry. Does any delegate wish to speak on the SOC's recommendations? (*No response*) Does Congress accept Standing Orders Report No. 1? (*Accepted*) Thank you very much, Gerry.

I remind the regions which accommodated the

movers and seconders in the changes that I will be giving each equal time to be fair.

I also remind colleagues who are due to move resolutions, motions, composites and emergencies, to make sure, please, that you have your written motions, etc., in your Congress bags in the event that we have to change the agenda at any time so you do not panic. That is very important.

RECALL CONGRESS 2005 AND RELATED MATTERS

THE PRESIDENT: I have to advise Congress that Congress 2005 reconvened on 11th March 2006 to receive the Report of the Inquiry into allegations concerning national elections. Congress debated the report and accepted recommendations for changes to the rules and procedures that govern the Union's national elections. Congress then approved a proposal by the Central Executive Committee to hold an immediate election for the office of General Secretary and Treasurer of the Union.

A note of the decisions of Recall Congress is in the delegates' wallets.

The next item of business will be the motion which validates the decisions made by Recall Congress 2005. I call Malcolm Sage to move CEC Motion 377.

VALIDATING DECISIONS OF RECALL CONGRESS 2005

MOTION CECM377

Congress adopts and endorses all decisions, including rule amendments, made by recall Congress 2005, as if those decisions had been decisions taken by this Congress meeting on 11 March 2006.

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

(Carried)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I am speaking on behalf of the Central Executive Council moving the motion to be endorsed the decision reached on 11th March by Recall Congress 2005.

Colleagues, on 11th January of this year the Assistant Certification Officer handed down his decision in a complaint brought against the Union by Bro Jack Doyle. In his decision, the ACO expressed concern that under the timetable agreed at last year's Congress we might not elect a new General Secretary until later this year. Happily, the internal election inquiry team produced its report and far-reaching recommendations in good time. That allowed the CEC, which accepted those recommendations, to consider procedures and by-laws for an early election. We had intended to bring

those proposals to this Congress. However, most regions had not completed the election of their Congress delegates. We did not have time to wait for the result of those elections and to give you proper notice of being called together. So if we were to meet the concerns of the ACO we had no choice but to recall Congress 2005.

Colleagues, many of you were at the Recall Congress. In any event, you have in your wallets a summary of the decisions taken on 11th March. We are confident that those decisions were properly made.

However, at such a sensitive time and on such a sensitive subject, we cannot take any chance that someone might find some technical ground to challenge the recalling of Congress 2005. So the CEC has brought forward Motion 377, which you will see in your Final Agenda. That motion invites this Congress, 2006, to endorse and adopt the decisions of the Recall Congress 2005 as if they had been taken by delegates to this Congress meeting on 11th March. In that way, we aim to exclude any possibility, however remote, of disruption caused by a spurious challenge to the decision taken on 11th March.

I hope that all delegates will support this motion and help the Union move on. I also hope that this motion allows regions to withdraw those rule amendment motions which replicate the amendments made to our rules on 11th March. Congress, I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Malcolm. I ask for a seconder to the motion.

THE DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY: I formally second.

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to speak to the motion? *(No response)* Does Congress accept the motion?

(CEC Motion 377 was carried.)

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I am now going to move all those amendments and rule changes affecting the validating decision. Although I am aware that some have been officially withdrawn, I must by right call them out. I will give the listing and ask the regions to say what their decisions are.

RULE 14 GENERAL SECRETARY AND TREASURER

2 The Central Executive Council shall, if circumstances so warrant, in case of either a vacancy or a suspension, appoint an elected official to act as General Secretary and Treasurer pro tem, until a new General Secretary and Treasurer is elected, or a suspended General Secretary and Treasurer is restored to office. An elected official who

holds such temporary office shall not be entitled thereby to a vote on the Central Executive Council, and shall not be eligible for nomination and election as General Secretary and Treasurer or as Deputy General Secretary. “

RULE AMENDMENT A292

Lines 6,7,8: Delete "and shall not be eligible for nomination and election as General Secretary and Treasurer or as Deputy General Secretary."
LONDON REGIONAL COMMITTEE
London Region

RULE AMENDMENT 293

Lines 6,7,8: Delete "and shall not be eligible for nomination and election as General Secretary and Treasurer or as Deputy General Secretary."
STANSTED AIRPORT BRANCH
London Region

RULE AMENDMENT 294

Lines 6,7,8: Delete "and shall not be eligible for nomination and election as General Secretary and Treasurer or as Deputy General Secretary."
SILVERTOWN SUGAR WORKERS BRANCH
London Region

RULE AMENDMENT 295

Lines 6,7,8: Delete "and shall not be eligible for nomination and election as General Secretary and Treasurer or as Deputy General Secretary."
BARKING BRANCH
London Region

RULE AMENDMENT 296

Lines 6,7,8: Delete "and shall not be eligible for nomination and election as General Secretary and Treasurer or as Deputy General Secretary."
PLAISTOW BRANCH
London Region

RULE AMENDMENT 297

Lines 6,7,8: Delete "and shall not be eligible for nomination and election as General Secretary and Treasurer or as Deputy General Secretary."
SOUTHEND CFTA BRANCH
London Region

RULE AMENDMENT 298

Lines 6,7,8: Delete "and shall not be eligible for nomination and election as General Secretary and Treasurer or as Deputy General Secretary."
BARKING AND DAGENHAM BRANCH
London Region

THE PRESIDENT: Is London Region prepared to withdraw?

BRO. E. BLISSETT (Regional Secretary, London): London Region is prepared to withdraw, President.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Does Congress agree? *(Agreed)*

RULE AMENDMENT 299

Lines 6,7,8: Delete "and shall not be eligible for nomination and election as General Secretary and Treasurer or as Deputy General Secretary."
SOUTHEND BRANCH
London Region

THE PRESIDENT: We now come to Rule Amendment 299. Is London Region prepared to withdraw?

BRO. E. BLISSETT: London Region is prepared to withdraw, President.

THE PRESIDENT: Does Congress agree? *(Agreed)*
Rule Amendment 316 has been withdrawn under the SOC's report.

RULE AMENDMENT 316A

Clause 2 line 5: After Central Executive Council insert "unless already a member of the Central Executive Council"
5 BRANCH
Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region

THE PRESIDENT: We now come to Rule Amendment 316A. Is Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region prepared to withdraw?

BRO. C. LEONARD (Acting Regional Secretary, Liverpool, North Wales & Irish): Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region is prepared to withdraw, President.

THE PRESIDENT: Does Congress agree? *(Agreed)*

RULE 14A DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY

3 The Central Executive Council shall, if circumstances so warrant, in case of either a vacancy or suspension, appoint an elected official to act as Deputy General Secretary pro tem, until a new Deputy General Secretary is elected, or a suspended Deputy General Secretary is restored to office. An elected official who holds such temporary office shall not be entitled thereby to a vote on the Central Executive Council, and shall not be eligible for nomination and election as Deputy General Secretary or as General Secretary and Treasurer.

RULE AMENDMENT 324

Lines 6&7: Delete: "and shall not be eligible for nomination and election as Deputy General Secretary or as General Secretary and Treasurer".
LONDON REGIONAL COMMITTEE
London Region

RULE AMENDMENT 325

Lines 6&7: Delete: "and shall not be eligible for nomination and election as Deputy General Secretary or as General Secretary and Treasurer".

BARKING BRANCH
London Region

RULE AMENDMENT 326

Lines 6&7: Delete: "and shall not be eligible for nomination and election as Deputy General Secretary or as General Secretary and Treasurer".

BARKING & DAGENHAM BRANCH
London Region

RULE AMENDMENT 327

Lines 6&7: Delete: "and shall not be eligible for nomination and election as Deputy General Secretary or as General Secretary and Treasurer".

PLAISTOW BRANCH
London Region

RULE AMENDMENT 328

Lines 6&7: Delete: "and shall not be eligible for nomination and election as Deputy General Secretary or as General Secretary and Treasurer".

SILVERTOWN SUGAR WORKERS BRANCH
London Region

RULE AMENDMENT 329

Lines 6&7: Delete: "and shall not be eligible for nomination and election as Deputy General Secretary or as General Secretary and Treasurer".

STANSTED AIRPORT BRANCH
London Region

RULE AMENDMENT 330

Line 6&7: Delete: "and shall not be eligible for nomination and election as Deputy General Secretary or as General Secretary and Treasurer".

SOUTHEND CFTA BRANCH
London Region

THE PRESIDENT: Rule Amendments 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329 and 330. Is London Region prepared to withdraw?

BRO. E. BLISSETT (Regional Secretary, London): London Region is prepared to withdraw.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, London. Does Congress agree? *(Agreed)*

(Rule Amendment 346 has been withdrawn under SOC Report)

RULE AMENDMENT 346A

Clause 3 line 5

After Central Executive Council insert "unless already a member of the Central Executive Council"

5 BRANCH
Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region

THE PRESIDENT: Rule Amendment 346A has been moved by the Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region. Is Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region prepared to withdraw?

BRO. C. LEONARD (Acting Regional Secretary, Liverpool, North Wales & Irish): Liverpool, North Wales and Irish Region is prepared to withdraw.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

2003 AND 2004 ELECTIONS**EMERGENCY MOTION 1**

Congress fully supports the CEC decision to carry out an Independent Inquiry into serious matters arising from the 2003 and 2004 elections and applauds the single mindedness of the Panel in delivering a substantial report covering all issues.

Congress also demands that the openness and transparency that is now an intrinsic and integral part of the GMB is continued and to that end Congress instructs the CEC to supply a full and unexpurgated copy of the Inquiry Report to all ten Regions so that members, should they so wish, have access to the full findings and investigations.

136 ROSSENDALE BRANCH
Lancashire Region

(Lost)

SIS. E. GREENWOOD (Lancashire): Lancashire Region was at a loss to understand why the CEC originally opposed this motion. I think that position has now changed. All of the members who are familiar with CEC minutes will know that all this motion was calling for what the GMB membership, not just the Executive, was promised, and that is an "open and transparent process throughout the Inquiry that would report back in full to Congress", not in part to a one day Recall Congress. Even the Executive then had not seen the full report. I repeat, that is not what we were promised and it is not what we should actually accept. To be quite frank, it is not worthy of the Executive of the Union to treat the membership in this way.

Let me be very clear. This is not about retribution. Lancashire Region fully accepts the assurances that were given to individuals who co-operated with the inquiry, but there is something fundamentally flawed in a process which promises protection to individuals who have broken the rules yet denies access to the finished report in full to the membership. The vast majority had no part in the nonsense that went on and without whom this great Union would not exist. The phrases we have heard are "draw a line under it", "move on" and "do not look

back”. Those phrases were used more than once by that non-entity Kevin Curran when avoiding discussions on how we arrived in the dire financial mess that we found ourselves when he took office. Those phrases have a very hollow ring.

As for the claim that we would leave the Union open to legal action in respect of defamation, you cannot seriously expect Congress to believe that this inquiry was ever undertaken without first taking out indemnity insurance against such things as libel and defamation because if it was then this Union needs to find new legal advisers sooner rather than later.

This Union for the first time in year has a chance to clear out all the dross, to build a new Union from the top down and from the bottom up, free from suspicion, free from corruption and free from allegations. The starting point is by passing this motion and putting a full and unexpurgated and unedited version of the Inquiry Report into every region so that any member can have access to it proving that we have nothing to hide, thereby removing all the accusations of a white wash. Then, and only then, can we move forward and draw that infamous line.

As for certain individuals suing us for defamation, which the CEC members are confident they can win, then, Congress, the answer is loud and clear. Publish and be damned. I move.

BRO. S. GEOGHAN (Lancashire): President and Congress, the mover of this motion has made our case clear. In seconding this emergency motion, I would remind delegates in all regions that you cannot be mandated on this. You all have a free vote and you should vote for honesty, transparency and integrity. The aim in the GMB should not be to represent mushrooms, i.e., kept in the dark and fed on bovine excrement. We represent members and those members deserve a union they can be proud of, one which does the right thing. Please support this emergency motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone else wish to come and speak on the emergency motion? *(No response)* The CEC has changed its decision and it supports with a qualification. I call Allan Garley.

BRO. A. GARLEY (Regional Secretary, South Western Region): In speaking on behalf of the CEC, I am asking Congress to support Emergency Motion 1 with a qualification. Emergency Motion 1 calls on the CEC to provide each region with a copy of the Report of the Inquiry into the 2003 and 2004 National Elections, so that any member who wishes to have access can do so.

The CEC qualification is that for the technical and legal reasons already alluded to, wide publication of the report removes what is called ‘qualified privilege’ and allows someone to sue the Inquiry team and/or the Union. The CEC is confident that we can stand

over the findings of the report. However, we do not understand why we should face expensive litigation brought by those who wish to re-write history, so whilst the CEC supports the motion we need to implement it in a way which will protect the Union. One has to be sensible.

We will make the summary report, as seen by the CEC, available for fully financial members of the GMB to read at their regional office having given the appropriate notice. The assurance we give you is that everything the CEC has seen will be made available to members of the GMB. But what we will not do is to give access to people who are not members of the Union. Copying any part of the report would also be precluded and we will keep a register of those given access. Through this system of supervised access, we aim to balance the rights of members with protecting the Union, ensuring members’ democratic rights and at the same time we can protect the organisation.

Congress, this is the way forward. With that qualification, the CEC ask you to support Emergency Motion 1. Thank you, President.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Allan. Edna, do you accept the qualification?

SIS. E. GREENWOOD (Lancashire): Lancashire Region does not accept the qualification because it is not what we asked for. We did not ask for a summary report. We asked for the full report for our membership. We do not want non-union members to see it but our membership is entitled to see it. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: Edna, I think you know the rules by now. If you do not accept the qualification, believe you me, legally this is as far as we can go. I will ask Congress to oppose the emergency motion. Is it still your stance?

SIS. E. GREENWOOD: Yes. We do not accept the qualification.

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, it is with regret that I am going to have to ask Congress to oppose the emergency motion as it is legally as far as we can go. Believe you me, that is fact. That is not hiding anything. All those in favour of Emergency Motion 1, please show? All those against?

(Emergency Motion 1 was lost)

ANNOUNCEMENT: GENERAL SECRETARY ELECTION

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I stand before you with great pride today. As you know, this Congress has to validate the election of your General Secretary.

Before I do that, there are many people here today who are very proud to be present. I have been made aware that we have visitors today who would ordinarily be Congress delegates but for one reason or the other they could not attend the full Congress. However, they have come here to show their support for one issue only. I would like to thank Pam Ross and Minty - I know many of you know Pam and her husband from Yorkshire Region - who have come today with delegates from her branch to be a part of what we are about to do now. This is a very proud day for me. I would like to welcome Mrs. Kenny Sr., Paul's mother, who is here for her great day and who is very proud. Most of all - I may get a bit emotional over this - I remember my own mum coming here when I was endorsed as your President. So it is a very proud moment.

I want to say thank you to Pat Kenny and their two sons, who during the past two years have also suffered like the rest of us because of what has gone on in this Union. So to Pat, Alex and Warren, we are extremely proud of your dad and husband and we will stand shoulder to shoulder with him in the good times and the bad. Thank you for coming to Congress. I thank all of the ex-delegates and visitors who have come along for the same reason.

I am to announce that following decisions of the GMB Recall Congress 2005 the CEC met to issue new by-laws, adopt a timetable and formally triggered an election for the post of General Secretary and Treasurer.

The General Purposes Committee met on 8th May 2006 and declared that Paul Stephen Kenny was elected unopposed as General Secretary and Treasurer of the GMB. Well done, Paul. *(Cheers amidst a standing ovation)*

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS AND VOTE OF THANKS

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Congress, it now gives me great pleasure to ask our President, Mary Turner, to address Congress. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Malcolm. Congress, to say that the last year has been traumatic would be an understatement. It would be true to say that the last two years have tested not only me but also the Vice President and the CEC as a whole, and I would like to place on record my thanks for their support during this uniquely difficult and historic time.

You will recall that last year I outlined the difficulties we had to face, stemming directly from evidence given at an industrial tribunal and correspondence from lawyers involved that led to the need to set in train an investigation into serious allegations regarding the 2003 election for General Secretary.

Based on those facts we put before you at Congress 2005, you endorsed the appointment of

Paul Kenny as Acting General Secretary for the forthcoming year with the intention of reporting back to this Congress and holding a fresh election for General Secretary. We did not allow or anticipate further complications but they happened anyway.

The investigation led by Phil King, a senior partner of Thompsons, got underway initially interviewing those officers, staff and lay members who had volunteered statements. In the course of events they also interviewed other people whose names were mentioned during those initial interviews.

The investigation clearly established serious wrong doing in the 2003 election: (i) the wrongful publication and distribution of election material; (ii) the establishment of a website; (iii) a Post Office box number, and (iv) a bank account with contributions from outside sources including employers and suppliers, the greatest cardinal sin that anyone can do as a shop steward and trade unionist.

Let me remind them and others. Congress, this Union is not for sale to employers or anyone else. It is our Union. *(Applause)*

The investigation was on track to report back in time for this Congress as agreed. This was only to be overtaken by a complaint to the certification officer by a retired GMB officer. The decision made by the Assistant Certification Officer expressed the wish that the Union election process for the post of General Secretary would take place as quickly as possible.

The Vice President, in his speech on the motion validating the decisions of Recall Congress 2005, has already outlined to Congress the process that then took place to initiate an earlier election than had been anticipated.

Congress, when the Assistant Certification Officer made his decision, I had already received a preliminary report from Phil King. With the approval of the CEC, I called for a final report from the investigating team and called for a special one day Recall Congress in order to receive the report which was also charged with proposing new by-laws for future elections for General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary.

Following the correspondence between solicitors representing the ex-General Secretary and Phil King, we were, Edna, constrained as to how much we could disclose and make comment on regarding the 2003 election.

I wish to make it abundantly clear that the ex-General Secretary was given the opportunity to respond to the serious issues raised by the investigation and chose not to do so, even on a one-to-one basis with Phil King.

It is a matter of record that the report was accepted at the Special Recall Congress. We had by that time received a large number of rule changes and amendments for this 2006 Congress seeking a

change of rule to allow the then acting General Secretary to stand for election to the post of General Secretary and Treasurer of the GMB. 2005 was not a rule change year but the CEC has the right to bring forward rule changes and amendments at any time. So with the support and agreement of the Standing Orders Committee, Recall Congress moved the rule changes and amendments en bloc and a timetable for an election of General Secretary was agreed.

Paul Kenny received 201 nominations. There being no other valid nomination, Paul Kenny was declared General Secretary as of May 8th, 2006, as today's Congress endorsed.

Congress, never, never again do we want to see people at a senior level trying to bring this Union into disrepute, people who are more interested in their own self-advancement than our members' interests. People who aspire to high office should do so for the advancement of their members' interests, not their own. That has to be our Bible from now into the future.

As well as navigating these waters, we have also had to contend with a host of industrial and related matters including two tier employment practices, the many problems with pensions including the difficulties associated with the attacks on public sector workers pensions. Talk about picking on the low paid and hitting them the hardest. To hear the Tories, the Lib Dems, the media and the CBI, you would think our public service workers were getting a king's ransom rather than the paltry pickings associated with low pay and a far from generous formula. If our NHS and local government members' pay was linked to dedication, loyalty and unpaid overtime, this country could not afford them. It would go bankrupt.

We have also had to deal with problems of our members in the AA, BA, ASDA and Remploy. Employers' concept of agreements seem to be words from a different era and I would like, personally, in this Congress, to congratulate our members in Washington who were not prepared to be bought off by ASDA. We will continue to lead the fight for justice on behalf of our members and their families who are suffering from asbestos related illnesses after the unjust rulings from the courts to deny them proper compensation.

But, Congress, we can be proud of the way we, and especially Paul in his acting role, ensured a high profile for the GMB and, Congress – this has got to be the message and the priority for the GMB of the future: a high profile leadership with no more sweetheart agreements with employers. *(Applause)*

We will be leading the way for positive progress regarding Warwick. Currently, Congress, the Labour Party has a consultation campaign called "Let's Talk". Well, Tony, we have talked and now we say to the Party let's listen, let's act, let's have the eight days bank holidays, abolish the two tier workforce for all,

abolish Best Value and privatisation, no more PFI, more social housing and restore the link to pensions now, not in 2012. It is now time for you to listen to us and not to the CBI.

Congress, it would be remiss of me not to reiterate my thanks to the CEC, head office staff and to my region, London, for the support they have given me to deal with these unique difficulties over the past two years. Special thanks must go to my Vice President, Malcolm Sage, for his continued and loyal support. I would also like to put on record my and the CEC's thanks to all staff, officers and activists throughout the Union who have had to get on with their jobs during this time. It was not easy for them either every time this issue appeared in the media.

On your behalf, I would like to thank the investigating team, Phil King, June Minnery, Paul McCarthy, Bill Smith and John Cope, retired regional secretaries from, respectively, Liverpool and London Regions. Of course, I wish to thank my family and, of course, my poor husband, Denny, who thinks he should get the Gold Badge for tolerating it. There we are.

Congress, I opened my address by commenting on the trauma of the previous years. Let us now, this week, put that behind us and look to the future with pride, proud of our Union, proud to be led by our new General Secretary, and campaigning on behalf of us all, for all of our very loyal GMB members. Thank you, Congress. *(Applause)*

VOTE OF THANKS TO THE PRESIDENT

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mary. Congress, I now ask Ray Lowden, from the CEC and the Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region to give the vote of thanks to the President.

BRO. R. LOWDEN (CEC, Engineering): President, Congress, visitors and guests, it is my privilege to move this vote of thanks to our President, Mary Turner, on your behalf. It is, indeed, an honour for me to celebrate and recognise the wonderful contribution that you have made to the GMB and the wider working class movement. Mary, as a CEC colleague, I am aware of the pressures and strain that you have been under during what has been a very difficult time for the GMB. Your determination, self-conviction, courage and, indeed, sense of humour has been an inspiration to us all in ensuring we survived that traumatic experience and we are now a more confident and financially secure Union than we have been for many years. We thank you for that.

Mary, you are well-known for your fairness, integrity, insistence on fair play and equality. These qualities have been so evident in our fight for a better deal for low paid and part-time workers. We know you have enjoyed the full support of your whole

family, especially your husband, Denny, during many years of hard work, long hours spent in promoting and developing the aims and objectives of the GMB. On behalf of Congress, I would like to thank him for that support.

Our thoughts were with you and your family last Christmas when, sadly, your mum passed away. I hope that was of some comfort to you.

Mary, I have referred to your sense of humour. You are going to kill me for this. I can very well recall an occasion when you needed it. You were Vice President at the time. It was following a GMB Congress here in Blackpool, quite a number of years ago, and many of us travelled directly to London for a one day health and safety conference. As I recall, it was for a rather important event. The conference room was packed. As we all waited with expectation, you stepped on to the rostrum only to promptly disappear because the bloody rostrum had collapsed. We all held our breath but you soon reappeared looking somewhat dishevelled but, thankfully, unhurt. As you endeavoured to regain your composure and sort out your paperwork, you suddenly burst out laughing. With great relief, everyone was laughing. That was a most appropriate way to start a conference on health and safety.

However, that incident clearly demonstrated your wonderful sense of humour and your determination to keep the show on the road. I am sure you will keep the show on the road this week but, just to be safe, Mary, have someone check the chair you are sitting on.

I am honoured to move this Vote of Thanks to our National President, Mary Turner. Mary, have a great week. Thank you, Congress. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Ray. Let me tell Congress that what happened was that the hotel had a trap door on the stage. They put the carpet over the trap door and as I stepped onto the carpet so the trap door opened and I disappeared. I ended up down in the cellar. Let me thank everyone for your kindness.

OBITUARY

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, this is a sad time for us now. I ask you to stand and you will see before you a scroll on the screen of lost friends and colleagues. I ask you to stand for one minute's silence.

(The Congress stood in silent tribute)

PRESENTATION OF GMB GOLD BADGES

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, the next part of our Congress gives me great pleasure because I will be making presentations of the highest honour in our Union, which is the Gold Badge. It is with pride that

the CEC honoured Liz Blackman – I call her “Liz”. It is down on my notes as “Elizabeth”, but she wouldn't even know I was calling her if I called her “Elizabeth”. Liz Blackman is from the Midlands & East Coast Region.

Liz has been a GMB member for 40 years. She has held many branch and regional lay representative positions and is a member of the Regional Council. She is the Secretary of the Regional Retired Members Association and is the editor of the new Regional RMA Newsletter.

Liz lists were proudest achievements as “securing a re-grading for Home Care Workers”. She continues to argue for the need for adequate training for all care workers and national care standards. Liz is heavily involved in the National Pensioners Convention in the east Midlands.

Colleagues, I have known Liz for many years and I am extremely proud to present to Liz the Gold Badge of Congress. *(Presentation made amidst applause)*

SIS. E. BLACKMAN (Midland & East Coast): Congress, President and colleagues, it is with humility that I receive this award here today. When I joined the General & Municipal Workers Union 40 years ago I never thought in my wildest dreams that I would be standing before you today.

I would like to thank my region and regional secretary for their support and faith in me. I would like to thank my branch for nominating me, our regional organisers and staff for their ongoing support, especially Cheryl Evans and Sandra Welch and, last but not least, my husband, Joe, for his unstinting report. He, incidentally, was also a local authority GMB steward. I also thank my daughter, Helen, who herself was a rep for the FBU.

Thirty years ago at my first congress I moved a motion on local authority nurseries. To say I was terrified is an understatement, yet I ended up calling them a bunch of chauvinist pigs. I have learned a lot in 30 years but it is no help to me today because I am very nervous.

In April 1966 I was employed by my local authority as a home help. It soon became apparent that our job description, which was reflected in our pay, to provide domestic assistance to elderly and vulnerable persons bore no relationship to the actual job we were doing. In addition to our domestic duties we were increasingly providing personal care, including dealing with clients suffering from dementia and alcoholism with virtually no training except common sense.

In those days I was part of a large engineering branch. My colleagues and I decided the only way in which we could address the training and pay issue, which actually was a grading problem, was to form our own branch. Here I must thank our former regional organiser, Peter Smart, for helping us to achieve that.

I was elected shop steward and branch chair. A couple of years later I was elected branch secretary, a position I still hold today. Let me tell you something, colleagues. It proved easier to crack the nut of training than regarding. Home care assistants are now trained, or should be, to national standards. In the 1980s I accompanied John Edmonds to ACAS on the issue of regarding. We finally won our claim but we did not receive recognition of the actual job we did until the local authority regarding exercise in the late '80s. You may wonder why it took so long. It was not for the lack of trying. Local government delegates' pay conferences were told time and time again of the injustice of the grading system before we convinced them to support the women. However, it is not surprising because, in retrospect, women activists in those days were a rarity seldom seen and scarcely ever listened to. So it is hardly surprising that the issues of regarding, equal pay, healthcare and family friendly policies were the first items to be jettisoned from the bargaining agenda when resistance from government and employers were encountered.

Colleagues, as more women became active, things started to change, albeit slowly. In 1985 Congress accepted the CEC's Special Report entitled Women in the Union. In moving it for my region I said that the next few years would be critical for our movement. Women make up a third of our membership and we have a key role to play in shaping future policy.

Looking at our structures today, we can see the results of that strategy but, colleagues, it would be foolish in the extreme to think that the battle for equality has been finally won. We have a long way to go yet, not least of all on equal pay, but at least today we are all singing from the same hymn sheet.

In 1985 when I said that the next few years would be crucial to our movement, I did not think I would be repeating these words 20 years later. The biggest single issue facing our membership today is pensions. If we do not get this right, tomorrow's pensions and workers face a bleak future.

How many colleagues here today are aware of the GMB RMA? How many of your members even know that we have a retired members' structure? Why the apathy. Do not pensioners have the same needs as those in work? Wasn't that why they joined the Union in the first place? As trade unionists, we rightly and proudly claim the GMB to be the Union for Life. Let's turn that slogan into action by supporting our retired membership.

Members who fought for many of the benefits you enjoy today are still fighting for a decent pension and a Welfare State not only for themselves but for you and your children's children. Thank you for listening. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Liz.

Colleagues, it now gives me great pleasure to

present the Gold Badge to our next colleague, who is Brian Adams from the Birmingham & West Midlands Region.

Brian has been a Union member for over 50 years and a GMB member since 1960. He has held almost every lay reps position in the GMB, including being a CEC member between 1999 and 2003. Brian is the region's member of the Standing Orders Committee. He is currently a Regional Committee and Regional Council member and Treasurer of the GMB's Retired Members' Association. He is a member of the North Staffordshire Trade Union Council and was recently elected treasurer of his local Labour Party branch. His Region says of Brian: "He has worked tirelessly on behalf of the members and has never shied away from giving his time, experience and enthusiasm for the benefit of the movement."

Brian, it gives me great pleasure to award you with the Gold Badge of Congress.

(Presentation made amidst applause)

BRO. B. ADAMS (Birmingham & West Midlands): May I, first of all, thank all those involved with my having the very great honour of being presented with this Gold Badge. Thanks to the Stoke-on-Trent Gas branch for their magnificent support which they have given me for many years. My thanks go to the Birmingham & West Midlands Regional Council and the Birmingham & West Midlands Regional Committee. I give a special thanks to the Birmingham & West Midlands Regional Secretary, Joe Morgan, and all the staff within the region for their never ending help when required.

Colleagues, I first joined this great Union in 1960 and became a shop steward in 1965. I left the gas industry in 1968 but six months later I returned to the gas industry. In the mid-'70s I became a branch chair through to 2003 and then the branch secretary, which I still am. During that time, I proceeded to climb the Union ladder until where I am today. One of the highlights of being involved with the Union during that time was having the privilege of taking part in the 1989 Centenary march. Colleagues, we are now 117 years old and I sincerely hope that this great Union, the GMB, sees many more years to come under its own name, the GMB.

Before closing, I want to thank the many friends who I have not mentioned individually. Please accept my thanks. I would like to save the best and most important until last, and that is my family. My daughter, Lesley, and my son, Andrew, are in the balcony. I give my very sincere thanks to both of you for your help and support during the time that you have supported me. Thank you.

