

## SECOND DAY'S PROCEEDINGS

### MONDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2006 MORNING SESSION

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

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, come to order, please. Good morning, all. Roll call for one region only, Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region: Ian Lowes, are you present? Good. I also have a special "hello" to a little boy up in the balcony. Mark, hi, there, babes. Okay, I will call your dad this morning. I give in. I thought about it. See you later.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning, colleagues. Could I say what a wonderful night we all had last night and can I say thanks to all the regions for their wonderful hospitality, and I know that goes for everybody in here. It looks a bit spare, does it not, Malcolm? We now have the safety announcement and will you please check that your mobiles are switched off. If a mobile goes off you have to tell me. With a certain Regional Secretary it went off twice yesterday but nobody shopped him! It is a tenner for a Regional Secretary.

Could I ask the visitors at the back, or the people congregating - are you listening to me - please keep the noise down as the regions at the back find it very difficult to hear.

*(Safety film shown)*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, can I call Gerry Ferguson to move Standing Orders Committee Report No. 2.

## STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 2

BRO. G. FERGUSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): President, Congress, moving SOC Report No. 2.

Withdrawn motions: the SOC have been informed that the following motions have been withdrawn. 1. Southern Region has withdrawn Motion 37 on Election Procedure. 2. Southern Region have withdrawn Motion 274 on Hurricane Katrina, President George Bush, Michael Brown (head of Federal Emergency Agency).

Emergency Motions: the SOC has accepted a further Emergency Motion being in order for debate. This Emergency Motion 5, on Health, standing in the name of Yorkshire and North Derbyshire Region. This Emergency Motion will be distributed to delegates today on a blue-coloured paper. The SOC recommend that the Emergency Motion 5 be heard on Wednesday morning in the debate on the National Health Service.

Bucket Collections: The SOC advises that the bucket collection for "When You Wish Upon a Star" is taken at the end of this morning's session. The SOC also advises that the bucket collection for the Jimmy Knapp Cancer Fund is taken at the end of the session on Wednesday morning.

President, Congress, I move SOC Report No. 2.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gerry. Anyone want to make comments on the report? *(No response)* Do you agree to accept the report? *(Agreed)* Thank you very much. Thanks, Gerry.

*(The Standing Orders Committee Report No. 2 was adopted)*

## REGIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT - GMB SCOTLAND

### 1. Membership and Recruitment

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| Total membership                              | 65,681  |
| Women membership                              | 27,098  |
| Section membership (by each Section):         |         |
| Clothing & Textile                            | 1,861   |
| Commercial Services                           | 3,753   |
| CFTA  | 2,312   |
| Energy & Utilities                            | 2,911   |
| Engineering                                   | 6,390   |
| Food & Leisure                                | 11,640  |
| Process                                       | 1,796   |
| Public Services                               | 35,018  |
| Grade 1 members                               | 43,894  |
| Grade 2 members                               | 13,321  |
| Sick, retired & unemployed members            | 4,723   |
| Total number recruited 1.1.2005 - 31.12.2005  | 5,276   |
| Gross increase/decrease 1.1.2005 - 31.12.2005 | (6,769) |
| Net increase/decrease 1.1.2005 - 31.12.2005   | (1,493) |

|                            |        |
|----------------------------|--------|
| Membership on Check-off    | 51,527 |
| Membership on Direct Debit | 5,724  |
| Financial membership       | 61,938 |

## **RESPONSE TO ORGANISING AGENDA**

GMB Scotland notwithstanding long-term sickness issues have ensured that the Organising Agenda has been given the priority set out by Congress.

Linking with the current work being undertaken by the National Organising Team and the CEC Organising Working Group has ensured a keen focus within GMB Scotland and the alignment and integration of the National Organising Team outputs into our Regional Strategy. We are committed to increasing our monthly recruitment figures by measurably improving our contribution in terms of Recruitment by the agreed 200 additional members per month thereby increasing our rolling average and contributing to the National objectives to grow our membership base.

Due to long term absences experienced within the Region we have not as yet been able to divert resourcing for our Organising Agenda under the dedicated control of a single Senior Organiser.

The appointment in December of two Recruitment Officers has added significantly in our ability to refocus on Organising and Recruitment, the Region was very encouraged in having received thirty two applications for the two available posts which were filled by one female and one male applicant who are showing significant measurable improvement with clearly developed and integrated targets.

GMB Scotland has embraced the concept of moving forward and growing the Union on the basis of workplace organisation and the involvement and participation of our membership. Effective Recruitment and Retention underpins our approach and this has to be based on the approach of Recruit-Organise-Service-Retain. Approaches in the past had focused solely on achieving numbers however without an organisation we would be unable to service and so retain our membership. A sustainable workplace organisation is critical to involving members.

High quality regular communications has been significant as a result of Equal Pay within Local Government, our largest group of members within the Region. This has provided scope for growth which we are currently capitalising on with these Equal Pay Claims across the thirty-two Local Authorities in Scotland being targeted for Recruitment as a clear strategy.

We are currently reviewing our Branch Structures within the context of a fresh start for Branches 2001 within the headings of Recruitment, Organisation, Servicing, Retention, Resources, Branch Structures and Union Democracy.

The approach to move ahead in stimulating and encouraging those Branches to play a much more active role in focusing on opportunities for consolidation and growth within workplace or general Branches and to develop Branch Development Plans with specific timescales and measurable outputs. More work has yet to be done in this area of development with Branch Secretaries to encourage and support this initiative.

The issue of Equal Pay had been touched on earlier in the report however the reality of this situation was such that the move into Scotland by Stefan Cross the No Win No Fee lawyer who marketed himself as the champion of low paid women within the Public Sector was running a very sophisticated operation and was ensuring that significant time was being taken up by our Legal Team, Officers and Staff to the degree that to ensure we reduce any possibility of negligence claims our resources were being stretched to the limit.

## **RECRUITMENT TARGETS AND CAMPAIGNS**

Targets within GMB Scotland have continued to focus within the Local Authorities on the back of Equal Pay Claims with our Recruitment Officers capitalising on the opportunity this issue created in particular across schools in areas of Catering and Cleaning crossing over into Home Carers as the 3 key areas of opportunity.

Greenfield Sites have not been an area where we have targeted our limited resources as lessons from the past have clearly shown that the commitment in terms of resources yields a limited return on

significant investment and therefore we have refocused on consolidation and ensuring that we need again to revitalise our Workplace Organisational Development Plan (Health Check). This is to ensure that we can achieve 100% membership in those areas of the workplace where membership density is low. We are also focusing on National Targets within the region coming out of the National Organising Team initiative being; the AA, Southern Cross, DHL and G4 Security.

These are being integrated with Regional Targets including Gala Casino's where we are trying to gain recognition with significant assistance from our two colleagues working on this project seconded from the London Region to the Casino's Project and I would wish to go on record in thanking Adrian Baker and Claire Laycock for all their support within the Region.

The economic decline within the Scottish Manufacturing Sector has still not as yet been offset by growing our membership within Private Services which still has low trade union density as is the case within the Hotel and Leisure Section. There are areas of growth however, they are also synonymous with significant labour turnover – these two areas will focus within Regional Targets and our Action Plan during 2006 in an attempt to balance out the structural change which has taken place within the Scottish Economy over the past decade.

I will also place on record the commitment and dedication of staff and officers within GMB Scotland during a period of fewer Human Resources as a result of genuine long term absences within the Region at a time when we are focussing on the pressures of Equal Pay at the same time as delivering our growth figures within the Region.

GMB Scotland have developed an Action Plan based on strategies to improve our performance against our National Objectives and has rolled this out to lay members of our Regional Council who have supported the agenda wholeheartedly – ensuring the support and buy-in of our senior lay delegates will be critical in achieving success.

To ensure the delivery of the Agenda for Growth we have reviewed our Shop Stewards Training Provision to ensure that Workplace Organisation would be a key feature in achieving our objectives, that our training would be continuously reviewed on the basis of evaluation and feedback from the reps themselves but most importantly to move away from the growing dependency culture of relying on Organisers in representation at low level grievances. In order to deliver the agenda we are now ensuring delivery of training across Scotland reducing the need for significant travel and overnights which can be a barrier to undertaking training based in Glasgow.

The key principles of Recruitment, Organising, Servicing and Retention combined with Consolidation has been fully integrated within GMB Scotland's Action Plan ensuring that we have taken a holistic view to future growth and a Campaigning Union delivering in the workplace.

### **ECONOMIC & EMPLOYMENT SITUATION**

The Scottish Economy – GMB Scotland does not under-estimate the long-term challenges facing the Scottish Economy on the Global Marketplace of 2006 and beyond, or the current factors, such as the decline in manufacturing and regrettably persistently high levels of Economic Inactivity. These factors currently restrict our economic performance however Scotland's current performance in terms of jobs and growth, is generally positive.

Scotland has currently been ranked joint fourth with the West Midlands out of twelve regions of the UK. December 2005 figures recorded that a strengthening of the Economy was maintained in to 2006.

This encouraging trend over recent months has not been confined solely to the service sector of the economy but also manufacturers were reporting sharper rises in output and new orders. These factors indicate that Scotland appears to be fairing better than the UK as a whole and indicates that economic growth is expected to stabilise towards the end of 2006.

The potential is therefore according to the Scottish Financial Institutions that Scotland will see stronger jobs growth in 2006 which is encouraging in terms of Recruitment Opportunities. These factors however have to be viewed in the context that growth may well continue to struggle unless the Bank of England are prepared to cut interest rates. Employment rates in Scotland at present are up .3% on a year ago, with seasonally adjusted figures was 5.3% down .2% on a year ago.

Public Procurement in Scotland is around £5billion in goods and services each year has a major impact as an economic driver and has a profound ability to meet our economic and social challenges. Procurement while not being a panacea for all our economic and social ills in Scotland can be an effective lever in promoting and supporting employment.

GMB has been at the forefront of demands on the Scottish Executive to set positive standards in employment conditions and ethical contracting, by demanding of the Executive that such considerations are not a burden on business and that they need to acknowledge the clear benefits to be gained in productivity and quality.

The Public Procurement Directive was a key area in which GMB has been involved with meetings involving Ministers with Kathleen Walker-Shaw and Phil Davies on behalf of Sheltered Workshops to promote the social, environmental and employment agendas. However, it has to be said that there was a distinct unwillingness on behalf of the Scottish Executive to use fully its devolvement to implement a separate and distinct Scottish solution rather they had been only prepared to follow the Westminster line.

The review of the UK energy policy by the Minister Malcolm Wicks was of significance in Scotland in terms of supply and demand and the GMB has been part of the approach via the STUC in meeting the Scottish Parliament Labour Trade Union Group – The Deputy Enterprise Minister, Scottish Westminster MPS with a view to ensuring a balanced approach to Scotland's energy needs and the opportunity to invest in renewables as part of the long term solution as is Nuclear Manufacturing opportunities for Scottish industry, arising from development of renewable energy industries will provide again further opportunities for GMB Scotland. With this in mind we have held meetings with one of the emerging companies in this area including Keith Hazelwood, National Secretary and Charlie King, Policy & Research Department who are working on harnessing energy from wave power off Orkney.

GMB Scotland has also played a role in meeting with the Justice Minister to discuss the proposals for Corporate Culpable Homicide and Corporate Manslaughter legislation.

Overall within Scotland the major decline in manufacturing due to off-shoring has been significant over the last decade however this has resulted in significant growth within the Service Sector of the Economy which we have yet to capitalise on. The demographics still show that to achieve the Executive's goal of "Smart Successful Scotland" there will be a requirement to achieve the skills deficit by more influx of Eastern European job seekers into the labour market. Refocusing GMB Scotland's strategy for growth needs to be targeted within the Public Services where there is still potential and also the Service Sector while consolidation and retention needs to be key within manufacturing.

### **CLOTHING & TEXTILE SECTION**

The Section has been fairly quiet over the last 2 years ago. There haven't been many major redundancies in the Section though our membership has obviously decreased.

Meetings with the Scottish TUC Textile Committee and also with the appropriate Ministers at the Scottish Parliament have been held. It is important though that the Section focuses on Public Procurement as a possibility and an opportunity to see sustained growth for the Industry for the future.

The message that we seem to get from employers regarding procurement contracts is that they don't know how to go about putting a tender in. It was discussed with the Politicians about a more open and encouraging forum in which Scottish and UK clothing and textile employers have the facility to tender for contracts that would be a life saver for their businesses and for our members who work within.

There have been areas that have given cause for concern particularly in the knitwear industry in the Borders and the Lace Industry in the Irvine Valley in Scotland. We have had some closures in both these areas but not of a significant nature. It is hard to take looking at the overall membership within the Section that only ten years ago GMB Scotland was proud to boast over 15,000 Clothing & Textile employees. China appears to be the overall winner in this trade war which we are suffering as a result of an uneven playing field. It is important that we still stay organised, structured as a trade union fighting and pursuing better rights and better terms and conditions for clothing and textile members in what is a very difficult operating field.

It was not thought that based on the overall performance nationally of the clothing and textile section of the last 7 years that another conference would actually take place within the Section and it is pleasing to say that we are glad that we seem to have stabilised in some major areas and it is hoped that through the appropriate policies and decisions that we can maybe see future growth within the section.

### **COMMERCIAL SERVICES**

Many of the issues that affect the Commercial Service Section are still subject to National Negotiations as will no doubt appear in other reports to Congress.