Colleagues, the most important person of all is my wife, Marion, whose help, assistance and understanding over the years has been immeasurable, without which I would not be standing

here today. Thank you, Marion.

I would like to finish with the words that Joe Cooke, a Birmingham & West Midlands Regional member, and a long-term member of the Standing Orders Committee said at the 1984 Congress: "I have not served this Union. This Union has served me and many millions more". Thank you, colleagues. Enjoy your Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I would just like to go back to the last point that has just been made, thanking our families. None of us in this hall, none of us in this great union, could do the job we do if we did not have the support of our families; it takes a team to do it, not just one. On behalf of all the families of all the delegates in here and the activists out there, I think the union should say thank you to them all. They are very important. *(Applause)*

Congress, I have to explain a couple of points of procedure before we begin our first debate. Where the CEC is supporting a motion, I will advise Congress of the CEC's recommendation. Where the CEC's position is something other than straight, support for instance with qualification or support with statement, or seek withdrawal or reference, we will call on someone to give the CEC's recommendation in a reply to the debate.

To save time I will take motions in groups and ask the CEC speaker to reply to groups rather than deal with each motion individually. The Congress programme shows the groups. I want to remind Congress that the large "X" is not a kiss in front of the motion in the programme; it means that Standing Orders have ruled the motion out of order. Is that clear? Yes? All speak to Mary. Clear as mud, says Mary!

Colleagues, can I now move to the programme.

UNION ORGANISATION: CONGRESS

MANDATE

MOTION 1

Congress – No brother or sister or Region should be mandated attending Congress. It suppresses free speech.

242 SALFORD NO. 1
Lancashire Region

(Withdrawn)

THE PRESIDENT: As you are aware, Lancashire Region has withdrawn number 1, Mandate, and you have agreed.

CONGRESS STANDING ORDERS

MOTION 2

Congress recognises that the standing orders for Congress business are outdated and therefore require modernising for the twenty first century. Congress therefore instructs the CEC to investigate an update in the standing orders to allow non-controversial motions and composites to be dealt with quicker in order that other matters can have a fuller and more comprehensive debate.

The CEC to report back to the 2007 Congress with recommendations.

W50 WELLINGTON BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Referred)

BRO. J. STOKES (Birmingham & West Midlands): In line with the motion I will keep this short to save Congress's time. At each GMB Congress motions have been accepted by the CEC and are not controversial, with speaker after speaker standing up at the rostrum in support with no speakers standing against. This is a waste of valuable Congress time for more pressing matters to be debated. We therefore request that the CEC investigates the possibility of bringing our Standing Orders up to date to allow a quicker passage of these matters and allow more time for debate in controversial or more detailed motions. The aspects that may be considered are shorter time limits for speakers or a limit to the number of speakers for a motion, or any other amendments the CEC may think appropriate, and the CEC to report back its findings at the next year's Congress for approval. Thank you.

(Motion 2 was formally seconded.)

CONGRESS MEETINGS

MOTION 3

This Congress supports the resolution that the GMB Congress is held every 4 years. The money saved could be used to service the membership with badly needed officer support.

CAMBORNE C21 BRANCH
Southern Region

(Lost)

BRO. C. LAWRENCE (Southern Region): President, Congress, on Motion 3 I do not have any support from the region. There was communication after withdrawal. We have fully considered the issue and we are not withdrawing. The feeling of the branch is that Congress is irrelevant. Costs could be used

more effectively in member support and recruitment and the motion from the Camborne GMB branch is, in a nutshell, the motion that is put before you. Please support. Thank you.

BRO. P. GOODACRE (Southern): I think there has probably been a need for an annual congress the last couple of years with everything that has been going on but I think as we get more stability and come out of this dark period we should maybe look at reducing the number of congresses as an economy measure. This would give us more resources to do what we should be doing, which is looking after our members. I second. Thank you.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH IN THE GMB

MOTION 5

Congress believes that protection of liberties such as free speech and public investigation and accountability, which define civilised societies, is a fundamental duty of this Union and the movement as a whole.

Consequently, it is essential that we organise our activities in ways that strengthen those liberties by encouraging delegates to participate in our proceedings as fully and confidently as possible.

Therefore, Congress requires that when guest speakers address it, they do so on the understanding that they are willing to answer questions from delegates at the end of their speeches.

Congress instructs the CEC to arrange for adequate periods of time for meaningful question and answer sessions to take place.

NORWICH GENERAL BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. K. ROWLEY (London): Before I start could I say to any people who are new to Congress and are a bit scared about coming up to speak for the first time, this is my fourth one and I still have the collywobbles.

I am moving Motion 5 and I think it is important that delegates look very carefully at the wording of this motion. I believe to describe it as "freedom of speech in the GMB" is slightly misleading. I understand the CEC is supporting this motion with a qualification. At last year's Congress I moved a very similar motion which it opposed, so this is progress of some sort.

The thrust of the motion is concerned with the way some of our friends come along to Congress to rally the troops for elections and/or further their own careers while we are expected to wait out the beauty parade without having any meaningful

opportunity to question them, or put them under any kind of pressure.

Micromanagement of annual meetings is stifling real debate in the Labour Party. All too often in the last nine years we have found the House of Commons lacking the courage to question our political masters with any kind of rigour. The Government's idea of a national debate on a major issue is to invite hand-picked experts to 10 Downing Street summits where one or two ministers may decide that a manipulative internet questionnaire is much better than debating with real people in public. So, as genuine public debate is strangled the media moves into the space, increasingly setting the agenda, blurring the line between serious discussion and entertainment, and encouraging sound bite idiocy. Peter Mandelson taught New Labour these tricks and Alastair Campbell perfected them, and we might say that the disastrous war in Iraq is the bitterest fruit of this process.

We must change direction if we want to prevent further disengagement and cynicism sweeping our political culture. No doubt some of you here will be saying that this motion is politically motivated. Of course it is. Trade unionism is politically motivated by nature but it is not politically motivated in any particular part of affiliation.

I am concerned with what is required to defend our democratic freedom. We need to be vigilant all down the line. It is not just a question of voting every four years. If we want to empower the people we must give them every opportunity to grow in confidence by asking questions and by so doing demystify political power. It is not beyond the wit of this union to organise the business of Congress so that there is time for guest speakers to face questions from the floor.

I notice on Tuesday that we are having a "senior Labour Party politician" to conduct a question and answer session. On Wednesday Peter Hain will have his opportunity to pitch for Prescott's job. I would be much happier if we were conducting the Q and A with him too. I think we would be doing more for our members and democracy in general if we were to insist that all guest speakers did so. I do not suspect that they would be embarrassed if we did not ask a single question but they might be if we asked them a difficult few. Comrades, I move.

BRO. R. SLADE (London): I second this motion for several reasons. I do believe that debate is squashed in the region in several ways, but especially in Parliament. Last year Gordon Brown attended and we had a terrific speaker who came up to reply to Gordon warning that the train is coming to the end of the line and that we are going to hit the buffers soon. We need to question our Members of Parliament and we need to question the speakers that come to this rostrum.

BRO. P. PERRY (Lancashire): Motion 3 should not be under rule amendments, paragraph 1; we changed it. Motion 2 is out of order; it should not be under rule review.

THE PRESIDENT: I will take them in block.

BRO. J. COOTE (London) speaking in favour of Motions 2 and 5, and speaking in opposition to Motion 3. I was absolutely gob-smacked when I saw Motion 3 actually come back. It was a long hard-fought London Region campaign to make sure that Congress actually did get to an annual basis. Actually, to go back to a four-yearly cycle would completely undermine everything that has happened so far.

I would like to remind you what Congress is about. Congress sets our programme now on an annual basis for the year. It gives us the opportunity to question the CEC, to understand the reasons why certain things have been put into place, and it is our opportunity to make sure we get our work that we want to be prioritised actually carried through.

I am quite pleased that our speaker on Motion 5 actually said what he did. If that Motion 5 is carried it gives us and speakers that come to this Congress an opportunity to say to people like senior politicians that we are not happy. We need to say what we can to them. If we have that opportunity once every four years, we will miss a golden opportunity. For example, when Gordon Brown announced that there was going to be a public sector pay freeze for three years, we would not have been able to sort out the changes because we would have missed the opportunity.

Congress, I ask you to oppose Motion 3.

THE PRESIDENT: I now call Paul Kenny to reply.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Good morning. First of all, thank you very much for the honour and trust that you have put in me to act as your General Secretary and Treasurer for the next 106 years! I promise I will not change the rules and abuse the situation. Thank you very much indeed. I am very honoured and very proud. (*Applause*)

You are going to wonder, as I did, why I would be up early on Sunday morning speaking on behalf of the CEC and throwing the big guns, if you like, into the debate. When we looked at the Congress agenda and the scheduling, the first item up on the agenda was resolution 1 from the Lancashire Region, from a long-time friend and colleague, and good battler, John Toomey. We said, "Who is going to go up on behalf of the CEC in order to oppose John Toomey," and there was this look round the table that said, "It's up to you now." That is the reason I have actually come to the rostrum, and it was a big surprise to me this morning to find that number one has actually been withdrawn.

Could I just say, however, dealing with the other

resolutions and starting with Motion 2, the Standing Orders Committee do a fantastic job, they do a brilliant job. They are actually protectors of Congress democracy, that is their role. Some people have visions that they are something from a Harry Potter film, the monsters sucking the life out of Congress. In fact, what they are actually doing is ensuring that the lifeblood of Congress is pumped. They keep it pumping. There is a real lack of understanding about the role of the Standing Orders Committee. They ensure that Congress is not hijacked by the platform or by any other individual. They make sure that lay members' rights are protected under the rules of Congress and the rules of debate.

The CEC is seeking referral of this resolution in what I think was the spirit of the mover. A review about how we work is always to be welcomed; it is always to be embraced. We have no problem looking at ourselves. However, the CEC make it clear we reject any suggestion that the Standing Orders Committee is outdated, or that its functions are somehow to suppress democracy of this Congress. That is just a misrepresentation of its function and role.

In fact, the Standing Orders Committee is making recommendations all the time about ways of improving Congress running, allowing delegations more time to consider issues like composites, for example. A few years ago composites were cobbled together almost at the last minute of Congress in corridors, amongst Regional Secretaries, and new delegates, and sometimes everyone was completely bewildered about the context and the process.

Standing Orders suggested that we make a change and get out the composites earlier, get them round to the regions, let people look at the composites, see if they fit in, and arrange the different speakers. That was a big move forward, it gave people more time, and it stopped people being bounced. After last year's Congress the Standing Orders Committee suggested earlier involvement with the National Office about how Congress functions, about the timetable, about how we could improve things. This idea that Standing Orders is just there somehow to suppress people is just not right.

The SOC has also offered and raised suggestions with us about a uniform process for training and education for new delegates so that people understand the process of Congress. Some of the strange and almost weird issues we go through about supporting with qualifications, or referral, what does it mean? What is a composite?

Some regions already do this and it is a great benefit, but I have to say I think the mover of the resolution from Birmingham was quite right to point out that there are things we need to look at, such as some of the ways we continually have resolutions that just repeat existing policy. I think that is a

really fair point and we should look at it.

We must also remember that it is not just an issue of talking about Standing Orders. There currently exists within the rules the right of branches to submit resolutions to Congress. If you are going to look at that, you are going to have to look at how that impinges upon the rights of branches to submit resolutions. A review is not a bad idea. I think the Standing Orders Committee are very positive about looking at new ways to make Congress more vibrant and flow better. We must not look at this as if it is some bang about the Standing Orders Committee, we are looking at Congress itself, how we can get more democracy, and how we can get a smoother operation. I believe the CEC seeks referral in the spirit the mover moved the resolution.

Moving to Motion 3, the CEC is flatly opposed to moving to a four-year Congress. I think it is important for people to remember that it is not about elections, it really is not about elections, it is about accountability. The idea that you and our members would not have the opportunity to question the National Officers, or the Deputy General Secretary, or the regions, or me, for four years about what we were doing in your name, if you think about the logic of that it just does not add up.

People talk about cost but sometimes there is a price you have to pay. If you lose that accountability, if you lose the fact that people get to the point where they do not believe they are going to have to stand up and justify their actions to you, the Congress delegates, then you lose the connection between the leadership of the organisation, those who take decisions in your name, and those they are accountable to. For that very simple and straightforward reason, we say oppose Motion 3.

On Motion 5, Keith, you keep banging away almost at an open door sometimes with your head, mate. I do not know if Peter Hain is going to run for the deputy premiership. If he does, I am sure he will not be alone. When he does, then we will organise appropriate hustings for those people who wish to conjure the votes from the GMB. That will be done on the basis it was done last time.

The CEC is actually accepting this resolution, Keith, with a qualification. We are moving along the route that you have outlined, as you did last year, very eloquently. We do think there is a strong case that in a lot of instances people who come to talk to union gatherings, both at Congress, in the regions, and at industrial conferences, should face a question and answer session from the members. Frankly, there are a few people where I am not particularly certain we would want to have more than about 10 minutes of their time but there are other people I believe should be put on the spot and directly questioned by the members of the union, particularly politicians who make decisions and govern the country in the name of the people.

I believe powerfully and passionately that those people should be accountable, effectively, to the Trade Union Movement and to the Movement that actually put most of them into office. I believe that passionately and I hope you will see a ground-breaking spectacular this week when we actually end up getting to that point exactly as you wanted, Keith, in this hall with the most senior Labour politician we could lay our hands on. I am sure I can leave it to you to work out who that is.

We are getting there, Keith, but I think the suggestion that at every meeting of the union, whoever comes to speak to us, we must set time aside then not only in terms of this Congress would it be damaging, we would either have to restrict the outside speakers to one or two or we would have, effectively, to restrict the amount of time we gave delegates to move their own resolutions or to speak in debate.

For that reason and with that qualification, we are going to try it, Keith. We are going to push it along, but we are not going to give a commitment, we do not want to give a commitment that every single speaker will submit to Q and A. We think we should develop this on a bit by bit basis by bringing in people and submitting them, where appropriate, to the question and answer sessions from the members both at Congress and in the regions. With that qualification, Keith, we support. Thank you, Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: I remind you that you are not "acting" any more, you are the General Secretary. Colleagues, does anyone wish to reply? *(No response)* I now move to the votes.

(Motion 2 was referred)

THE PRESIDENT: Southern Region, the CEC seek withdrawal. Are you prepared to withdraw? No? Is the delegate up here without the support of his region? *(Confirmed)* Then he should have made that quite clear when he came to the platform. Did he? *(Confirmed)* Now move to the vote. The CEC is asking for withdrawal.

(Motion 3 was lost)

(Motion 5 was carried)

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: THE ECONOMY

BRITAIN FOR SALE

MOTION 183

Congress instructs the General Secretary, Executive and GMB Management to campaign with the TUC and Labour Movement to end the

Labour Governments laissez faire market led approach to British Industry, recently highlighted by the bidding for the major UK Shipping and Ports Company, P&O Group. Britain should not be 'For Sale'. Our major international competitor countries do not allow this 'Open Season' approach to their industry and neither should the UK.

DOVER FERRIES X23 BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. P. GOODACRE (Southern): During 2005 the value of British businesses purchased by overseas buyers amounted to over £50bn. This year that figure is likely to be surpassed with companies such as BAA passing into foreign hands. The Government's attitude to the sale of British companies is characterised by their typical laissez faire indifference with legitimate intervention and proper scrutiny rejected on the grounds of pious warnings of the dangers of economic nationalism.

This policy of indifference and non intervention fails to address the profound negative effects of Britain for Sale. Typically the acquisition of a British company by a foreign company is followed by the removal of operations headquarters abroad with the inevitable loss of jobs and employment opportunities. This has recently happened with my employer, P&O, who was taken over by Dubai Ports World. They are now in the process of shipping all the high end jobs over to Dubai.

This pattern is repeated in crucial areas such as research and development. This trend has dire ramifications for the Chancellor's dream of a knowledge-based economy. The accelerating sale of Britain and the accompanying export of intellectual capital raises the danger of Britain becoming a branch plant of the global economy, undertaking the intellectual equivalent of metal bashing. The loss of manufacturing jobs that accompanies a foreign takeover, often based on the purchase of brands, is well documented. We currently witnessed BMW routinely threaten to move production of that most British of icons, the Mini Cooper, overseas. The recent example of BAA provides a convenient example of many of the problems and concerns raised by foreign takeover.

Several commentators have questioned the wisdom of allowing such strategic national assets to fall into foreign hands. It is difficult to contemplate that bastion of free market economics, the United States of America, allowing a similar thing to happen there. The buyer of BAA the Ferrovial Group is already in debt and has taken on a further debt of £7bn to finance this purchase. This raises concerns about charges and future investment possibilities in this strategically vital area of the economy. In allowing this takeover to happen, the Government

allows Ferrovial to mortgage not only its own future but also that of Britain's economy and our future economic prospects, this at a time when the future of Heathrow is already in doubt.

Why is Britain for sale? It is not to import capital or expertise but to satisfy the short-term financial appetites of city institutions and because foreign companies recognise a bargain when they see one. Britain is viewed as the easiest country in which to make a takeover. This government-inspired indifference is not shared by foreign governments. We regularly see the French government intervene to stop the takeover of French companies. They did this most recently with Danone. That group does not control airports like BAA or ports like P&O, they make yoghurts.

Congress, we instruct the General Secretary and Central Executive to initiate a campaign to end this Government-abetted open season on Britain's businesses and future. I move.

(Motion 183 was formally seconded)

OFF-SHORING

MOTION 184

Conference is amazed and disgusted that a Labour Government are actively considering off-shore work currently done by employees in the Work and Pensions Ministry.

Conference calls upon the CEC to forge links with our sister Unions to campaign jointly to put an end to this industrial sabotage.

16 BLACKBURN BRANCH
Lancashire Region

(Carried)

BRO. S. FORBES (Lancashire): Congress, I am disgusted that the Labour Government are actually considering offshoring work currently done by employees in the Works & Pensions Ministry. Congress calls upon the CEC to forge links with our sister unions to campaign jointly to put an end to this industrial sabotage. Congress, it is not just call-centre jobs that are going abroad, it is jobs that are done by employees who actually work for the Government. It is a bad state of affairs when our own government are proposing to send what are fundamentally public service jobs abroad. Congress, that is a disgusting proposal. I urge you to support this motion. I move.

BRO. M. WILLIAMSON (Lancashire): As Branch Secretary for Oldham I have seen the offshoring of the textile industry costing thousands and thousands of jobs. Of late offshoring of electrical goods has cost our branch 400 jobs and 400 members. I think we are all aware of the devastation that this practice

brings to the families. The knock-on effects to the community are as bad as when family spending reduces dramatically.

Offshoring work in the Pension Ministry will create great concern for the whole country, given the breach in security in other offshore work. We are all aware of people's bank account numbers and pin numbers being handed over and sold off. We need to talk to our MPs and to make sure people's personal information is secure. I second.

BRO. J. KANE (Northern): This is something I feel very strongly and passionately about and not just for the reason that my own company is going through it now. I work in the nuclear industry, for the British Nuclear Group. The major players looking to buy our company are Fleur and Bechtel, American companies. Putting that to one side, if someone said to me now, "Tell me the top 10 fully owned British companies," I could not do it. I could not give you 10 major players that are fully owned by Britain. We have sold everything off. That is the way this country is going. As soon as you mention the word "liability" to a politician their tail is between their legs and they walk away.

All the major economies give their companies 20-year contracts. The American companies, the French companies, the German companies, give them 20-year contracts. We are governed by 5-year terms of office. It is unacceptable. It is time this Labour Government changed it. I ask you to support Motion 183. Thank you.

BRO. J. COOTE (London): I promise I will not get up again after this. I am speaking in favour of Motion 184. I am actually employed by PCS and I have been directly involved in the offshoring of civil service jobs. It is completely restricted to the Department for Work & Pensions. There was an attempt recently for tax records to be actually offshored to India. The cuts in the civil service have now cut so deeply in HM Revenue & Customs that they are not able to process the tax returns efficiently enough. Additionally, the Alliance & Leicester, which now controls the National Savings of the Treasury, have "offshored" a vast quantity of ex civil service jobs to deal with National Savings and they have gone abroad already.

It is not just restricted to the civil service and public sector, we have to remind ourselves of the financial sector where there have been huge numbers of offshoring of banking jobs, not just call centre working but the processing of cheques and other banking processes. This is a real issue and it is one that this union must support. I support.

CHINA TAX REBATES

MOTION 186

Congress calls on the Government to put a stop

to the highly unfair advantages that Chinese producers hold over a European company like London & Scandinavian, Rotherham, due to the inequities in the export duty and tax regimes between China and the United Kingdom.

ROTHERHAM CHEMICALS BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Referred)

BRO. R. CLARK (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress calls on the Government to put a stop to the highly unfair advantages that Chinese producers hold over a European company like London & Scandinavian, Rotherham, due to the inequities in the export duty and tax regimes between China and the United Kingdom. China is flooding our markets with cheaper materials putting undue pressure on our manufacturing businesses. I call upon Congress to support this. Thank you.

(Motion 186 was formally seconded)

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to speak in the debate? *(No response)* I call Linda Clarke.

SIS. L. CLARKE (CEC, Public Services): The CEC is asking Yorkshire & Derbyshire Region to agree to refer Motion 186, China Tax Rebates. The CEC is very sympathetic to the motion and the issues that are raised in it. The CEC agrees that it is very difficult for UK companies to compete with low-wage economies such as China. However, following its rural trade organisation concession China is required to phase out its export tax rebate which it plans to do so by 2010. Tax benefits are only part of the equation as foreign companies will continue to source from China as the countries' key advantages are its cheap land, lack of planning restrictions, and low-skilled labour costs due in part to an absence of independent trade unions.

Given the very importance of China on the world stage, there is a clear need for us to develop a comprehensive GMB policy position on China that covers all our concerns. This must include Chinese and international companies complying with international labour organisation standards, freedom of association and free trade unions. The GMB and the TUC need time to establish how best to provide support for Chinese workers to organise themselves, to remove some of the unfair competition that comes from artificially low and poor working conditions. Therefore, the CEC requests the movers agree to refer Motion 186. If it is not referred, then the CEC will have to ask you to vote against Motion 186. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Linda. Does the mover of 186 wish to respond? *(No response)*

(Motion 183 was carried)

(Motion 186 was referred)

(Motion 184 was carried)

REGIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT - SOUTHERN REGION

1. Membership and Recruitment

Total membership	81,384
Women membership	38,395
Section membership (by each Section):	
Clothing & Textile	202
Commercial Services	10,084
CFTA	2,674
Energy & Utilities	7,174
Engineering	6,883
Food & Leisure	9,643
Process	1,758
Public Services	42,966
Grade 1 members	53,820
Grade 2 members	21,182
Sick, retired & unemployed members	6,382
Total number recruited 1.1.2005 - 31.12.2005	9,265
Gross increase/decrease 1.1.2005 - 31.12.2005	(12,431) Decrease
Net increase/decrease 1.1.2005 - 31.12.2005	(11,252) Decrease
Membership on Check-off	50,199
Membership on Direct Debit	16,370
Financial membership	75,253

RESPONSE TO ORGANISING AGENDA

During the course of 2005, the Region has developed a much stronger regional identity with the aim of becoming a more campaigning organisation. The issue of recruitment and servicing has been subsumed into the organising agenda and the Region is focused on delivering a high level of service through organisation.

In order to assist the organising agenda, a priority has been establishing more full-time release for activists in order to better utilise Officers' time for organising. There has been some success with obtaining more release time but the Region is also concentrating on using its political influence to achieve further releases within the Public Sector.

Throughout 2005 recruitment was undertaken by the Area teams but the Region has identified that there is a need for a Regional team as well, in order to deal with sectors and companies that operate across the whole Region. This is particularly the case in Commercial Services and Food and Leisure. The Area teams have continued with considerable success in the Schools' Support Staff recruitment programme. This successful campaign will also now be used to recruit further in School Kitchens.

In its 2005 report the Region identified that there was a need to establish a proactive approach to Officer and Staff training. The first round of training was put in place from April 2005 and by February 2006 every Officer had been on at least one course, with many attending a number of modules. Integral to these courses is the priority of organising. In addition, a programme of on-line training for Staff has just recently been initiated.

At the centre of the re-focused activist training programme is the need to promote the organising agenda. In addition, the question of equalities is also a core theme.

RECRUITMENT TARGETS AND CAMPAIGNS

In the last year the Southern Region faced some challenging demands where our membership came under further attack by Employers and disgruntled former Officials. We have, as a Region, overcome these challenges, and are making good progress towards recovering what was the most under-mining and savage attack on our Organisation.

As a result we have in place a better structure for organisation and representation of our members. We, like most Regions, are encountering on-going difficulties with Asda in both the Stores and Distribution Centres.

We have concentrated on Education establishments across Southern Region, and we continue to grow our membership in Public Services to this exercise and ending up with good workplace representatives and organisation.

We are also engaged in an active campaign in the Security Industry, paying particular attention to G4S, which is also a National target.

Despite some heavy redundancy losses in our Warehouse Distribution Sector, we have identified growth potential in 3663, and we continue to maintain our strong presence in Food and Leisure across the Region.

The Officers and activists across the Region are engaged in consolidation exercises within Southern Cross. Although there are only 14 residential establishments within Southern Region, the potential for the GMB is estimated at about 750.

With the vast changes to terms and conditions within the NHS, together with the severe financial constraints, there are daily issues where the GMB are becoming involved again with opportunities to promote the GMB, and we have now a nominated Officer within the Region with direct responsibility for the NHS.

The GMB Southern Region plays an active role in the National Organisation Team and have a Regional Organisation Team that adopts the National targets, and identifies Regional campaigns for recruitment and organisation. Every campaign has been supported by Officers and offices across the Region, and backed up by our Regional Education Department, where we are bringing added value to GMB membership for potential recruits in identified target companies.

OVERVIEW OF REGION'S ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT SITUATION

The Region continues to see an increase in its Public Service membership but a decline in Engineering and Manufacturing jobs.

The purchase of P&O by Dubai Ports World has led to some uncertainty in regard to our P&O Ferries membership. It is though too early at this stage to see if there will be any impact.

The acquisition of Safeways by Morrisons has led to the closure of the Aylesford Depot. We predicted in September that this would happen. This was initially denied by the Company but our position was proved right. Due to a very successful campaign by the Officer and Activists we have been able to retain the majority of members who have been made redundant.

In addition to the Public Service Section, we continue to see recruitment opportunities in Commercial Services and Food and Leisure. In Commercial Services these are predominantly in the Security field where we anticipate further opportunities due to new Agreements that have been signed. In Food and Leisure we continue to have some small scale success in Casinos.

The migrant workforce has grown in Southern England. In particular, the Portuguese community and certain Eastern European communities, predominantly Polish. The Region has made contact in a number of areas, particularly with Portuguese and Polish workers and through our Project Teams are putting together programmes in order to try and introduce the Union to these communities. We already have a growing Portuguese membership in Somerset and we are confident that we will be able to have some success with the Polish communities, particularly those based on the South Coast.

The Region has an exceptionally high number of small enterprises, the definition of which is a company that employ 250 or less. These account for 80% of employment in the Region. The SME market continues to be particularly difficult to organise in but we are beginning to see some success in making in-roads into a number of small organisations.

2. General Organisation

Regional Senior Organisers	4
Membership Development Officers	0
Regional Organisers	17
Recruitment and Organisation Officers	2
Regional Recruitment Officers	2
No. of Branches	109
BAOs	0
New branches	0
Branch Equality Officers	* * *

During 2005, one Senior Organiser left GMB employment and two Senior Organisers were appointed. One Regional Organiser transferred to another Region and two Regional Organisers resigned from GMB employment. Two Recruitment Officers were appointed.

3. Benefits

Dispute	£0.00
Total Disablement	£4,0.00
Working Accident	£5,515.15
Occupational Fatal Accident	£24,000.00
Non-occupational Fatal Accident	£0.00
Funeral	£14,347.50

4. Journals and Publicity

The Region has issued hundreds of press releases throughout the year which has helped raise the profile and awareness of the GMB in the media.

In particular, the Region has publicised bad practices within the AA and has achieved considerable press coverage.

The redundancies in Morrisons resulted in some Regional and National Television coverage. The continuing problems in the relationship with ASDA has also created media interest.

The Region is currently conducting an in-depth analysis of its Regional magazine Proactive, with a view to re-launching it with a new title.

5. Legal Services

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

Applications for Legal Assistance	872
Legal Assistance Granted	830
Cases in which Outcome became known	
Total	825
Withdrawn	280
Lost in Court	2
Settled	542 (£6,548,642)
Won in Court	1 (£5,630)
Total Compensation	£6,564,612
Cases outstanding at 31.12.2005	919

(b) Employment Tribunals (notified to Legal Department)

Claims supported by Union	95
Cases in which Outcome became known	
Total	95
Withdrawn	12
Lost in Tribunal	1
Settled	74 (£459,705)
Won in Court	8 (£32,532)
Total Compensation	£507,074
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2005	20

(c) Other Employment Law Cases

Supported by Union	86
Unsuccessful	9
Damages/ Compensation	£894,333
Cases outstanding at 31.12.2005	13

(d) Social Security Cases

Supported by Union	14
Successful	11
Cases outstanding at 31.12.2005	3

INNOVATIONS AND CHANGES TO GMB SOUTHERN REGION LEGAL SERVICES BETWEEN 01.01.2005 AND 31.12.2005.

The Call Centre operated by Thompsons Solicitors which was launched in 2005 has proved very popular with our members. It provides a free service of legal advice on non-employment matters and allows on-line access to the personal injury services.

6. Equal Rights

Once again the Southern Regional Equal Rights Committee has had a successful year.

Each GMB Southern Region Officer has attended Equal Rights training to further support the values of Equal Rights and demonstrating Southern Region's commitment to the values of the GMB, as indicated in the Rule Book.

Building on the organising structures from 2005, the Equal Rights Committee has met each quarter, supporting individual cases and developing communication and strategy. Within the Region, Committee members have attended LGBT meetings, Pride demonstrations and parades, as well as attending Branch, workplace or area meetings where invited, to highlight Equal Rights values.

This year saw the first GMB Equality two day event held in Manchester. Each Region sent four delegates, including the GMB Organisers. The Southern Region held one of the first seminars of the event, focusing on "Women in Security" – security being a Congress 2005 project.

Our delegates came from the Food and Leisure, Public Services and Security Sections. Each has returned, inspired, to develop equality within their given area.

RACE

Committee Membership - From 1 January 2005 to 13 October 2005 the Committee had eight members and was chaired by Charles Adje. At the Regional Race Conference on 13 October 2005, the Committee expanded its membership to twelve and Dotun Alade Odumosu was elected as Chair, with Lorraine Parker as Vice Chair.

The Committee has met bi monthly during the year and most of the meetings have been well attended.

Regional Race Conference - We had a successful race conference on 13 October 2005 and the Committee agreed to establish a Plan of Action for 2006-7 and agreed that the Committee should continue to meet bi monthly with guest speakers being asked to make presentations wherever possible.

Political Activities - Members of the Regional Race Committee were active during the local and European elections throughout the Southern Region, particularly in areas where the BNP were active, and worked with London Region GMB in BNP target seats in the east end of London.

Members were also involved in events to commemorate Black History Month in London and in Liverpool and attended the London Mayors Rise Festival in London.

Branches - Branches have been reminded of the requirement to appoint Race Officers although only a minority have done so. To assist with this the Committee has now drawn up a "job description" for the role so that interested individuals are made fully aware of what might be expected of them. This has resulted in more appointments but this till only covers a minority of branches.

The Committee understands that the job description has been adopted at national level for inclusion in a forthcoming Equalities handbook for branches and the format has been adopted in principle by the Southern Region Equalities Committee.

Southern Regional Race Committee also identified the need for basic employment rights material to be produced for migrant and guest workers. The Regional Political Officer facilitated the production of basic rights material initially in Portuguese and Polish. This was subsequently distributed to officers and branches to enable them to recruit guest workers. A number of guest workers in a variety of companies subsequently joined GMB

Future Plans - The Committee has agreed to meet on a bimonthly basis with a Conference in October 2006, and plans to play a full and active part within the Region and the National Race Committee. Dotun was recently elected to the CEC Task Force and intends to play a full part in its activities and deliberations as well.

In addition the Committee has now drawn up a Plan of Action for 2006-7 which will guide the Committee's work, ensure Southern Region participation in a number of important regional and national events, and provide information to enable resources to be made available when required by the Regional Secretary and Regional Committee.

BREAKDOWN OF GMB COMMITTEES BY ETHNIC ORIGIN

Regional Committee

White British/European	10
Other	0

Regional Council

White British/European	64
Non White	3

7. Youth

2005 saw the continuation of a number of successful activities that the Young Members Section is involved in, alongside the development of new initiatives.

Workers' Beer Company - The section again sent a team of volunteers to work at Reading Festival. In doing so they raised money that will help support future events. It is also important to note that the opportunity to get involved in this way was the reason some of these volunteers joined the GMB in the first place.

Tolpiddle Summer Academy - A delegation of young members attended the Academy taking part in a week of activities and workshops in the run up to the Festival. GMB Southern Region was again the best represented there. Some of the members who attended have been inspired to become more active since in their own workplace, and in the activities of the Young Members Section.

Target BNP - Young members in the Brighton area gave their support to the launching of "Target BNP" in Brighton. They attended the sold out night enjoying music and film. The Young Members Section aims to build further links with Love Music Hate Racism in 2006.

Young Members Website - Communicating with young members through the specifically designed website is having an increasingly positive impact. Members are able to view the events, activities and campaigns we're involved in. They can also get employment advice directed at young workers.

Young Members Committee - The next exciting part of 2005 was the first meeting of a Young Members committee. Members put forward suggestions to help design a job description for the largely unused post of "Branch Youth Officer". From here we can begin to ensure the position is filled and volunteers are co-ordinated and aware of their duties. The Committee put forward a proposal for reduced contribution rates for students and young people. Various members agreed to take on certain roles within the Committee including a Campaigns Officer and Training Officer. With more meetings planned for early 2006 this is very much a work in progress.

Future Plans - 2006 will hopefully see the development of the Young Members Committee. I aim to use

the group to set up training specifically for young members, campaigns we can work around and a full programme of events throughout the year.

8. Training

	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
(a) GMB Activists Basic Courses					
5-Day GMB Induction Part 1	18	147	65	212	1,060
(b) GMB Activists Courses					
5-Day GMB Union Learning Reps	5	33	14	47	235
5-Day GMB Industrial Relations Part 1	3	20	3	23	115
3-Day GMB Employment Law	2	14	6	20	60
3-Day GMB Political Weekend Education School (residential)	1	13	3	16	48
3-Day GMB Negotiating Skills	2	16	5	21	63
5-Day GMB Stress at Work	1	4	1	5	25
3-Day GMB Leadership Skills	1	5	0	5	15
(c) GMB Activists Health & Safety Courses					
5-Day GMB Induction Part 2 (H&S)	14	118	47	165	825
5-Day GMB Health & Safety Part 1	4	30	10	40	200
5-Day GMB Health & Safety Part 2	3	20	8	28	140
(d) Other GMB Courses					
3-Day GMB/AA Introductory (residential)	2*	11	2	13	39
	<i>*only figures available for 1</i>				
5-Day AA/AA Follow-on (residential)	1	10	3	13	65
(e) GMB Officers Courses					
2-Day GMB ICT Basic	1	4	0	4	8
2-Day GMB ICT Intermediate	1	4	1	5	10
2-Day GMB ICT Advanced	1	0	1	1	2
2-Day GMB Recruitment & Organising	1	4	2	6	12
2-Day GMB Negotiating Skills	1	6	1	7	14
2-Day GMB Equal Pay	1	9	3	12	24
2-Day GMB Handling Casework	1	9	3	12	24
2-Day GMB Tackling Inequality Part 1	1	17	4	21	42
TOTALS	65	494	182	676	3,026

9. Health & Safety

Introduction - From a health and safety perspective the region's focus during 2005 has been to develop and improve on the service we offer to both our members' and representatives. The regional office is adopting a more proactive and hands on approach in this respect offering support and assistance as and when needed in tackling workplace health and safety problems. Whilst we continue to provide technical support and advice, a great deal of effort is being put into working closer with our reps in the workplace and drive forward with the union's organising agenda. Regional visitations to workplaces are becoming more frequent and are being welcomed by our members and reps alike. Collective problems are being dealt with collectively and are relevant to the GMB organising agenda.

The Union Effect - It is acknowledged that the most effective tool that we have in ensuring good health, safety and welfare at work is trade unions, and being organised in the workplace, because organised

workplaces are safer workplaces. Therefore crucially and more importantly is the involvement of our members' and trained GMB reps who make a substantial difference in addressing workplace health, safety and welfare problems.

In support of the above position the regional activist education programme links directly into the organising agenda where reps are encouraged to recognise the value of the organising culture with the emphasis on membership participation, empowerment and a real sense of ownership of the processes of organisation and bargaining.

Instead of the shop steward/safety rep acting as a delegate they are encouraged to adopt the role in taking a lead in building participatory workplace trade unionism, moving away from the 'leave it to me mentality' and the passiveness of the past.

HEALTH & SAFETY TRAINING

Apart from our core programme of health and safety courses, specialised areas of study are also on offer i.e. Risk Assessment, Stress at Work, Bullying and Harassment with an on line Occupational Health and Safety course currently under review. The programme continues to expand which now includes sector specific courses where our members' and reps needs are being addressed in a more flexible and organised way.

A good example of this was a course that was set up for the ambulance workers in Dover and surrounding areas. They highlighted a need for health and safety training focusing on inspections and risk assessment. Instead of them coming to us we organised a course to suit them and their needs on a local basis. As a result of that course and the issues and problems that were exposed it was recognised that there was a real need for organisation i.e. a structure of elected reps, an agreed process of inspections /risk assessments and more crucially a proactive membership helping to resolve their problems through collective activity.

Making A Difference - As a union we can only reap the rewards of the above process. By addressing the needs of the membership/activists via training and education and a more proactive approach by the region will in the long-term assist and increase the strength of workplace trade unionism.

Examples/Advantages of Being More Proactive - A caretaker in a school in Richmond has been helped to resolve concerns regarding manual handling issues and unsafe systems of work. Meetings and visits that included local reps from the Borough Council, the GMB and the school business manager have proved to be very productive in establishing manual handling training, more effective risk assessments and in addition the purchase of mechanical aids to assist the caretaker in his work.

In contrast we have been involved in supporting members at the Horniman Museum and Gardens in London, which has a new aquarium close to completion. Operationally the project is to be handed over to management by March/April 2006. Whilst there is a recognised employer health and safety officer on site, our reps requested and preferred to seek "independent clearer advice" from region. This was done initially by providing technical support i.e. GMB health and safety leaflets regarding risk assessment, contractors on site, manual handling and other resources, and subsequently offering advice and assistance in producing procedures/policies and a health and safety policy. This will be backed up with a visit during early 2006 to offer further organisational help as and when required.

Aviance Cargo at Gatwick Airport has been a focus during the second part of 2005. Historically the employer is not renowned to have the best health and safety record. Although there is a health and safety policy in place it is not reflective of managements actions in terms of managing workplace health, safety and welfare.

GMB reps on site became increasingly frustrated in this respect and contacted regional office initially regarding concerns in the handling of radioactive materials. Information was provided regarding appropriate regulations under law as well as GMB risk assessment documentation, which proved to be very useful in helping the reps to deal with the problem. They worked out a plan of action, which resulted in them being proactive in carrying out risk assessments and assisting in training requirements.

Although progress was being made the reps remained very concerned about management's general attitude to health and safety and apparent neglect in recognising their responsibilities and obligations.

Sadly during July 2005 one of our members had a serious accident whilst working on an automatic pallet transfer system. During the operation of this equipment he was crushed with his left leg being trapped and subsequently broken, he also suffered from deep vein thrombosis and severe shock. He is still receiving medical treatment today and may not fully recover from the accident. The case is currently in the hands of our legal representatives.

As far as the GMB reps and union is concerned the accident happened due to an unsafe system of work. It transpired that this was indeed the case.

Initially the employer tried to cover up their negligence and breach of health and safety and targeted the victim blaming him for the cause of the accident. Fortunately he and the reps had highlighted their concerns in respect of the said equipment and expressed those concerns to management on more than one occasion prior to the accident reinforcing the need for risk assessments, training and a properly recorded maintenance programme.

To their credit the reps had kept a paper trail of events and ensured that they were involved in the investigation process. As a result of the accident, mitigating circumstances and managements apparent unwillingness to carry out appropriate inspections and maintenance, despite repeated requests from the reps to do so. It was decided at this juncture to involve the union regionally.

A collective decision was made to make a formal complaint to the Health and Safety Executive. This was initiated at the regional office. All the paperwork, including photographs, witness statements, documents and minutes from meetings and subsequent meetings as well as records of any maintenance, work done, or alterations made were passed across to the HSE. This later proved to be invaluable, not only in supporting the victim's position, but also the collective one of the union.

In essence the complaint expressed the union's view that the employer was in serious breach of health and safety law neglecting their responsibilities and obligations to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their employees connected to their undertaking. It was proposed that an investigation and inspection take place at the site by the local HSE inspector, including the presence and involvement of the reps and representation from the regional office.

As a result of organising collectively and utilising union involvement to the full the HSE issued the employer with improvement notices, giving definitive guidelines and dates as to when those necessary improvements need to be done and clearly identified the law and possible consequences if they did not comply.

Although the case has not reached a conclusion the employer has now admitted liability. The equipment has been modified, improved and is back in use including control measures to ensure that it is safe to operate.

The reps continue to be actively involved in the risk assessment process as well as reviewing training issues and have been instrumental in proposing and devising solutions to health and safety problems. Although there is still a lot to be done, being proactive has helped to forge a good relationship with the safety reps on site, not only to assist in educating management but also to try and involve everyone in making it a much safer place to work.

At P&O Dover we have been assisting GMB reps and members working in the call centre industry. The focus here has been to raise the profile of Work-Life Balance as well as workers rights relating to health and safety. The Labour Research Department (LRD) has been very helpful in this respect in supporting the regional office with questionnaires, surveys, case studies and other supportive documentation. This initiative will create greater GMB activity and assist with recruitment.

Conclusion - Being more proactive appears to be paying dividends for the region and more importantly it is helping our members' and representatives to raise the standards of health and safety and to be more involved in the decision making process. In essence it is about providing a service, helping our members' to help themselves.

(Adopted)

THE PRESIDENT: Pages 152-161, does Congress agree to accept?

(The Report was adopted)

SOCIAL POLICY: GENERAL

SMOKING BAN IN CERTAIN VEHICLES

MOTION 236

Congress calls for a total ban in all vehicles where babies, youngsters and young persons under smoking age are conveyed.

GUILDFORD G38 BRANCH
Southern Region

(Withdrawn)

SOCIAL POLICY: WELFARE & SERVICES

INCAPACITY BENEFIT

MOTION 257

This Congress is appalled at the recent announcement that this government is yet again attacking the vulnerable members in our society with their proposed changes to the Incapacity Benefit Scheme.

101 MANCHESTER BRANCH
Lancashire Region

(Carried)

BRO. J. McDONNELL (Lancashire): When will this government realise that they must stop the relentless attacks on the most vulnerable people in our communities? Expectation on facts, figures, and targets defies all logic or reality. This Government have announced drastic new measures to reduce the number of people claiming incapacity benefit during the next 10 years. They have dreamt up the new idea of forcing disabled people to attend interviews for job placements and threaten the stoppage of benefit if they do not attend their planned meetings. 200,000 disabled people are targeted over the next two years to be placed with a host company. It is stated that if a person comes off benefits it will release more money for those who deserve it. People do not want to be on benefits but often it is their only means of support and being placed in the wrong environment can destroy a person's wellbeing, and could lead to a more serious situation.

The minister has also stated that disabled people can make a positive contribution to society by being in employment. Does she mean they do not contribute to society if they do not have a job? She seems to forget the sterling work that is done by disabled people who undertake voluntary work; many thousands of unpaid hours are given up. This

Government should remember that not everyone on incapacity benefits is a scrounger, in fact very few realistically are.

President, we have thousands of disabled members employed in the Remploy factory network and we have stewards, organisers, and a National Officer who work tirelessly to ensure our disabled members get a fair deal while still at work, yet our disabled members at Remploy face a time of uncertainty as a result of a review by our government. A number of factories may close putting thousands of members out of work. Where is the logic in that?

To conclude, President, this has the hallmarks of another vote loser. Governments lose elections because they forget who put them in power, they become remote from real issues that affect real people, and they forget why they are there. The message is simple, stop attacking the most vulnerable in our society, stop picking on easy targets, and start to win back some of the credibility that our Labour Party once had. I move.

BRO. P. PERRY (Lancashire): Incapacity benefit and incapacity benefits, there is a difference. Incapacity benefit is a claim made in the majority of cases for accidents at work or a disability due to an accident at the workplace which in a lot of cases is long-term. Employees do not look for or expect these accidents to happen in the workplace but, unfortunately, they do. Incapacity benefit payments are made to compensate for loss of earnings at work or in the long-term compensate for the disability which prevented the individual obtaining employment of any sort.

Incapacity benefits are paid to people who do not ask to be born with a disability, whether it is mentally or physically, and are unable to work because of it. It is the case that many incapacity benefits claimants would like to work, and we are supportive of their right to do so. Equally, we are just as supportive of those who are severely disabled and cannot work and who, we argue, should be spared harassment by the Government into finding work.

For claimants who are severely disabled and cannot work we would call on the government to ensure these people are not punished further by being called in for unnecessary interviews, or being subject to a medical examination, such as the all-work test. Social security no doubt will always find work that people are capable of doing, even if the job does not exist, just to reduce the number for the benefit of the Government.

We ask Congress to support this motion and stop picking on people who cannot defend themselves. I move.

REDUCED EARNINGS ALLOWANCE (REA)

MOTION 258

Congress calls for a campaign to be mounted persuade the government to reinstate the regulations applied to REA, which were changed by the previous Conservative administration.

These regulations were changed to reduce REA payments by 75% when the claimant reached retirement age when previously being paid the full rate for life.

The Conservatives, also attacked the disabled by introducing the 14% rule which stopped any benefit being paid for any injury or disease resulting in disablement of less than 14%.

They claimed at the time, this was to give greater benefits to the more severely disabled and in any case the less severely disabled would be able to claim REA if they had at least 1% disablement for life.

A year later they systematically abolished REA entitlement for any injury of disease sustained after October 1990.

In opposition the Labour Party front bench gave assurance that they would receive these attacks on the disabled when in power.

Since their election to Government in 1997, to their eternal shame, they have done nothing to restore these benefits, which are mainly claimed by manual skilled workers who are forced to claim incapacity benefit, job seeker allowance or take even lower paid employment.

SUNDERLAND NO 10 BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

SIS. R. CLEWES (Northern): Congress, Reduced Earnings Allowance has been a great benefit to many of our members over the years. It has improved the income and therefore the lives and standard of living of people. It is no surprise, therefore, that the last Tory government decided to change the regulations that applied to Reduced Earnings allowance for the worse.

The regulations were changed so that people in receipt of Reduced Earnings Allowance on reaching retirement age suddenly did not need so much money, or so the Tories thought. They reduced this allowance by 75%. Previously, anyone who had been in receipt of this benefit had received the full rate for life. To compound matters, the Tories also attacked the disabled by introducing the 14% rule. This meant that if a person had a disablement or injury resulting in disablement of less than 14%, they would no longer be able to claim benefit, the theory

being that the more severely disabled would get more benefit and the less severely disabled would be okay as they would get Reduced Earnings Allowance as long as they had at least 1% disablement for life. Surprise, surprise, after a year they introduced this legislation. The Tories abolished the Reduced Earnings Allowance for anyone who sustained an injury or disease after October 1990. When the Labour Party were in opposition they gave assurances that when they came to power they would put this clearly unjust situation right. Surprise, surprise, nine years after coming to power we are still waiting for this to be put right.

Congress, I urge you to support this motion. It is not the most headline-grabbing subject but it will make a real difference to our members' lives if this is put right. Congress, please support the motion. I move.

BRO. J. JONES (Northern): Reduced Earnings Allowance has been a benefit to many of our members over the years. When it was introduced it meant that if you were injured at work or developed an industrial disease that left you unable to do your original job, having to take work that paid less, or not being able to work at all, then you received a top-up allowance called Reduced Earnings Allowance.

This meant that workers were not financially penalised if affected by their employment. This was a good system, simple, and it worked. What did the Tories do? They changed it. Various changes occurred during the Tory years, all to the detriment of our members so that now if you suffer an injury at work or suffer from an industrial disease, like vibration white finger, industrial deafness or asbestosis, there is no benefit you can claim. Also, when you retire, if you are lucky enough to have already received this benefit, your benefit is cut by 75%. This is not fair or reasonable treatment of our members.

Congress, this motion calls for the full re-introduction of Reduced Earnings Allowance promised to us many times by the Labour Party when in opposition. It is time to deliver those promises. Congress, I second.

ABOLITION OF THE SOCIAL FUND

MOTION 259

This Congress asks that Social Fund loans from the Department of Works and Pensions; be they Crisis Loans or Budgeting loans, be abolished in favour of grants and/or that other deductions not be made until the claimant is off benefit; effectively ring-fencing subsistence levels of benefit.

NOTTS VOX BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Carried)

BRO. V. THOMAS (Midland & East Coast): The Social Fund, basically, is a discretionary fund for people in poverty not just for people on benefit, and we get crisis loans if there is no income coming in, and it could be for whatever reason. All I want to address are budgeting loans and the crisis loans, not the community care grants.

It used to be that the Social Fund was all grants but when the Tories came in they changed it to the loans. Basically, when there is a need or necessity when a cooker goes bust or the fridge goes, you can put in for a loan. It is simple enough, you get the loan before you start making payments, which are basically repayments or deductions out of your benefit. It is just an advance on welfare benefits.

What happens is you get a decision letter which will say, "This is how much the law says you need to live on," and it will itemise the applicable amount for you, spouse, children, and below that it will say, "This is how much we are going to take off your benefit." Ipso facto you are going to live on less than the law says you need to live on.

Let me tell you about one particular case and what the implications of this could be. One case that went to tribunal some time ago left the family with £7.64 a week to live on, £7.64 a week. You heard the right figure. We took the case to tribunal. The regulations were correct. The deductions were right. The amounts were correct. £7.64? There is something wrong. It is wrong, basically. It is unjust.

So, we went to tribunal and challenged it on the basis of the Human Rights Act. We used article 3, inhuman and degrading treatment. I think it is fairly degrading to expect someone to live on that kind of figure. We actually won the tribunal but we won it on a technicality. The tribunal chairman went out of her way to say that she did not think being made to live on £7.64 a week met the threshold of degrading treatment; obviously, a qualified lawyer. Who am I to argue with that?

Actually, we do beg to differ. These regulations are not just, they need changing and abolishing. The loans need abolishing completely and utterly. They need to go back to grants with basically no deductions from benefits while you are on benefits. People have to pay their debts but, as it says in the film, not yet. Congress, I move.

BRO. J. EVANS (Midland & East Coast): The Government stated their aim some years ago to abolish child poverty, and all other types of similar poverty for that matter, and as long as they continue to facilitate the repayments to the Social Fund by way of these deductions those aims will not be achieved. Over half of the 750,000 deductions being made from income support claims, after Social Fund repayments, have been made to single parents. Obviously, this has a direct impact upon poverty for children. If the law states that a person needs

a certain amount to live on, then the Department of Work & Pensions should not facilitate these deductions. Everyone has to pay their debts but we move that they should not have to until they are in work at some stage in the future. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Could I ask the mover of Motion 260, Tax Credit, to move and second.

TAX CREDIT

MOTION 260

Congress we call upon you to mount a campaign to pressure central Government where people on tax credits are being put in a vulnerable position and where tax credits are supposed to help people on low pay.

People should not be made to pay overpayments when it is not their mistake.

BRIGHTSIDE BRANCH

Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

BRO. J. STRIBLEY (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): We call on the CEC to mount a campaign to pressure central government where tax credits are being overpaid to people and putting people in a vulnerable position. Tax credits are supposed to help people on low income and with very little funds. Where they are being overpaid and told to pay it back when it is the Government's mistake, this also makes people twice the worse off. It is the Inland Revenue's mistake so they should cut their losses and revert back to the correct amount. Our members should not be asked to pay this money back. Only two weeks ago Gordon Brown announced the Government had overpaid people by millions of pounds on an average of £1,000 per household, which is very unacceptable. If you ring them up, they just do not know what they are doing. It is leaving our members in a position of stress and upset. I move.

(Motion 260 was formally seconded.)

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to join in the debate?

SIS. T. VAN-GELDEREN (London) speaking on Incapacity Benefit, Motion 257, said: I know this will be passed but I thought it would be quite informational to Congress if I told you of my recent experience.

My partner was on incapacity benefit and he was asked to go to a medical. It coincided with the time when his illness had progressed and he was diagnosed as terminally ill. A sick note from the doctor to say that he was in hospital does not stop that. We were

assured that he could have a medical at home, if necessary. Four weeks after his death he received another date for his medical. Incapacity benefit had stopped, they knew about it, there had been no money outstanding, but the machine drives on. I was tempted to take along the ashes to see if he was medically fit to resume work.

Seriously, aside from the people who are undergoing that type of experience, whether it is those who are ill or the families of those people, it is also a waste of our money as well to start having those types of medicals which are completely unnecessary. That was for £26 a week incapacity benefit.

I know you will support the motion but I thought you might be interested in that little experience.

SIS. R. WILKINS (CEC, Food & Leisure): The CEC is supporting Motion 258 with the following qualification. Congress, the Industrial Injuries Scheme which includes the Reduced Earnings Allowance is the most complicated of all social security benefits. As the motion accepts, it is now nearly 16 years since the abolition of the Reduced Earnings Allowance. That significant passage of time makes its reinstatement highly unlikely. Payments of Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit and Reduced Earnings Allowance are low, each only averaging around £30 to £35 per week.

The CEC supports the motion but we believe a more appropriate objective would be to seek the reform and simplification of the Industrial Injuries Benefit Scheme to ensure that benefits are paid at a more realistic compensatory level.

Colleagues, with that qualification in mind, the CEC kindly asks Congress to support the motion. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: I put Motion 257 and the CEC is asking you to support.

(Motion 257 was carried)

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 258, does Northern Region accept the qualification? *(Agreed)* With the qualification, the CEC is asking you to support.

(Motion 258 was carried)

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 259, the CEC is asking you to support.

(Motion 259 was carried)

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 260, the CEC is asking you to support.

(Motion 260 was carried)

THE PRESIDENT: Could I say on the last one, colleagues, that we know several people who owe £2,000 they were overpaid. I think there has to be a way we could take the Government to task on the repayment, or not to repay that money if it is their fault and if people have given the correct information.

Colleagues, we move on to the European Report.

EUROPEAN REPORT

Introduction

GMB continues to maintain its high profile campaigning role in Europe, during what has been a challenging and turbulent year at European level. The "No" votes on the Constitutional Treaty in France and the Netherlands not only halted its progress, but provoked wider questions about the future direction of Europe – a major issue still to be resolved. Governments agreed a period of reflection, but there is concern that more must be done to bring this important debate closer to the people of Europe.

The sudden death of Midlands MEP Phillip Whitehead in December was a big shock, and he will be sadly missed. GMB members are certain, however, that Phillip would have agreed with us that he could have had no better successor than GMB Midland Region Senior organiser and political officer, Glenis Willmott, whom we congratulate, and wish well in her new career as an MEP.

Recruitment and Organisation

The European office continues to support members and officers in recruitment and organisation by producing regular briefings on key developments on EU rights and policy which impacts on workers across all our sections. The European officer has also been actively involved in training initiatives in the regions to promote the scope for using GMB's involvement and expertise in areas such as European Works' Councils, Information and Consultation structures, Equal Rights and anti-discrimination to help us recruit and organise. Our ability to involve MEP's in workplace visits, and link key companies into wider European support networks to promote industries, such as nuclear, has helped to raise the profile, and therefore organising influence, of the union in many workplaces.

Recognition

The language skills of the Brussels based staff continues to facilitate useful support in comparing recognition across key target multinational companies. Contact taken up with trade union colleagues in a company from another country has often resulted in positive solidarity and support for recognition for our members, as was the case in Gleasons in the Southern Region. Such contacts have a wider benefit in allowing us to compare conditions and developments in work organisation across the company, which helps support our bargaining position.

EU Level Campaigns

Trade unions across Europe are concerned about the creeping influence of neo-liberal policies in defining EU legislation. Too many key European Governments and decision makers seem to have forgotten that there is a well established deal underpinning the development of the European Internal market, that there must be a balance between the social and economic dimensions of a Single Market. Many feel that the scales are currently out of kilter, and need to be rebalanced.

As trade unionists, we are no strangers to struggle, and we have campaigned actively and consistently on several key issues at European level of crucial importance to GMB members:

- *Services in the Internal Market Directive* – GMB has played a key role in the sustained high level trade union campaign to undo the damaging effects of this proposal. Working with the ETUC, our EU trade union sector Federations, and our colleagues in other UK trade unions, we have provided regular briefings on the GMB position at all the key stages of the decision-making process. Furthermore, we have held regular meetings with MEP's on the issue, both individually and as a group of trade union General Secretaries, as well as with Commission and Council officials, including Commissioner McCreevy. We have also used the briefings to raise our concerns with our Westminster Group of MP's. ETUC has co-ordinated two major demonstrations in Brussels and Strasbourg in which GMB members have participated.
- *Port Services Directive* – Working together with our colleagues in the European Transport Federation and with the support of our MEP's, GMB helped to ensure that the dangerous proposals risking casualisation and deregulation of safety and working conditions in the sector were rejected by a massive majority in the European Parliament in January 2006. This clear message from the European Parliament to the EU Commission will hopefully be sufficient to ensure that the Commission does not try to resuscitate these proposals for a third time.
- *Working Time Directive* – the campaign to protect and improve workers rights on working time has been on-going for too many years. Proposals to revise the 1993 EU Directive reducing rights and protections has naturally met with hostile opposition from the European trade union movement. The very idea of formalising the right to opt-out of these crucial health and safety protections beggars belief. Harder still to believe, is that it is the British Labour Government that has been promoting this position. GMB is further concerned that on-call protections will also be weakened as the proposals stand, undermining significant progress we made in court on the Harrow Warden's case, supported by a number of helpful European Court judgments defining on-call time as working time. Despite the European Parliament supporting an end to the opt-out, EU Government's are split, and the British Government is seeking to justify its support for the opt-out by claiming that other member states are worse in seeking to define 48 hour week per contract and not per person. The reality is that British workers still work by far some of the longest hours in Europe. GMB has worked closely with colleagues in the TUC, ETUC and with successive EU presidency Governments. We have written to, and held meetings with Government Ministers, and MEP's. Furthermore, we have produced regular briefings, which have been circulated widely within the GMB, and to MEP's and our Westminster MP group. We continue to campaign to ensure that our working time rights are not undermined.
- *Temporary Agency Workers Directive* – the continuing lack of progress on this proposal has become a further cause for concern in the context of the proposal for the Services Directive, as temporary agency work was not excluded from the initial proposals. This would risk further undermining protections for the sector. Exclusion of this sector from the Services Directive's scope has been a key trade union demand in our campaign on Services, and we have combined this with a call for positive progress in agreement on the Temporary agency Directive.

- *EU Paper on Labour Law* – the EU Commission has announced that it will be publishing a consultation paper on Labour Law, which GMB and our European trade union colleagues will be responding to and monitoring closely.
- *Public Procurement* – Having seen through the EU level revision of the Public Procurement Directives in 2004, GMB turned its focus to ensuring the improvements we had achieved at European level were fully reflected in the national implementation stage by central Government and the Scottish Executive. GMB has campaigned tirelessly in the face of a reluctant Government to maximise the scope for considering the social, employment and environmental dimensions in public contracting. Our determination paid off in turning the initially very grudging approach to reserving contracts for supported employment workplaces for the disabled into a very positive Regulation and supporting guidance, which states that all public authorities should have at least one contract with a supported employment workplace. Although we managed to stop the Government from initial attempts to water down social and employment considerations in the Regulations, we are disappointed that it has not gone further on these issues in the Regulations. More progress has been made on improving the social guidance document, in co-operation with TUC colleagues. GMB will continue to campaign to ensure the positive scope is used by public authorities in their contracting decisions. In view of the expertise GMB has developed in this issue, the union was asked to take one of the two trade union seats on the Defra Taskforce for Sustainable Procurement launched in the summer 2005, where we are promoting a positive focus on the social and employment dimensions of the report. GMB is also advisor expert to the workers group of the European Economic and Social Committee for the report on Public Procurement in the Internal Market.