GMB Scotland had a mixed year in terms of building up our membership base. The effects of the closure of British Airways Call Centre had a dramatic impact on our membership levels. The Region has been working hard to address this and we are beginning to see growth in membership again. Our aim is to continue with that growth and not only make up for our losses in BA but to see even further growth. The Region was involved in the fight against the attempts to remove GMB as the recognised Trade Union in DHL and we have been reasonably successful in keeping the vast majority of members within the company. This has been down to a lot of hard work by our Organisers and Representatives. In Civil Aviation Transport there appears to be a shake up in the companies delivering services within Scotland's Airports and we are hard at work ensuring our members rights are maintained and that our workplace organisation remains in the okay.

### **CFTA SECTION**

Vibration White Finger - the Health and Safety Executive is promising to turn the heat up on tool manufacturers in its campaign to cut the risks of hand-arm vibration. The HSE is considering plans for inspectors to work directly with manufacturers to ensure they improve the information given to tool users. This is one of a series of measures including increased access to specialist doctors and health surveillance checks to ensure that those most at risk are identified. It is not a war on manufacturers, but the customer has clear needs and often now they are not able to work out the risk levels from the information they are given. We would like the manufacturers to go beyond their basic responsibilities. If a manufacturer doesn't co-operate, we have the powers to go after them.

We want people to think carefully about whether it is the right thing simply to buy the cheapest tool. The HSE is working on a tiered system of health surveillance, whereby an employer, with some guidance, can decide whether a worker needs to visit an occupational specialist. It will be a one-page questionnaire for workers, whereby anyone with any signs of vibration illness is referred to a doctor. It won't help anyone to send all workers to the doctor, but it provides an essential safety net.

In a parallel move, the University of Loughborough has launched a Vibration Research Centre, which will provide a programme of 'real-life' vibration tests of commonly used tools to enable employers to get a more accurate picture of typical vibration exposures. The Centre, funded and run by the university's Operc equipment research operation, is to put the results of its tests on its website to enable access by anyone who needs guidance for risk assessments and health surveillance. The Centre has university funding in place for testing on 70 common tools over the first six months and is hoping to attract the support of the industry to expand the research. This information will be free of charge, but if anyone wants to they will be able to buy the full technical report. By providing the basic information firms should no longer need to fork out for specialist consultants.

### **ENERGY & UTILITIES SECTION**

Scottish & Southern Energy - Pay Agreement (2005-2007) Ratified. The JNCC has formally ratified the three- year pay agreement for 2005 to 2007 following the results of the trade unions consultative ballots. An important element of the pay agreement is a commitment to review specific roles undertaken by employees to establish whether the level of their pay is correct. The trade unions are currently researching which roles should be examined and a process for the review is being agreed with the company. The aim is to complete the exercise by the end of this year and lay members of the JNCC will be fully involved. Flexible Working – the Preferred Option - The JNCC has reviewed the issue of TOIL (time off in lieu) balances that have accumulated under the Flexible Working – the Preferred Option arrangements provided for by clause C2 of the company agreement. This has been a source of considerable frustration to members for a long time.

Following representations by the Trade Union Side a Joint Working Party was established and the JNCC has now accepted its recommendations. Under the new arrangements Team Managers will be

expected to manage TOIL requests in a way that prevents the accumulation of excessive balances. Provision is now being made to reduce TOIL balances that are in excess of 37 hours. There will also be provision for payment at the rate of time and a half where operational requirements prevent TOIL being granted within a reasonable time of the request for TOIL (i.e. 6 weeks from the date of the request.) Full details of the new provisions will be circulated shortly and members should discuss any issues with their local representatives. The Trade Union Side will regularly monitor the new arrangements to ensure that they are being applied properly.

Drug and Alcohol Policy - The Trade Union Side has agreed to participate in a joint review of the Company's Drug and Alcohol Abuse Policy. The trade unions accept that the safety of staff and the public is of paramount priority. The Company has indicated that it would like a revised policy to include provision for the random testing of employees to establish if prohibited drugs have been used or if the employee is unfit for work due to excess alcohol in the bloodstream. All the issues will be thoroughly debated in a Joint Working Party, which will involve a majority of lay representatives on the trade union side. Careful consideration will be given to the experience of similar companies which have random testing e.g. Scottish Power and those which do not e.g. United Utilities. The Trade Unions have indicated that we have major reservations about the need for random testing and its effectiveness. We would expect all legitimate staff concerns to be addressed. It is emphasized that the trade unions have not agreed to random testing.

British Energy -HR & Management Briefing – Staff Refreshment Programme - In 2005 the Company announced that arrangement would be made to facilitate a combination of SVS and enhanced early retirements. The Refreshment Programme will be limited in number and will help to resolve a growing number of issues resulting from previous and current reorganisations, A1 fitness and a recognition that there are a number of employees whose health is not commensurate with the demands required by the business but not such that it would qualify them for ill-health early retirement.

Aside from the reorganisation affecting Peel Park, it is a considerable time since there was a severance programme and there have been a number of requests for severance or early retirement. As a result of that, it is expected that the response to this new initiative will be more than can be accommodated by the funds available. It is recognised that the staff will prefer SVS, even if they are eligible for early retirement but it will not be possible to meet those aspirations in full within the finances available. To assist, the company have agreed to introduce a programme of early retirement terms which are significantly better than those potentially available to those staff who leave and ask for early release of their pension. They are also further enhanced over the current terms available for those who retire with Company consent. Volunteers will be sought from the categories outlined above for SVS or early retirement. For some of those who are unsuccessful in their application for SVS, enhanced early retirement might be an option which they may wish to consider and programme is designed to facilitate that need subject to the limited resources available.

For guidance, SVS will be more suited to those unable to take the early retirement option but that will not preclude SVS being approved for suitable candidates. This is not a mechanism to reduce headcount but primarily to assist with refreshing the skills base in line with the Company's restructuring plans whilst offering individuals a further option. This will be for a limited number of staff (excluding Peel Park), for a limited period and needs to be closely managed. Cases need to be identified and agreed by mid August, however, actual release dates can be agreed for a date appropriate for the case. In some cases, NII approval may be necessary, but in most cases it is expected that the majority of staff involved will be released before the end of March 2006.

Scottish Power, Customer Sales & Service, Integrated Approach to Pay – Outcome of Negotiation. Members will by now be aware of the agreed offer that has been made by ScottishPower Management as a result of the last 3 years of discussions, and subsequent difficult negotiations, over an integrated approach to pay across the Customer Sales & Service group of businesses. Management started this project in an effort to develop common pay, terms and conditions of employment across all of the businesses and to tie this to both individual performance and the wider employment market. The unions have played a full part in the process to ensure that the result gives as good a fit to members' needs as possible. The result is a new pay and grading system, a new performance management scheme and new arrangements for annual leave. This is a three year deal, covering all pay related issues for 2005 to 2007, so you should consider it in that context. The offer cannot be comprehensive, so there are issues that remain to be addressed when we return to pay negotiations for 2008. Through

the negotiations we managed to secure significant improvements to the company's original position and are certain that we could not have achieved anything more. Within the duration of this offer, there will be pay benefits for the majority of members. It has not been possible to deliver improved pay and conditions for everyone, however, so we sought to protect pay for those above the max of their scale as much as was possible within the constraints of the current business drivers and economic climate that relate to the various businesses within CS&S.

Scottish Power PowerSystems -2005 Pay and Conditions Final Offer -Following extensive negotiations your Joint Trade Union Negotiating Committee received the Company's final offer at a meeting on 30 June 2005 and arising from a meeting of Amicus, GMB and TGWU Shop Stewards on 5 July 2005 it was agreed to RECOMMEND the settlement in a ballot as the best that can be achieved by negotiation. Key elements of the package: PAY - With effect from 1 April 2005, 3.8% increase on schedule salaries with follow-through to appropriate allowances and payments. 'WORKING TOGETHER' PHILOSOPHY AND OPERATION OF JOINT NEGOTIATIONS AND CONSULTATIVE ARRANGEMENTS. As part of the 2005/06 Pay and Conditions Negotiations the Business outlined its proposal to enter into further discussions with the Joint Industrial Trade Unions on (i) the achievement of a longer-term Pay and Conditions Agreement for April 2006 and (ii) the potential for collective Trade Union negotiations. The Joint Industrial Trade Unions and the Business are committed to enter into discussions collectively with the other Trade Unions with a view to reaching agreement on the following:

The key principles and objectives of a Joint 'Working Together Philosophy' between the Trade Unions and PowerSystems;

- The potential scope for development of Joint Trade Union Negotiations; and
- The potential framework which would underpin both these joint negotiations and a longer term Pay and Conditions Agreement from 1 April 2006.

Job Evaluation Scheme And Process - The Business and the Joint Industrial Trade Unions jointly recognise that all potential job evaluation issues across PowerSystems must be assessed in a fair and consistent manner. Both the Business and the Industrial Trade Unions agreed that the existing job evaluation schemes and processes lacked integration, consistency and transparency. To address these issues a Joint Steering Group will then be established to review the existing job evaluation schemes and processes and formulate proposals on the implementation of one job evaluation scheme and development of common job evaluation processes for application across PowerSystems. A Joint Steering Group, drawn from members of the JANCC, TJNCC and JINCC will be established with the following terms of reference: Jointly review existing job evaluation scheme for PowerSystems and common job evaluation processes.

## **ENGINEERING SECTION**

Burntisland Fabrications - management have entered talks with GMB and AMICUS over Recognition. Recruitment is good and talks are nearly complete. 70 platers and welders will be offered employment status out of a workforce of 100.

NAECI – Scotland - the Organiser has held several meetings with Babcock over 2<sup>nd</sup> Tier payments for Cockenzie and Longannet. It was agreed that there would be a 15p an hour increase to 75p an hour.

Babcock Cockenzie - management offered 3.7%, plus an increase in sick pay and duration. Awaiting confirmation and meeting with members.

Norec Longannet - the membership agreed a 3.7% pay deal and an increase in sick pay rates and duration.

SGL Technic Ltd - we have two representatives on Site and have reinstated monthly meetings and membership is steadily increasing. A major incident occurred on Site with a line explosion and the Organiser will be meeting with the Company in the near future to discuss any implications.

Enterprise Engineering - following very long protracted consultations the Organiser is pleased to advise that we have been able to meet the aspirations of our Enterprise members and settled on a 3.61% one year deal with no strings attached. This now gives Craft employees a minimum of £10 an hour.

Peterhead Engineering - the Employer's current offer is to move to £9.50 an hour which is considerably less than other Fabrication Shops in the area.

KBR NAECI Site Sage Project, St. Fergus Gas Terminal - the Site was due for completion at the end of August 2005. The Site is currently very busy with all trades, significant numbers of which are recently employed travelling tradesmen. Currently a night shift is being organised as the contract moves to 24 hour working. The Organiser will shortly be on Site to undertake recruitment. Further to this there are a number of new apprentices started and some improvers.

OCA Partnership Companies Construction - this Organisation in the North Sea and West Africa Offshore sectors are very busy with a large upturn in maintenance due in the main to two factors. Firstly, the Shell incident where 2 employees died as a consequence of industrial accidents, and obviously age portfolio of North Sea stock which now requires significant maintenance.

Wood Group in the Talisman field i.e. Shell – Recently, has introduced additional holidays and more flexible working arrangements with increased incomes and significant allowances for new Foreman/Supervisor positions.

Employment - there is an ever increasing demand for skilled labour in the north and north-east in particular for Platers, Welders, Mechanics, Engineers, Electricians, Scaffolders and Riggers. On the Wellhead side of the oil business, companies such as Weatherfords, Santa Fe UK and Drillquip are crying out for employees to train as wellhead technicians to the extent that they are paying for trainees to undertake offshore survival certificates etc.

Tannoy - the Officer has negotiated a wage settlement in Tannoy which resulted in a 3.2% increase. Chep UK - The Officer again has negotiated a wage settlement of 3%. Terex - at the start of this month we had a final offer which will go back to the Terex workforce for them to decide on the offer which is 3%. Met Tech - proposals to close the Paisley Centre and also make redundant 2 instructors at Grangemouth, ongoing.

Offshore Industry - with regard to wage negotiations under UKOA we have secured a 5% wage increase for wellhead operational staff. The Unions have recently won the right to have employment tribunal heard concerning holiday entitlement under the Working Time Directive this effectively means that the jurisdiction of the Tribunal System has extended the recognition that Working Time Directive claims can be heard for those who work from here to the continental shelf. Offshore Recruitment - we have made arrangements for access at employee inductions with the OCA companies such as AMEC & Wood Group. National Office has produced an offshore recruitment leaflet.

UKOA and OCA recently sponsored a Skills Seminar with the emphasis on attracting new blood into the offshore industry they highlighted that there is a huge shortage of skilled labour, they are also defiantly willing to look at adult trainees. With the emphasis, that you do not need to relocate to Aberdeen to work in the Industry.

Rosyth Dockyard - several meetings held on 2 Failure to Agree on Pay and Redundancies. Both went to National Level talks and resulted in agreement on the way forward and a 4% pay offer which was accepted.

Ferguson's Shipyard – Port Glasgow – Ferguson Shipyard was recently awarded a contract for a £6 million ferry from Calmac. This order will ensure the job security for the workforce for the foreseeable future with a prospect of increased employment. However, there remains a question mark over the long term future and support required to enable the yard to sustain employment. The First Minister, Jack McConnell has been written to regarding the yard's precarious position within the shipbuilding market and the need for the Scottish Executive to take a closer interest in the future of the Port Glasgow Site. This is the last remaining commercial shipyard within the UK and it would be an absolute disaster if we did not do as other nations would do in protecting their interests. The EU rules and the principles behind them was one of protectionism to ensure that no nation would provide unfair subsidies to assist their particular shipbuilding company. We are well aware that this has been breached in the past 20 years continuously and yet we have failed to show signs of support in times of need for our own yards. The important factor for the long term is that we have a site which can do commercial shipbuilding and work alongside BAE Systems who carry out MOD work this would allow in the long

term BAE Systems to expand its horizons and look for specialist work within the commercial market. Only in having this vision is there any prospect of a long term future instead of the peaks and troughs scenario toward total collapse.

## **FOOD & LEISURE SECTION**

The Section has been particularly stable over the last few years. Membership within the Section has remained pretty much the same without having any significant job losses or any significant gains in recruitment across all areas of the Food & Leisure Section. The one area that we do believe we can capitalise on heavily is in Casinos as a result of the new legislation regarding Casinos and the possible introduction of Super and Regional Casinos all over the United Kingdom. Glasgow is the strong favourite to win one of the Regional Casino bids with the Casino being built at Ibrox Stadium in a £200 million plus project that will see a hotel casino complex and other facilities which will lead first and foremost to employment in the construction industry in the initial stages and then employment in the servicing of the facilities that are built. It is hoped that GMB can nationally exploit the situation in respect of membership development and we look forward to working with other regions and the National Casino Steering Group to oversee all potential areas that we can use our expertise and our knowledge to raise the GMB profile.

Leisure - There has been a real increase in the building of leisure facilities and fitness centres all over Scotland which again means that there is a real potential for recruitment within this sector. Unfortunately as of yet we do not have any national agreements or indeed local agreements with any of these companies as they appear to be anti-union establishments. We have though had interest from people employed in the leisure and fitness centres who wish to become trade union members but we cannot negotiate terms and conditions on their behalf at this moment in time because the trade union density is too low. It will be an objective of GMB Scotland's to try and change that situation and keep picking away at recruitment in order that we may at some stage be able to ballot the company on a recognition deal.

The Whisky Industry once again has remained pretty stable with the major players declaring increased profits. The only point of concern is the relationship between 2 of the big 3, Allied Domecq and Chivas who have indicated that they will merge which could lead to substantial job losses. As this is in the early stages of its infancy we will be monitoring the situation on an ongoing basis to make sure that we are able to protect plant and jobs for our members which will lead to stability and obviously workplace harmony. There was a major dispute in the whisky sector last year where Edrington GMB members took part in industrial action against the company in the pursuit of a higher wage offer. Edrington who produce brands like Cutty Sark and the Famous Grouse eventually brokered a deal which our members accepted and gave them an above inflation deal which was equivalent to what was negotiated elsewhere within the sector.

Hotel and Catering is another particular that we should be seriously developing in as tourism in Scotland is growing year on year and major hotel chains are building new hotels up and down the whole of Scotland. Glasgow in particular has saw huge capital investment in the hotel building with some of the main players like Jurys, Bewleys, Radisson, Ibis and Accor all building new hotels within Glasgow. It is important that GMB Scotland organises in these particular establishments as the GMB at one particular time had an actual Hotel & Catering Section.

The ongoing problems within Asda retail remain the same with the underhand tactics that Asda use to de-recognise the GMB through various union busting means. Asda Retail are in pursuit of trying to achieve that all their employees move on to New World Contracts which mean less favourable terms and conditions for our members who have worked there for years and years and have contributed to the overall profitability of Asda. Things will get particularly worse as they try to compete with Tesco who again at Christmas saw an 11% increase in its Christmas sales which makes them well in front as a market leader. The only way that Asda will be able to claw back any of the ground that it has lost will be through members' terms and conditions and we must oppose at every opportunity Asda's attempts to do this.

In the Distribution Sector things are still pretty desperate with Asda using local agreements to introduce national issues through the back door. We still have an ongoing problem at the Falkirk Site where the TGWU have got a majority of members in the Falkirk site and are pushing for GMB to tear up the existing Partnership Agreement that GMB signed approximately 3 years ago. It could well be that the

TGWU will try to use the weaknesses within Asda to exploit on their own behalf recruitment opportunities which will cause us some concern. It is my belief that the senior Asda organisers along with the National Secretary get into debate with the National Officer from the TGWU regarding this situation before it gets out of hand.

## **PROCESS SECTION**

In order to resolve the present deadlock between the Management of Polimeri Europa Grangemouth, & Trade Union Representatives the following arrangements will apply in respect shop stewards recognition. The current Management Recognised Shop Stewards will enter into immediate discussions with the management side on the composition of the number of Shop Stewards and Safety Representatives at the plant. At the end of November 2005 a Branch Meeting will be convened and elections (conducted by way of the GMB Rulebook) will take place. The Company agree to recognise the Shop Stewards & Safety Representatives duly elected by the Branch on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2005, with no exceptions. With immediate effect, the current Management Recognised Shop Stewards will begin discussions on:- A new local Agreement, A new Alcohol & Drugs Policy, Safety Matters and Any other relevant business.

Both the Company and the GMB will use all reasonable endeavours to conclude agreement on the new local Agreement and the new Alcohol & Drugs Policy by 1 December 2005. If this is agreed by all sides, then the GMB will drop its action currently set to be heard by the Appeals Tribunal, Barrie Fraser -v- Polimeri Europa.

## **PUBLIC SERVICES**

Recruitment- Due to some resourcing issues this year it has been difficult to maintain our Recruitment activity within the year. Despite this however the Section has managed to see improvements in its Financial Membership levels. With the resourcing issues improving there is an air of confidence that the improvements in our membership base will continue in the months ahead.

Equal Pay - The issue of Equal Pay has been at the heart of the work in GMB Scotland's Public Sector this year. GMB Scotland has been at the forefront of the Campaign to eradicate Pay inequality within Public Sector Organisations. Our Campaigning has brought this to the top of the Negotiating Agenda in Local Government when we lodged with all Councils Grievances on Equal Pay. This has led to over 50% of Councils proposing local arrangements to deal with the historical Equal Pay issues and proposing Equality proofed Pay Structures for the future which has resulted in significant increases in Pay for many of our women members employed in low paid, part-time occupations such as Catering, Cleaning, and Caring jobs. This Campaign has now been extended to the NHS where Grievances have been lodged with many of the Health Boards in Scotland.

Local Government Pay - Our members in Local Government have received an increase this year as part of a two-year deal which ends on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006. GMB Scotland has argued for this year's Claim to include an 'Across the Board' payment as opposed to a percentage increase. This was done as the best way to continue our fight to end Low Pay in Local Government. Whilst this view was not shared by the other Local Authority Trade Unions we were successful in structuring the Joint Claim in such a manner that it still focuses on the Low Pay issue.

NHS Partnership Working - The NHS in Scotland has for some time now had Partnership arrangements in place which has seen a greater involvement of Trade Unions in the development and implementation of Strategies and Policies within the Health Service. The Partnership arrangements have been the subject of a Review this year and a new Framework has been agreed that removes a lot of the duplication that existed between the different Forums. There are now three main Bodies. The Scottish Partnership Forum, The Scottish Workforce and Staff Governance Forum, and The Scottish Terms and Conditions Forum. GMB are represented and fully involved with the work of these Fora.

Agenda for Change - The Management and Trade Unions have taken a much longer time than other areas of the UK to assimilate jobs onto the new Pay Structure. This was done despite considerable pressure from the Health Minister and the Scottish Health Department. The reason for the longer time period was the Trade Unions, including the GMB, wanted to get it right and avoid a situation where there would be a high volume of Appeals. It would appear as the first Occupational Groups are now moving over to the new Pay Structure that this strategy has been successful as there does not appear at this minute in time to be many Appeals coming through.

Pensions - As Pensions are a devolved, or more accurately a partly devolved matter, the proposed changes in the Pension Schemes for NHS workers and Local Government workers have been the subject of negotiations in Scotland. GMB are actively involved in the Working Groups that are looking at a future Pension Scheme for both Groups.

## 2. General Organisation

|                                       |     |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Regional Senior Organisers            | 3   |
| Membership Development Officers       | -   |
| Regional Organisers                   | 19  |
| Recruitment and Organisation Officers | -   |
| Regional Recruitment Officers         | 2   |
| No. of Branches                       | 191 |
| BAOs                                  | -   |
| New branches                          | 0   |
| Branch Equality Officers              | 33  |

Administration changes have resulted in the focus ensuring that effective and efficient administration can and does assist within the Organisation Agenda. Closer working relationships across all departments within the Region has been able to reduce bureaucracy and ensure a speedier turnaround in processing membership, claims and payments.

The integration of Regional Education in Partnership with the TUC has also ensured our processes are much more targeted and effective in ensuring a speedier delivery of training for our New Shop Stewards and because of the diverse geography of Scotland we have now been able to ensure the delivery of training across Scotland thus reducing time away from home due to distance. This has been a positive development and is linked to our Organising Agenda by ensuring speedy training.

The administration is also working closely with our Legal Department in particular as a result of Equal Pay which is having a huge implication on our Human Resources within the Region. However, there is a positive scale to this as we have effectively again built this into our Organising Agenda in identifying areas within the Public Sector on this issue.

Administration has become much more a central function within the Region involved on a cross functional and interdepartmental basis. The geographical spread of Officers across the Region has also highlighted the speed of response required and that all staff are clearly aligned with our organising culture in everything they do so that we have effective and efficient processes designed to deliver a service level to existing members while ensuring the prompt co-ordination of potential members to Officer to ensure an effective response time capitalising on every available opportunity.

## 3. Benefits

|                                 |        |
|---------------------------------|--------|
| Dispute                         | -      |
| Total Disablement               | 4,000  |
| Working Accident                | 6,960  |
| Occupational Fatal Accident     | -      |
| Non-occupational Fatal Accident | 1,055  |
| Funeral                         | 21,362 |

## 4. Journals & publicity

Recent publicity within GMB Scotland highlighted the successful role of GMB in the Learning and Skills Agenda within the Scotch Whisky Industry which was driven out of a successful application by GMB Scotland for a two year funded programme for the industry. This provided a key message that the GMB was the lead Trade Union within the Sector.

GMB Scotland were leading the fight to retain Scottish Water as a Public Utility having organised and publicised Press Releases on the Union Agenda to fight off deregulation and privatisation.

Successful coverage of GMB's agenda for Equal Pay within the Public Sector has been reported across both tabloids and broadsheets and TV highlighting a strong stance in rejecting offer by Councils' and taking a strong campaigning role. Successful medial coverage to protect shipbuilding and repair on the Clyde and at Fergusons Yard in Port Glasgow. GMB have sponsored a major conference on Asbestos

which is attracting significant media coverage and international speakers. GMB defending local Health Services has secured significant TV and press coverage. Media work has been successful following on from the National Releases during the year which has resulted in significant media coverage particularly radio.

Significant communications sent to thousands of our female members in Equal Pay; Questionnaires, Guidance and Updates. The Scottish Professional Footballers Branch has been successful in ensuring that they have a high profile within Scotland. We continue to advertise at events run by Local Government and Health Service to ensure a high GMB Profile.

All of the above has been to ensure that these all support our organising agenda and that we are seen as a campaigning union. Currently we are working on a new Journal for the Region to promote our key messages and provide both interesting and informative articles.

## 5. Legal Services

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

|  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| Applications for Legal Assistance          | 696                 |
| Legal Assistance Granted                   | 696                 |
| <b>Cases in which Outcome became known</b> |                     |
| Total                                      | 994                 |
| Withdrawn                                  | 302                 |
| Lost in Court                              | 5                   |
| Settled                                    | 678 (£5,408,441.99) |
| Won in Court                               | 9 (£108,385.25)     |
| Total Compensation                         | £5,516,827.24       |
| Cases outstanding at 31.12.2005            | 1,636               |

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

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| Claims supported by Union                  | 130              |
| <b>Cases in which Outcome became known</b> |                  |
| Total                                      | 113              |
| Withdrawn                                  | 60               |
| Lost in Tribunal                           | 2                |
| Settled                                    | 47 (£190,082.03) |
| Won in Tribunal                            | 4 (£41,225.97)   |
| Total Compensation                         | £231,308.02      |
| Cases outstanding at 31.12.2005            | 532              |

### (c) Other Employment Law Cases *None*

### (d) Social Security Cases

|                                 |    |
|---------------------------------|----|
| Supported by Union              | 68 |
| Successful                      | 37 |
| Cases outstanding at 31.12.2005 | 25 |

Organisers in GMB Scotland no longer represent members before Employment Tribunals. Instead Representation is provided by Solicitors from the Employment Law Unit of Digby Brown Solicitors. They also provide Employment Law Advice via an Advice Helpline.

Significantly in 2005, the Employment Law Unit has been at the forefront of supporting and assisting GMB Scotland with the challenges we face in tackling pay equality in the public sector. In autumn 2005 their involvement led to the creation of a GMB Scotland Equal Pay Working Group which includes the Head of the Employment Law Unit Margaret Gribbon, the Principal Legal Officer of the EOC in Scotland Muriel Robson, GMB Regional Legal Officer and Senior GMB Scotland Officers and Organisers.