EU Training and Funded projects

GMB has had a successful year in the organisation and delivery of European funded training initiatives and projects. In October 2005 a unique training programme was held in the GMB Brussels Office, involving forty five GMB activists and officers from three GMB Regions (South Western Region, Liverpool, North Wales and Irish Region, and London Region). The intensive European awareness training programme involved information/discussion sessions with ETUC (John Monks) and EU trade union sector Federation colleagues, a visit to the European Parliament, and programme of meetings with a number of MEP's from across Europe, and sessions in the European Commission, and covered important issues such as Services Directive, Working time and the future of a social Europe. The programme received considerable funding from the EU Commission.

A momentum has been created by this successful programme, and regions have been developing follow-on initiatives, and plan to build on the inter-regional co-operation in these events. The commitment and involvement of our lay members in developing these initiatives has been inspiring, with GMB member Steve Boden in Liverpool designing and producing materials for a very impressive European training course to contribute to the Region's training programme. European funding is being sought for a seminar to launch this, as well as for a joint conference involving GMB South Western Region Cardiff Business School.

The European officer has also supported regional training initiatives and seminars on Information and Consultation rights and Equal Rights.

Summary

Whilst European Institutions and Governments have clearly been affected by the uncertainty and confusion over the future of Europe, GMB has kept a clear focus on our purpose of continuing to protect and promote the rights of our members and their families at European level. At a time when Governments and institutions have shown discord and disunity, we have been heartened by an increasingly strong spirit of solidarity and co-operation among European trade unions, which is encouraging for the future, and GMB will continue to be actively involved in further developing these strong links.

(Adopted)

SIS. K. WALKER SHAW (European Officer): President, Congress, Europe is currently at a crossroads following the "No" vote in the European Constitution

in France and the Netherlands just before our Congress last year, which has halted its progress. Furthermore, it has raised questions about the

future direction of Europe and with that, very importantly for us as trade unionists, the future of the European Social Model.

We were very sad to lose MP Philip Whitehead, who died suddenly just before the New Year last year but, equally, in his place we are very pleased to welcome Glenis Willmott who is further swelling the ranks of GMB MEPs and is already making a very considerable contribution to us in Europe. I know Glenis will be speaking to you in a minute.

Despite the uncertainty over the European Constitution, the wheels of Europe have been continuing to trundle on and GMB and European trade union colleagues have been locked in battle over the last two years to try and stop the neo-liberal proposals for a Services Directive, and also less publicly noted but equally as damaging the Port Services Directive and, I have to say, Congress, with some success. The Port Services Directive has now been withdrawn thanks to MEPs completely throwing it out by a massive majority in the Parliament in January. But we must be vigilant that this proposal does not resurface in another form elsewhere later in EU policy.

Again with the support of our MEPs we have transformed the shape of the Services Directive removing the unacceptable country of origin principle and protecting our labour laws and collective agreements while at the same time trying to ensure the quality and integrity of our key services. Congress, this proposal is not yet finished. We must remain vigilant and ensure that outstanding concerns are resolved and the text further improved before it is finished.

As trade unionists we should, rightly, take heart from the show of solidarity and cooperation that all Europeans showed in countering these very negative neo-liberal policy proposals for a Services Directive. We should not delude ourselves in having done that, that we have tamed the dragon, for it is very clear that member states and the European Commission has not lost its appetite for liberalisation and labour market flexibility.

We have to continue to rely on that solidarity in the face of other neo-liberal challenges that we will certainly face ahead, challenges such as protecting our existing rights, not new rights, our existing rights, on working time fought for in 1993 at the risk of being watered down in 2006. We will not accept that as trade unionists. We want to fight for decent rights for temporary agency workers, proposals blocked now for two years or more and abuse in that sector is on the rise hurting not just the temporary agency workers themselves but also workers in permanent jobs as conditions and wages are squeezed. The future of the European Social Model, Congress, lies very much in the balance and we, and our fellow unions across Europe, have to unite to fight for its survival.

At a local level on the workshop floor we are continuing to fight by supporting bargaining to help our members improve by comparing labour standards and conditions across Europe, comparing the terms and conditions and improving them in our GMB workplaces. We have also been working tirelessly on the issue of trying to improve the social dimension of public contracting. Following the European Directives we agreed and which GMB played a very significant part in improving, our Government have now positively implemented GMB's amendment to reserve contracts for supported employment workplaces and has included some, though sadly not all, of our recommendations on the implementations of ILO standards in contracting and respecting the integrity of collective agreements. We continue to push for these principles to be included in the Government's Sustainable Procurement Taskforce which is publishing its report this week, and having seen an early copy of that I have to say I think our input there has had some impact on the final report.

To help our members make more informed decisions about Europe and what is going on in European developments, the GMB has been very actively involved in the last year in creating and developing awareness-raising events for our members. In October last year a three-region delegation was in Brussels with 50 delegates for a three-day training course funded by the European Commission, which allowed our members to see firsthand how EU decision-making goes on.

One of our delegates from that course has actually produced his own training programme in the Liverpool region, Steve Bowden, and I was proud to be at the launch of that programme in April this year. GMB South Western Region has just successfully won funding against a lot of competition to develop a project to improve information consultation in multinationals, an achievement of which we are very proud.

Congress, sadly, I cannot report today that the European tap is currently flowing full belt with social policy measures and new important rights such as we have enjoyed in the past but I would say to you that our involvement and continued commitment to fighting our battles for improved trade union rights and conditions for our members have to continue at European level as we fight to protect and promote our European Social Model. Thank you. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Page 5, 6, and 7, does Congress agree those?

(The European Report was adopted)

THE PRESIDENT: Can I ask the movers of Composite 30 to come forward, although there is a slight change to that. The Yorkshire & N. Derbyshire delegate has not arrived so South Western will move and

Lancashire will second. Is that agreed, colleagues?
(Agreed)

POLITICAL: EUROPEAN UNION

EU SERVICES DIRECTIVE

COMPOSITE MOTION 30

(Covering Motions 209, 210, 211)

209 - Bolkestein Directive - (Lancashire Region)

210 - EU Services Directive - (South Western Region)

211 - European Service Directive - (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region)

This Congress requests that the Central Executive Council of the Union to continue to lobby the Labour Government to honour and meet its commitment of the Labour Party's manifesto which should not bind us to achieving a Services Directive at any cost, but strive to achieve an effective Directive which provides real benefits to consumers, new opportunities for British business, protects our employment standards and does nothing to undermine or jeopardise our regulatory framework.

Conference notes with alarm the effect the Directive will have on British workers and:

1. That our government is currently engaged in negotiations concerning the European Services Directive or Bolkenstein Directive (referred to in this motion as the "Services Directive").
2. That the Services Directive includes the principle known as the Country of Origin Principle (or *freedom to provide services*).
3. That reputable employers in the areas of private security, cleaning and, temporary agencies are calling for an exclusion from the principle.
4. That the TUC and European TUC are opposed to the directive and have called demonstrations to oppose the directive.

This Congress believes that:

5. That the Country of Origin principle will:
 - i. Open the floodgates for deregulation, contracting-out, privatisation and undermine the quality of services.
 - ii. Significantly damage the terms and conditions of workers in the UK. For example, a Polish Security Firm would be able to operate in the UK, employing

Polish staff on terms and conditions regulated by Polish National Standards. This will cause a downwards pressure on pay and conditions rather than upwards harmonization of standards and conditions.

- iii. Make enforcing the minimum wage more difficult.
 - iv. Damage efforts to licencing the security industry and to regulate temporary agencies.
 - v. Undermine equality and non-discrimination laws.
 - vi. Encourage bogus self-employment as the self-employed are not covered by labour law protections in many countries.
6. That there should be a right of workers to insist on having a representative in the host territory and the prohibition under Article 16 3c of a representative must be removed.
 7. That services of general economic interest should be excluded from the Directive.
 8. That Temporary Agencies were should be excluded from the Directive.
 9. That the private security industry should be excluded from the Directive.
 10. That the Country of Origin principle should be withdrawn.
 11. That all workers of whatever national origin should have access to the same rights and be paid according to the host nations regulations, legislation and prevailing terms and conditions.
 12. That the directive should be based not on the Country of Origin but instead on the Country of destination principle.

This Congress resolves:

- To support the TUC's and European TUC's campaign against the implementation of the Services directive.
- To inform/educate our membership through our union structures and facilities on the implications of the Services Directive.
- To lobby UK MEPs and MPs to vote to ensure that the Services Directive is not implemented in any form that encourages privatization, de-regulation, contracting out and downwards pressure on worker's rights, pay and terms and conditions.
- To support any broad based UK campaign against the Services Directive.

- If the directive is implemented, to support any action taken by workers to oppose its implementation or any significant negative impact upon their terms and conditions of work.

Companies will be allowed to sink to the lowest levels of pay and health and safety standards should this Directive become EC Legislation. Conference calls upon the CEC to campaign vigorously to prevent this Directive becoming law.

(Carried)

BRO. B. WILLIAMS (South Western): On 16th February the European Parliament voted on the proposal for a directive on services in the internal market. After a great deal of lobbying and campaigning by European trade unions, with the GMB being one of the major players, progress was achieved in turning around the unacceptable Bolkestien proposal by the removal of many of the dangerous elements of the original proposal, which would not only have undermined the rights and protection of workers in the services sector but risked undermining the quality of those services.

Whereas this was an achievement and a good deal of progress was made in getting them to remove the negative elements of the original proposals, we should still have concerns on the continued coverage of the services of general economic interest and we need to be seeking assurances that public and private healthcare will be excluded from the scope of the final directive. We draw heart from the fact that the members of the European Parliament listened to the concerns raised by the trade unions and recognise the damage the original proposals would have done to European workers in the services sector where many of our UK jobs now exist.

We also applaud the removal of the private security sector and temporary agency workers from the scope of the directive as the GMB worked and campaigned hard for its exclusion. It is reassuring that the stronger and clearer exclusion of labour law from the proposals and the damaging country of origin principle has also been removed, which originally would have allowed member states having the ability to apply rules on employment conditions, including those laid down in collective agreements. This can be seen as significant and positive progress.

However, before we all start congratulating ourselves on a successful campaign, this is not the final directive and certain areas, such as the previously mentioned public and private healthcare, must still be fought for to make sure that the hard-won concessions and exclusions from what could have been a nasty piece of legislation remains on course. Hopefully, we will be provided with a piece of legislation that is beneficial to our members and

does not erode their terms and conditions that have been fought for and achieved over the years.

We must congratulate all those who campaigned long and hard to modify the original proposal and give particular thanks to our Brussels office who worked very hard to put the GMB at the forefront of this campaign. This shows how important it is to have such a base in Europe. I move.

May I just say as well, President, that tonight there is a very important rugby match going on, Wales versus Argentina, and we shall most certainly do better than England! Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: Are we invited along to your hotel for free drinks? Open the bar! Could I have the second?

SIS. E. GREENWOOD (Lancashire): Chair, comrades, this directive was thought up by Fritz Bolkestien who was actually one time head of Shell Oil and a very right wing Dutch politician. The directive will seriously erode workers' rights and protection and will also damage the supply of essential services to European citizens. Central to the Bolkestien directive is the country of origin principle and this is based on existing EU rule stating that goods produced in an EU country can be sold in any other EU country.

Under Bolkestien this rule would not just apply to goods but it would also apply to services as well. Services sold abroad would be subject to the rules of their country of origin which means that companies, say, in France or Germany could hire services from Poland or Slovakia, who are often paid lower wages and subject to less rigorous labour laws. The obvious result would be that enterprising corporations would relocate their headquarters in countries where labour laws are the weakest.

The philosophy at the core of the Bolkestien directive is the most vicious form of neo-liberalism as practised by the World Trade Organisation and the directive bears a striking resemblance to the WTO general agreement on trade and services, which seeks to enforce the liberalisation of all services on a world scale. This directive is the most radical and most comprehensive attack to date on welfare states within the EU. Firms can do everything that is allowed by the lowest labour legislation simply by moving to a country with less social rights. There will be no more social guarantees if we do not resist this.

Now is the time for a strong campaign against liberalisation and privatisation of public services. If we want a different social model for Europe then we need to stop Bolkestien all together. The scale of the threat to employment standards is not widely appreciated although it is no exaggeration to say that it is one of the most important issues to come before the EU Commission in the last 20 years.

Whole sections of the labour force are going to be put in pursuit of cheapness rather than

competitiveness. It is critically important that civil society rejects the law of the jungle. We as one of the richest countries in the world do not need our infrastructure to be built, our goods to be transported, or our services provided by paying people slave wages. We do need a strong united battle of citizens and unions against the idea of privatised public services. Therefore, CEC, please campaign vigorously to prevent Bolkestien becoming law. I second.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

MOTION 212

Congress recognises the potential damage to the workers of Europe by the implementation of the 'Port Services' Directive and the 'Services' Directive, both hopefully defeated by the time this motion is taken.

That these Directives were ever brought forward by the Commission, displays a total lack of reality and a major failing in the European political process. Congress deplores the waste of resources utilised in the necessary campaigns against these Directives and condemns the European Commission for its abject failure of policy making 'in a vacuum'.

Congress calls upon the General Secretary to initiate a campaign in the UK and European labour movement, to democratise the European Commission.

DOVER FERRIES X23 BRANCH Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. P. GOODACRE (Southern): Congress calls upon this union to initiate a campaign in the UK and the European Union to democratise the European Commission. As the European Union has expanded geographically, its power and influence over the lives of EU citizens has also expanded so much so that political scientists estimate that the President of the EU Commission is the most powerful man in Europe and the EU Commission one of the most powerful bodies. Disturbingly, neither this man nor this body is directly elected by those citizens over whose lives they wield so much power and influence. Subsequently, it lacks democratic legitimacy, a fact reflected in many of its policies which are created in a vacuum reflecting no mandate from the electorate of the European Union.

This growing accountability deficit is exemplified by its repeated efforts at neo-economic liberal deregulation in the form of a Ports Directive and the yet more evil twin, the Services Directive. The Commission drafted both proposals without a democratic mandate and without consideration of

social and employment impact on EU workers. We can only assume the winners from these directives will be multinational businesses.

I am not going to go into detail of these two directives. Our colleagues have already done that more capably than I could but the negative impact these Service Directives would have is difficult to overestimate. You could not really make it up. You would have been shocked if Thatcher had come up with something like that. Fighting these directives has been time-consuming. It has taken up a lot of our union's time, a lot of other unions' time and, importantly, a lot of the expensive time of the European Parliament, and European taxpayers' money.

Representatives of the European Union travel to every corner of the world extolling the virtues of democratisation. The European Union correctly insists upon impeccable democratic credentials for aspiring entrants. Congress, it is time these democratic principles were extended to the central institutions of the European Union. I move.

(Motion 212 was formally seconded)

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? *(No response)* I will now ask Dave Clements to speak on behalf of the CEC.

BRO. D. CLEMENTS (CEC, Commercial Services): President, Congress, the CEC is supporting Composite 30 with statements.

The EU proposal for a Services Directive, the so-called Bolkestien text, was a very clear attack on the European Social Model and our trade union collective bargaining rights. It was the embodiment of the neo-liberal agenda that is becoming all too familiar to us.

Together with our European trade union colleagues, the GMB was at the forefront in opposing the proposal. We have actively campaigned at both European and national level to prevent workers' rights, and the quality and integrity of services being swept away by the bargain basement labour standards approach threatened by the country of origin principle. Our persistent lobbying and demonstrations paid off when the European Parliament pulled the teeth from the Bolkestien text in February, clearly on a roll having defeated the deregulatory Port Services proposals in January.

Although replying for the CEC at this moment, I wish to take this opportunity to place on record my personal thanks to Paul and Kathleen Walker Shaw for their support and work in helping defeat the Port Services Directive. You have just heard my colleague, Paul Goodacre, speak about this in some way. As a P&O worker this was vital. I am sorry, Paul, the Fulham shirt is a one-off, mate!

The European Commission has wisely accepted most of the European Parliament's compromise; an

EU member state government seems set to endorse this approach. The GMB is proud to have been part of the solidarity and unity of the purpose demonstrated by the European Trade Union Movement in tackling this threat and we can be proud of our success to date.

However, Congress, the Services Directive remains unfinished business and we cannot afford to take our eye off the ball. Furthermore, we must not delude ourselves that we have killed off the neo-liberalism agenda. Already threats removed in the services proposals relating to posted workers protections are being resuscitated in other documents and this is a trend we can expect to see continue.

Congress, we must remain vigilant and build on the trade union solidarity we have used to good effect so far for the battles that we will clearly continue to face in preserving and developing our social Europe. Support Composite 30.

THE PRESIDENT: Does South Western Region accept the statement? *(Accepted)* With that, colleagues, can I now put Composite 30 to the vote? The CEC are supporting with a statement.

(Composite Motion 30 was carried)

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 212, European Commission, the CEC are asking you to support.

(Motion 212 was carried)

ADDRESS BY GLENIS WILLMOTT MEP ON BEHALF OF THE GMB EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, it gives me great pleasure on the next agenda item to welcome on your behalf Glenis Willmott, MEP. Glenis is well known to us. She was a GMB officer in the Midlands and East Coast Region for 16 years, holding the positions of organiser, political officer, and senior organiser, before she accepted the seat of Member of European Parliament for the East Midlands in February this year. As well as her work for the Trade Union Movement, including as a member of the TUC Regional Council, Glenis has a long record of dedicated work for the Labour Party and was a councillor for Nottingham County Council.

Glenis, welcome to Congress. You can address Congress because you are now an MEP, and have been for six months, but for 16 years you could not. Well done.

WILLMOTT, G. (MEP): Good afternoon, colleagues. It really is a great pleasure to give the report on behalf of GMB MEPs, particularly as this is the first time that I have spoken at Congress.

As Mary said, I worked as a senior organiser in Midland & East Coast Region until a few months ago when following the sad death of my good friend Philip Whitehead I became a Labour MEP. Philip was not only a highly respected politician but also an award-winning journalist, a truly remarkable man and not an easy act to follow, particularly under such difficult circumstances. Philip, if he was here, would say to me, "Just get on with it," so that is what I am doing.

The European Parliament is a strange yet fascinating place. The first thing that strikes you is the number of different languages that you hear as you are walking around the corridors. Of course, many things lose a little in translation, which is why a German MEP never quite understood why Michael Cashman seemed to call him a "waterproof coat". He had actually called him an "anorak". There was also the French MEP who said, when it was time to leave a meeting, "Allô, saluer," only to find one of the British MEPs thought he said, "Hello, sailor."

It is also a place for hearing some wonderful stories. One story is from my colleague, Michel Rocard, MEP, a former French Prime Minister, who raised the issue of the single currency with Margaret Thatcher, who said, "Not in a thousand years." Rocard said, "Well, I am delighted to hear you are not opposed to the principle and it is just a question of timing."

Of course, MEPs have to do a lot of travelling which I can assure you is far from glamorous but it can have its funny moments, such as when Glenys Kinnock was approached by an air hostess who thought she might like to know as a campaigner for equal rights that the crew, including the pilots, were all women. Impressed, Glenys asked if she could visit the cockpit to which the hostess replied, "We don't call it that any more." *(Laughter)* Wait for it.

In 2005, the European Parliament played a leading role in promoting the Make Poverty History campaign. In partnership with NGOs from across Europe members of the parliament wrapped a white band around the Strasbourg chamber and attended a wide-ranging debate led by Hilary Benn and Jack Straw in the Parliament. MEPs joined in on calls for more debt relief, more aid, fairer trade, and placed themselves truly at the forefront of efforts to ensure that the EU played a central role.

Our MEP, Glynis Kinnock, was responsible for the European Parliament's report on achieving progress on the Millennium development goals and spearheaded calls for all member states to commit themselves to the longstanding UN target of 0.7% of GDP to be spent on overseas development aid, a commitment that was subsequently made in Council in May 2005. One year on, however, the fight continues. The European Parliament also continues to be closely involved in the WTO negotiations and, of course, human rights remains a central concern for Labour members.

GMB MEPs, and Richard Corbett in particular, had significant input into the drafting of the proposed constitutional treaty which would have replaced the current set of EU treaties with a single codified and clearer text. It would at the same time have achieved a better balance between the free market and social and environmental considerations. It would also have increased democratic scrutiny and control of EU decision-making by strengthening national parliaments and the European Parliament and ensuring greater transparency of decisions.

Sadly, this text, strongly supported by the European Trade Union Confederation, was rejected in France and the Netherlands. However, it has now been ratified by 18 countries and it is unclear what will happen next. A period of reflection has been called which will continue well into next year. How to reconcile a divergence between the majority which approved the text and the minority which have rejected it remains unclear. At the very least some extra protocols may be added to the treaty but it is also possible that it may need to be more substantially rewritten; if so, the Trade Union Movement must be vigilant to ensure that the progress achieved during the first draft remains in any subsequent draft.

There have been many controversial issues affecting working people. We have already heard about some of them where we have worked closely with the GMB, and we have been grateful for the support of Kathleen Walker Shaw and the Brussels office, they do a great job over there. I will briefly mention some of those issues.

The Services Directive, one of the most controversial pieces of legislation, has been completely transformed. Working closely with trade unions, socialist MEPs have ensured that labour law and collective rights are not affected, but the country of origin principle has been removed as have a large range of sectors such as health, private security, and temporary agency workers. The legislation will return to the European Parliament for a second reading and we are looking to see what more can be done.

Working Time is a very contentious issue for the UK Government. However, UK MEPs voted unanimously to end the opt-out phased over three years but this matter has still to be resolved.

Temporary agency workers. Again, this remains unfinished business. It cannot be right or just that agency workers are not treated equally over essential terms and conditions with those permanent staff who work alongside. This really is a travesty opening up agency workers to continued exploitation.

Port Services. This directive was subject to a major campaign by trade unions, including the GMB, who were seeking outright rejection of the proposals. The European Parliament not only rejected the proposal but rejected it by a huge majority sending a

message to the Commission which it could not ignore. This really was a massive victory for all of us.

I would like to pay tribute at this point to my colleague, Stephen Hughes, who played a pivotal role in ensuring a positive outcome on this and the other employment-related directives. He does a great job.

This brings me to Asda. Stephen Hughes, Richard Corbett, and myself, put forward a resolution condemning the anti trade union activities of Asda Wal-Mart and calling for the right of association and to join a union contained in the Charter of Fundamental Rights to be given treaty status.

Interestingly, not long after the resolution had been submitted I was contacted by a lobbyist telling me that Asda wanted to meet me and other colleagues and could they take us out for dinner. I have had Asda responsibility in various forms for most of my GMB working life and I have always had difficulty in getting Asda to listen to anything I wanted to say, and now they want to take me out for dinner? No, thank you very much. *(Applause)*

I spoke to my GMB colleagues and we decided to offer a 15-, perhaps 30-, minute meeting with all of us together. Asda reluctantly accepted. It was quite interesting because at the meeting we were told by Asda that they wanted a better relationship with the GMB. They tried to convince my colleagues that they were a model employer. Unfortunately for them, I was able to intervene, constantly I might add, in that my own experiences certainly did not bear that out. They left somewhat deflated, more deflated than when they arrived. My colleagues continue to work closely with the GMB, not just at a European level but also regionally. For my part, I attended and spoke last week at a GMB public meeting held in Midland & East Coast Region. The subject of the meeting was, yes, you guessed it, Asda. Some things never change.

Finally, could I thank you for inviting me to Congress. Congratulations, Paul. I am really glad that you are now not just "Acting", you are the real General Secretary, and I hope that you have a very successful congress. Thank you very much, colleagues. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Glenis, this is another gift you never had before. Another room we can go to with the whisky!

(Presentation made amid applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, that is this morning's business, a heavy morning, and I thank you all for your patience out there.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE PRESIDENT: I just remind you that there is a fringe meeting upstairs, very important, in the balcony bar. All the drinks are on Brian Strutton. Do not tell him I said so!

Colleagues, we now break for lunch and return at 2 o'clock. Thank you.

(Adjourned for lunch)

AFTERNOON SESSION

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I would like to make a very important announcement, which is that there is free tea and coffee for delegates in the Exhibition Area sponsored by Liverpool & Victoria. We would like to thank them for this. There is also a smoking and non-smoking area in the seated area outside.

CEC SPECIAL REPORT: PROGRESS UPDATE - A FRAMEWORK FOR THE FUTURE OF THE GMB: MOVING FORWARD

In this Special Report to Congress, the CEC provides an audit of the progress that has been made towards implementation of the 23 recommendations set out in the CEC Special Report *A Framework for the Future of the GMB*, and carried by Congress 2005. The table reflects the position at the time of going to print. More detailed accounts of some of the actions reported can be found in the General Secretary's Report and other Special Reports.

	Recommendation	Progress at March 2006
1	The CEC Communications Committee will examine how best to achieve improved communications at all levels throughout the organisation, and will incorporate into this examination an assessment of how best use can be made of information technology to assist with improving communications. Each Region should examine communications within the Region to inform the work of the Communications Committee.	<i>Implemented: The Committee adopted a Communications strategy based on making GMB a more effective campaigning union - new initiatives include 'GMB Official' and 'Public Eye', and members campaign websites such as Asda and DHL.</i>
2	The CEC recognises the strong consensus that retention and servicing of existing members should be given a higher priority, and will take proactive steps to ensure that this is reflected in the GMB's priorities. These proactive steps will include developing a system to allow the CEC to monitor the success of the Union's retention and servicing activities.	<i>The National Organising Team are taking this forward</i>
3	The CEC will establish a special working group on young people, whose terms of reference will be to examine how to raise trade union awareness amongst young people, how to attract more young people into membership of the GMB and how to increase the participation of young people in the Union.	<i>Still to be progressed</i>
4	The CEC Training Committee will progress the development of education and training for workplace activists on the basis of the proposal outlined.	<i>A plan is in place to develop core training provision across the union. Regional Education Officers and the National Organising Team will be working on this with the Training Committee</i>

5	<p>The CEC will ask for examples of the good practice that already exist at all levels throughout the Union (nationally, regionally, at branches and in workplaces) to be gathered and presented to the CEC. In particular, examples of recruitment and retention strategies that work should be identified. The aim should be to identify what works most effectively and implement it as best practice throughout the GMB as widely as possible.</p>	<p>Implemented: A consultation was conducted through Regions during November and December 2005 and the results presented to the CEC Recruitment and Organisation Committee in February 2006 for consideration</p>
6	<p>The CEC will make arrangements for further consultation with members at branch, regional and national level, to ensure further discussion and debate about how to achieve increased membership participation.</p>	<p>Implemented: A consultation was conducted through Regions during November and December 2005 and the results presented to the CEC Recruitment and Organisation Committee in February 2006 for consideration</p>
7	<p>[Developing new recruitment strategies] The CEC will refer these issues to the recently established Organising Working Group for its consideration.</p>	<p>Implemented: The strategy developed by the Organising Working Group is being delivered through the National Organising Team. National targets have been adopted and all Regions are pursuing a campaign of membership consolidation in existing workplaces</p>
8	<p>The CEC recommends that the GMB should adopt and implement this increased workplace focus as <i>policy</i>, and will refer this matter in the first instance to the Recruitment & Organisation Committee for the Committee to identify how to progress this.</p>	<p>Implemented: A consultation was conducted through Regions during November and December 2005 and the results presented to the CEC Recruitment and Organisation Committee in February 2006 for consideration. The National Organising Team is progressing workplace focus as part of its approach to organising.</p>
9	<p>[Recruitment of GMB officials) The Task Group took into account that a Management sub-group had recently been established to examine the Union's recruitment process and procedures. The CEC recommends that this sub-group should continue its deliberations and to report its findings as soon as possible.</p>	<p>All parties have agreed that the 'Recruitment Officer' entry point will become 'Organising Officer'. Further changes to recruitment process and procedures are being progressed as part of a root and branch review of the union's HR function</p>

10	<p>The CEC recommends that:</p> <p>(i) Midlands & East Coast region be asked to prepare a short summary document describing and defining the principles of a community branch. This document would then be distributed by the CEC to regions for onward distribution to branches in order to help develop understanding and inform and stimulate discussion and debate on the subject of community branches.</p> <p>(ii) Regions are asked to report to the CEC on progress to date to implement the GMB policy '<i>Fresh Start for Branches 2001</i>', and for each region's report to outline what steps will be taken to progress implementation further where this has not yet been achieved.</p>	<p><i>This is in preparation by Midland Region</i></p> <p>Implemented: A consultation was conducted through Regions during November and December 2005 and the results presented to the CEC Recruitment and Organisation Committee in February 2006 for consideration</p>
11	<p>There will be a full examination of all nationally serviced branches by the Recruitment & Organisation Committee. This examination will be conducted with full consultation with the members of the nationally serviced branches and the Regions.</p>	<p><i>Work is due to begin in April 2006 on this project but already the AA membership has been distributed between Southern, South Western, Northern and Birmingham Regions</i></p>
12	<p>The CEC will examine the issue of "tidying up" some regional boundaries where any alterations to these could enhance and improve the service to GMB members.</p>	<p><i>Some work has already been done by Regions. Regional Secretaries are in regular dialogue to see how services can be improved</i></p>
13	<p>The CEC recommends that:</p> <p>(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.</p> <p>(ii) the CEC Recruitment & 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.</p>	<p><i>Draft paper considered by March 2006 CEC and rule amendments prepared for Congress 2006</i></p> <p><i>Committee to consider at next meeting</i></p>
14	<p>The CEC recommends that there should be a return to an annual Congress and that the 'traditional' existing structure remains. Further, that Congress should debate the implications of this proposal, and consider a variety of options for the future running of an annual Congress, taking into account factors such as the location, timing and overall cost.</p>	<p>Implemented</p>

15	<p>The CEC recommends that:</p> <p>(i) an examination should take place of the size and effectiveness of the CEC and Regional Councils and;</p> <p>(ii) the current system whereby only members of Regional Councils are eligible to stand for election to the CEC should be maintained.</p>	<p><i>Still under review by Regions</i></p>
16	<p>The CEC will establish a working party to review the rulebook (at an appropriate time) following Congress 2005.</p>	<p><i>To be progressed – this was in abeyance pending the outcome of the King Inquiry</i></p>
17	<p>The CEC has established an Election Working Group chaired by the Vice President to review GMB election rules for future elections, and recommends that any CEC decision should await the outcome of the Working Group's report.</p>	<p><i>This proposal is superseded by the King Inquiry report and the changes debated by the 2005 Recall Congress</i></p>
18	<p>The CEC recommends that the Finance Committee and Senior Managers review all the financial restructuring issues identified by the Task Group with the aim of identifying appropriate reforms that can be implemented immediately and, in the case of reforms requiring changes to Union Rules, recommending detailed Rule Amendments for the CEC to propose to the next GMB Congress. Senior Managers have already taken preliminary steps so that the financial restructuring review can proceed quickly should Congress 2005 accept this recommendation.</p>	<p><i>In progress – much has already been achieved including new streamlined banking procedures, the repayment of bank loans, restructured budget systems, improved financial planning and a review of audit arrangements</i></p>
19	<p>The CEC will look at all areas of expenditure to identify those that are unproductive and to make recommendations that these practices are stopped, to free up resources for direct servicing of members and ensuring the growth of the Union.</p>	<p>Implemented by Senior Management Team. Measures include a costs audit, co-ordinated purchasing policy and revenue and benefit review</p>
20	<p>The CEC considered the report from the NAU Review Group on 19 April 2005 and endorsed its conclusions and recommendations. Action is already under way to implement the recommendations, notably identifying a Regional Secretary to work with the NAU and Regions in encouraging employers to switch to direct debit and to increase the use of electronic data transfer.</p>	<p>Implemented by Senior Management Team, led by Andy Worth</p>
21	<p>The CEC Finance Committee will conduct a review of branch commission payments.</p>	<p><i>Work is underway with a draft report due to go before the Finance Committee in April 2006</i></p>

22	The CEC Finance Committee will conduct a full review of members' benefits to consider upgrading them. The review will be based upon all the relevant data and information available on current benefits.	<i>Discussions are underway with the Finance Committee studying benefits, qualifications and costs</i>
23	Regions should examine how to increase the number of members paying by direct debit, and whether incentives to convert to direct debit should be offered in the Region.	<i>Regions are experimenting with various options including the use of incentives</i>

(Adopted)

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, we move on now to the Special Report and I will explain to Congress how I am going to take it. The Special Report will be moved and seconded on behalf of the CEC. Then I will invite a speaker from each region in turn to put up one speaker. Then I will ask for any speakers opposed to the Report. The CEC mover will have the right of reply. Then I will move to the vote.