The Working Group provides specialist legal advice to GMB Scotland to ensure that the rights of our members and interests of the union overall are protected. So far Equal Pay claims have been raised before the Employment Tribunal for over three hundred members in fourteen different local authorities in Scotland. These claims have been lodged to protect the time limit position of those women who have left local authority employment in the last six months.

We have also selected target local authorities with the aim of commencing litigation against those authorities where no agreement on a deal has been reached. In addition to litigation, GMB Organisers continue to actively negotiate on Equal Pay with thirty two local authorities in Scotland.

PI Compensation - Digby Brown Solicitors recovered on behalf of GMB Scotland members total compensation of £3,542,448. Thompsons Solicitors recovered on behalf of GMB Scotland members total compensation of £1,974,378.

Training - The Employment Law Unit Solicitors have also provided training seminars for GMB Organisers on various employment law issues including Equal Pay. The programme of Organiser training within GMB Scotland will be extended in 2006.

## 6. Equal Rights

Since Congress 2005, GMB Scotland's Equal Rights work has been dominated by Equal Pay; with successes in the Private Sector and meeting the challenges in the Public Sector, especially Scottish Local Government and the NHS. MSPs, MP's and Government Ministers from both the Scottish Parliament and Westminster have been lobbied over the need to find a resolution to the financing of our members Equal Pay Claims. At all times we have worked closely with the Equal Opportunities Commission. Equal Pay has been major campaigning and recruitment issue over the last few months.

The Regional Equal Rights and Race Equality Committee has met and the Region as well as playing an active part in the Union's Equal Rights work Nationally, is also heavily involved in the Equalities work of the Scottish TUC, through the Black Workers Committee and Conference, the Woman's Committee and Conference as well as the more recently established Disabled and LGBT Networks.

## 7. Youth

## 8. Training

|   | No. of Courses | Male | Female | Total | Total Student Days    |
|---|----------------|------|--------|-------|-----------------------|
| <b>(a) GMB Courses Basic Training</b>           |                |      |        |       |                       |
| Introduction to GMB (2 days)                    | 10             | 115  | 26     | 141   | 20                    |
| GMB/TUC Induction (5 days)                      | 2              | 27   | 6      | 33    | 10                    |
| GMB/3 Day Risk Assessment                       | 1              | 16   | 0      | 16    | 3                     |
| <b>(b) On Site Courses</b>                      |                |      |        |       |                       |
| <b>(c) Health &amp; Safety Courses</b>          |                |      |        |       |                       |
| Health & Safety Stage 1/TUC                     | 12             | 11   | 1      | 12    | 120                   |
| Health & Safety Stage 2/TUC                     | 9              | 7    | 2      | 9     | 90                    |
| Health & Safety Update/TUC                      | 2              | 1    | 1      | 2     | 10                    |
| Health & Safety Online/TUC                      | 1              | 1    | 0      | 1     | Over a 6 month period |
| Accident Investigation & Reporting /TUC         | 1              | 1    | 0      | 1     | 5                     |
| <b>(d) Other Courses</b>                        |                |      |        |       |                       |
| <b>(e) TUC (STUC &amp; ICTU) Courses</b>        |                |      |        |       |                       |
| Union Reps Stage 1/TUC                          | 5              | 4    | 1      |       | 50                    |
| Stepping Up - Advance Course for Union Reps/TUC | 1              | 1    | 0      | 1     | 10                    |
| Handling Disciplinarys & Grievances/ TUC        | 3              | 2    | 1      | 3     | 9                     |
| Using Computers & Communications Skills/TUC     | 5              | 1    | 4      | 5     | 50                    |
| Bargaining for Equality/TUC                     | 1              | 1    | 0      | 1     | 3                     |

|   |   |   |   |   |                           |
|---|---|---|---|---|---------------------------|
| Negotiating Skills/TUC                        | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2                         |
| Certificate in Employment Law/TUC             | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 36 days                   |
| Understanding Pensions/TUC                    | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2                         |
| Workforce Development/TUC                     | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 10                        |
| Introduction to On-Line Learning/TUC          | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | Over period of<br>1 month |
| Introduction to Spanish/TUC                   | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 15                        |
| Equal Pay Weekend School/STUC                 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2                         |
| One Workplace Equality Weekend<br>School/STUC | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 3                         |
| Woman's Weekend School                        | 1 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 2                         |

## 9. Health & Safety

Regrettably GMB Scotland's Health & Safety Officer, Robert McGregor, has been diagnosed with cancer and is currently undergoing drug therapy. At the time of writing this report Robert is waiting on a diagnosis from his consultant and remains very positive in his wish to return to work. Given these circumstances Health & Safety has not had the profile intended since Congress last year, however we have invested in ensuring through the Regional Education Officer that all of our Health & Safety Reps have been contacted and updated as to why Health and Safety is of significant importance to our members and also is a priority within the Bargaining Agenda.

Two of our female Shop Stewards have achieved IOSH qualifications assisting in creating a central focus on Health & Safety and in particular the role of women in the workplace again key to the Organising Agenda. A positive outcome of this approach has been the successful appointment of one of our qualified female members to the role of Regional Recruitment Officer ensuring that Health & Safety does indeed feature heavily within the Organising Agenda as we move through 2006.

All Health and Safety Reps have been recently supplied with new materials and have been made aware of the role that Health and Safety needs to play within the Organising Agenda ensuring that Health and Safety becomes mainstreamed within the workplace and that the GMB can make a difference and becomes integrated into the Region's plan for growth.

*(Adopted)*

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now ask Harry Donaldson to move his report, pages 138-152.

142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152.  
Bingo! Agree to accept those, colleagues? *(Agreed)*  
Thank you.

*(Regional Secretary's Report - GMB Scotland was formally moved)*

*(Regional Secretary's Report - GMB Scotland was adopted)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Page 138, 139, 140, 141,

## GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

Welcome to sunny Blackpool!

We assemble as the Congress of our great union, to be accountable, to debate, make new policy and set our values for the years ahead. The last year has been both challenging and rewarding. The GMB has found its campaigning and organising strategy after what seemed like years of unfulfilled promise.

The 2005 Congress told us to become a campaigning union again, we have, ask Asda or the AA or Morrison's or any of the hundreds of workplaces where our union challenged injustice and inequality. The 2005 Congress told us to manage the union better and we've made a very good start, unprecedented comradeship and unity of purpose from our CEC and our Regions mean we come to you today free of any debt with a properly controlled expenditure system and for the first time in years a growth (albeit small) of real live paying members! Congress 2005 told us to get organised, we've set up a National Organising Team to target growth through workplace organisation. The Special Task Group

set up to help identify areas for change gave us fresh ideas, we've acted on some and are working on others.

The inquiry into the 2003 General Secretary and Treasurer elections have been completed and I hope by the time we meet in Blackpool our union's democracy will have been strengthened and reformed.

I have travelled to all Regions during the last year and what I have found has been officers, staff, branch officers and activists who are 100% committed to fighting for a better future for our members, a fairer society and justice and equality for all.

The success or failure of the union rests on our belief in its core values. There will always be sell-out merchants or defeatists who tell you it can't be done, or the trade union movement is failing. Frankly if these people put as much effort into fighting for working people as they do in making excuses for themselves then the trade union movement would be bursting at the seams with new members.

Organising can be very difficult. New challenges face many of us, the economy is shifting at an alarming rate, 1.2 million manufacturing jobs lost since 1997 – 3 million new, service sector jobs created in the same period. Many in industries which frankly trade unions haven't challenged or organised in before. That's no longer an option. The GMB will go where the people work. We will organise and we will fight for better pay, conditions, justice, equality and respect. That's our business.

Have a great conference.

Yours in comradeship

**Paul Kenny**  
**GMB**

## **COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT**

The GMB Communications Department has been charged with doing everything possible to assist GMB Organisers with the recruitment of new members and to service existing members who are under attack in their workplaces. This has been ongoing since April 2005 when the Acting General Secretary tasked the department with telling Britain's workers why they should belong to GMB. This task was made simple by the extent of the level of activity in the regions.

Below is a breakdown of the work the department has done under each of the subject heading for which it has responsibility; followed by a breakdown and listing of the number of press releases issued nationally and regionally month by month since GMB Congress 2005 up to the time of writing this report in early March 2006.

### **PRESS**

Between June 2005 and early March 2006 the National Communications Department sent out 579 press releases; an average of 72 a month; on hundreds of issues. GMB disputes and campaigns; reactions to government policy and other bodies' statements. Below is a summary of this output. GMB members can receive all GMB press releases directly to their email address by going to the national website at [www.gmb.org.uk/news](http://www.gmb.org.uk/news) and registering on-line.

AA dispute and Congress demo; ASDA Washington and Skelmersdale disputes; Gang masters; Tagging of workers; surveillance and Dataveillance; Stanley casinos pay dispute; Morrisons dispute; Council Housing; A&P Shipyard; Kensington & Chelsea Street Sweeper; Average wages by occupation; use of consultants by Government; Schools white papers; NHS scanners set up; Uncollected Council tax; number of industrial accidents by region; Heathrow Terminal 5 dispute; British Gas Pension dispute; Mudchute Farm disciplinary; sacked caretaker; state pension retirement age; city bonuses; Derrinda Belgin's ET win over pregnancy sacking; DHL dispute; number of company cars in Britain; numbers self employed; Council Housing; Social housing; rent rates changes; number in receipt of incapacity benefit; Vacant properties; Rentokil Pension and site closures; Unilever sale of UK assets; council e-comms achievements; Coco Cola; Obesity in Children; Number with Lung cancer as part of the passive smoking campaign; government plans for reduction of GP surgeries; number in manufacture; number working in service sector; tattooists; tax credits; deficit between numbers on

benefit and available jobs; Arsenal FC treatment of club shop staff; Medway Queen; Off-shore working in engineering; fire at Southend pier; gender pay gap; worlds aids day and national mesothelioma day and other national days of note; Average male hours; JJB strike; TICA; Ryanair turnaround times and reaction to Dispatches program; Croydon council proposal to close Crosfield factory; Cash in Transit security of staff and reaction to C4 The heist programme; gaming industry and casino expansion reports and reaction to government proposals; gas and energy statements and prices rises; procurement laws change for local authorities; services directive and Strasburg demo; pay in higher education; GMB signing of G4S recognitions deal; construction work at Wembley stadium; CEC statements on union business; Excelcare proposed closure of ten Essex care homes; Remploy pay talks and the Lagers demo at Allington EFW Plant.

The monthly totals of subjects covered by press release issued are (some issues e.g. non collection of council tax require regionalised versions as well as a national one. This can mean up to 13 releases per subject. All these press release are available on the national website press archive.

June 2005 (including GMB Congress 2005) 37 press releases

July 2005 80 press releases

August 2005 58 press releases

September 2005 94 press releases

October 2005 65 press releases

November 2005 65 press releases

December 2005 60 press releases

January 2006 51 press releases

Up to mid February 2006 60 press releases

## **CAMPAIGNS**

### **AA**

The aim of the GMB campaign in the AA is to persuade the thousands of AA staff to re join GMB having been led out of the union by ex-GMB officials in to a staff association. Since the venture capitalist took over we have kept up a constant bombardment of publicity about the detrimental employment practises that our former members have suffered since de-recognition of the independent trade union rights. The workforce has been cut by a third so that the long hours culture is set hard as part of the businesses. Disabled workers and those on the sick were targeted for and given severance packages well below their redundancy entitlements. AA customers too have borne the brunt of the paring down of the service. Fewer breakdown patrol staff and fewer call centre staff has led too longer waiting times at the road side and so has disgraceful reports of disabled and vulnerable drivers being abandoned altogether by the company. Increased pressure on staff to sell parts and AA membership at the roadside and the blatant asset stripping of the company in order to pay £500 million bonus to the owners is the current state of play at the time of writing. GMB has made sure that all these issues have been reported far and wide and has not allowed the new; venture capitalist owned AA to masquerade as the original 4th emergency service that served its customers for year but is now long gone. Visit the website page at [www.gmb.org.uk/aa](http://www.gmb.org.uk/aa) for all the latest news on the campaign.

### **Asda**

The aim of the GMB campaign against ASDA is to restore full; national collective bargaining rights; pay and conditions and decent health and safety for our 20;000 members in the stores and depots. Since June 2005 when GMB stood out against pay cuts and attacks on their right to collective bargaining GMB has kept ASDA in the news and informed ASDA customers about the treatment metered out to its workforce. The strikes at Washington and Skelmersdale in June and August 2005 started the ball rolling and since then it has been non-stop. Employment Tribunal findings against ASDA for anti-trade union activities and race discrimination have been widely publicised along with the revelation that ASDA had paid Portland PR; a company set up by former Labour spin doctor Tim Allan; to run the union-busting campaign against GMB. ASDA was also found guilty of racial discrimination in two depots and forced to pay GMB members £750 each in Wakefield and Lutterworth. To highlight the discriminatory treatment against gay members of ASDA's staff we used the pink media.

### **Casinos**

The communications department has sourced and produced the two Runners and Riders Reports on the companies vying for licenses and planning permission to build and run the new resort casinos in Britain.

**Public Services Awareness**

We have published GMB surveys of official figures on the achievements of local authorities in the delivery of services. These survey have achieved millions of individual items of coverage informing the general public; would be and current members of where their council comes in the national league table of service delivery.

**Disputes**

British Gas Pensions  
Local Authority Pensions  
ASDA  
AA  
Heathrow Terminal 5

**Regional**

Unilevers  
Rentokil Pensions and Closures  
JJB Sports

**WEBSITES**

The national website is updated regularly with information on all areas of the work of GMB.

At the time of writing the online joining facility is imminent and we have every expectation that this will have a significant impact on recruitment by offering a new; easy and accessible way to join the Union.

All press releases are available on-line in the press area.

GMB campaigns; departments and sections all have their own areas. There are also links to all the regional websites and any branch websites we have been given the details of. All publications produced by GMB nationally are included on the website and merchandise is also available to purchase online.

**Campaign Websites**

A new weapon in our campaigning armoury is the dedicated member led campaign websites.

Our ASDA; AA; DHL and Anti fascist campaigns all have their own sites. Visit; -  
gmbinasda@unionweb.co.uk  
gmb.org.uk/aa  
gmbindhl.unionweb.co.uk  
targetbnp.unionweb.co.uk

**PUBLICATIONS**

The first edition of Public Eye the new magazine for the public services membership as instructed by GMB Congress 2005 decision on motion 19 was published in January 2006 and will be published twice yearly from now on.

The GMB Official is a new publication for GMB activist and post holders.

DHL Newsletters 1 – 6  
DHL Charter  
GMB Black History Month National Event Flyer  
September Recruitments form print run  
Securicor Recruitment forms  
AA Campaign Newsletters 1 – 2  
AA Campaign leaflets  
New GMB Activist New letter 'GMB Official'  
Public Services Members Magazine 'Public Eye'  
Off Shore Workers Recruitment Forms  
H&S for Casino Workers  
Casino Workers Leaflet  
Ship Building Leaflet

MPO Recruitment Forms  
 GMB Diaries  
 ASDA Recruitment Forms  
 School Support Staff re-print  
 Health & Safety Stickers  
 Political News  
 Your Rights – Translated Leaflets various 27 so far  
 Pubs & Clubs Leaflet  
 Local Government Pension Guide  
 Labour Party Spring Conference Casino Fringe Flyer  
 Hope Not Hate Flyers  
 Magna Kansi recognition ballot material  
 Political mailings and bulletins for Local Elections

### **MERCHANDISE**

We continue to produce campaign merchandise including placards and armbands for rallies and demonstrations. We also have GMB branded baseball caps; t-shirts; sweatshirts; ties and lanyards for sale. All are available from the website or National Communications Department. We always use Ethical Threads as our t-shirt provider to ensure that they are ethically sourced. All merchandise is guaranteed as sourced via union friendly firms.

### **INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY REPORT**

According to the most recent figures from the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) for 2004, 145 people were murdered due to their trade union activities, 700 were violently attacked and there were 500 reported death threats. Many more have been imprisoned, dismissed and discriminated against and tougher legal obstacles to trade union organising and collective bargaining are on the increase, denying millions of workers their rights.

GMB has long been a participant in global solidarity work in an effort to advance workers rights and we have been involved in campaigns to raise awareness of human rights abuses, but there has been to date no concentrated focus on international issues. In the face of unbridled multi/transnational capital a global perspective is more relevant today than it ever was.

There was a clear need to strengthen our commitment and participation in international issues and to this end Joni McDougall took up the position of International Solidarity Officer (ISO) on 11 July 2005. The key components of the post include raising awareness and generating solidarity for international issues by providing information and support to members and regions on campaigns and projects.

Other responsibilities include working with organisations including sister trade unions both at home and abroad, Government Departments, Foreign Embassies, NGO's and Solidarity Organisations. The ISO reports to the European and International sub committee of the CEC twice a year, with recommendations for action and support, projects with a financial implication are then forwarded to the Finance Committee for ratification.

#### **Committee Members**

|                                |                   |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Reports to:                    | General Secretary |
| President:                     | Mary Turner       |
| Vice-President                 | Malcolm Sage      |
| Birmingham & West Midlands     | Trevor Fellows    |
| Lancashire                     | Bob Welham        |
|                                | Steve Quigley     |
| Liverpool, North Wales & Irish | Paul McCarthy     |
| London                         | Lena Sharp        |
| Midland & East Coast           | Rachelle Wilkins  |
| Northern                       | Yvonne Ritchie    |
| Northern/Race Reserved         | Peter Foley MBE   |
| GMB Scotland                   | June Minnery      |
| Southern                       | Dave Clements     |
| South-Western                  | Don McGregor      |

Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Paul Bedford

To determine what our international priorities should be we looked at the global situation, compiled an audit of existing international activity at branch, regional and national level in consultation with the Regional Secretaries and sought views through various structures of the union. The European and International Committee concluded that the campaigns for priority should be Justice for Colombia (JfC) and Banana Link. All campaigning information is placed regularly on the website and relevant information sent to the Regional Secretaries for dissemination to the branches

### **Colombia**

We elected to prioritise Colombia, because it is the most dangerous place in the world to be a trade unionist. Not only are our brothers and sisters threatened and sacked, they and their families are detained without trial, tortured, 'disappeared'. Last year alone, 99 of our colleagues were assassinated by paramilitary death squads working complicity with the Colombian Government and big business.

As an outcome of a meeting held between Carlos Rodriguez the leader of CUT (the Colombian equivalent of the TUC), Paul Kenny, Mary Turner, Debbie Coulter, Joni McDougall and JfC we came up with a raft of practical proposals.

- To continue to lobby the British Government with the aim of freezing military aid to Colombia until the Colombian Government complies with UN human rights recommendations. To this end we have engaged in a critical dialogue with the Government and have been active in instigating and promoting Early Day Motion 355, which calls for the Government to freeze military aid, the lead signatory of which was Frank Doran, GMB sponsored MP
- To launch a major GMB fundraising appeal to provide computers for the offices of CUT. A letter of appeal was sent to all branches in December, via the Regional Secretary for consideration. The CUT needs computers not just to organise and facilitate communication but most importantly to form part of an early warning system when trade unionists and others from civil society are targeted and under threat
- To publicise the plight of Colombian trade unionists by organising a tour of Regions by a Colombian trade unionist in 2006
- CUT has stated that we could not underestimate the importance of international solidarity and that the delegations organised by JfC were of particular importance. In November Mel Whitter from the South Western Region participated in the Youth Delegation and has been active in the Region since her return, addressing meetings and writing articles
- We have been involved in various other ways – by participating in the National Executive of JfC, speaking and chairing meetings on Colombia, writing letters of appeal and support, meeting with the Colombian Ambassador and his offices to challenge the human rights abuses
- Hosted Angel Salas, General Secretary of ANTHOC to GMB Congress 2005
- Attended various meetings with visiting Colombian trade unionists
- We are affiliated to JfC at a national level, most regions and many branches are also affiliated

### **Banana Link**

The second priority area is Banana Link. This furthers the Congress motion 331 'Labour Standards in the Latin American Banana Industry' - and complements existing solidarity work undertaken by the London Region. As a consequence of the motion we have now affiliated to Banana Link at a national level and have had a series of discussions, involving London Region with Banana Link to establish a working relationship as to how we can progress the aims of the campaign. We have agreed to work on a series of actions which will come to fruition in 2006:

- Advance the Dole campaign, to be launched in Spring 2006, called for by COLSIBA, the Latin American Regional Coordination of Banana Worker's Unions to denounce the social, labour and environmental practices of the Dole Food (Standard Fruit) Company
- Supporting and developing the Tesco poly campaign
- Apply pressure on the Government to introduce a legally binding code of practice and an

independent regulator to control the buying power of major supermarkets

- Look to organising a day school when we know if there is to be a new round of Department For International Development (DFID) funding
- To raise awareness of opportunity for branches and regions to become Banana Link trade union supporters and help increase the capacity of Latin American banana worker's trade unions organising and legal work
- GMB played an active role in the preparatory process for the International Banana Conference II
- GMB regularly hosts visitors and keeps in contact with solidarity partners in Latin America, most notably inviting Gilberth Bermudez the General Secretary of SITRAP to address Congress 2006
- Bert Schouwenburg was elected to the Board of Fairtrade Foundation ensuring that the union voice and concerns are represented
- GMB London region, should be specially commended for their long and productive relationship with Banana Link, initially fundraising to build a training centre for the Costa Rican trade union SITRAP, and most recently funded organisers, their work and transport to recruit in the Central Pacific and Atlantic banana producing regions of Costa Rica. A full report of the work achieved so far through this project is available from [info@bananalink.org.uk](mailto:info@bananalink.org.uk)

In line with successful motions to Congress 2005 and with existing policy we are involved with other issues which are strategic in terms of their global importance and to our union. In each instance we have involved the region or branch and kept them abreast of current developments and actions that we are involved in.

### **Iraq**

We are an active participant in the TUC Iraq Solidarity Committee. The Iraq Solidarity Group is working to:

- cancel all debts incurred by Saddam Hussein
- ensure that Iraqi laws and practices embody International Labour Organisation (ILO) core conventions
- Reject privatisation of essential public services and vital resources such as oil
- The GMB have contributed to the founding conference of the newly merged formed IWF – which is a merger of IFTU, GFITU and the GFTU
- We have been active in pursuing the campaign to overthrow Iraqi Government Decree 8750 which calls for union finances to be in the control of the Government and that new labour laws would be drawn up without the involvement of the Iraqi trade union movement. Letters of protest have gone to the Iraqi Ambassador and we have asked the ILO and the UK Government to intervene. As a result the ICFTU has now formally requested the ILO to intervene directly with the Iraqi Government

### **No Sweat**

As a result of Congress Motion 333 we are now affiliated to the No Sweat Campaign at a national level. We have agreed with the organisation to disseminate information of their activities and work with them specifically on a joint campaign involving the TUC, centred on the successful London bid for the 2012 Olympics. The aim is to ensure that the Olympics have ethical/labour standards throughout the supply chain, built into procurement from the start.

### **Palestine/Israel**

Congress Motion 343 Middle East calls on the British Government to exert pressure on the Israeli Government to demolish its illegal separation wall. This augments our existing policy on Palestine, which calls for a two state solution and that we work with both Histadrut and the Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) to help achieve a lasting settlement to the conflict.

In November we wrote to Dr Kim Howells, Minister of State with responsibility for the Middle East to ask

the British Government to act on the International Court of Justice's ruling - that Israel's separation wall through occupied Palestine territory was not only illegal but is effectively sealing off East Jerusalem from the West Bank placing the two-state solution in jeopardy. They agreed that the wall was illegal and that this echoed the consistently held position of the UK, European Union and the United Nations and that they would continue to urge Israel to route the barrier away from Occupied Territory.

We are affiliated to Trade Union Friends of Palestine and Palestine Solidarity Campaign.

### **Cuba**

The ISO was elected onto the Executive of the Cuba Solidarity Campaign (CSC). Through this the GMB has been represented and active on a variety of campaigns and events most notably:

- The continuing campaign against the US blockade and Cuba's right to sovereignty and self determination which is at the centre of CSC's local and national activities
- Organised and participated in a fringe on Cuba at GMB Congress
- The Miami Five Campaign, which campaigns for the unconditional release of the Miami 5, including organising and chairing meetings and rallies during the visit of the Miami 5 Tour
- Part of the steering/planning committee for the European Trade Union Solidarity Conference with Cuba and Latin America
- Worked with the CSC, Venezuela Information Centre (VIC) and JfC to organise Latin America 2005 and participated in the role of chair and speaker. Over 300 people attended this conference which covered a broad range of themes and the key issues facing the people of Latin America in their struggle for sovereignty and against the effects of neo-liberal economic policies which have so impoverished the continent over recent years

### **Venezuela**

The GMB has been involved with VIC since sponsoring its inaugural meeting on 25 May. The meeting of 300 people was supported by many trade unions and those in the labour movement who realised the need for a broad-based UK solidarity campaign with the people of Venezuela.

The Government of President Hugo Chavez has pledged to "make poverty history" in Venezuela, where over 70 per cent of the population lives in poverty. A programme of radical change has been implemented afforded by redistributing the oil wealth of the country away from the traditional elite and toward working people and the poor in general. They have introduced a literacy programme, a cheap food programme, distribution of land, health care, free care and drugs for victims of HIV/AIDS and a variety of social reforms.

The Venezuelan Government is also utilising the country's oil to help the poor throughout Latin America by offering this vital raw material at preferential prices as well as other forms of assistance aimed at implementing the ALBA (Bolivarian Alternative of the Americas) which is in direct confrontation with the US sponsored Free Trade of the Americas (FTAA) which represents US economic interests.

Although there are differences in the social systems and political composition between Venezuela and Cuba, they are allies; both fighting for what is right for their people, their sovereignty and united in an anti imperialist alliance. Because of this another thing that they have in common is the wrath of the US. The US Government funded a three month long lock out in the oil industry in Venezuela, a non payment of taxes campaign and a military coup against the democratically elected Chavez; they are also instrumental in supporting and funding anti Chavez elements in Venezuelan society. Many in the labour movement feel that Chavez provides a real alternative not just to the people of Venezuela but to the entire continent. Knowing the history of violence and aggression, perpetrated by the US in the region they also fear for Chavez's safety. A broad based campaign of solidarity with Venezuela needs to be built in support of Venezuelan sovereignty and self-determination and to combat foreign interference in Venezuela's internal affairs. The trade unions need to be at the core of such a movement.