Votes can be held on separate parts of documents but only if Congress has first voted to do so. See the Guidelines for Congress Business in the Final Agenda, decision of the 1993 Congress in Portsmouth, Motion 144. I think it was moved by the Midlands & East Coast Region.

BRO. A. WORTH (Regional Secretary, Midland & East Coast): I am speaking on behalf of the CEC and proud to move the Progress Update – A Framework for the Future of the GMB Moving Forward. The document is in your pack and it is no. 3, I believe.

I said last year that this document and its recommendations if adopted and carried into action would radically change the shape and culture of the GMB. I also said that, in my view, this document and its contents are, in reality, the antidote to merger. If we deliver on all of the recommendations, I believe that the GMB has no need to merge and can remain independent.

In adopting this Report, Congress last year unanimously recognised that we cannot simply rest on our laurels, agreeing that we must confront the challenges which face the Union. We have been doing that since we last met at all levels and, on behalf of the CEC, I thank everyone for their involvement in bringing about the much needed changes.

In the past 12 months we have achieved much. The document before Congress details what has been done. More detailed accounts of some of the actions are contained in the General Secretary's Report. I will touch on some of the achievements. There has been no black hole, colleagues, but we have more to do and I want to concentrate on what is left to do, unlike New Labour, who keep telling you what they have done.

I told Congress last year that we should be proud of the GMB and its achievements. Too often we focus on the negative and we keep quiet about our successes. Make no mistake, colleagues, the CEC is seriously looking at what we do from every angle including what we should, come and must do better. The central questions remains how best to organise and involve as many members as possible and prospective members to ensure the growth of the Union and wider member involvement. It is the responsibility of each and everyone of us to identify where and how we need to adapt the Union. That will be addressed later on by the CEC which is putting forward a document *GMB at Work: Workplace Organisation*. That will be debated this week. It is my belief that the document is excellent and should be used as a working document, not simply passed and endorsed by Congress. You should take it away with you and work towards achieving what it asks us to do.

Recommendation 1, turning back to the Framework document, calls for the GMB to become a more campaigning and visible organisation. We are on the way to achieving that, colleagues, with DHL, the BNP and ASDA. There are many more things going on. We are improving communications through websites and by adopting text messaging, etc.

Recommendation 2 of the Report shifted us from that failed age old policy of *recruit, recruit, recruit* to a more sensible policy where recruitment and retention are viewed as complementary and not competing. There are many signs, colleagues, that this culture is starting to take hold. There is still a consensus that the key to success is, of course, focused, committed, well-trained and front-line activists – you, the stewards. The Report calls for training within the regions to national standards and for resources to be shifted to the workplace. They were recommendations 4 and 7.

Much work has been done on developing a standard of training for activists and for officers and a new programme for officers has been agreed and is being implemented as we go forward this year. The focus we are moving towards is one of organising.

Recommendation 9 calls for a review of the

process for recruiting officials. This has been done and many of the lay members involved in the recruitment of officials have been trained. We continue to move forward on that.

Moving to what remains to be done, we have returned to an annual congress but we have yet to complete the review on congress timing, venue, structure and content that the task force document called for. So that is work still to do. The CEC intends to do that and various sub-committees have been asked to look at these issues.

We have established the senior management team and each member of that senior management team has taken on national responsibilities. The senior management team and the Finance Committee have done much in respect of the finances but we still have much to do. We have streamlined the banking procedures, we have repaid bank loans and we have restructured and improved the financial planning. We are committed to reviewing all the financial restructuring issues identified by the task group. In the case of a reduction to three sections, at Congress last year it was recognised that this would require some transitional arrangements and, again, the CEC is bringing firm proposals to Congress this week.

Other things are well underway. An HR department is being established and a new HR manager is with us this week in the hope that we avoid ever going back to the days of ending up in tribunals as a union. So we are moving on that issue.

All areas of expenditure are constantly being reviewed and examined, and unproductive practices have been stopped. The Finance Committee still has to look at the benefits as called for by the task group and branch commissions. The size and effectiveness of the CEC is still under review and proposals will be brought to Congress 2007. We are pressing for EDT, which is electronic data transfer, from the employers to improve our membership information and a reduction of the administration charge that the employers take. More remains to be done but certainly much has been done and I hope, on behalf of the CEC and the senior management team, that I have shown that we are not resting on our laurels. We are committed to action and action has been taken.

Congress, we are building on our past achievements, preparing to meet the challenges of the future. Our aim must be to ensure that the GMB is well-positioned to be the union for growth in the 21st century. The CEC is determined to achieve this and, with your agreement, help and assistance we are confident that together we can do this.

Congress, I have pleasure in moving this action packed report. There is only one question. Are we going to grow? Deal or no deal?

BRO. W. HUGHES (Northern): Worthy President, I think you had better give Congress a couple of

minutes to settle down because colleagues will be saying, "What's he doing speaking to a CEC report? That has never happened before. What is he about?" I will tell you. I am putting the layman's point of view, but I have had my instructions from the CEC. When you speak as a CEC member, you do this, you do that and a nod is as good as a wink. A promise has not been made, but I have had a little nod that maybe in ten years' time, if I do well, I could get a seat on the CEC, so I am aiming for that.

Enough frivolity and let's get down to business. I am speaking on the CEC Special Report: A Framework for the Future.

Colleagues, many of you know that I am not a member of the CEC, I have never been a member of the CEC nor do I intend to be a member of the CEC. In fact, I am quite happy with those CEC members who represent the Northern Region. They have their say and that does me. So I see no need for change there.

This Report is the result of a unique exercise in the history of our GMB Union, with all the big issues facing our Union addressed by a task group. This report was not led by consultants or think tanks. It was not even led by officers. It was led by the lay members, some on the CEC and others like me not on the CEC. The ideas in the report came from the lay members. We framed a serious of questions, and the answers to those questions came from the biggest membership consultation that this Union has ever undertaken. Were they the right answers? The CEC believes they were, and they have spent the past year implementing them. Since the start of the CEC Task Group, this Union has been transformed. There is a new confidence in our campaigning, a fresh approach to recruitment, a strengthening of our finances and a determination on all sides to work together for our members. We have an annual congress, which is what the members wanted, and recommendations for more effective structural sections. The Union, like me, is rejuvenated. Why, only this morning, when I was coming to Congress, I saw one of the regional secretaries smiling! Mind, it could have been wind. I don't know. There was a bus passing at the time. *(Laughter)*

Colleagues, no one likes changes, but changes will have to be made. Take the advice for once of an old campaigner, someone who has more years behind him than in front of him. Changes will have to be made if we have to stop the fear of union mergers, the fear of union takeovers, the fear of people telling us, after more than a hundred years, how to look after our members. In order to do this, we must be financially sound and continue in the future to modernise this Union of ours. I know that with common sense and good debate, this can be achieved. Always remember, this CEC may have put this report together. Colleagues, please remember this. I can assure that these recommendations are the wishes of our

members. This Congress has the important task of endorsing this document. I second, gladly. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Billy. As usual, you are your bright, sparky and cheeky self. I will now move round the regions. Does Birmingham & West Midlands wish to put a speaker in?

SIS. S. BIRCH (Birmingham & West Midlands): I am speaking in support of the CEC Report: A Framework for the Future.

President and Congress, as it states, this is a progress report. It is a document which was endorsed and accepted by Congress last year. We in our region accept that progress has been made since last year. However, there are a few very important areas of the report in which we have not progressed enough, and they are on recommendations 3, 21 and 22. Recommendations 21 and 22 are on branch commissions and members' benefits, so we expect there to be a delay in progressing these items for financial reasons.

However, recommendation 3 is establishing a Working Group on Young People to establish more young people to join our Union and raise awareness of trade unionism. Yet according to the report no progress at all has been made. Colleagues, you only have to look at the age profile around this room to realise that recommendation 3 should be made an absolute priority. Youth is vital to keeping our Union strong and vibrant. We are demanding that there is no further delay in implementing recommendation 3. That having been said, Birmingham & West Midlands Region supports the Special Report.

THE PRESIDENT: I understand that Northern Region is not putting forward a speaker. In that case, I call Lancashire.

BRO. J. McDONNELL (Lancashire): President, I am speaking to the Framework for the Future. The Lancashire Region has studied the report and believes it to be the correct way forward. In order to move this Union onwards, we are happy to accept this Special Report in its entirety for the future democracy of the Union. We would like to congratulate all the members who took part in this document, A Framework for the Future, and say that it was a job well done. Thank you.

SIS. A. LEADER (South Western): President and Congress, the South Western Region fully endorses this report. This is really something that we have been waiting for; first, a commitment to better communications and, more importantly, to see it actioned; secondly, servicing and retention. Again, we do not want just the usual commitment, but actioned. I must say that our National Organising Team and our regional organisation teams are

carrying out sterling work for us. The establishment of a Working Group on Young People is welcomed and so, so necessary for the future of our organisation. The document contains many recommendations. However -- I do not intend to go through them all - let me say that my region finds them long overdue and welcome. What an exciting time in the GMB. I support.

SIS. M. BOYD (GMB Scotland): President and Congress, GMB Scotland supports the document Framework for the Future. Congress recognised the need to confront the challenges we faced. The document details and sets out progress to date. There are no black holes. *This* is open and transparent and identifies all the elements of progress to date. We believe that all the recommendations are being driven forward and we are happy to endorse the document 'A Framework for the Future' for GMB moving forward. We accept that much more needs to be done, but much has been achieved. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: London Region?

BRO. E. BLISSETT (London): Nothing to add.

BRO. D. SUTCLIFFE (Liverpool, North Wales & Irish): I speak in support of Framework for the Future of the GMB: Moving Forward. We would like to support the report. The GMB has a great history as a trade union. We now need to move on from our past. We have consulted our membership widely, as has been said previously. The report reflects the outcome of that consultation and we need to move forward. If we are going to be a leading trade union in the future and not part of a merged trade union, we must support this report even though some people may find areas in it which are not acceptable. Along with the help of our newly elected General Secretary, Paul Kenny, we support *this* document.

SIS. L. LORD (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I am speaking in support of the CEC Special Report: A Framework for the Future of the GMB: Moving Forward.

Congress, the past 12 months, since last year's Congress, have been so action-packed that it seems incredible that we have been able to make so much progress on so many fronts in such a short period of time. The GMB is a renewed and reinvigorated union which bears, here and now, almost no resemblance to the GMB of 18 months ago.

In the Yorkshire and North Derbyshire Region, we are committed to ensuring that progress continues apace and we welcome, therefore, this Special Report which updates us in the work which has been completed, the work which is still in progress and the areas where more work is required. I want to focus on a couple of areas which remain 'works in progress'.

The first is recommendation 3, which deals with the involvement of young people in this Union. The recommendation is that a special working group on young people be established, whose terms of reference will be to examine how to raise trade union awareness amongst young people, how to attract young people into membership of the GMB and how to increase the participation of young people in the Union. Colleagues, to me and my region that sounds like a priority. One look around this hall will confirm that it is a problem that we have not solved since last we met, so we are disappointed. Of the three recommendations so far, this one is still to be progressed. Is that a euphemism for “nothing has yet been done” or are we any nearer addressing this real and important issue for all trade unions; i.e., working out to young workers and showing them we are relevant to life both inside and outside of work? Can we have a progress report on the lack of progress, please?

Another area that I want to mention is recommendation 7: the Development of New Recruitment Strategies. This is one area where success has been achieved by many in such a short time. I know that in Yorkshire Region the focus on organising weeks and targeted recruitment using officer time and activist support have transformed our regional recruitment performance and turned a slide in membership to a small growth in membership. The heartening fact is that the trend does not appear to be a slip or coincidence but a sustained and sustainable growth based on handwork and good planning. We hope to report even better progress on this front when we meet next year. Congress, Yorkshire Region supports.

BRO. D. HOCKING (Midland & East Coast): President and Congress, this report contains 23 recommendations, nine of which have been implemented. Twelve are work in progress. Last year I spoke on this report and stated that we must leave a legacy for our children and our children’s children. So you can understand that recommendation no. 3 is of particular interest. Sadly, it is still to be progressed. So let us complete these tasks and create a GMB for future generations. I support.

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone else wish to speak on the Report? *(No response)* Does anyone wish to speak against the Report? *(No response)* In that case, I ask Andy Worth to reply.

BRO. A. WORTH (CEC): President and Congress, in

reply to the debate Framework for the Future of the GMB: Moving Forward.

As the last delegate said, who came from Midlands & East Coast, there are 23 calls to action, if I can put it that way, inside the document. The document that was agreed last year was massive and much work has been achieved on it. However, it is fair to say that we do need to move forward. I think the Executive has moved since the report went to print towards the establishing of the called for working group to move on to young members and getting them recruited because they are the future of the organisation. So the Executive is keen to move on that issue. Certainly, when we give an update report next year, it will not be, I believe, recommendation 3 that is causing us any further problem. We will be moving on from that. Everyone who is involved in implementing recommendation 3 will be working hard. Hopefully, the concerns expressed by the Yorkshire and Birmingham & West Midlands regions will be alleviated as we go forward. There is no intention to leave it on the shelf. We have to get the issue sorted out. We have faced difficulties and we think we will overcome them.

In terms of the Yorkshire Region comment, which I think was the only other comment to reply to, about the new recruitment strategies, that will be dealt with in much more detailed in a document called *GMB At Work* which the National Organising Team has brought forward. That document sets out strategies for consolidation. Massive opportunity for consolidation exists within workplaces where we have recognition. Some people say there are more than half-a-million non-members within GMB recognised workplaces. That does call for hard work, which someone mentioned when asking a question, from all of us. Hopefully, Mary, I have replied to all the outstanding points.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I now put the Special Report to Congress. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against?

(The CEC Special Report: Progress Update - A Framework for the Future of the GMB: Moving Forward was carried)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Congress.

I call on the Deputy General Secretary, Debbie Coulter, to move the Deputy General Secretary’s Report, pages 37-39 and 45-46 of the General Secretary’s Report.

DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY’S REPORT

It hardly seems a year since we last met in Newcastle where we celebrated a successful Congress organised by a dedicated team of staff and officers who managed to transform an otherwise

inhospitable environment into one that was conducive to healthy debate and comradely good cheer. One of my first tasks on returning from Newcastle was, as Chair of the Congress Working Party, to reconvene the CWP and embark on the long process of preparing for Congress 2006. The team, buoyed by the success of Newcastle, has yet again risen to the challenge and has worked tirelessly in arranging this Congress which I hope will be as good-spirited as last year.

That same comradeship and goodwill has been present throughout the year and there has been an unprecedented amount of cooperation across the union as we faced another difficult year. Beset with troubling budgetary concerns, internal industrial relations problems, rogue union defectors to name but a few of the challenges that presented themselves in the past 12 months. We have confronted these challenges by working within a newfound climate of collaboration we have been able to collectively find solutions and restore confidence and stability. The leadership demonstrated by Paul Kenny during this period has been central in helping us achieve these goals and his open, inclusive and positive approach have assured me and many others that we are capable of shifting our focus away from internal strife, and redirecting our energies, rightfully, toward growing and servicing our membership.

A significant amount of my time has been spent working externally on the Women and Work Commission which had been charged with conducting an independent review to examine the causes of the gender pay and opportunities gap and to find practical ideas to close it within a generation. In Autumn 2004 I joined fellow trade unionists, educationalists, employers and public sector managers at the start of an 18 month project which would involve us visiting women across the UK in their schools, colleges and workplaces as well as taking formal evidence from academics, specialists, employers and trade unions - I ensured that GMB members and officials had the opportunity to contribute directly to the review.

What is clear is that the gender pay gap is complex and multi-faceted. There is no single solution and the evidence that we have uncovered to date suggests that wide-ranging action to tackle the culture in schools and workplaces that create job segregation and leave women trailing behind men in the pay stakes requires action from all parties and the report is likely to set out 40 practical recommendations to tackle job segregation and the gender pay gap which still exists despite 30 years of Equal Pay legislation, including:

- > Funding a £20 million package to enable women to change direction and raise skill levels, including offering free skills coaching and training programmes focused on women returners
- > Introducing an initiative to promote quality part-time work
- > Promoting a localised approach to matching jobs and skills
- > Using community centres, schools and children's centres to recruit local women, to be piloted in five areas across the country
- > Providing support for the development and training of equality reps

Clearly, from a trade union perspective, there will be disappointment that agreement could not be reached on the key demands for mandatory pay reviews and statutory rights for equality reps though there are likely to be recommendations that would give trade unions the opportunity to apply further pressure on employers to conduct 'equality checks' and also there will be a call for additional Union Modernisation Fund finance available for capacity building to support training and development for equality reps in the private and public sectors.

The campaign on these two key union demands will now intensify and GMB needs to demonstrate that we are the union that is prepared to be at the forefront of the fight for equal pay and opportunities at work. This agenda needs to be mainstreamed throughout the whole organisation and equality and diversity must be at the top of our bargaining, recruitment and political agenda. To this end I will be working closely with the Senior Management Team, the National Officer with responsibility for Equalities, our equality committees and negotiating officers to develop a GMB Equality Action Plan which will focus on pay and opportunity equality.

The Senior Management Team has recognised the fundamental requirement to have Equality and Diversity at the centre of all our aims and objectives and have appointed a SMT team to drive this agenda forward. I am joined by Tommy Brennan, Northern Regional Secretary and Harry Donaldson, Regional Secretary GMB Scotland, in developing our strategic approach to equality. One of our key tasks will be to develop a quality comprehensive training programme, in the first instance, for all officers

and staff throughout the union. It is envisaged that such an ambitious training programme will be supported by our bid to the Union Modernisation Fund. The CEC Race Task Group have been briefed on our proposals and welcome these positive developments which will go a long way toward addressing some of the key recommendations in the Elizabeth Henry Report.

Following the historic election of a third-term Labour Government in 2005 our relationship with the Party continues to be largely amicable despite having significant policy differences on a number of issues. The future relationship between New Labour and the Trade Unions continues to be debated particularly by those who would no doubt feel more comfortable cozying up to big business or millionaire donors. However these detractors are constantly reminded that Labour relies on trade unions not only for financial support but also to provide a legitimate voice for working people who feel increasingly alienated from both New Labour and politics in general. Both myself and Mary Turner will look forward to this particular debate surfacing at the National Executive Committee.

We both continue to represent the GMB on the Labour Party NEC and this year I have been elected as Co-convenor of the Joint Policy Committee. I am also a member of the Britain in the World Policy Commission, the Women, Race & Equalities Committee and the Local Government Committee. Mary remains Co-convenor of the Health Policy Commission, a member of the Local Government Committee, Organisation Committee and a member of the JPC. Our membership of the National Policy Forum, one of the key institutions in the policy making process, now includes Paul Kenny, Acting General Secretary, who also serves on the Prosperity and Work Policy Commission and Joe Morgan, Birmingham and West Midlands Regional Secretary, who serves on the Creating Sustainable Communities Policy Commission. Together with our other CEC member representatives Linda Clarke and Jean Chaplow, as well as a number of GMB constituency delegates, we have a strong team who are well placed to provide a powerful and influential role in the next cycle of policy development.

The RMA continue to remain a thriving and active part of our union thanks in no small part to the efforts of Monica Smith, RMA National Secretary. The Committee aims to meet in different regions in an attempt to publicise their activities at local level and this trend will continue throughout 2006. The RMA Conference in October 2005 was the usual lively affair with debates on issues ranging from State Pensions and Age Discrimination to Care in the Community and Council Tax. The Committee now channel the bulk of their campaigning and political work through the National Pensioners Convention and GMB are well-represented on this body. The most significant development however arose from a motion to RMA Conference calling for branches across the Union to opt-out of affiliating to RMA rather than opting in to affiliation. This call was supported by the Senior Management Team and the CEC and the RMA now have independence and resources to run meeting, conferences and campaigns.

I remain involved in the campaign to secure fundamental trade union, political and human rights for our brothers and sisters in Colombia. I represent GMB on the Justice for Colombia National Executive and have addressed a number of meetings to publicise this cause. It is with great pride that I can boast that GMB is responding magnificently to the appeal from the CUT Federation for assistance in obtaining computers and is also inviting Hernando Hernandez, Legal Advisor with the Peasant Workers Union FENSUAGRO, to tour the UK in early 2006. I met Hernando in his bullet-ridden offices in downtown Bogotá and I know that, like me, GMB members will feel both humbled and inspired by the message he will deliver on behalf of the members he risks his life to represent.

Colleagues it was decided from an early stage that the theme for this Congress would be For Justice and Equality. This wasn't because we felt it was a hip and trendy bandwagon to board or even that we felt it was the correct political and moral route to take. We adopt this theme to send a very clear message, both externally and internally, that GMB are the Union that understands the changing demands of our members. We can respond to the shifting work environment where equal pay, work-life balance and maternity/paternity rights are now primary concerns of our members in the workplace and we recognise that equality issues will have direct appeal to the new emerging workforce - mainly female, increasingly diverse with unconventional work patterns in non-traditional industries. We've made a great start already – let's now turn the slogan into action in 2006.

PRODUCTIVITY SERVICES CENTRE

Introduction

Based at National Office, the Productivity Services Centre (PSC) provides a support service to National and Regional Officers, representatives and members in a wide range of productivity, pay and work organisation issues. The work of PSC has developed over the years to reflect the changing nature of management initiatives, from traditional work study and job evaluation through to newer concepts such as human resource management and partnerships. The range of expertise includes:

- Job Evaluation
- Pay and Grading Systems
- Performance, incentive and competency schemes
- Team working
- Annualised hours and flexible working
- Work study systems
- Work organisation

Retirement

2005 saw the retirement of PSC Officer David Haire after more than 30 years loyal and dedicated service. David was very experienced and knowledgeable in his field and the GMB will miss his expertise, enthusiasm and, not least, his humour. We wish David a long and happy retirement.

Recent Activity

David's retirement leaves Mick Hubbard as the sole remaining Officer of PSC, and as a consequence has obviously limited activities to some degree. Nevertheless, the training aspect has increased, largely due to the delivering of the Local Government Single Status Pay and Grading Courses. The Courses have been flexibly designed to respond to the varying needs of Representatives and Officers, and most of them so far have also included, by request, refresher sessions on Job Evaluation. While the Courses have been very well received by participants, with positive feedback, it is surprising that only six Regions have so far taken advantage of the service, especially in light of the impact pay and grading will have on our members in 2007.

As reported last year, work study related activity increased, and this aspect of the workload has continued to grow, particularly in the private manufacturing and distribution sectors. Increasingly competitive, companies are returning to traditional work study techniques as they strive for efficiency savings. While we obviously welcome initiatives that help to keep companies afloat, thereby enhancing job security, it is PSC's role to ensure that good practice is maintained. Through the provision of appreciative training for our Representatives, and ongoing support and advice, we can ensure employers maintain professional standards rather than resort to 'cowboy' tactics.

Performance-based bonus or incentive schemes are another growth area, and work study techniques have been used as a basis for establishing targets. We have to ensure that those targets are fair, consistent and achievable, and that the reward is proportionate to the effort expended.

The growth of work study activity and performance reward systems reflects a decline in other aspects of PSC's work such as HRM techniques, which were supposed to replace those 'old fashioned' practices. The failure of British Management to grasp the true concept of employee involvement and participation has resulted in a gradual return to more traditional techniques to improve efficiency and encourage motivation.

Future Projects

The provision of the Local Government Single Status Job Evaluation, Pay and Grading Courses will remain a priority for PSC through until 2007. In conjunction, ongoing support and advice will continue to be provided in response to issues arising in specific Authorities. There are also a couple of national employers embarking on large scale job evaluation projects, with which PSC have become involved; these are at an early stage and it is predicted will continue throughout the year.

Summary

With the increase in work study projects and performance-based incentive schemes, it is easy to predict that this trend will continue to be a growth area. It is important that these are successful if we are to

stem the loss of jobs in the manufacturing sector. In Local Government, Officers and Representatives need to be armed with the best knowledge, in anticipation of the proposed implementation of new pay and grading structures in 2007. PSC has an important role to play in these areas on both a Regional and National basis.

(Adopted)

THE DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY: President, it gives me great pleasure to move my report to Congress. I am reporting on a year which has witnessed significant and substantial changes within our organisation, the effects of which have been felt at every level throughout the Union. There seems now to be an acknowledgement that, although there are still a number of challenges facing us, many of the more difficult episodes of recent times are behind us and the language people use reflects this situation. I am not just talking about the cursing and swearing which has been heard emanating from our research department in recent weeks, but the language of activists who now speak of stability, collaboration and unity rather than the corrosive and destructive exchanges which have reverberated around the Union in recent times. As I mention in my report, there has, indeed, been an unprecedented degree of co-operation right across the board.

The senior management team now works as a team, sharing responsibility, taking ownership of projects, shouldering the burden of management and we are eager to make progress on a whole series of issues which have been neglected for quite some time. Some notable developments have been the work undertaken by Andy Worth in progressing plans for the development of an enduring and robust HR department, a new resource within the Union which will greatly assist us in modernising and professionalizing our employment practices; to provide training, support, effective policies and procedures for dealing with internal disputes and helping us to create an environment of fairness and dignity at work. Look at Allan Garley's efforts in managing the Union Modernisation Fund bid which will help us to meet the challenges of responding to and developing the profile of our increasingly diverse membership and potential membership base. That is a huge task which will be driven by the Senior Management Equalities Team.

This new found demonstration of positivism stretches beyond the senior management team. Staff and officers, who not long ago were despondent and demoralised, are now more co-operative, feel better informed and, we hope, more trusting of our commitment to improve employee relations. We have already made progress, witnessed by a positive attitude and mutual respect and understanding that accompany our negotiations with the NFLC and the ONC. We have received an appreciative response when we travelled to the regions, consulting directly

with employees on their pension scheme and anything else which has cropped up in those meetings during the year long tour of all the regions. The environment is changing and we are committed to work hard to rebuild that trust and confidence throughout the organisation.

I reported last year that I have been asked to serve on the Women & Work Commission, which has been charged to conduct an independent review examining the causes of the gender pay gap and finding practical ideas to close it within a generation. I joined fellow trade unionists, educationalists, managers and employers, and for more than a year we have travelled throughout the country visiting schools, colleges and workplaces and took evidence from a whole series of people, such as workers and employers, to academics and specialists. Of course, I ensured that the GMB officers and activists contributed to that review.

The evidence that we uncovered suggested that wide-ranging action to tackle the culture in schools and workplaces that creates job segregation and leaves women lagging behind men in pay requires action from all parties, from the government, employers, educationalists and trade unions; innovative youth schemes to give girls a better understanding of the pay and prospects in the careers they choose, to boost the quality of part-time work and to provide skills training for women returners have been set out as part of a report which proposes 40 practical recommendations to tackle unequal pay.

However, trade union representatives were bitterly disappointed that consensus could not be reached on our key demands for mandatory equal pay reviews and for statutory rights for equality reps. Although there is a commitment to revisit and review progress in 12 months, I do not believe that these measures can be achieved in the short-term. However, the lack of supportive legislation has never stopped us before from campaigning on behalf of our members and now, more than ever, we have to ensure that equal pay is at the top of our agenda. We must show that the GMB is taking the lead in the campaign for pay and opportunity equality. I am delighted that our Congress theme reflects the growing awareness amongst our members and activists of the increasing importance of equality issues. Tomorrow, we will have a Congress session dedicated solely to this subject and lay members -- not politicians or equality specialists - plus rank and file activists will be

addressing all equality strands including young member issues and will be reinforcing the message of why equalities matter.