- At the invitation of the Trade Union Group for Venezuela the ISO was a participant on the first trade union delegation to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in November. The delegation was a direct consequence of TUC Resolution 79, unanimously adopted at 2005 TUC Conference. The delegation met with the recently founded National Union of Venezuelan

Workers (UNT) and the Confederation of Venezuelan Workers (CTV), Government Authorities at the highest level and visited health, education and other social programmes in order to learn about the situation in Venezuela for the broadest possible viewpoints. A full report of which is available from [joni.mcdougall@gmb.org.uk](mailto:joni.mcdougall@gmb.org.uk)

- Organised, chaired and spoke at events and various public meetings including the sell out Conference 'Latin America 2005 –Making Another World Possible'
- The ISO has been elected as Vice Chair of VIC's Management Committee
- Participated in meetings with visiting Venezuelan trade unionists, the Venezuelan Ambassador and addressed MPs at the House of Commons

### **Make Poverty History**

The GMB were involved in the Make Poverty History (MPH) campaign throughout 2005, and many members took part in MPH activities throughout the year. GMB activists, from various regions, were proud to take part in the MPH Rally in Edinburgh. It was a monumental occasion drawing 200,000 people from all over Great Britain from all walks of life, unified by a desire to see the eradication of the appalling poverty suffered by so many throughout the world.

Unfortunately the campaign did not achieve what was needed in terms of change to trade, aid and debt policies. In terms of aid world leaders have promised more aid for developing countries, but more and better aid is needed; eighteen countries will receive more debt relief, meaning more money for health and education, but more debt cancellation is needed. Another achievement was the commitment to universal access to HIV/AIDS treatment by 2010. However there was virtually no change in the vital area of trade with the EU and the US showing no regard for developing countries. Despite Labour's 2005 election manifesto which stated "We do not believe that poor countries should be liberalised" these words have not been followed up by actions, and have been frequently contradicted by the UK Government and the EU in trade negotiations at the World Trade Organisation (WTO). We are a long way off target for reaching the UN's eight millennium goals for 2015.

The main achievement of the campaign was raising awareness of the factors that cause dire poverty and offering tangible solutions. The campaign also brought together a divergent range of organisations creating a groundswell of action that the world's leaders could not ignore, they did not comply but for an entire year the plight of the world's poor was brought to centre stage and that is something that we have to build on.

GMB has also responded to numerous emergency appeals for support in various campaigns, writing to authorities to protest against violence against trade unionists or against anti union activity in Eritrea, Indonesia, Argentina, Australia, Iraq, Zimbabwe, Morocco, Turkey and Burma. Additionally we work with our sister unions and are represented on many forums within the TUC.

We are currently affiliated at a national level to:

Anti-Slavery International  
Banana Link  
Cuba Solidarity Campaign  
Justice for Colombia  
No Sweat  
Palestine Solidarity Campaign  
Trade Union Friends of Palestine  
War on Want

For further information contact Joni McDougall on 0208 971 4272 or [joni.mcdougall@gmb.org.uk](mailto:joni.mcdougall@gmb.org.uk)

## **HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT**

### **Introduction**

To say that in 2005 the National Health & Environment Department was understaffed would be something of an understatement. The Director of Policy, who was also in charge of the Health and

Environment department, had other duties which took precedence and without any support staff there was effectively no health and safety material being produced at a national level.

The Acting General Secretary requested that the London Regional Health and Safety Officer relocate to National Office for as many days as could be afforded until such time that a new National Officer could be interviewed and appointed. This relocation took place on a temporary basis in May. Between this time and the appointment of the National Health and Safety Officer in October the department functioned principally on a fire fighting reactive basis. However this at least enabled the GMB to regain some of its' previous profile in the health and safety arena.

### **Congress Motions, 2005**

Congress motions which have been enacted during 2005 are referred to in their respective texts. The two motions which have not been addressed as yet are Motion 116, Men's Health and Motion 108, Public Holiday for Workers Memorial Day 28 April.

The Department will attempt to address the first during the coming year and, bearing in mind the logistical difficulties with the date, get an Early Day Motion in the House of Commons, to establish the support for the second motion.

### **Government Consultation Documents**

The government issued a number of consultation documents on a variety of issues, all of which affected GMB members across a number of industries. The first one from the Home Office was the draft Bill on proposed Corporate Manslaughter legislation. Any delegate who listened to last years Congress debate on this will be aware of the strength of feelings of many delegates on this and the stance of the government in, so far, failing to place Corporate Manslaughter offences on to the statute book.

The publication of new proposals in May was greeted with initial enthusiasm until the details were revealed. The major disappointment was the lack of proposals to imprison directors for gross failure even if the death of a worker was involved. In a meeting with other Trade Unions at the Home Office the explanation for this was that if there was imprisonment for Corporate Manslaughter this would be at a lower tariff than for other criminal acts and would be subject to legal challenge.

The main difficulty with this was that the Home Office had not proposed any sanction on directors short of imprisonment. In it's submission the GMB suggested that at the very least there should be the threat of being barred from holding a directorship, community service of some kind or a public apology and public restitution to any bereaved family as a minimum.

On 20<sup>th</sup> December the scrutiny Committees published their recommendations to government. Perhaps surprisingly there was much in their report which concurred with the GMB response. The definition of "Senior Management" was unclear, there should be secondary liability for Corporate Manslaughter, a less broad exemption for Crown immunity and a more innovative range of sanctions devised. The GMB would endorse these but worry that the struggle with the government may delay the Bill onto the statute books (Congress Motion Composite 3, Motion 280).

The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (1995), commonly known as the RIDDOR Regulations were under consultation by the Health and Safety Commission (HSC). It is widely acknowledged that there is a vast under – reporting of accidents in the UK. The GMB suggested that reporting accidents to the safety representative would help improve the situation.

At present road traffic accidents involve about 3,500 deaths per annum. Of these as many as a third, that is over 1,000, might involve someone driving as part of their job. The GMB would like to see these included in work related accident statistics so that driver risk assessments can be under taken seriously.

The original Construction (Design and Management) Regulations were introduced in 1994 and amended in 2000. It would appear that initial improvements to the rate of fatalities have now levelled out and the industry needs to seek further improvements in safety on sites if government targets are to be met in the most dangerous industry to work in, in Britain.

The proposals under the new regulations, rightly, sought to ensure the competence of the client and

increase the role of the Co-ordinator. Better liaison and consultation were to be encouraged. The GMB, uniquely we think, suggested that where a site had 50 or more workers, and that some of the workforce were in one of the Building industries recognised Trade Unions then there should be automatic recognition of that trade union for health and safety purposes. We proposed that this number should include agency, casual and administrative workers. It is well documented that meaningful consultation is the most effective way in which to improve safety in all workplaces, including construction sites, and this would appear a logical proposal.

Finally in the early autumn the Department of Health published its "Protecting the Public" Bill. The most contentious issue within this was the proposals on smoking in the workplace. Instead of a complete ban on the exposure of workers to second hand carcinogenic smoke, following well documented inter Cabinet arguments, the proposals were for a partial ban to exclude pubs which didn't serve food and private members clubs.

This would appear to fly in the face of a number of government objectives, not least the need for clarity and a reduction in "Red Tape" and bureaucracy. The GMB stance over a number of years has not been about the individual freedom to smoke but about the exposure of workers to other peoples smoke. Even more puzzlingly this will only apply to England, as Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will bring in respective legislation to ban smoking in all work and public places. The department attended the Select Committee hearing at the House of Commons on this, in support of Mick Ainsley, a London Regional Officer in the hospitality industry, who was giving evidence on the subject.

On 19th December the Committee published the result of its' findings. Unsurprisingly in this case it agreed with the GMB that there had been a failure of leadership from the top on this. In addition the proposed exemptions for non food pubs and members' clubs would have a disproportionate effect on the poorer sections of society. (Motion 104, Composite 4).

The GMB will continue to campaign on this illogical, and dangerous approach by the government, and seek to protect its' growing membership in the hospitality trade.

### **Recruitment and Organisation**

It is well demonstrated that workers trust the Trade Union movement to support them in health and safety issues over their employers. There is a need to build on this trust and develop campaigns around health, safety and welfare issues in the workplace. The demise of National College has not helped some reps in their training and confidence but the provisions of the "Brown Book " remain and give an opportunity of using health and safety as a recruitment tool by demonstrating what can be achieved by asserting reps rights at a local level. London Region has developed a Two Day Inspection Course which attempts to address this deficit and have given permission to use this across the country. A number of regions (notably Lancashire and Liverpool) have already started this process and the department is available to help any other regions who may need to "kick start" the education process for organisation teams and individual reps. In addition an issue on health, safety or welfare can be just the hook by which we can galvanise existing members and recruit and encourage new ones.

### **Asbestos**

The shift from a manufacturing economy to a service based economy has done nothing to stem the numbers who suffer and die due to asbestos exposure. This is due to the legacy of asbestos within buildings built decades ago and the length of time it takes for the disease to manifest itself. Therefore it's too early to say as yet if the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations, and in particular Regulation 4 introduced in May 2004 are having a material effect.

What is very clear is the continuing conduct of the insurance industry as they try every excuse to get out of their responsibilities towards victims of asbestos exposure. If they are not challenging every victims exposure record they are declaring themselves bankrupt as a means of avoiding compensation payments. Currently, Ian McFall, of Thompsons' Solicitors, on behalf of the GMB, is challenging proposals by Cape to set up a fixed compensation fund to pay victims over the next decade. As this would be cash limited, and a review and extra payments would be based on any favourable trading position, there is a need for independent financial scrutiny on this. Again at the time of writing this challenge has not been satisfactorily answered.

There was also mixed messages from judicial decisions. In future asbestos exposure which leads to

lung cancer would not need verification by fibre count analysis. However there was no progress on the campaign to get Pleural Plaques re-classified as a prescribed Industrial Disease.

The HSC have also issued a Consultation Document on Revised Asbestos Regulations. In the main the GMB welcomes these as they are an attempt to unify and clarify three existing sets of Regulations. There is also the proposal to lower the fibre count exposure level to a common level for all types of asbestos. The main point of contention for GMB members is the proposal to take out Textured Coatings out of the licensing regime. The GMB considers this to be a retrograde step on two counts.

Firstly we believe that the research undertaken on behalf of the HSC is flawed and needs to be developed further. And secondly, and bearing in mind the history of knowledge of asbestos exposure, we believe that any attempt to ease asbestos regulations should be resisted as a point of principle. The consultation process is due to finish at the end of January 2006 but the GMB feel that no decision should be taken until the research has been completed.

At the 2005 GMB Congress a successful fringe meeting, where over 50 delegates attended, took place on asbestos. Four quality speakers followed by a lively question and answer session ensured a lively end to Congress. During the year the GMB signed up to the British Lung Foundation campaign and charter on Mesothelioma.

At the 31<sup>st</sup> International Metalworkers' Federation World Congress Keith Hazelwood, GMB National Secretary for the Engineering section moved a resolution on a "Global Ban on Asbestos". This was unanimously adopted.

Thanks must also go to Richard Morgan, Midlands & East Coast, for the work he has put in at the Asbestos Licensing Group, on behalf of the GMB. (Motion 107).

### **GMB Publications**

The department produced a Health & Safety leaflet on Casinos in time for last year's congress where it was successfully launched. This leaflet has played a significant part in the ongoing recruitment and organising campaign in the hospitality sector.

A part was also played in helping to produce a prototype leaflet aimed at Bar Workers in the London Region. This is in response to changes to the licensing regulations and the GMB's role in the issue of workers exposure to second hand tobacco smoke. If this is successful then there will be an opportunity to roll this out to other urban areas around the country.

The department has also rewritten and helped revamp the Health & Safety leaflet for Schools Support Staff which has proved a useful recruitment tool in this growing sector. This is due for publication in the New Year and hopefully will build upon the membership numbers already in the public services section. Guidance has been placed on the GMB web site on the HSE Management Standards on Work related Stress, with a link to the HSE questionnaire. It is anticipated that much more information will be distributed in this way, though traditional methods will continue to be used. A re-launch of the popular Health and Safety Matters is also underway with the first issue, on "Working at Height" due in January. It is intended that this will be produced on a regular basis.

One large task which is ongoing, but slow, is the re-formatting of the Safety Reps Kit. As many are no doubt aware the present Kit was only ever designed to be an interim publication, but the governments' possible changes to Safety Reps rights never materialised. This will be produced in its new form in the spring.

Health and safety updates have been produced for inclusion in both the new newsletter for all reps and for the newsletter for the Public services section. It is anticipated that these will be ongoing.

### **HSC/HSE**

The HSC admit that their targets, set by themselves, in The Revitalising Health and Safety document (2000) have stalled. Many Trade Unionists and grass roots activists would argue that this is down to the lack of resources devoted to the number of Inspectors in the field (a problem arguably greater at Local Authority level). The HSE respond by saying that although interventions are down that there is a better

targeting of their resources. There appears to be a drift towards a self regulatory approach following the continuing propaganda from employers' organisations and following the Hampton report which called for "better" regulation. The GMB continues to believe that without some form of enforcement, or at least the threat of it, some employers will never improve the health, safety and welfare of their workers, without the fear of a court appearance.

That is why on the HSC's open day in November the department joined the Hazards movement ,the Construction Campaign and GMB officers and activists from the London Region in demonstrating this fact ,before joining the meeting proper .It was quite clear in the meeting itself that though the numbers of Trade Unionists present was relatively small that their presence there was vital on two fronts, namely to remind some employers that we are still around and to demonstrate our knowledge on workers' health and safety issues.

The Trade Union members of the Commission continue to press for greater involvement for Safety Representatives in the actual Risk Assessments at workplace level and while the signs are encouraging so far there has been no real commitment on this which could make a difference.

The department continues to represent the GMB on the Local Authority/HSE Forum and on the Waste Industry Safety and Health Forum (WISH). The department would like to thank Simon Reed, London Region, for the work he did for this group on helping to produce guidance on Driver Competency.

One of the tasks in the coming year is to identify in conjunction with the respective National Officers where the GMB lacks representation on these national bodies and rectify this.

### **Workers Safety Advisors**

While the GMB will always press for greater rights for Safety Representatives in both their own, and other workplaces, the prospects of such at present are slim. This is why the GMB has gone down the path of making applications to the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) for funding for WSA's. This follows the highly successful bid by the London region over the past two years.

The department is currently waiting for the result of a joint bid, along with the British Furniture Manufacturers, for two WSA's in the East London area. In this project health and safety advice will be given to largely unorganised workplaces, where consultation between management and the workforce is effectively meaningless .This is intended to be the last year funding will be available for this overall three year project and it will be interesting to see if the DWP introduce further schemes in their quest for worker involvement. If not, it is clear that they will have to consider other mechanisms if they wish to extend worker involvement and proper consultation beyond unionised workplaces.

### **Conclusion**

The Health and Environment department has had an admittedly lean period over the past few years. However with the appointment of new personnel and a new approach to how recruitment and organisation are to be utilised across the GMB there is an opportunity for the department to play its' full part and become an automatic tool in the whole process.

There will still be a need to produce advice and material for safety reps and officers and while increasingly this will be available electronically, the traditional methods for those without access to computers will continue.

Engagement will still be necessary with government departments and their civil service arm if we are to try and have any influence of policy and legislation. For this the department will continue to work with the GMB Political Officer, who has been of great help in a number of contact areas since the summer.

In addition the work and advice of the European Officer has been extremely beneficial, notwithstanding the mess the British government made of the EU presidency (For evidence just look at its' proposals on the Working Time Directive).

And the overlapping interests of these different departments highlights the need to do things collectively. Only by sharing experiences and information can the GMB organise and grow. And only by growth can the Health and Environment department continue to develop and deliver a service to the members.

## LEGAL DEPARTMENT

### Personnel

The Department comprises Barry Smith, Legal Officer, and Sarah King, Legal Research and Policy Officer.

### Support for recruitment and organisation

The Department continues to give priority to supporting recruitment, particularly in the Commercial Services and Public Services Sections. Equalities remain as ever a crucial organising issue and as such features strongly in the department's work.

In the NHS the publication of "Agenda for Change" has focussed attention on staffing and grading issues, and in particular on equal pay. We have advised generally on these matters, and in particular on the legal issues that may arise in applying Agenda for Change to members who had been transferred out of the NHS between 1992 and October 2004 under TUPE.

We have supported the National Secretary for Public Services in the setting up of an Equal Pay Unit with GMB Solicitors to pursue claims for equal pay in the public sector, particularly in the NHS and in local government. We have continued to work with the National Secretary and Regions generally on equal pay issues.

We supported this year's National Equalities Event in Manchester by running workshops on discrimination law.

### POLICY DEVELOPMENT

We responded to the public consultation on proposals to change TUPE. The Government has postponed any changes from October 2005 to April 2006. The changes should make it clearer when TUPE applies, but there is some concern that some of the proposed changes may make it easier for employers to make changes to terms and conditions for "economic, technical, or organisational reasons". We will be monitoring the position closely.

We responded to the public consultation on the revised Code of Practice on Industrial Action Ballots and Notice to Employers. We highlighted our concerns about the onerous obligations that the industrial action notice requirements place on unions and repeated our calls for a withdrawal of this requirement.

We worked with the Research Department in responding to the DTI's Work and Families: choice and flexibility consultation document and preparing a Parliamentary Briefing on the resulting Work and Parents Bill, in which, in line with Congress policy we call for an increase in statutory paternity pay. Our regular attendance at both the Work and Parents Group and EOC Parents and Carers Coalition meeting provided an opportunity to engage with trade union and voluntary sector colleagues on these issues and promote GMB policy on the family friendly agenda.

Legislation prohibiting age discrimination in employment is due to come into force in October 2006. We worked with colleagues in the Pensions and Research Departments in responding to the DTI's Coming of Age consultation on the draft regulations. We are concerned at the large number of exceptions contained in the legislation, particularly regarding retirement practices and the proposed introduction of a "justification" test in relation to direct age discrimination. We will be offering briefings on this confusing new legislation prior to its implementation.

### PUBLICATIONS AND INFORMATION PROVISION

Each year sees the introduction of a raft of employment related legislation. We endeavour to keep abreast of the changes and to disseminate this information, in an accessible and user friendly format among officers and the regions, through the use of Law Briefings and more compact Law Notes.

We issued a Law Briefing on the Information and Consultation Regulations 2004, which came into force in April. The Law Briefing was prepared and issued in conjunction with a Research Department Bargaining Brief and together the documents provided a comprehensive guide to this complex legislation. It is difficult to say what impact the Regulations are having as we have had very few queries. However we were consulted by and provided detailed comments to Southern Region over P&O Ferries' proposed addendum to the existing Recognition and Procedure Agreement.

We also produced Law Notes on:

- Industrial Action - outlining the new rules on 7 day notices;
- CAC Recognition Ballots - covering the new rules on access and unfair practices;
- New Legislation in force (Sex Discrimination, Equal Pay, Employment Tribunal Procedures, and the National Minimum Wage);
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (Amendment) Regulations 2003, which addressed some of the major weaknesses in the DDA
- Maternity Leave and Family Friendly Issues, explaining important changes in relation to SMP and further legislative proposals on the family friendly agenda;
- Discrimination Legislation Update 2005-2006 outlining the major recent and forthcoming changes in discrimination law.

We issued revised Guides for Officers on Industrial Action and CAC Recognition Applications, reflecting the changes introduced by the Employment Relations Act 2004 and incorporating revised and new Codes of Practice. The guides provide a practical, step by step tool to assist officers navigating the troubled waters of industrial action and recognition applications.

“GMB the Most Asked Questions”, which we update annually is now in its 12<sup>th</sup> edition. This consists of a series of one page answers to questions covering the breadth of employment rights issues, including Health & Safety, Contracts & Pay, Discipline & Dismissal and Union Rights that Regions can easily send or hand to members with common enquiries. This is posted on the internal GMB intranet, and a slightly amended version (which excludes region-specific benefits) is posted on the GMB website.

In 2006, we aim to produce briefings focusing on legal issues within specific sectors, for example migrant workers and identity checks under the Asylum and Immigration Act.

### **Support for recognition**

We have continued to provide casework support to officers in their recognition applications to the Central Arbitration Committee. Barry Smith is available to visit Regions to act as devil’s advocate prior to an application being made.

GMB continues to meet with considerable success across a wide range of companies, often where GMB members have stayed loyal through years of employer hostility. GMB continues to make positive use of the legislation, both as a framework for voluntary agreements (the “shadow effect”), and as a procedure for achieving recognition in the face of employer resistance.

We have issued a revised version of the Guide for Officers to take account of a number of changes in CAC procedures as a result of the Employment Relations Act 2004. The revised Guide contains details of the new rules on access and unfair practices in CAC recognition ballots that came into effect on 1 October 2005. Earlier in the year we responded to the public consultation on the new Code of Practice on Access and Unfair Practices in Recognition Ballots. We have held and offered briefings at Regional level.

We have continued to provide general advice on cases, and have been involved in assisting Officers e.g. in the successful Southern Region application at Gleasons Works Limited in Plymouth.

We continue to campaign for improvements in the procedure e.g. for the removal of the 21 worker threshold before a CAC application can be made, and the removal of the need in a recognition ballot to get support from 40% of the workers in the bargaining unit, as well as a majority.

On a disappointing note, we lost the Ultraframe judicial review case in the High Court, which illustrates how strictly the 40% rule is applied. In this Lancashire Region application, 53.9% of workers in the bargaining unit voted for recognition in a postal ballot. However, the proportion of workers in the bargaining unit who voted for recognition was 39.1%. Five workers did not receive ballot papers due to postal problems, and had they done so, would have voted for recognition. This would have reached the 40% threshold.

We successfully argued at a Central Arbitration Committee (CAC) hearing in June 2004 for the ballot to be re-run. However, the employers, backed by the EEF, challenged this by way of judicial review. The case was brought against the Union and the CAC. The case was heard in January 2005, and regrettably the High Court overturned the CAC decision. The Judge hearing the case ruled that the CAC had no legal power to order a re-run ballot, and even if it did have this power, it should not have ordered a re-run in our case.

Following pessimistic legal advice on the prospects of a successful appeal, it was agreed not to pursue an appeal to the Court of Appeal. The CAC decided to appeal on its own, and although we did not appeal or intervene as an interested party, we wrote to the Court of Appeal in support of the CAC position. The Court of Appeal held that the CAC did in principle have legal power to order a re-run of a ballot. However the Court heard no argument on whether the CAC should have ordered a re-run at Ultraframe, and did not overturn the earlier decision of the High Court not to order a re-run. The CAC eventually ruled that GMB was not entitled to be recognised because the vote fell below the 40% threshold.

### **Support for industrial action**

The Department continues to provide regular support to Officers on industrial action matters and industrial action ballots, representing a significant proportion of the department's work.

From 1 October 2005, new rules have applied to the information we have to give to the employer in the 7-day pre-ballot and pre-action notices. We are now required to provide lists and figures of those to be balloted or called upon to take action. We issued a Law Note and revised the Guide for Officers to take account of these changes, including revised draft letters for Officers to use. We have held and offered briefings to Regions.

Our Officers have continued to face challenges in relation to industrial action matters, and in particular in relation to the 7-day notices. Despite the changes introduced on 1 October 2005, it is still often very difficult to provide adequate information on the lists and figures of the relevant workers/members. We continue to provide day to day support to National and Regional Officers in preparing for and conducting industrial action.

We assisted national officers in a wide range of ballots and disputes across both the private and public sectors e.g. ASDA, Safeways/Morrisons, Terminal 5, the Local Government Pension Scheme, and CWS Funeral Services,

In ASDA we advised generally on a number of issues relating to the complexities of the law in this area, and also in relation to the Northern Region dispute at Washington, which highlighted further difficulties with the current requirements to provide notice under the legislation.

In Safeways/Morrisons we faced technical points of law regarding the identity of the employer – a tactic used by the company in an attempt to avoid establishing a joint national bargaining agreement, and to avoid service of the pre-ballot notice. Despite these challenges, and a re-run ballot (which produced a yes vote for action), the National Officer successfully negotiated an agreement.

In Terminal 5, we faced again faced challenges from the employer in relation to the information provided in the pre-ballot notice.

In the Local Government Pension Scheme ballot we have faced further challenges surrounding the complex rules that apply when a dispute arises with the Secretary of State, rather than the employer.

We continue to support the National Officer in efforts to secure the repeal of section 127 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 without any pre-conditions. This is the legislation which restricts the Union's ability to call upon members who work as custody officers, prisoner custody officers, and detention custody officers (in respect of asylum seekers) in private sector companies to take industrial action. The Government has repealed section 127 for prison officers in the public sector as their union has signed a collective agreement binding it not to call upon its members to take action. This is something which GMB will not agree to.

We are participating in the preparation of a Trade Union Freedom Bill. This follows on from Composite

1 carried unanimously at TUC Congress 2005. The 2005 Labour Party Conference also backed a resolution calling for freedom to take solidarity action. As part of our involvement, we have argued that repeal of section 127 with no pre-conditions above should be included as part of the Bill. We are presently (at the time of writing this report) awaiting a response from the TUC to our proposal to include the repeal of section 127 in the Bill.

### **Employment Relations Act 2004**

We have held and offered briefings to Regions on the new rules which have been introduced as a result of the Act, including industrial action, recognition applications, the new law on unlawful inducements, and the BNP.

In the CWS Funeral Services dispute we successfully used the grievance procedure under the statutory dispute resolution procedures and argued that the employer was offering workers unlawful inducements when they made a pay offer over the heads of GMB. Tribunal cases were initiated, leading to a settlement in 2005.

### **Statutory disciplinary, dismissal, and grievance procedures**

It has now been a year since the introduction of the statutory disciplinary, dismissal and grievance procedures. Employers must comply with the statutory disciplinary and dismissal procedures before dismissal and employees are required to comply with the statutory grievance procedure before bringing most types of tribunal claim.

We expressed our concerns over the complexity of the new rules prior to their introduction in October 2004. Statistics from the Employment Tribunal Service show a reduction of about 40% in the number of tribunal applications in 2004-05, one of the Government's primary objectives in introducing the new procedures. It is difficult to assess whether this reduction is due to improved workplace dispute resolution or whether applicants are merely being deterred by the complexity of the rules.

The TUC intend to survey the unions on, and in preparation we have contacted the Regional Offices for feedback of their experiences. Some initial feedback indicates that the procedures have been used positively to resolve disputes in the workplace. The rules have also assisted in some litigated cases: Tribunals seem to be adopting a fairly liberal interpretation as to what amounts to a grievance letter under the rules and the uplift in compensation for the employer's failure to follow the procedure has also been used to our members' advantage.