As Mary said this morning, trade unionists still remain frustrated also by the lack of progress of the Warwick Agreement. Whilst we acknowledge that some progress has been made, this is progress on commitments which were largely uncontroversial. On the big issues, the issues which matter to our members – the Bank Holidays, the Agency & Temporary Workers' Directive and the Working Time Opt-Out arrangements – there is a clear failure to abide by the spirit and intent of Warwick.

Congress, please be assured that myself, Mary and our colleagues on the National Policy Forum will continue to press for full implementation at every level and, no doubt, our guest senior Labour politician will be pressed on Warwick when he responds to your questions later in the week.

Colleagues, I remain actively involved in the campaign for justice for our Colombian brothers and sisters and since last Congress GMB activity in this area has increased significantly, as highlighted in the General Secretary's Report. Our Computers for Colombia Appeal raised more than £5,000 which is more than half our target of £9,000. The number of regions which now affiliate to Justice for Colombia has increased from four to ten, so every region is now affiliated.

June Minnery from our CEC International Committee will be joining the next delegation to Colombia in August, and we are hoping that June will be present at what they call the CUT Conference when the GMB donation is announced. I would make a fresh appeal for you to give generously and to make up that shortfall so that we can give them the full amount that we promised.

There has been encouraging activity at both ends of the age spectrum of the GMB. Retired Members Association members, led magnificently by Monica Smith, have had a great year. For the first time, they have secured guaranteed funding from all branches which will now enable them to focus on activity both within GMB campaigns and also by leading on the

political agenda through the National Pensioners' Convention. You can tell by the calibre of the Gold Badge winners this morning how their enthusiasm and commitment often puts the rest of us to shame.

Speaking on the issues of concern which were raised earlier in terms of recommendation 3, I am pleased to tell you that progress is being made. A young member activist network has recently been resurrected and we are holding our third formal meeting here during this week of Congress. We have a dozen young members arriving this evening and they will be meeting up tomorrow to talk about strategy and the way forward.

We have also secured an externally funded secondee, who is a young member, to work with GMB activists and young member officers to develop a contact base, web pages and all of the other modern communication systems which young people prefer to rely on these days to enable us to communicate more effectively and to build young member activity. I am very pleased to say that that is happening. One of our speakers in the equality session tomorrow is a young member from Yorkshire Region who is the vice-president of the Young Members' TUC Committee.

Congress, I remain excited by the challenges which lie ahead in the next year, whether we remain in merger talks or not and whether we are embroiled in a Labour Party leadership election or not. Whatever the challenges are which are thrown at us, we know that we are now strong enough and determined enough to tackle any issues head on. Let us go from strength to strength. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Debbie. I move to pages 37, 38 and 39. Does Congress agree those pages? *(Agreed)* Pages 45 and 46? *(Agreed)*

(The Deputy General Secretary's Report was adopted)

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to the CEC Special Report: GMB@Work, to be moved by Joe Morgan and seconded by Martin Smith. I will go through the same process as I did for the previous report.

CEC SPECIAL REPORT: GMB@WORK - WORKPLACE ORGANISATION

Our union at every level needs to adopt a radically different strategy on recruitment and organisation to grow and prosper. Membership growth must become the measure of every aspect of our work and we must re-build the link between recruitment, representing and retaining new members

Four out of five GMB members first joined us because a GMB Rep where they worked asked them to. GMB Reps in the workplace must be seen as the frontline of our efforts to grow the union, and must be trained, supported and given the resources by the union they need to recruit, organise and represent members.

Effective, active and strong workplace organisation, lead and sustained by GMB Reps is our goal. Our purpose is to grow the union in the workplace not to just achieve recruitment targets but so that our members have more say on the job.

We have a clear view on what works. Effective workplace organisation has five main elements:

1. **Campaigning.** The GMB must always have a “claim on the table” and adopt a pro-active approach in every workplace and with every employer. Instead of waiting for management to propose changes and then responding, the GMB at work should have its own agenda and keep every employer on the back foot, responding to our members demands. GMB members need to know what the union stands for and be involved in deciding the GMB agenda where they work. The GMB at work must go out of its way in every workplace to involve members in decisions that affect them, giving members a vote on every issue we can, and asking them to get involved in the union in any way they can.
2. **Communications.** The GMB must make sure everyone at work knows we exist and what we are campaigning for. Where-ever possible workplaces should adopt their own regular newsletter to keep members informed and involved, to use as a tool for bringing new members in and to deliver better, more local information more quickly.
3. **Contacting Workers.** The GMB reps in each workplace, should know who is joining and who is leaving the job, who is a member and who is not and use this information to talk to potential members in their area regularly about the unions’ work. More up to date membership information is essential. Regular and planned contact with GMB members is an effective way of encouraging members to become more active in the union themselves and make us stronger at work.
4. **Credibility.** In every workplace and sector we need a clear and credible industrial strategy. But our credibility also depends on the strength of our organisation and the skills of our Reps at work. Members must know where to go and who to contact where they work if they need help, advice or representation. We are confident about the commitment, expertise and ability of our Workplace Reps to represent members, set the agenda where they work find ways to include members and build the union. As much servicing of members as possible should be done by GMB Reps at work. Our training needs to stay focussed on providing Reps with the skills they need while our Organisers need to stay focussed on providing on-going support to allow Reps to do their job.
5. **Commitment.** Everyone at work should see the GMB as being a part of the workplace, and in it for the long term. We should replace short term “recruitment drives” with members regularly talking to non members about what the union is doing. Not to sell the union - but to explain where we stand on the issues where they work, why they should join and what they can do to support us.

Nationally, the “National Organising Team” (NOT) has been established with a senior officer representing each region to co-ordinate the contribution regions will make to the new strategy for growth.

The National Organising Team Reps from each region are as follows:

Birmingham and West Midlands Region:	Martin Hird
Lancashire Region:	Eddie Parker
Liverpool, North Wales and Irish Region:	Terry Mellor
London Region:	Tony Warr
Midland and East Coast Region:	Tim Roache
Northern Region:	Billy Coates
GMB Scotland:	Mick Conroy
Southern Region:	Paul Maloney
South Western Region:	John Phillips
Yorkshire and North Derbyshire Region:	Neil Derrick
National Organising Co-ordinator:	Martin Smith

Each NOT representative will take the lead in their Region in finding new ways to grow the GMB at work. Collectively the National Organising Team will draw up recommendations for action across the

union on behalf of the regions. At its first meeting in November 2005 the National Organising Team drew up a checklist of recommendations for immediate action, and the key messages that lie behind the new strategy. (See below)

In the first few months the priorities have been clear:

1. To move away from the monthly league table which compares each region's recruitment performance with every other. The focus is now on region's judging their performance on recruitment against themselves rather than against colleagues in other parts of the country where the challenges can be very different.
2. To have a better focus in GMB offices on the organising targets officers pursue, and to make sure these targets are selected openly and on the basis of potential membership gains. Generally we need to adopt fewer targets and pursue them more effectively. Organising projects where we have no access to workers, no problems at work we can organise around and no means to service new members as they join should be given low priority.
3. To focus each region on developing stronger workplace organisation in areas where our membership is weak but the GMB is recognised. To mobilise, train and support our Reps to better use our existing recognition and facilities agreements to recruit and organise new members. Demanding access to consult workers during negotiations on pay and conditions, is an effective way recruit and build the strength of the union.

In addition, the National Organising Team has adopted three national projects which all regions will focus on. These projects will remain in place until they have achieved a momentum of their own nationally, when new projects will be considered and adopted, but never exceeding three at any one time. The Not will develop the industrial and organising strategy on these national projects with regional colleagues, National Officers and members. Regional and national resources will be diverted to these projects to make sure they succeed.

National Organising Team, March 2006

KEY MESSAGES

All publications, presentations and training recommended must contain the following key messages:

1. **The main cause of our current decline is internal not external.** The answer to membership decline lies in our hands but we need to change how we work.
2. **Our job is not to manage the decline of the GMB** – but to take whatever steps are necessary to halt it and reverse it.
3. **We must be clear about what works and what does not work in recruitment.** We can identify and eradicate failed recruitment and organising practice from our past.
4. **To turn membership decline around we need to focus on workplace organisation.** Increasing the activity of our membership and giving them a role in building the GMB where they work, mobilising our reps to recruit and organise.
5. **Increase officer resources spent on recruitment and organisation.** – but direct and target them much more effectively and with much more discipline.
6. **Fewer Targets more effectively organised.**
7. **A bigger role in servicing and organising in the workplace for our Reps will be required.** New and coherent training and education will be required to equip them with the skills they need.
8. **Focus on consolidating membership in existing sites rather than green field.** Adopt a systematic approach to consolidation work and ensure all officers and Reps are briefed on what works.

9. **Expect every aspect of the GMB operation to make a contribution to membership growth.**
10. **Focus on sustained membership growth rather than competitive sales culture.** Integrate recruitment and organising work with industrial issues and workplace organisation. We must end destructive competition on recruitment performance between officers and offices.
11. **We should go out of our way to include Reps, members, and potential members in our organising and servicing work.** We must guard against unconsciously displacing Reps or encouraging dependency on full time officials.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

REGIONS

Performance and Accountability.

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

Organising Teams

4. To divert resources into organising in each region under the control of a dedicated Senior Organiser.
5. To organise these resources into an Organising Team including an appropriate mix of skills and experience.
6. To require Organisers to allocate regular time to the Organising Team on a rolling basis, to work on Project Board priorities at the direction of the Senior Organiser.
7. Organising Teams to include RHSO's to assist in identifying consolidation targets.
8. 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.
9. To change the entry point for new officers, renaming the Recruitment Officer grade as Organiser.

Organising Project Boards

10. 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.
11. Organising Project Boards to include collective quarterly numerical targets and be on open display.
12. Organising Project Boards to include no more than 6 main projects and the numbers expected to deliver in the quarter – and no more than 5 developmental targets.
13. 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.
14. Consolidation targets to be identified using organisers own workplace maps, and centrally produced information on membership levels, existence of check off and numbers of postholders.
15. Targets to be prioritised using the Aim Organising Test (Access, Issues, Momentum)

Administrative

16. To ensure each local office co-ordinates calls from potential members with allocated organisers to follow up leads within 24 hours.
17. To have an agreed and understood policy on services available to new members joining with pre-dated problems.

18. 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.
19. To ensure the shift in resources to organising is understood by front line staff and put across to members.

Training

20. Follow on training in workplace organisation to be targeted at reps in consolidation targets. Training to be standardised, based around the 5 key principles and delivery to include organisers involved in the workplace.
21. Regional Training programmes to be reviewed and standardised, shifting the focus from dependency on officers to workplace organisation.
22. Regional training programmes to be open for entry at every level to allow retraining of Reps in targeted workplaces.

NATIONAL

Performance and accountability

23. To produce monthly reports of average performance and the trend in each region.
24. To standardise evaluation system for projects into output measures (members recruited, increase in membership density, Reps coverage) and activity measures (contact time with potential members, workplace activity).

Organising Teams

25. To form a National Organising Team from the Senior Organisers appointed to make recommendations to the CEC organisation group on policy, review, monitor and manage recruitment work, share good practice and prioritise National organising projects.
26. That this team meet 10 times per year.

Organising Project Board

27. To develop a National Project Board on the same basis as in the regions but containing no more than 3 main projects at any one time.
28. To grade national projects into three streams: Stream One where we ask regions to divert some resources towards a common goal and place the project on their project board, Stream 2 where we ask regions to assist in developing a target, and Stream 3 where we launch projects designed exclusively to be run and lead by activists.
29. To produce data to assist in the identification of consolidation targets in regions.
30. To produce data to assist in the prioritising of National Projects.
31. To construct a clear streamlined decision making process to assess and prioritise National Projects: proposals come to MS or JM, are referred to the monthly NOT meeting for consideration and a recommendation made to JM for action.

Training

32. To produce a new Stewards Handbook to assist local reps learn the skills they need to improve workplace organisation – to re-define the role of workplace reps.
33. To use the Reps mailing to re-inforce the workplace organisation message to existing Reps.
34. To standardise training for new reps, follow on training for reps in consolidation targets and training for officers in consolidation techniques.
35. Briefing for all officers in consolidation techniques to be delivered in region, by the SO with support from the NOT and standardised nationally.

Administrative

36. To make the arrangements to allow workers to join us online.

37. To establish a centralised lead Book in national office to allocate leads to the senior organiser in each region.
38. To shorten the time between a TUC lead arriving and a local officer making contact.

(Adopted)

BRO. J. MORGAN (Regional Secretary, Birmingham & West Midlands): I am moving the CEC Special Report, GMB@Work: Workplace Organisation.

First of all, colleagues, let me assure you that I do not intend to go through the report line by line. I am sure you will all have read the report by now and, if you have not, the report is no. 4 and it is one of the most important reports at this Congress. So I would urge you if you have not read it yet to make sure you do read it. It is all about change and how we need to change.

Colleagues, during past years we have had many reports on recruitment and organisation and we have heard many fine speeches from this rostrum on how best to get non-unionists to sign up to be members of the GMB. We all say that it is everyone's job to recruit and organise and then we expect someone else to do it. How many times have we reacted to the phone call from the potential member telling us that he or she works in a factory with more than one hundred employees, all non-union and there are problems on the shop floor, and we think it is manna from heaven.

So what did we used to do? We used to get hundreds of leaflets on every subject possibly known to man, we pack our bags with application forms, turn up the factory gate mob handed at some un-Godly hour in the morning and putting your life at risk dodging the cars as they attempt to play human skittles with you. In fact, one officer who I know has had his feet driven over that many times on gate jobs that he now buys his shoes off Coco the Clown. So we do all of this and after the last person clocks in we all go to a greasy café and we measure the success of the campaign by how willing the workforce was to take a leaflet from us.

If we are honest with ourselves, colleagues, a little, if not all, of what I have just described are things which we will all have done sometimes with little or no success. I have certainly done them in the past. What is the answer, I hear you all think? The answer is not blowing in the wind but it is not to throw everything away. We are not suggesting that we throw everything away and start from scratch. There is a lot in *this* report which will guide us in the right direction. The answer is to utilise the expertise and experience of every region in the organisation. That is what this Special Report and the formation of the National and Regional Organising Teams is attempting to do. It is a matter of being eclectic, adopting the best from each region. We all have knowledge of what does not work and we have to be

bold enough to acknowledge that what does not work, does not work and simply stop doing it.

Colleagues, we all cherish our regional autonomy and quite rightly so, but sometimes we need to realise that to be really truly focused we need a national strategy to ensure consistency in delivery of best practice across the organisation. There may be some who think we are doing just fine and that they do not need to change. As I said, this document is all about change. They think that they do not need to change the way they operate and follow the old adage "If it's not broken, don't fix it". Well, I've got news for you, colleagues! It was broken and it has been broken for a hell of a long time. This Special Report is just the start to the road of it being mended. It is not going to be a quick fix, it will take time but every region has to be on board and working as team players for *Team GMB*, to make sure that each region works as part of that overall team to achieve national growth.

It is not worth a few regions delivering growth with the majority losing members year on year, which is what has been happening year after year after year. We are now starting to see a little bit of growth, but we need more and we need it to be consistent. If this Special Report is adopted and endorsed by Congress, it will give a clear and cohesive approach to organising in the workplace. We will be aiming to consolidate where we already have agreements but not 100 per cent membership. That is not rocket science. Why haven't we been doing it already? Where we have agreements, let us go into those workplaces. There will be clearly identified targets with appropriate resources allocated to them. Colleagues, the National Organising Team has been set up for only a matter of months and yet we have already seen major strides taking place in ensuring that organising has become and continues to be the number 1 priority of the GMB.

For those who may – there may not be many – mutter that the National Organising Team is trying to teach granny how to suck eggs, let me reassure you that the National Organising Team has no intention of doing that. We are aware that granny does not need to be shown how to suck eggs, but she does, on occasions, have to be reminded to take her teeth out before beginning to suck the eggs.

Colleagues, I commend this report to Congress. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Martin.

BRO. M. SMITH (National Organising Co-ordinator): Congress, I second the Special Report on behalf of the National Organising Team and the CEC.

Congress, the Special Report sets out the strategy in detail for turning around the decline in GMB membership. This decline can be turned round and the means lies in our hands and in our hands alone. There are three basic principles which lie behind GMB@Work.

Firstly, the workplace is the building block of the Union. It is at work where our members have the power to improve their working conditions and it is at work where members look to the GMB to make a difference. Radio advertising, sports sponsorship and leafleting festivals will raise the profile of the Union. Community organising and political campaigning are part of what we do, but it is at work where we either make or lose members. We all know this.

Secondly, at work, it is what we have to say about the problems workers face and their boss that makes the difference of whether they join or not. We know that only a small percentage of new GMB members say they join us because of the personal and financial services and benefits we offer, but we need to build the Union in every workplace, not sell it on the High Street. The point is that when we try and compete with the Prudential Assurance Company we start to look and sound like the Prudential Assurance Company more than we look and sound like the GMB. Neither should we separate recruitment from representation and retention. They are part of the same thing. Bringing all three together and using workplace issues is the key to membership growth in the workplace. Involving people in the solutions to the problems they face, not doing it for them and expecting them to join the Union later out of gratitude, is the way forward.

Thirdly, the test for each and every campaign is to how far we can put the boss on the back foot, forced to respond every day to our members' agenda, respect and decent treatment so that our members can get on with their jobs, better pay and pensions so that our members have a future to plan, shorter and flexible hours so that our members' kids get to see their mum and dad once in a while, and this is, as we all know, why we recruit and organise and why we make our Union as strong as it can be in every workplace where we have members.

So the workplace is the building block, organising around the issues, keeping our eyes on the prize of a better life for our members and reuniting recruitment and representation.

Put simply, we all know that if a branch recruits 50 new members in 50 new workplaces, it may well have made the Union weaker but if a branch recruits 50 new members into existing workplaces we will have begun to make the Union stronger. For now existing workplaces should be more important to us than green field sites. It is in these workplaces that

thousands of potential members meet our organisation every day, and it is there where our reps can and do make the most difference. So our strategy is to act on what we know works and avoid what we know does not. The GMB@Work Report in front of you includes a set of recommendations for immediate action to reflect the situation. Drawn up by the National Organising Team with all regions participating last year, part of these have already been acted upon nationally and by regions. We have begun to make progress. Since last September six out of our ten regions have seen recruitment grow substantially, with sustained increases of between 6% - 33% but there is so much more to do.

In the Report you will see who the National Organising Team member is for your region. They are charged with consulting you, bringing forward proposals and ideas on your behalf and using the unique experience of your region to help us arrive at a national consensus as to what needs to be done.

I want to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues on the National Organising Team for the commitment they have shown to developing GMB@Work, working together yet looking beyond regional interests to plan collectively, with regions supporting each other in a way which I, personally, have not seen happening before. So GMB@Work is a strategy based on rebuilding the Union from the bottom up, applied flexibly according to each region's circumstances, their particular opportunities and challenges, offering a greater role for our reps in setting the agenda and campaigning where they work but with improved support and training from the Union.

Sisters and brothers, there are, in reality, only two types of power in the world – organised people and organised money. We deal with the power of organised money in every workplace every day, even in public services. All we aim to do is to take a bit of that power to our members. We will not be able to do it easily or without making demands. We should always have a claim on the table. GMB@Work puts this simple idea at the heart of our thinking, planning and action in each workplace.

I urge you to support GMB@Work here today and in your workplace next week. I second.

BRO. V. WEST (London): London Region welcomes the publication of this report as a blueprint for taking the GMB forward. The GMB has a long and proud history of organising in the workplace, of recruiting and retaining members across all the industrial sectors. We also have a long and proud history of amalgamation, merger, and consolidation with other unions. Elsewhere this week we will discuss where the GMB goes in relation to further mergers or the development of a new union. However, whatever the outcome of that debate we should not shy away from the fact that the GMB needs to have a clear plan of

action as to how we as a union need to organise in the workplace.

For too long this union has stagnated, replacing real growth and real organisational development with mergers and acquisitions. If we are really honest with ourselves, without some of those mergers the GMB would have struggled to exist or defend our members.

As we move forward no longer should we accept that membership growth can only be achieved by mergers. London Region has in many ways already shown the way forward. We have regrettably accepted in many of our traditional industries the potential for growth is non-existent but instead of accepting decline we have moved into new industrial sectors, new workplace areas that have traditionally been ignored, sectors that we have shown over recent years have potential for real growth, real penetration for union membership, and real penetration for union organisation.

As London Region we are not precious about our success, we are willing to share our good practice but, equally, and most importantly, we are willing to learn from good practice in other parts of the country. The development of a national organisation team can only accelerate that process and good practice. The breaking with the sales culture recognises that recruitment and retention and the servicing of our members are two sides of the same coin, membership growth leads to industrial success and industrial success leads to membership growth.

Look round the room at the banners. What did our forebears do? Did they consolidate and merge to retain the membership? No, they went out and organised in the workplace. We must do the same.

BRO. J. DOLAN (Scotland) responding to the document, Workplace Organisation, said: This document sets out a radically different strategy for recruitment and organisation in the workplace. The report sets out five key elements: campaigning, communication, contacting workers, credibility, and commitment. The setting up of a national organisation team is a fresh approach involving and engaging the regions, not excluding them, setting joint approaches. The key messages are focused, realistic, and achievable. The recommendations for action are all-embracing and involve national, regional, and local involvement. This is a welcome approach focusing on growing the GMB.

Congress, our future will be based on a workplace organisation ensuring that we build both the capacity of the shop stewards and growth of membership to deliver in the workplace and ensuring a strong and vibrant GMB: no change is not an option. We need to ensure that this document does not lie on the shelf. This needs to be a living document and we need to breathe life into it and the future. GMB Scotland fully supports the document, Workplace

Organisation.

BRO. A. DAVIES (South Western): Congress, the South Western Region fully supports the CEC report. What a refreshing breath of fresh air it is and, if I may say, President, a confidence booster to all reps and I am sure a motivator to all GMB staff and officers.

Congress, at long last we have a forward looking and sustainable blueprint for the future, our future, that we can all work to. At long last, as the document says, we have a clear view on what works and a recognition that effective, active, and strong workplace organisation, led and sustained by GMB reps, is our goal. Our purpose is to grow the union in the workplace, not just to achieve recruitment targets but to give our members more say in their employment. I support.

BRO. V. BAINES (Midland & East Coast): For far too long now the whole emphasis, the whole direction of this union has been on recruitment. Almost the first item on the agenda at every meeting at the office, at the branch forum, at every reps training course, was recruitment. We were told, "Recruit a thousand members a month and everything will be hunky-dory." God, I even remember the General Secretary of the day coming to my region, getting his diary out, and telling us, "If it's not recruitment, don't do it." We all turned into sales people almost overnight – targets, targets, targets, recruit more than your neighbouring region, be at the top of the league – everything a union is not about. But even more important than leaving all the values we stood for, it did not work and it was never going to work.

If you want to look at it from a sales person's point of view, what company would say to their staff, "Forget your existing customer base, don't look after them, just bring me new ones." I know you may have a smile on your face when I say this but I do not think even now we all realise quite what a heavy price we have paid for this nonsense. First, we were losing more members out at the bottom than we could possibly recruit because we had no strategy to retain them. Secondly, we lost our members' loyalty. Why should they stay with us when all we were bothered about was recruitment? Thirdly, and most crucially of all, we had no activists in the workplace or the branch to look after them.

We had an army of members, many of them new to the union, all of whom had been told, "Just join us and if you get a problem just call and we'll sort it out for you," and they did, and they still are. We therefore have fulltime officers acting as super stewards, branch secretaries who are inundated with requests for representation in loads of workplaces in the branch, and a small team of accompanying reps who in most regions would simply not be able to cope.

So, the new organising agenda has come along just in time, an agenda at long last that focuses on

targeting workplaces when they have issues, on getting reps on every shift in every workplace and ensuring those reps are trained first and foremost to look after the members they represent, and on campaigning, communicating, and contacting our members in the workplace. It is an agenda that certainly my region absolutely believes will revitalise, reinvigorate, and even reinvent the GMB, an agenda that will in time lead to sustained growth, loyal members, committed activists, and, yes, even meetings having elections again for section conferences, and even Congress. This is absolutely the way forward. Our Regional Committee, Regional Council, our Regional Secretary, officers, and staff, are in total support. I commend the GMB at Work report to you on behalf of my region and commend the work of the national organising team. Thank you.

SIS. J. INGLEBY (Birmingham & West Midlands) supporting the special report, GMB at Work, said: From 1997 trade union membership across the country went into serious decline. With the ending of Tory political domination and the election of a Labour government there was new hope for the Trade Union Movement. The GMB reacted with a culture change and all emphasis was shifted to recruitment. There was success with this strategy across the regions but the losses of membership sustained more than outstripped our gains. It has become clear that to achieve true success the GMB has to adopt a new and progressive strategy, one that will realise the significant potential of new members and to provide the highest level of service that our members deserve. It is for this reason that we welcome and support this report, a strategy that makes the GMB a strong and campaigning organisation in the workplace, the region, and nationally, an organisation that communicates with all our members and raises our profile with the millions of potential members in our workplace.

This report recognises that 80% of all new GMB members are recruited by our workplace representatives. This strategy recognises the fundamental role that our representatives play in the recruitment, retention, and servicing of our members. They will be setting the workplace agenda with the GMB officers and staff, and organising teams providing the resources, support, and training, to achieve finally what we are all striving for. Only by supporting and fully implementing this strategy with the full involvement of all GMB members can we be successful.

President, Congress, and to the worthy people with the traffic lights, keep them green. On a personal note, Paul, many congratulations on your election, unopposed, to General Secretary. Paul, we have GMB at work within your own family. As the saying goes, behind every good man there is a good woman. You have Pat, your wife; how refreshing to

have a family behind you, all GMB orientated. Pat was a shop steward at the Luton Hospital, Branch Secretary for the Luton branch, and now working in the GMB Regional Office at Hendon. We speak of family values and now coming through the ranks is Warren, a young and enthusiastic chip off the old block. In the hall today is a very proud mum and grandma; welcome. Good luck, Paul, in your worthy position. Long may the GMB prosper and grow in its own right. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jackie. Good to see you back, Jackie, fighting fit.

SIS. J. JEPSON (Northern): Northern Region supports this special report to Congress and welcomes the national organisation team as a positive development that has already achieved success in the recruitment of private care workers and security staff. A coordinated approach based on best practice and shared information can only lead to further success in the quest for the growth of the GMB. Thank you.

BRO. J. McDONNELL (Lancashire) speaking to the special report on work, said: Lancashire Region supports any and all new ideas and initiatives to ensure maximum growth in all areas, especially recruitment and retention through our organisation. The ideas and concepts in the report and those that focus on growth are equally important for continued sustainable growth. Self-perpetual growth is fundamentally underpinned by a sound foundation of effectiveness and accountability of our organisation at all levels. Delivery of a first-class service is paramount to our success.

However, one important point, a very important point as far as I am concerned, and to certain people in Lancashire, it appears that all the constituents of the national organising team, including Lancashire, are male. Bearing in mind the large percentage of women in our organisation we feel this to be an obvious imbalance and should be addressed. With those comments, we accept. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: We can always rely on you, John, to pick the mistake. Thanks. John, it is entirely up to the regions who they nominate. The point has been made and I think you have made it absolutely wonderfully. Gender balance is what we call it, is it not? Does anyone wish to speak against? (*No response*) I now move to the vote.

(The CEC Special Report: GMB@Work - Workplace Organisation was carried)

UNION ORGANISATION: RECRUITMENT & ORGANISATION

BRANCH FACILITIES

MOTION 24

Congress - recruitment and retention are the most used buzz words within the GMB, however, facilities to assist branches and its activists in ensuring recruitment and retention, does not appear to be a priority.

We call upon the CEC to end the GMB's discriminatory practices in respect of the facilities it provides to activists in different branches.

Colleagues, what we call for is a level playing field to allow activists to conduct the business of the GMB.

We call upon the CEC to undertake a review of branches to identify where the GMB is failing in the facilities it does or does not provide.

97 MANCHESTER BRANCH
Lancashire Region

(Referred)

BRO. L. STIRLING (Lancashire): This motion is calling upon the GMB to conduct a review of the accommodation it provides to branches in order that they can conduct the business of the GMB. We appear to be having a two-tier system when it comes to branch facilities. Like the motion states, colleagues, we call for a level playing field in this respect and call upon the GMB to end this discriminatory practice and address branch facilities for full-time and part-time branches. I move.

(Motion 24 was formally seconded)

OLYMPICS 2012

MOTION 25

This Congress calls for extra funding from GMB for the Olympics which will employ up to 50,000 workers and which will be a major possibility for recruitment.

SOLO BRANCH
London Region

(Referred)

BRO. J. ISAACS (London): The London 2012 Olympic Games Bill received Royal Assent and became an Act of Parliament on 30th March this year and will run from 27th July to 12th August 2012. If the evidence from the past host cities can be believed, it shows

that staging the games can provide an enormous economic boost and provide many new jobs. When Sydney staged the 2000 Games businesses in the state of New South Wales won the equivalent of £400m worth of Olympic contracts and 55,000 people received employment-related training.

The 2012 Olympic Games offers a unique opportunity for recruitment for the GMB, not just in London but for the rest of the country. The immediate focus was centred on the showpiece Olympic Park in London and to give an idea of the size of the project 3m cubic metres of soil needs to be cleaned and moved and 169,000 seats installed in nine venues. At the peak of construction there will be more than 6,000 workers on that site alone.

Before, during and after the 2012 Games one of the major areas of the UK economy benefits will be the tourism sector. It will not only affect the locality but will have far-reaching effects for the whole of London and the rest of the country. Thousands of visitors will be descending on us and will all need servicing, hotels, restaurants, transport, buildings, etc. etc. Employment will be very high and give every opportunity to recruit not only at the building of the stadium but throughout the country.

Most of the Olympic events will take place within the newly built Olympic Park but a selection of other events will be held elsewhere in London and the UK, including football matches at Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow, Newcastle, Cardiff and London, with sailing events in Weymouth and Portland. From luxury hotels to budget beds the country will be packed full. New employment will not be just required for the sporting spectacular but will be required in transport, security, catering, and so on, giving rise to a national recruitment opportunity for the GMB.

2012 may seem a long way off but worker recruitment has already started on the project so we need to be in on the act now. Work is currently under way on the underground power lines in the Olympic Park area. Murphy's have been appointed to undertake this work and advertise all roles in the New Trade Press. The London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games and the Olympic Delivery Authority are currently recruiting, and work has already started on a world-class athletic centre.

London 2012 will provide a lasting legacy for future generations in health, home, and jobs, and of course sport. We need to be heavily involved now and not let other unions steal our thunder from us. To do this we require an injection of funds. Therefore, this Congress calls for extra funding from the GMB for the 2012 Olympic Games which will employ upwards of 50,000 workers and will be a major opportunity for improvement. Please support the motion.

(Motion 25 was formally seconded)

GMB MEMBERSHIP DATABASE

MOTION 26

Congress calls on the CEC to institute a review of the GMB Membership database, as to its present suitability/construct/present data build, to provide rapid, group specific contact addresses/identification flags for those GMB employees and activists who are engaged daily, in recruitment, campaigning and representation tasks.

This review should be undertaken in conjunction with a review of the current membership application form and the specific workplace identification questions that it seeks from new members.

An example to highlight the database problems, is a local authority membership; its school support staff membership cannot, at present, be clearly extrapolated or the membership in specific schools identified. This is mirrored across, especially, large workplaces, for specific work groups.

The GMB having effective recruitment and campaigning is essential for its growth and sustainability. An effective membership database is essential in support of this aim. It is also essential to the GMB addressing, effectively, the increasingly legal employment framework that it is required to operate in, eg CAC applications etc.

PLYMOUTH P20 BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

SIS. A. PRICE (*nee Gallagher*) (Southern Region): I just want to say that, despite what it says on my name tag, I have recently married so my name is now Anne Price.

THE PRESIDENT: Congratulations, Anne.

SIS. A. PRICE: I am speaking for Motion 26, the GMB Membership Database. I have actually been responsible for my branch's membership records since 1990 and because most of my members are employed by the same firm, the London Borough of Greenwich, I have always kept a record of their actual workplace, which is often on the actual membership form when they join. The union system at present only appears to allow for the details of the employer to be included unless a separate workplace address is set up, such as Thomas Tally's School, London Borough of Greenwich. So far as I am aware, this requires a separate code to be set up for that new workplace and is a time-consuming process,

especially as there may originally only be one member at that particular location.

It may have been okay in the past not to have this additional information about where our members are located but with local management of schools and other changes this is vital for recruitment, organisation, and ballots, like the local pension ballot that we have just had. Therefore, we need as a priority a new database that meets the union's needs for the 21st century that will record both the employer and the actual workplace as well as any other relevant information.

Although there would obviously be an initial issue of extra resources needed to input the additional data, once this was set up it would require no further effort to maintain it. The information would be on the membership form and input as part of the normal process, as would any changes that occur during someone's membership of the GMB. I urge you to support this motion. I move.

(Motion 26 was formally seconded)

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

MOTION 28

Congress applauds the setting up of the National recruitment team working very closely in all Regions.

Organisers' priorities and resources must be to continue to service the membership as effectively as possible. One way we can ensure consistency is that we ask all Regions' membership services to identify workplaces that have membership in several Branches. This information should be passed on to Senior Organisers etc so that a consolidation exercise could be undertaken with the sole intention of ensuring the best possible service to our members.

MIDLAND HEALTHCARE BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Carried)

BRO. B. HELEY (Midlands & East Coast): Congress, you have just heard the CEC Special Report on Workplace Organisation. We have to get our act together and rethink our strategy. Not only do we have to recruit, we have to service if we are to look after our members. We need to keep them informed and up to date and we are more likely to retain and build membership in the workplace.

This motion is seeking to ensure that in the workplace where there are multiple branches a consolidation exercise is undertaken to move them into a single branch by allocation of workplace, not by home post code. This would make more sense and allow us as a union to make better use of our time

and resources and, more importantly, allow us to give our members a much better service.

Doing it this way we would be able to identify new starters and leavers, it would be quick to follow up that action, it would give us better credibility in the workplace as we would be speaking with one voice instead of different branches sending out different messages. Members would know who their branch secretaries and reps were instead of having to try and find out who it is in the organisation. If members want help, as we all know they want it yesterday, not tomorrow, they do not want to go round the houses to see who is who. Let us not waste our resources, which is what the document is about, let us get it right, let us make us a lean, mean, fighting machine. I move.

SIS. H. JOHNSON (Midlands & East Coast): I wish to second Motion 28, membership services. Serving the membership of this union is not, and should never be, about the arguments over which branch is entitled to receive commission for a particular member, it is about ensuring that all members within any given workplace receive the same high level of service from us. Currently, members in the same workplace but in a different branch can receive mixed messages or in some cases no communication at all. The same can happen when members move or are transferred from one region to another; many are unaware of which branch they are actually in, let alone who their stewards are.

Membership consolidation makes sense. It ensure that members know exactly where they belong and makes the best use of resources available both at branch and regional level. Let us end the confusion and group our members by workplace and employer to ensure that they all receive the best service that we can offer. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Does anyone else wish to come in on the debates? (*No response*)

BRO. J. ROBERTS (Lancashire): I fully support Motion 25. It is a wonderful way of recruiting the workforce but also, as one of the special reports today on section 23 was how do we get to young people, a golden opportunity to get involved with the young people, to go out and get involved with those in the Olympics who are training; get to the young people with our support is a golden opportunity. I know it is in 2012, not long off, so let us get to the young people now, give them our support, and get them on board. I support.

BRO. D. TAGGART (London): The motions sets an example of membership that cannot be tied down to local authority sites. In the security industry where I work there is a similar problem trying to tie down members to specific sites. It is very important at

present to increase membership. There are so many sites that it is quite difficult to recruit without a database contact; some have many members, some have only a few.

I think there may be problems with the Data Protection Act in some cases in relation to information but when we contact members we must make sure we do not go through to a hostile employer in the process. I fell foul of it a bit myself on my own site when I had a list of members and I actually had a general letter sent to them at the workplace. Unfortunately, I left the manager's name on the list and he was not too keen on joining the GMB, but I think he saw the funny side of it.

I think some employers would like to make use of the Act to our disadvantage. Employers have never taken any notice of the Data Protection Act, or the Government for that matter. What about canvassing or selling mobile phones? I think we have to make clear to members when they join us that it is in their interest for us to contact them in order to increase membership on the sites where they work. It is a crazy situation when the employer is better able to contact our members than we are. I think to fight and organise in the modern workplace we have to make use of the most modern methods. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Before I call Gordon Gibbs, is there anyone else who wishes to speak on any of the resolutions? (*No response*) Gordon?

BRO. G. GIBBS (CEC, Public Services): Speaking on behalf of the CEC and very fragile from last night. The CEC is asking Congress to refer Motions 24 and 25. We are supporting Motion 26 with a qualification.

Firstly, Motion 24 calls for improved branch facilities to aid recruitment and retention. The CEC is referring this to allow for an examination and a wider branch review to be undertaken. We need to head towards a level playing field. This year we have prioritised a national organising approach to help grow and sustain the union.

Motion 25 looks at one of the recruitment targets for 2012 Olympics. The CEC wishes to refer this motion as it is a national organisation team project. The team are looking at what resources, opportunities, and recruitment potential are open to us in the run-up to and during the Games and will work closely with all regions to ensure a common approach.

The CEC congratulates the national recruitment team on the work they have done in consolidating our membership across the union and breaking into new areas. However, accurate membership information is essential for effective organisation, recruitment, and campaigning. No team can work without this backbone.

Motion 26 covers a review of the membership database. The CEC supports this motion but with a

qualification, that a review is already under way through the SMTIT steering group which works in cooperation with regions. This will ensure that the wider data protection issues are covered as well as data maintenance. We recognise that our power lies in the ability to identify and target our members through their workplaces and branches, and we are working to ensure the information is accurate and up to date.

Therefore, Congress, the CEC is asking you to refer Motions 24 and 25 and support Motion 26 with a qualification. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Gordon. Does anyone in the regions wish to speak after hearing that report? *(No response)*

Motion 24, is Lancashire Region prepared to refer? *(Agreed)* Thank you. Does Congress agree?

(Motion 24 was referred)

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 25, London Region, are you prepared to refer? *(Agreed)* Thank you. Does Congress agree?

(Motion 25 was referred)

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 26, GMB Southern Region, do you accept the qualification? *(Agreed)* Thank you.

Motion 28, Membership Services, Midland & East Coast Region, the CEC is asking you to support so I call for the vote on 26 and 28.

(Motion 26 was carried)

(Motion 28 was carried)

UNION ORGANISATION: REPRESENTATION & ACCOUNTABILITY

STANDARDS IN THE GMB

MOTION 33

This Congress recognises and compliments the GMB Leadership over the past year for their actions that the GMB will not tolerate any abuse of power by officials or members of the Union irrespective of their status.

This Congress urges that they continue to ensure that high standards of conduct by officials and members of the union are maintained to protect the reputation and integrity of our great Union.

113 MANCHESTER BRANCH
Lancashire Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. WILSON (Lancashire): We seek, and indeed demand, the return to high standards of mutual respect and accountability to be conducted at all levels in how the GMB operates. As stated, it has been a rough few years for both the GMB nationally and not least for our own Lancashire Region. We think the decisions taken at the London Recall Congress, and confirmed today, must ensure that a line has been finally drawn under a period in which the leadership and credibility of the GMB was severely tarnished. It has to be at the top of Paul Kenny's agenda to ensure the high standards and integrity with which the GMB was long associated returns.

We can say that despite setbacks due to union infighting the GMB continues to make progress and continue to campaign for working class rights and manage to win along the way some major legal rulings to ensure the rights of the members. However, how much more service could have been delivered and how much more recruitment could have been made without so much time and energy being spent on seemingly endless industrial tribunal cases, often settled at great expense to the union coffers?

Reps and branch activists have had to shake their heads in disbelief in wondering how it could come to pass that a minority, and I state it was a minority, could mismanage the affairs of this union to such an extent that previously loyal officers or employees saw no other alternative but to seek legal redress to uphold their individual employment rights. This obviously had a detrimental defect on the services of the union. The stewards and members seeking advice over a particular problem would have been shocked to discover that a particular region official or branch officer they had wanted to consult would have either been suspended or on long-term sick due to work-related stress. How many members have questioned the value of their subscriptions when put against colossal estimates in legal costs, damages, or pay-offs?

Despite the great work done by the majority of dedicated officers and lay officials, their efforts have been partly clipped by the bad publicity and negativity associated with a minority who preferred to work in an atmosphere of ego trips, jealous intrigues, and cliquish rivalries, much to the detriment of the rest of the membership. Perhaps they thought the rules would not apply or could never apply to them. They were proved wrong.

It has to be a primary task of the new General Secretary and the CEC to provide leadership to put this right. We in the Lancashire Region say, let us move on from the bitterness of recent years. If this union is not to wither on the vine, we need to unite. Let us use the democracy of the union to chart a way forward. Let us have honest and open debate but say no to those who would rather indulge in secret deals

and work on a “you scratch my back” basis; no more of that ever again.

Like it says on the union emblem, let us work together in the best interests of this union to ensure that the GMB operates at the highest standards and in turn deserves trust and respect. Congress, I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Well said. Thank you, colleague.

BRO. S. GEOGHAN (Lancashire): I am not going to stand here and vent my spleen about past corruption. In my opinion, corruption is part of human nature. If you have sloppy procedures and working practices, somebody will rip you off. It is, “you smooth, you lose”, in this game. This year we have reaffirmed our determination to ensure the spirit and letter of our rules is upheld. No one is a law unto themselves. No one is bigger than the rules. No one is above accountability. If you think you are, this Movement is not for you. Those who cannot abide by the rules are not friends of the GMB. They will be held to account at this Congress and our rules will ensure they are accountable. Thank you.

BRANCH SECRETARY

MOTION 34

Calling on Congress to support the motion from 286 Branch to insert into Rule 39 that the post of Branch Secretary can only be held by Branch members/activists and exclude Union employees from holding the post.

286 BRANCH
Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region
(Withdrawn)

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 34, Branch Secretary, Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region, we have been advised by the SOC that this motion was withdrawn. Is that correct? *(Agreed)* Does Congress? *(Agreed)*

RULE 37 BRANCHES

7 All Branch Officers, and the Branch Committee, but not whole-time Branch Secretaries, District Officers, or Branch Administrative Officers, shall be elected at the last meeting in June every four years. Nominations may be made at any of the three meeting nights preceding the General Meeting, and shall be posted in a conspicuous place in the meeting room. If no nominations (or insufficient number of nominations) are received for Branch Officers or Branch Committee at any of the three meeting nights preceding the General Meeting, nominations may be made at the General Meeting. If, however, sufficient prior nominations have been received in

accordance with Rule, no nominations can be accepted for that particular office at the General Meeting.

RULE AMENDMENT 365

Lines 1-2: Delete: “but not whole-time Branch Secretaries”

MANSFIELD CENTRAL BRANCH
Midland and East Coast Region

(Carried)

BRO. I. BURKETT (Midland & East Coast): This is part of an ongoing campaign, really, to ensure that the branch is run by the lay members and not by full-time officers. Really and truly it is a tidying up of the rules to reflect the current practice of having fully elected officers within the branch. I think that is a commendable way of going forward and tidying things up. I move. Thank you.

BRO. B. HELEY (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I am a new branch secretary of a newly formed regional branch. The very sad person that I am I took the Rule Book to bed to make sure I have it right. You want to meet the regional secretaries on my case. I came across the phrase “full-time branch sec” so I had to go to my mentor and ask him to explain as we are all all-time, full-time, lifetime, take your pick, we are committed, that is the job. I could not work out where this phrase came from. So, he took great patience in telling me, “In the great and distant past...” I said, “Whoa, whoa, can I have the easy version? I want to understand it.” The shortened version was, “There is no such thing.” So, if it is not there, let us delete it and get the Rule Book right. I second.

RULE 37 BRANCHES

14 The Regional Secretary shall have power to close any Branch or merge any Branches for any reason which s/he deems good and sufficient, or where, in his/her judgement, it is considered advisable to do so.

RULE AMENDMENT 367

Clause 14: Insert:

“Branches forward to Region minutes of their meetings, with names of officials attending, a minimum of one meeting per quarter.

If branches do not operate within the rules, then they cease to function and be merged with the nearest working Branch, or organised by the Region.”

CAMBORNE C21 BRANCH
Southern Region

(Withdrawn)

THE PRESIDENT: Did I hear right, that is withdrawn?
(Agreed) Is that agreed, colleagues? (Agreed)

RULE AMENDMENT 369

Insert New Clause

“The post of Branch Secretary can only be held by Branch members/activists and excludes Union employees from holding the post.”

286 BRANCH

Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region

(Withdrawn)

THE PRESIDENT: I have been advised by the SOC this motion was withdrawn, not ruled out of order. Agreed, colleagues? (Agreed) Does anyone wish to come in on the debates? (No response) Could I say to our colleagues in Lancashire, the mover and the

seconder, we applaud what you said and we endorse what you said. I hope that you have seen in the last year the CEC's, mine, and the new General Secretary's commitment to make sure that what you have spoken about is carried out. Thank you. While I am at it, I am missing Mr. John Toomey. Would you please give Congress's best wishes to John, and from me in particular? Tell him I miss that late night little supper with him. Can I now move to the vote?

(Motion 33 was carried)

(Rule Amendment 365 was carried)

THE PRESIDENT: George (Emmerson), I do not need you now, sorry, mate.

REGIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT - NORTHERN REGION

1. Membership and Recruitment

Total membership	73,903
Women membership	25,888
Section membership (by each Section):	
Clothing & Textile	1,615
Commercial Services	7,585
CFTA	2,868
Energy & Utilities	6,979
Engineering	14,159
Food & Leisure	7,623
Process	9,131
Public Services	23,943
Grade 1 members	46,125
Grade 2 members	10,777
Sick, retired & unemployed members	17,001
Total number recruited 1.1.2005 – 31.12.2005	7,021
Gross increase/decrease 1.1.2005 – 31.12.2005	
Net increase/decrease 1.1.2005 – 31.12.2005	
Membership on Check-off	21,430
Membership on Direct Debit	11,584
Financial membership	73,903

ECONOMIC & EMPLOYMENT SITUATION

The manufacturing sector of the regional economy continues to shrink mainly due to the competition from India and China where the economies are growing at an extraordinary rate.

Parts of the service sector are also under threat from the far east with banks and building societies relocating service provision to India. Call centres have taken the brunt of this policy with the consequential loss of jobs to the Region.

The much heralded “hats in the air” so called employment of the future appears to have been hatched then extinct in the “blink of an eye”. Despite this happening the number of jobs in the economy continues to increase with the public sector particularly benefiting from significant investment.

The tourism and leisure industry is also attracting investment and creating new jobs. Therefore the loss of manufacturing jobs has been more than offset by the creation of jobs in the service sector. However the value of the new employment is far less than the lost manufacturing jobs and has depleted the spending power of the pay packet, whilst increasing the number of hours at work.

This mitigates against GMB policy “to create a better work life balance for working people”. It is therefore and must be a priority to make the breakthrough into the service sector and provide much needed support to what is basically an unrepresented workforce.

RECRUITMENT & ORGANISATION

We continue to make excellent progress in securing new recognition agreements through the Central Arbitration Committee route and have signed 20 in 2005. However we are conscious of the fact that although workers in great numbers vote in favour of having trade union representation this is not matched by the numbers who actually join when the recognition agreement is in place.

Consolidation is therefore high on the agenda and we need to be a lot better at recruiting the nons in workplaces wherein we have recognition and shop stewards.

This issue is being taken up by the National Recruitment Team with a view to achieving a best practice approach, following the success of the School Support Staff and Southern Cross national recruitment initiatives.

POLITICAL

The last year has been extremely busy for GMB Northern Region following on from a frenetic 2004.

GMB Northern played a very active role in the general election campaign of 2005, targeting our resources into the areas that most needed our help. We worked particularly hard in the City of Durham that was under severe threat from the Liberal Democrats who poured massive resources into their campaign. We won through in a hard fought campaign by challenging the Liberal Democrats on the issues, which they did not like. We worked closely with other trade unions and the Labour Party to ensure we held on to all of the Labour seats in the region. I am happy to say we were successful in this endeavour.

Five new Labour MPs were elected to Parliament in the Northern region, four of whom are members of the GMB: Roberta Blackman-Woods in the City of Durham, Helen Goodman in Bishop Auckland, Sharon Hodgson in Gateshead East and Washington West, and Jamie Reed in Copeland. This was an excellent result and increases the number of Labour MPs in the Northern region who are members of the GMB to 12, more than a third of the Group.

We have already established a good working relationship with our Northern Group of GMB MPs, having met with them either individually or as a group on issues that are of concern to us.

We are currently working with the MPs on issues we have around the Compensation Bill, of which we have a number of concerns; and a number of industrial issues.

We are currently organising in preparation for the local elections where we are working particularly hard in Newcastle where the Liberal Democrats took control of the Council two years ago. We are also planning to organise against the BNP if they put up candidates in any of the local councils.

GMB continue to have a very high profile politically in the Northern region, we continue to play a full and active role.

2. General Organisation

Regional Senior Organisers	5
Membership Development Officers	2
Regional Organisers	15
Recruitment and Organisation Officers	
Regional Recruitment Officers	3
No. of Branches	138
BAOs	
New branches	2
Branch Equality Officers	

3. Benefits

Dispute	£126.00
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Total Disablement	£8,000.00
Working Accident	£4,854.75
Occupational Fatal Accident	£3,870.00
Non-occupational Fatal Accident	£1,100.00
Funeral	£41,270.50

4. Journals and Publicity

GMB Northern Region continues to have a high profile in the regional media, being asked to comment on most issues of the day.

We have had more success this year in gaining publicity of some of our successful legal cases.

There have been two big industrial stories for us this year; the campaign to bring work to Swan Hunter shipbuilders and the issues surrounding our relationship with ASDA.

The campaign to bring work to Swan Hunters has gained huge amounts of publicity both in the print media and radio and TV. To date the campaign has unfortunately not been successful but we continue to fight for work to come to the yard in order to secure work for our highly skilled workforce. Also to bring security to all of the related employment the yard creates when in production. GMB Northern have had excellent support from the local community, the media, local businesses and local politicians in this campaign.

Our ongoing struggle with ASDA has created a lot of media interest, particularly around our membership in two ASDA distribution depots in Washington. The extent of the anti trade union stance of ASDA begs belief and we have had to resort to the employment tribunals to try to resolve some outstanding issues.

We continue to have two regional publications that go out to our members. Twice a year we produce a magazine "Northern Star" that is posted directly to members' homes. This has covered a number of current industrial topics including the shipyards, successful legal cases and ASDA. It has also covered the Warwick Agreement and what that will mean to our members, as well as an appeal to our members to join the Labour Party.

The Reps Report goes to all GMB reps in the Region (approximately 1700) every two months. This report covers up to date information that will be of use to our representatives, any campaigns and initiatives we are involved in as well as legal updates, changes in regulations etc.

5. Legal Services

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

Applications for Legal Assistance	1,106
Legal Assistance Granted	1,100
Cases in which Outcome became known	
Total	1,338
Withdrawn	423
Lost in Court	0
Settled	£7,193,829.95
Won in Court	
Total Compensation	£7,193,829.95
Cases outstanding at 31.12.2005	3,170

(b) Employment Tribunals (notified to Legal Department)

Claims supported by Union	513
Cases in which Outcome became known	
Total	665
Withdrawn	37
Lost in Tribunal	8
Settled	£523,474.64
Won in Court	£321,687.31
Total Compensation	£845,161.95
Cases outstanding at 31.12.2005	781

(c) Other Employment Law Cases

Supported by Union	Nil
Unsuccessful	Nil
Damages/ Compensation	Nil
Cases outstanding at 31.12.2005	Nil

(d) Social Security Cases

Supported by Union	65
Successful	35
Cases outstanding at 31.12.2005	42

A survey was carried out with all Activists during 2005 to identify what they wanted from the GMB legal service. It was useful to get feedback from Activists and this enabled us to tailor the delivery of legal services more appropriately.

During 2005 we prepared and circulated newsletters dealing with personal injury claims and health and safety issues again to highlight and advertise the range of legal services available to GMB members.

In 2005 GMB Northern Region ran an awareness campaign to highlight the pitfalls of using claims farmers and actively promoted the reporting of successful GMB cases both personal injury and employment law in various newspapers throughout the Region.

6. Equal Rights

The Equal Rights Committee has met on a number of occasions in the last year. They have discussed plans and priorities for the next year. The numbers attending the Equal Rights Committee has declined over the year so we are looking at ways to address this. We have looked at what external events we can attend and get involved in to raise the profile of the GMB and the work of the Equal Rights Committee.

We have decided to take part in future gay pride events organised by the University, and to look to involve ourselves in various external events.

We have also discussed ways in which we might engage with our members who may have an interest in equal rights.

The Equal Rights Committee have decided to concentrate on two areas to campaign on over the next twelve months, Women Internationally and Women in Pensions.

The pensions issue is relevant to all of our members but many women approaching pensionable age are facing real problems which we feel the Government must do something to address.

At the end of November we sent two delegates to the National Equal Rights event held in Manchester. This was an important event and an opportunity for delegates from around the country to discuss the many issues concerning the area of equal rights.

We have also sent a delegate to the reformed LGBT Forum.

The Race Committee has met a number of times over the last year, concentrating on two areas of work fighting the BNP and raising the GMB profile amongst the various minority ethnic communities in the North East.

We have worked with the Northern TUC and other organisations in the North East on our anti-racist agenda.

The coalitions that were set up the previous year have continued to meet. In 2005 many areas where the BNP have been most active did not have local elections so they did not have the opportunity to campaign as they had done in previous years. The BNP did stand a candidate at a local election in the autumn and ran a particularly nasty campaign, they were however beaten.

The GMB had a stall at the Middlesbrough Mela in July, an event that attracts many thousands of

people from across the region. This was a successful event for us making contact with many people.

We have discussed a number of ideas to engage with and raise awareness of the issues of concern to the Race Committee, and in particular to try to increase interest and attendance of the Race Committee.

7. Youth

The Northern Region has maintained its policy of identifying potential activists and encouraging them to take on more active roles within the GMB. Despite our efforts this has been severely hampered due to pressures of work faced daily by our activists, their attempts to find a work/life balance, and difficulty in gaining time off to participate, although a number of activists have managed to take on more active roles within the GMB structure as shop stewards and involvement in our Regional Council, which is extremely encouraging.

Once identified within a branch or workplace, we will of course attempt to encourage more participation from them and seek to involve them wherever possible.

Unfortunately very few young activists seem to want to take on more active roles within our organisation. Disappointing I know, but where a branch or workplace is effectively organised we have found that young people are still joining the GMB. Our mailing list had continued to grow but we receive very little if any feedback from them. Whenever events are organised we have no problem finding people to attend, but become extremely frustrated when events are cancelled and often at short notice, which happened on a number of occasions during 2005.

We participated in TUC organised training for speakers in schools initiative, which proved extremely useful and received very positive feedback from those that attended.

Following a mailing of our own 'Your Right at Work' booklet we received a number of requests to speak in schools, giving an opportunity to promote the GMB and the roles we fulfil for our members.

A programme of talks was organised at Gateshead College Centre of Learners, following discussions with the new manager. We hope to repeat this programme of talks with them but due to reorganisation within the College it may take some time to arrange.

Since our involvement with the first Northumberland Youth Games we have maintained our relationship with the organisers of this event resulting in being invited again to participate. The organisers have also invited ourselves to get involved in Healthy Schools Initiative throughout the Region. Sunderland and Redcar/Cleveland were the first local authorities to roll out this initiative with more local authorities to follow. We will where possible want to get involved and promote the GMB in all local authority initiatives of this kind which complements the hard work carried out by our Public Services Team. The initiative targets all schools, pupils, parents and teaching staff within the chosen area raising our profile and distributing a booklet to all involved.

Our delegate to attend the TUC Youth Conference will be Suzanne Robinson. The conference will take place in Eastbourne from 31 March to 2 April 2006. This will be Suzanne's first conference as a GMB delegate and she is looking forward to reporting back to us about her experience.

The TUC Work Wise booklet has been well received and distributed throughout the Region. Produced in conjunction with the Young Members Network and their speakers in schools programme, it is a practical guide for young workers entering the world of work, aimed towards 16-21 year olds with a particular focus on those aged 16-17 about their rights at work, preventing them from being exploited or mistreated and to introduce them to the benefits of trade unionism.

8. Training

	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
(a) GMB Courses Basic Training					
Introduction to GMB (3 days)	9	79	25	104	312

GMB 5 Day Follow on Course	10	96	26	122	610
(b) On Site Courses					
GMB 3 Day Introduction - County Hall, Durham	1	12	2	23	69
(c) Health & Safety Courses					
GMB 5 Day Health & Safety	7	74	14	88	440
(d) Other Courses					
3 Day Grievance & Disciplinary	5	N/A	N/A	73	219
2 Day Information & Consultation	1	18	4	22	44
(e) Northern College					
5 Day Employment Law	2	8	0	8	40
5 Day Advanced Health & Safety	2	6	0	6	30
5 Day Industrial Relations	1	3	0	3	15
3 Day Advanced Health & Safety	1	2	0	2	6
5 Day Diversity & Equality	1	3	1	4	20
3 Day Advanced ULR Workforce Developments	1	1	0	1	3

SHOP STEWARD & SAFETY REPRESENTATIVE TRAINING

2005 saw a continued improvement in the development and provision of training in Northern Region. The 13 day core course for new Reps has now been consolidated and every new GMB Rep, following initial induction by their RO, is allocated to the first available course. All courses in Northern Region are still provided through the Regional Workers Educational Association (WEA).

The core course programme has become accepted as the first stage in the progression route to learning for new Reps and is very popular with them. The core 13 day course is the most important part of the regional programme as it provides their grounding for everything that follows. The programme is also flexible and is provided in two ways, a block release of 3+5+5 (Introduction, Follow-on and H&S) basis; and a 13 day on a day per week basis. Reps therefore have the options of block or day-per week training.

In-house training has also taken place. Alcan in Northumberland, McVities and Innovia in Cumbria, and KP Foods in Tees Valley are examples of where sector-specific training was provided.

Sector specific training advice and guidance has been provided in National Grid, Northumbrian Water and Northern Electric (utilities companies in the Region).

Northern College courses are taken up by Reps on an increasing basis, and, in collaboration with other Regions this residential resource is becoming more popular with those Reps who can access residential training. This year Northern College has allocated eleven weeks to the GMB for residential training.

Advanced Regional Courses – we have now consolidated the 3 day Grievance and Disciplinary Course and two day 'Workplace Inspection Course' (both 'nicked' from London Region – with consent) are being run this year as well as a 'Negotiating Skills' course.

The education programme in Northern Region is continuing to improve in terms of quality (best tutors, course materials, responses from students and provider (WEA)) and quantity (numbers attending courses and demand for further courses).

UNION LEARNING FUND PROJECTS

Last year Northern Region was successful in obtaining funding for a three year Regional Project aimed at creating the opportunity for every GMB member to have access to learning by April 2008. This is a

very ambitious and challenging project, which, with two full time project workers and some part time secondees is more than meeting the targets set by the LSC (Learning Skills Council) and we could achieve this objective if the current enthusiasm, commitment and organisation is maintained. It is also intended to integrate the regional TUC Learning for All Fund Projects into the bigger Union Learning Fund Project. We now have over 400 Union Learning Reps in the Northern Region.

9. Health and Safety

There have been a number of health and safety developments in the Region since last Congress. The establishment of the Tyne and Wear Asbestos Victims Support Group in July 2005 was a real boost to the fight against the injustices faced by victims of asbestos exposure. The GMB REO is the Chair of the Group and they had a stunning victory shortly after they were formed. A life enhancing drug, related to the killer mesothelioma, an asbestos-related death sentence, was denied to victims in the North East, despite being prescribed in parts of the country where the problem is less. The new group started a campaign with a petition and within two weeks had got the drug made available to the population of the Region – a magnificent victory.

Health and safety issues are continually being handled by the RHSO on intervention advice and guidance bases.

(Adopted)

BRO. T. BRENNAN (Northern): Formally move.

134, 135, 136, 137? Do you agree those, colleagues?
(Agreed)

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Tommy. Pages 131, 132, 133,

ENGINEERING SECTION REPORT

1. National Committee

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

The Engineering Section National Committee is as follows,

David Falconer MBE, Section President GMB Scotland
Barry Montgomery, Section Vice President, Lancashire Region
Roger Darcy MBE, Southern Region
Ray Lowden, Liverpool North Wales and Irish Region
Tommy Robertson, Northern Region
Derek Hocking, Midland and East Coast Region
John Christie, GMB Scotland
Peter Ferguson, Liverpool North Wales and Irish Region
Charlie James, Yorkshire Region
Micky Laws, Southern Region
Alaistair McLean, London Region
Keith Patience, London Region
William O Williams BEM, South Western Region
Vin Bloor, Birmingham and West Midlands Region

The National Committee consists of representation from every region, one from the Thermal Insulation industry and one from the offshore industry including one black member and an Equal Rights representative.

2. Shipbuilding

Once again in the UK shipbuilding industry I report an industry of mixed fortunes, in Commercial Shipbuilding we have only one yard which is Ferguson's in Scotland having to fight for every order it can get in order to keep in business, and is finding it very difficult whilst competing for work against European competition, and in some cases fighting against countries who financially support their shipbuilding industry when all we have ever asked for is a level playing field when competing against

European competition.

All indications are that the future of the UK Naval shipbuilding industry is looking good with a recent announcement of the Government's Defence Industrial Strategy which is long needed within the Defence industry especially in the shipbuilding industry, and we are looking at the Defence industrial strategy to stabilise the industry and the distribution of work, therefore working for the UK shipbuilding industry. We have the biggest order book for the MOD ever in the UK with the awarding of the orders under the UK Government's procurement policy for the build of ships for the Royal Navy. I refer specifically to the Type 45 Destroyers of which 6 have been awarded to BAE Systems, of which the second will be launched in February 2006, with a further two yet to be awarded, which will be built in modules at the yards on the Clyde in Scotland and Vosper Thornycroft of Portsmouth, which along with the Defence Industrial Strategy will provide stability to the UK shipbuilding, and preserve the possibility for competition for future warship building programmes from Europe.

With the awarding of the Prime Contractor to BAE Systems, with Thales as the main contractor to build the two new aircraft carriers for the Royal Navy, which is good news. The new aircraft carriers will be among the largest warships that the Royal Navy has ever had. They will be built in the UK in modules at the two BAE Systems yards on the Clyde, Vosper Thornycroft in Portsmouth, DML, Rosyth, and we are hoping that other yards like Swan Hunters etc will also get work.

These modules will be floated up to Rosyth to be assembled. When built they will deliver a formal force, and a projection capability, creating some 2,000 jobs and sustaining a further 10,000 through the build and fitting of systems of these two aircraft carriers.

So the long term future of UK military shipbuilding looks good and the MOD as the largest warship building programme ever. Along with the aircraft carriers and Type 45 Destroyers there are also astute submarines which are built at the BAE Systems yard at Barrow in Furness and we are awaiting clarification with reference to the MARS programme, which is a programme of frontline support ships for the Royal Navy.

We need to look at ways and means of working together for the UK shipbuilding industry and for each other to stop this decimation of the industry especially within commercial shipbuilding. And in the military shipbuilding industry we need to make sure we have the skills available to deliver these programmes on time and within budget, so on every negotiating agenda we need to include the recruitment of apprentices.

3. The Engineering Industry

In general, engineering, as reported at previous congresses, has the same sad story of cutbacks, pay freezes / pay cuts to save jobs and of course redundancies. This again is a sad story of UK manufacturing. We need to work with the employers, Government, DTI and the trade unions to formulate a UK manufacturing survival strategy. We have to constantly contend with comments like it's more economical to import work or offshore work than manufacture in the UK, blaming the strength of the pound. As with all other engineering and construction related industries there is a shortage of skills which desperately needs addressing by investing in training and the re-introduction of apprenticeships for all engineering related industries to survive, and additionally there is the age profile with people leaving the industry and not being replaced.

4. The Aerospace Industry

Since my last Congress report the Aerospace related industry is once again an industry of mixed fortunes. We have factories like Chadderton closing down which is a devastating blow to the community, although the work has been transferred to sites like Sarisbury and Woodford all within reasonable travelling distance of Chadderton. But any closure is a blow to UK manufacturing and to the local communities.

Work is still ongoing on Nimrod, Boeing and Airbus which is some stability within the aerospace industry.

Within Bombardier who at the time of writing this report have secured the order for the C series aircraft which is a much needed boost for the Bombardier factory in Belfast.

We are constantly lobbying the Government to save the aerospace related industries, under the umbrella of the CSEU aerospace committee, and the lobbying will continue to go on in an attempt to save jobs and the aerospace industry in the UK.

5. The Offshore Industry

In the offshore industry I can confirm although we have made progress on the Working Time Directive and the offshore industry we still have not come to an Agreement on the Directive Offshore, although we have met with Senior Government Ministers and with employers representatives who have various interpretations we are still pursuing this through the TUC and hopefully in my next report I can give you a conclusive decision on the Working Time Directive and the implications within the offshore industry.

We are now just coming to the end of a two year pay deal within the offshore industry and will be sitting down in 2006 with the Offshore Contractors Association to negotiate the 2006 pay claim.

Within the offshore industry we are running a recruitment campaign mainly at Heliports where the rig workers are flying from and also we have secured a slot on all Offshore Contractor's Association members inductions and we are watching the outcome with interest.

6. Car Industry

As previously reported the UK car industry is still a roller coaster industry with the announcement at last years Congress of the closure of Rover at Longbridge. The announcement delivered a devastating blow to the car industry and to UK manufacturing yet again. Our members within the automobile industry are experiencing a very turbulent time and in all cases are fighting their corners for survival.

7. Thermal Insulation

We are now coming to the end of a two year deal within the Thermal Insulation Industry. At the time of writing this report I can confirm that we have submitted the 2006 pay claim. We have had one meeting with the employers with another meeting planned to try and progress the pay claim and also other outstanding issues, that have been outstanding for a number of years of which we are hoping to resolve in the form of a working party from the employers and trade unions to discuss these issues.

8. NAECI

The Engineering Construction Industry is at this moment in time an industry of uncertainty. We have some of the ECIA member company's questioning the validity of the National Agreement which has been brought to a head by recent disputes at Terminal 5 and New Wembley Stadium for bonus payments of which the employers conceded, which led to the employers side of the NJC withdrawing support for the NAECI on these two projects.

We are now coming to the end of a two year pay deal within the Engineering Construction industry we are currently in negotiations with the employers for the 2006 pay claim.

9. Steel Industry

We are currently coming to the end of the first year of a two year pay deal within the Strip and Long products within Corus.

We are now exploring the possibility of National negotiations for the future of Long Products and Strip to sit down on a National basis to negotiate the pay and conditions with Corus.

10. Marconi

Marconi which was formed from the old GEC empire attempted to get the company on a sound, economic basis, of which various attempts had already failed, and a company called Jabil which also became a failure.

At the time of writing this report I can confirm that Marconi is in discussions with Ericson with all indications being that Ericson will be taking over Marconi in the not too distant future. There is a job of work to be done if this takeover goes ahead with reference to current employee's terms and conditions and future employment, which we will be pursuing.

11. International and European

It is important that we keep a presence Internationally and European wise, because in the main we are dealing with multi National companies and more and more legislation is coming from Europe.

In the last 12 months we have had representation at the IMF Congress in Vienna, IMF Steel meeting in Argentina and a Shipbuilding meeting in Japan.

I would like to thank Kathleen Walker Shaw for all the hard work she does at our Brussels office in keeping us updated with what's going on in Europe.

12. Conclusion

When we met last year at our congress in Newcastle we reflected over the continuing decline of the UK manufacturing industry. With many companies closing down, relocating and forming joint ventures. All these have been at the expense of our member's jobs and I am sad to say that this trend has continued over the last 12 months in the UK losing yet more manufacturing jobs. In various industries we are experiencing the increased use of European Union and non European Union labour. Whilst we are all members of the European Union we cannot and will not sit back and see our colleagues from other European countries be exploited by ruthless employers paying our European colleagues any less favourable rates of pay or terms and conditions than the negotiated rate for the job, therefore eliminating our European colleagues from being a cheap option.

Over the last 12 months we have had continued meetings with various employers with reference to pension arrangements. Employers like BAE Systems, Rolls Royce, Corus, to name but a few, an issue that is causing ongoing concern for us and all our members.

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

The following is the update on the motions covered by the Engineering Section at the 2005 Congress.

RESPONSE TO CONGRESS MOTIONS 2005

Motion 206 – Ship Recycling

Since this motion was adopted by Congress the GMB has written to Alan Johnson, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, Lord Hunt, the Minister for Health and Safety and Geoffrey Podger, HSE Chief Executive for Health and Safety Enforcement whilst dismantling ships in appropriate facilities.

Motion 181 – 35 Hour Week

The GMB wrote to the General Secretary of the CSEU making him aware of the endorsement of Congress for the call to start a campaign for a 35 hour week, stating the CSEU had funds for this project.

The response from the CSEU was they would support members at workplaces who contributed to the 35 hour week fund in taking industrial action in pursuit of a shorter working week.

Emergency Motion 3 – Rover & The Phoenix Group

The motion asked for condemnation of the actions of people in charge at Longbridge with employees finding out their fate by phone calls and text messages from loved ones partners and members of their family who had picked up the news on TV.

When the company collapsed in April they promised to donate all the assets of their holding company, Phoenix.

An enquiry is now underway into the financial running of the MG Rover Group and subsidiary companies. Trade Union pressure to the DTI forced the government's hand; the enquiry is likely to last about 18 months.

On the 26th July 2005 the joint administrators from Price Waterhouse Coopers announced the sale of

both MG Rover Group and its engine producer Powertrain to Najing Automotive (Group) Corporation.

After meeting with the trade union officers, Nanjing announced they had plans to employ 1,200 workers and ultimately build 100,000 cars within 12 months. On the 10th February, 2006 we met with Nanjing to discuss exactly what the business plan is. I believe the previous expectations cannot be met, Nanjing seem to be struggling to raise the required working capital to restart major production, their main and only interest seems to be the MG Sports ZT car. Time will only tell if Nanjing are serious in bringing mass production back to Longbridge instead of China.

Finally, after months of meetings with all parties all ex Longbridge associates have been awarded at £14 million compensation pay out after MG Rover failed to consult with them on the redundancy situation. All 6,500 associates received around £2,200 each and further tribunal dates are pencilled in for further unfair dismissal cases later this year.

Michael Stokes partner from Rowley Ashworths brought the protective award on behalf of the GMB, T&G and Amicus.

The board of the Pension Protection Fund (PPF) confirmed that MG Rover Group Pension Scheme and the MG Rover Group Senior Pension Scheme had been entered into the PPF assessment period which is likely to last a minimum of one year.

Emergency Motion 4 – A&P Southampton

This motion highlighted the announcement of A&P Southampton shipyard who made all their production workers redundant for not agreeing new terms and conditions.

We believed it was the intention of A&P to employ new employees on less favourable Terms and Conditions but sadly the company has effectively ceased trading in Southampton.

Sadly Shiprepair in Southampton which once employed thousands is now gone.

(Adopted)

BRO. K. HAZLEWOOD (National Secretary, Engineering): Since writing my report, I would like to inform Congress of a couple of changes which are in the General Secretary's Report, pages 73-77. Page 74, item 2, Shipbuilding, refers to the aircraft carriers. I would like to inform Congress that DML is no longer in the alliance for any aircraft carrier work. Also, page 75, item 4, the Aerospace Industry, reads: "Within Bombardier who at the time of writing this report have secured the order for the C series aircraft which is a much needed boost for the Bombardier factory in Belfast."

Colleagues, I can inform Congress that the C series has now been put on hold but the good news is that Bombardier in Belfast have secured work on the Q400 contract, which is fuselages currently built in Japan. This is being brought back to the Belfast site. Further good news is that 230 proposed redundancy notices have been withdrawn and Bombardier are recruiting. Good news at last, colleagues, for the aerospace industry.

The other outstanding issue at the time of submitting my report I would like to bring Congress up to speed with is that in Corus we have done a risk mitigating exercise to protect the Corus final salary pension scheme with the following proposals being accepted by the workforce: Although the scheme is

in surplus, the employee contribution has increased by 1% taking their contributions from 5% to 6%; the employer contribution from nothing (as they were having a pensions holiday) to 10% and possibly 12%; no more pensions holidays; early retirement from 50 to 55; past service protected; and the scheme remains open to new employees. Next, colleagues, in Corus-run products we have just concluded the 2006 pay negotiations which resulted in a two-year deal of 3% effective from 1st April 2006 and 3% effective from April 2007. If there is a substantial increase in inflation in 2007, we have left the doors open to review the situation.

In engineering construction I can now inform Congress that a 3.5% increase has been accepted by the workforce and we are, within a working party, looking at various aspects of the National Agreement which have to be concluded by April 2007.

In the thermal insulation industry, I can now confirm that pay talks have been concluded and a basic rate increase of 4.63%, which is an increase of 42 pence per hour, has been accepted by the workforce. There are some longstanding issues that are being addressed by a working party. Colleagues, that is an update as to the change and outstanding issues of the General Secretary's Report.

Now, colleagues, I will briefly summarise the

situation within the section. In Airbus we have BAE Systems selling their 20% shares which now leaves Airbus with no UK ownership at all. In the offshore industry, we are mounting a recruitment campaign and are monitoring the results very carefully.

In shipbuilding, as reported previously, colleagues, the shipbuilding industry is an industry of mixed fortunes and nothing has changed. We have yards winning orders at the expense of other yards. We are left with only one commercial yard building ships and they are finding it very difficult to compete with European competition. On the other hand, we have the building of warships for the Royal Navy with the biggest order book we have ever had, with six Type 45 destroyers and possibly two more to be built. Then there are the aircraft carriers, which are the largest warships ever built in the UK. Hopefully, we will start cutting steel within the next year to 18 months on these aircraft carriers. This will then be followed by a number of ships for first line support for the Royal Navy, the MARS programme.

Colleagues, even with all these orders we have yards crying out for work, making redundancies, and closing where we feel there is a role that these yards can play in helping to build ships. Britain is an island nation with shipyards spread all round the coast and with these orders, if procured properly, would keep the yards open and busy for the next 10 years and beyond.

My message to the UK Government is this: Mr. Blair, the UK shipbuilding industry wants fairness, not favours, and all we have ever asked for is a level playing field. It is not a lot to ask for, colleagues. The UK shipbuilding industry can compete with any country in the world on quality and quantity but we cannot compete with countries supported with subsidies. My philosophy is, if we are competing against a country that will get subsidies, then we want the same; nothing more, nothing less. We can then put work in yards like DML, Appledore, Fergusons, and Swan Hunters, all yards struggling to survive and in some cases on the verge of closure.

Skills. We are now embarking on a skills shortage within the engineering-related industries. With the work we have in shipbuilding, engineering construction, and offshore, the skills shortage will get worse. This is being addressed in the short term by the influx of European labour to the UK. We need to put on every negotiating agenda the recruitment of apprentices. We also need to broaden our outlook for the future as we eliminate 50% of the population by not recruiting more women into apprenticeships.

Finally, the motor industry has been hit with announcements, closures, redundancies, and work being transferred abroad with the recent announcements of Rover being transferred to China and more recently the closure of Peugeot, yet another devastating blow to UK manufacturing.

Finally, I would like to conclude my report by

sending a message to this Labour Government: let us get away from this offshoring culture that is devastating the manufacturing industry and communities all across the UK. There has been a commitment from the Government pledged at Warwick, let us see it implemented. Let us see a strategy to resurrect manufacturing in the UK and the work we have in shipbuilding shared with all the yards surrounding this island nation. Colleagues, I submit my report to Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Keith. Pages 73, any questions to Keith on 73, 74, 75, 76, and 77? Do you agree this report, colleagues? Speak to Mary, it is getting late. *(Agreed)*

(The Engineering Section Report was adopted)

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: ENGINEERING

SHIPBUILDING

MOTION 150

Congress calls upon this Government to ensure that all war or warlike vessels be built in the UK, that no parts of these ships be constructed elsewhere.

This Government should support the skills of our indigenous workforce.

NORTH TYNE ENGINEERING
Northern Region

(Carried)

BRO. W. HUGHES (Northern): I have been coming to this rostrum, believe it or not, for 20 years on shipbuilding alone. In fact, it is so often that it is difficult to find the words to talk about it. If it was not for the different government departments we would just be at a loss, but they always come up with some crackers.

It goes without saying that in this country we have a proud history of being the best and the most prolific shipbuilders in the world, the skills of our members are second to none, and the capacity to build ships is enormous. One of the most important things is that we need apprentices, we need to train the next generation of shipbuilders. Like the little boy that cried "wolf", some day it is going to be too late and the next excuse they will come up with is, "Well, we've got the work but we don't have the skilled labour." Like our clothing and textile workers, we are going to lose the best skilled labour that any country could produce.

Why are there rumours abounding of the Government's desire to build war or warlike vessels? That is a cracker, warlike vessels. The rumours are

there because it is cheap to do so. Why not do away with the Navy? It will be cheaper still, will it not? We must call upon this Government, we must demand from this Government, a Labour Government, to commit to build all warlike vessels (their words) in the UK. We will always need a navy. Does it matter if a ship is an aircraft carrier, a frigate, a hospital ship? Of course it does not. In a war situation each ship is important and each one is dependent upon the other. The distinction between war and warlike vessels and what the MOD are trying to create is a nonsense. To outsource the building of our military vessels, we are not going to be fooled by that, are we?

It is plain and simple, we have to get the message across, colleagues. I have said it before, I think it is about time we took the kid gloves off. As I say, they did not listen to us 20 years ago and they are not listening to us now so let us have a go, somehow. The public service workers, I think they rattled their sabres a little bit and every credit to them. It is about time somebody took the bull by the horns.

This is a little bit of history. The last government minister that did anything for shipbuilding and manufacturing in this country was Tony Benn; believe you me, we go back as far as that. However, Congress, we cannot just stand aside. Kid gloves off. Let us have the UK building ships, the ships where they belong. They say we are a part of Europe. We are part of it but we are not attached to Europe. We are an island nation. It is our heritage and our birthright to build ships and nobody but nobody should allow anything other than that. I move.

BRO. M. BAKER (Northern): In the North East we are very proud of our shipbuilding heritage. We have a long history of building ships, large and small, for many years. At one time the River Wear had the world record for the most number of ships built in one year. We have one of the best skilled workforces in the world. We have a ready supply of skilled labour, of workers able to build ships. We also have the shipyards and river frontage available to build ships. So why would the Government be thinking of building war and warlike ships abroad, perhaps not whole ships, perhaps just sections of them? It comes down to money. They think they will get the job done cheaper abroad, whereas the old saying goes, "You get what you pay for."

We cannot allow the Government to think that this is an acceptable option. It is not. We call on the Government to commit to building all war and warlike vessels in the UK to support our indigenous workforce and to maintain our shipbuilding capacity, which in times of trouble is crucial to an island nation like ours. Congress, I urge you to support this motion. I second.

SHIP RECYCLING

MOTION 151

Congress notes that there are many ships that will be decommissioned over the next few years. This needs to be done with due regard to the highest health and safety standards adhered to.

We call upon the Government to set up a state of the art ship recycling facility within the UK.

SUNDERLAND 9 ENGINEERING *Northern Region*

(Carried)

BRO. M. BLENCH (Northern): For those who were at Newcastle last year they probably remember I stood up, and I am going to say more or less the same thing again this year.

Congress, we know, and it has just been said by the last two speakers, we have a tradition of building ships in this country but the lifespan of all ships must come to an end. When that happens, the ships need to be dismantled with the same care and attention and, more importantly, the same high regard to health and safety regulations as when they were built.

In recent years, ships, including military vessels, have ended up on the beaches of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. These ships have been scrapped literally by men, women, and children, with their bare hands, wearing no protective clothing and not even wearing any footwear. The dangers and risks to those people are enormous with exposure to asbestos and explosions that occur, and the fires that break out. Many people are killed and injured scrapping ships this way. In the long term their exposure to asbestosis will kill many more.

It is totally unacceptable that the ships built here should end up being scrapped under these circumstances. That is why we are asking Congress to call on the Government to set up a state-of-the-art ship recycling facility within the UK. We have the skills, we have the knowledge, and we have the experience to do this work safely. It is essential that a state-of-the-art facility is provided to ensure that the ships our members have built are scrapped in a safe and efficient manner. Congress, I urge you to support this motion. I move.

BRO. G. MURRAY (Northern): Today, Congress, many ships lie decommissioned in shipyards all around the world waiting to be scrapped. In the UK there are military and merchant vessels waiting to be scrapped. In the coming years, there will be many more vessels coming to the end of their working life and they will also be waiting to be scrapped.

Congress, we have the skilled workforce amongst our membership who are able to scrap these ships safely. The skills required to scrap ships are the same as the skills required to build ships. The health and safety issues involved are enormous, particularly when you consider that most of them being scrapped now will have large amounts of asbestos in them. These ships need to be scrapped in the correct way with due regard for health and safety issues.

That is why we are calling on this Government, in fact we are sick of calling on this Government, for over 20-odd years we have been calling on various governments to set up state-of-the-art facilities, this time ship recycling facilities, not only will that facility do the job properly but it will provide high skill, high quality, well-paid jobs for our members. If they will not let us build them, surely they can let us knock them to bits again and do it properly. Congress, please support this motion. I second.

THE PRESIDENT: Before I call the mover of Emergency Motion 4, does anyone wish to come in on the debate? *(No response)*

SWAN HUNTER SHIPBUILDERS

EMERGENCY MOTION 4

This Congress is shocked to learn that the naval support vessel under construction at Swan Hunter is to be towed away from this yard by the MOD in order to complete elsewhere leaving GMB members redundant.

Congress therefore calls upon this Government to ensure that this work is finished on Tyneside and urges our members in other shipyards in the UK not to collaborate in this exercise.

Congress also calls upon this Government to recognise the highly valued skills of our shipbuilding workforce in the North East of England and the major contribution they can make in the construction of the super aircraft carriers and other contracts in the pipeline by giving an assurance that they will be participating in the build process without having to leave the North East in order to do so.

NORTHERN REGION

(Carried)

BRO. M. BLENCH (Northern): Congress, thank you for the privilege of letting me move this Emergency Motion. I am the GMB convenor at Swan Hunter Shipbuilders and have been for the last three years. I can tell you what a roller coaster that has been. I am a plater by trade and I have worked at my trade for 35 years. Over that time I have seen many ships built on the river, liners, oil-carriers, refrigeration vessels, and many naval ships including Ark Royal and

Illustrious, but I have never seen a ship uncompleted.

The Largs Bay which was the first ship built at Swan Hunter left a couple of months ago; it was finished, complete, in tip-top condition, and defect-free. The MoD was delighted with the quality of the ship. Unfortunately, since then we have had numerous redundancies. Everyone who is left at Swan Hunter is now under notice, they call it a jeopardy letter; we know we are at risk. I am the last shop steward in the yard and I have to say the morale of the workforce is now rock bottom.

The MoD is proposing to move its sister ship, the Lyme Bay, which is currently under fitting-out at Swan Hunter, to be moved elsewhere. Obviously, the repercussions of this will leave many of our members redundant but also, probably more importantly, the pride of the men who have worked on the River Tyne for not just the last 10 years but for the last 100 years will be severely dented. We are just pawns in this political game that seems to be going on at the minute and we do not know what the outcome will be. Our future is in dire straits. We have had problems in the yard with the management but there has never been any problem with the workmanship or the skills of our members. Our members who work in the yard deserve the right to finish the ship that they have built and to maintain pride in their work.

Congress, in this motion we are calling on the Government yet again to finish this ship on Tyneside. We have the skills, we have the workforce, and we have the facilities to finish the ship. One of the reasons I am up here will be to urge the members in other shipyards in the UK to show their solidarity with and support for us - I know I can count on those people - and not collaborate in the exercise of moving this ship.

We call on the Government to recognise the highly valued skills of our shipbuilding workforce in the North East and the major contributions they make in the construction of the new super aircraft carriers, and other projects, which are numerous and which are in the pipeline. We need an assurance from them that we will be participating in this build programme by doing some of the work in the North East, on the Tyne, the Tees, or the Wear. One thing is for sure, these ships cannot be built without the skilled workforce of the North East. Unfortunately, the question is, will that workforce be on Tyneside, Teesside, or Wearside? Will they be working at home?

Congress, I am asking for your support on this motion. Support the finishing of the Lyme Bay on Tyneside, support our need for future work, and support our members. Congress, I move.

BRO. J. DOLAN (Scotland): To sustain shipbuilding in Britain, as Billy Hughes has already said, we must ensure that all present shipbuilders and shipyards are maintained and active in the industry. If this ship is taken away from the Tyne, then British

shipbuilding will lose a highly skilled dedicated workforce for ever. Guys do not come back to shipbuilding once they are away. We have to maintain what we have.

Central governments have attacked the shipbuilding. Heath tried it. Thatcher tried it. We did not let them close the yards and we are not going to let the present government shut the yards. With the work that is coming on stream, two new aircraft carriers are to be built for the British Royal Navy, there will be enough work to keep every shipbuilder and every yard in Great Britain active for a very very long time. We cannot allow this ship to leave the Tyne. If this ship leaves the Tyne, then the Tyne will be finished. They are needed as much as Fergusons in Port Glasgow or BAE Systems in the Clyde, or VT in Portsmouth. Everybody is needed to maintain shipbuilding in Britain. Colleagues, President, I support this motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I am going to do something that I have not done, to my knowledge, for a long long time. Because this is such a serious issue, where whole communities rely on that shipbuilding right throughout the country, I am going to call on Tommy Brennan to speak to Congress on this very issue. Tom? I will call others in; do not worry.

BRO. T. BRENNAN (Regional Secretary, Northern): I am responding on behalf of the CEC and not from a parochial point of view - you can believe that, if you like - to this Emergency Motion from the Northern Region. Mickey referred to the vessel nearing completion at Swan Hunter. I will say to Congress this could be the last ship constructed from the drawing board on Tyneside. It would therefore be an absolute insult to those of our members currently employed on this contract, and I must say to all those workers that have worked on Tyneside in the past, if this contract was allowed to leave Swan Hunter unfinished.

Congress, there are 600,000 tonnes of ships to build for the Ministry of Defence when we have a reducing capacity in the shipyards and a shrinking workforce. This Government should be investing in the existing facilities and developing the workforce, not closing shipyards. There is a need to invest in apprenticeships. Thousands of apprentices should be trained to accommodate the jobs bonanza that is on the horizon to take place within approximately two years' time but, no, not this Government, not this patriotic Ministry of Defence.

What they are now saying is that some of the warships can be called warlike, those that carry little guns, peashooters, not big guns, those not in the front line of action, even though statistics tell us that more of the warlike support vessels get sunk in action than front line battleships. They are now saying that these ships can be built abroad. What an

absolute disgrace. This is their solution to the shrinking capacity rather than GMB's position of investment in the manufacturing industry and the provision of added value, skilled jobs, to the indigenous population.

Congress, on the controversial subject of ship recycling, scrapping, dismantling, call it what you like, it was the GMB in partnership with Peter Mandelson - would you believe it, the GMB with Peter - that persuaded this Government we had a responsibility to clean up our own mess and that British warships should be dismantled in British yards - and I am not talking about ghost ships from America, British ships, British yards - rather than be hauled onto the beaches of India and, as Mickey has described, pulled apart by the hands of women and children without any protection whatsoever.

Now, in order to do this we need to establish state-of-the-art facilities where trade unions are engaged, where we are involved, not backstreet scrap merchants, in order that we can ensure there is due regard for health and safety of those involved in the process and of course to the environment. The CEC therefore is supporting Motion 4 and would advocate and continue to campaign on behalf of all our members who are employed and engaged in the shipbuilding industry.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tommy. Do you still want to make a contribution?

BRO. E. MARNELL (Liverpool, North Wales & Irish): With regard to the middle paragraph where it says, "Tyneside urges our members in other shipyards in the UK not to collaborate in this exercise", I think it is wrong, to be honest with you, to be asking other members in other shipyards to take action without first taking action yourself. I would say to you, if they are planning on moving this last vessel, then stop them. Can I remind you that back in 1984, and I do not want to harp on about it, in Cammell Lairds there was a Type 42 destroyer earmarked for Southampton and there was a jack-up rig earmarked for Brest. Because of our action, all right, we all got sacked and we went to jail and all that, but those vessels were finished off in Lairds. I urge you to stop that vessel from leaving the yard.

BRO. M. BLENCH (Northern): This is just to thank everybody who has come up here. I do realise what he means, and as the convenor at Swan Hunter I can assure him that if any action is necessary it will first have to be initiated within Swan Hunter. I can assure him that will happen in this case. I am the only one left there but I have the backing of the GMB. I only have a small number of members there but somebody still has to take the ropes off the ship and somebody has still to pull it away, so I can assure Congress that if there is any action necessary to be taken it will be

initiated from the Northern Region and Swan Hunter.
Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: With those words, colleagues, the CEC is supporting.

(Emergency Motion 4 was carried)

THE PRESIDENT: Can I remind Congress that, while it may be the shipbuilding area, wherever our members are locally and can help and support our members on the Tyne please do so because more hands, less work.

I move back to the votes on Shipbuilding, Motion 150, Northern Region, we are supporting it, colleagues, and we are also supporting Ship Recycling, Motion 151.

(Motion 150 was carried)

(Motion 151 was carried)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, that is the business for today. Can I thank you all for being so patient in Congress on such a very very warm day. See you all in the morning at 9.30, and have a great evening.

(Congress adjourned)