We have updated our Briefing Note on "the Right to be accompanied in disciplinary and grievance hearings" and propose to issue more detailed guidance on the procedures, incorporating any feedback received from the Regions. We understand that the Government will be reviewing the procedures later this year, as part of the wider DTI simplification plan. In addition to addressing some of the procedural complexities, we will use this as a further opportunity to raise issues such as the removal of qualifying service for unfair dismissal claims and the range of reasonable responses test.

### **Other employment law**

We continue to provide day to day support to the Union's Officers on individual employment law matters, though collective issues and policy matters remain the department's priority.

### **Trade union legal services**

Trade union legal services have been under attack recently from the Government, the CBI, and the Insurance Industry. The most recent threats have arisen from the following sources:

- A proposal to put the County Court Small Claims limit up to £2,500 (the original proposal was £5,000), which would mean that in almost 50% of GMB accident cases legal costs would no longer be recoverable
- A proposal to resolve lower value accident claims of below £10,000 in value without trade union solicitor involvement (put on hold at present)
- Compensation claims firms poaching trade union members
- Insurance and CBI led pressures to cut costs (the CBI has recently suggested introducing a fee for making an employment tribunal application)

- The Compensation Bill, which proposes to regulate claims farmers, but may bring trade unions within its ambit (at the time of writing we are seeking to secure an exemption for trade unions).
- The Compensation Bill also proposes to introduce a new definition of the law of negligence. In future, when a court considers what reasonable steps an employer or defendant should have taken to avoid an accident, the court will be able to take into account whether these steps might prevent a “desirable activity” from taking place. The reason given for this change is that there is a “compensation culture” which is deterring desirable activities previously undertaken in the public and voluntary sectors through a fear of being sued. If this becomes law many GMB members, particularly those who are injured in the public sector, will see their claims bogged down in complex legal arguments and appeals over the definition of “desirable activities”. We are lobbying the Government and MPs to prevent this change from going ahead.
- Adverse changes to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme, which will lead to injured workers recovering less compensation from the scheme

We are seeking to play our part in resisting these attacks on trade union legal services.

### **Standing Orders Committee**

Barry Smith was Secretary to the GMB Congress 2005 Standing Orders Committee (SOC), and is Secretary to the GMB Congress 2006 SOC.

## **PENSIONS DEPARTMENT**

### **Staffing**

The GMB Pensions Officer, Naomi Cooke and Pensions Policy & Research Officer, Heidi Benzing, were joined in November 2005 by the new Pensions Casework Officer, Phil McEvoy.

### **Action on Congress Motions**

The Department has successfully campaigned for an explicit Labour Party policy to introduce a universal state pension linked to earnings. In the same resolution passed at Labour Party conference 2005, the party called on the government to introduce compulsory contributions to occupational pensions. The Department supported both TUC and Labour Party conferences writing motions and speeches.

We have continued to lobby the government in areas relating to the protection of occupational pension rights incorporating significant work on the Pension Protection Fund and Financial Assistance Scheme. Also in 2005 the TUPE regulations were extended to cover pension provision. Although this is a major achievement in itself, the Department is continuing to lobby for improvements in the protection for pensions provided in legislation.

The Department continues to work with other campaign groups such as the National Pensioners Convention and Age Concern to improve the lives of UK pensioners in a number of different areas.

Throughout 2005 the Department has been heavily involved in the issue of Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) reform. The Department continues to support the National Secretary’s negotiations in this area through the provision of member communications, participation in formal committees, responding to consultations, parliamentary briefings and press comment.

The Department formally responded to and actively participated in discussions over ODPM proposals for a new LGPS set to be introduced in 2008. Formal responses were also submitted to consultations on draft regulations to the LGPS on a range of issues including provision for Civil Partners and changes to Inland Revenue restrictions. The Department continues to be involved in discussions with the DPM, his officials, the Employers’ Organisation and other trade unions on proposed changes to the scheme.

The Department was also involved with the Public Sector Forum agreement on pension negotiations that produced a framework for the reforms to the NHS and Civil Service pension schemes.

### **Support for Recruitment & Organising**

The Department provides briefings and other information for officers wishing to take the opportunity provided by pensions issues to recruit and organise members. In addition members of the Department have participated in seminars and other events to increase the profile of the union. The prominence of the union on pensions issues has also been strengthened through increased involvement in the production of press releases and articles for publication.

In conjunction with the New Media Co-ordinator the pensions section of the GMB website has also been built up to maximise access to the information provided by the Department. This can be accessed at [www.gmb.org.uk/pensions](http://www.gmb.org.uk/pensions). Additionally the Department also developed the Public Sector Pensions Campaign section of the website that ensures those seeking information on reforms to public sector pension schemes have the most up to date information available. This can be found at [www.gmb.org.uk/pspc](http://www.gmb.org.uk/pspc). In 2005 the Department began producing brief guides to the Local Government Pension Scheme for use by organisers and members seeking to better understand their current entitlements. These documents are also available through the website at [www.gmb.org.uk/lgpsguide](http://www.gmb.org.uk/lgpsguide).

The Department has continued to support the 150 strong member nominated trustee database. The trustees have received a number of mailings, which contain bulletins, briefings and publications from external sources such as the Pensions Regulator. In 2005 we also started to produce the bimonthly Pensions Q&As which seek to extend engagement on pensions issues to a wider audience.

### **Casework**

The Department manages a large casework load for the 10 GMB regions. The casework is diverse and covers all the main types of pension schemes: occupational, state, personal and stakeholder pensions. With the new Pensions Casework Officer the ability to expand this function is substantial and the Department will be able to continue to support the casework of regional officers.

The Pensions Department has continued to provide casework support for regional organisers, which has involved taking on cases fully and supporting those who retain the casework in the region. The cases worked on in the Department are normally complex and currently involve the Pensions Ombudsman, Financial Services Authority and Internal Disputes Resolution Procedures.

Although staff in the Department need to receive requests to assist or deal with any relevant cases and member enquiries through a regional official, a significant number of direct calls are received from members who have been advised by officers to contact the Pensions Department directly. The Department staff exercise a great deal of good judgement and flexibility, always seeking to assist with an individual enquiry if it is possible to do so. In particular the increased awareness of the proposed changes in the Local Government Pension Scheme has led to a significant increase in the number of calls to the Pensions Department which are all handled but may be indicative of a wider issue with the dissemination of information to individual members.

### **Policy/Political Lobbying**

The work of the Pension Commission has dominated the political agenda on pension issues throughout the year with the publication of its two reports. The Department formally responded to the interim report and produced substantial briefing material (for members, officers and MPs) and press comment in the aftermath of the second report at the end of November 2005. In addition the Department participates in public debates on the report's contents and wider areas of pension reform.

The Department also co-ordinated the union's response to the formal consultation on Age Discrimination legislation and has provided briefings on its contents. We continue to argue for improved pension provision under TUPE law and submitted a formal response to the Draft Regulations on this issue in January 2005.

The Department has taken a prominent role in the discussions on the establishment, funding and assistance distribution of the Financial Assistance Scheme. This involves holding meetings with the DWP about the scheme's implementation and attending meetings of the Pension Theft Action Group.

Two consultation documents were produced by the government this year covering the way defined benefit pension schemes are funded and the GMB submitted a response to both. In addition, a member guide has been published to update interested activists, particularly trustees, on developments.

The Department also responded to a trustee consultation document entitled: The occupational pension schemes (member nominated trustees and directors) regulations.

On the issue of the Requirement of Employers to Consult on scheme changes the GMB formally responded to the consultation and successfully secured several changes to the Regulations that will provide significantly better rights for members to be consulted when employers seek to change their pension arrangements.

The Department continues to be actively involved in the wider pensions debate, holding informal discussions with a number of think tanks and interested parties in addition to co-ordinated participation through the TUC.

### **Industrial Support**

Departmental support in the private sector has centred on a number of individual scheme specific issues relating to imposed changes, transfers and scheme suspension. This has required the Pensions Department to negotiate issue resolutions and provide significant information support. This has been the case in a number of different companies both nationally and within Regions.

A growing issue that unfortunately has become increasingly prominent over the last year is that of scheme wind ups. Departmental support for workers at Federal Mogul continues and subject to confirmation from the Pension Protection Fund it is likely that the scheme members will be eligible to receive 90% of the benefits they've earned from the PPF. This is significant progress on the initial offer of 7% that the potential owners in the US recommended. However, more companies are finding themselves entering the insolvency process with an underfunded occupational pension scheme and the Department is providing advice and information to members and officers at a growing rate.

The second prominent change that is growing in prominence is the move to close final salary schemes, firstly to new entrants which has been common for a number of years and secondly to all members. The Department continues to provide support to members and union officials fighting both these attacks on pension provision for example in British Gas and Rockwool during 2005.

Regional and national pension negotiations in which the Department has participated have been diverse. These have ranged from trying to lessen the impact of a reduction in pension benefits for members (in the Co-Op for example) to establishing a pension consultative committee (Pilkington Glass) to creating a new industry wide pension scheme (NDA). This has involved attending various meetings and producing bulletins and briefings to update the members and officers about developments.

In the public sector outside the Local Government Pension Scheme, the Department have supported the National Officer's negotiations in the NHS and Civil Service schemes. At the start of 2005 the Department supported the NHS Employers in the publication of a consultation document. This was a joint publication between the employers and the trade unions. A full response was prepared to the document. The Department sits on the steering group and technical advisory group within the NHS negotiating forum. By the end of 2005 the NHS scheme was at a preliminarily stage of negotiations which the Department continues to support.

A response to the civil service consultation document was submitted early in 2005. Later in the year, the Department obtained a seat representing the industrial trade unions in the civil service negotiations.

### **Committees**

Throughout 2005 members of the Department represented the GMB on a number of committees run by the TUC, ODPM, DWP and DoH in addition to trade union side committees considering the three main public sector schemes. The GMB/T&G Local Government Pension Committee met several times during the year and in addition the Department organised the annual conference held in December 2005 at the T&G's Eastbourne venue.

In addition, during the GMB lay delegates' health conference in November, a two hour break out session was run by the Department where member views were sought to assist with future negotiations. A report is currently being prepared summarising the results of the consultation session.

## **Training**

The Department has re-launched the training programme for both officers and activists in April 2005. The officers training programme has primarily focused on a one day introduction to pensions. Eight out of the ten Regions have now received the training while the other two have issued invitations, although dates still need to be fixed. Specialist officer training days have also been launched and the Department is in the process of developing further days. The first of these courses is TUPE training on pensions, which was given in GMB Midland and East Coast Region.

The advanced pension course will run in Manchester at the end of March 2006 and will primarily focus on trustees, although interested activists can also apply. The four day course will provide an invaluable resource for GMB trustees.

The Department also began the process of launching one day activists training programmes during 2005. The training will be given at Regional Offices and should provide a good source of information for shop stewards and branch secretaries, along with other interested members.

## **POLITICAL WORK**

### **Introduction**

The position of National Political Officer has been in post now for a full year. Through this position GMB has been able to raise the profile of political work at a national level, as well as utilising our MPs in the House of Commons to further the interests of members.

GMB has greatly increased its correspondence with Ministers and MPs, taking issues that affect our members to the heart of Government.

Over the last year we have worked on the 2005 General Election, the 2006 Local Elections and general political campaigns. We also produced our first quarterly Political Bulletin which was sent out across the union, to GMB MPs and other interested parties.

### **Regional Political Officers**

Throughout the year there have been a number of meetings with Regional Political Officers to exchange information and co-ordinate our political work. Increased co-ordination and co-operation is delivering a greater coherent strategy throughout the GMB.

### **Westminster Office**

There is now a GMB Office at the House of Commons, where Iain McNicol is based. This has allowed the GMB to raise its game in terms of lobbying and day to day contact with MPs, special advisors and researchers.

The Department can arrange visits to the House of Commons for GMB members. For more details contact Iain McNicol at GMB National Office or email [iain.mcnicol@gmb.org.uk](mailto:iain.mcnicol@gmb.org.uk)

### **Labour Party**

GMB has two representatives on the NEC of the Labour Party - Mary Turner and Debbie Coulter and four positions on the National Policy Forum. Throughout last year we have played an integral role within the Labour Party.

At the 2005 Labour Party conference GMB had speakers in all the main debates. Our motion on pensions, which was passed, set Labour Party policy on its most radical tract.

We were involved in a number of fringe meetings ranging from the Services Directive to the future of manufacturing.

### **Government**

Regular meetings with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) have been ongoing, as well as individual meetings with Ministers to discuss issues as and when they arise. GMB has taken delegations into Parliament to raise our concerns over issues such as the future of council housing, local government pensions, shipbuilding procurement, the future of the NHS and legal services affecting trade unions.

## General Election 2005

The General Election strategy had 3 main objectives:

1. Return to the House of Commons the MPs we target with support
2. Return with a differential swing those seats that we target
3. Raise political awareness and activism throughout GMB membership

The strategy was set following the CEC decision to direct funds to those MPs who share our aims and values. A list of key seats was drawn up in consultation with the Regions and 26 key seats were selected. We also directed our resources into other seats where MPs and candidates had a relationship and supported the GMB.

Each region allocated a GMB contact for the target seat (Key Seat Co-ordinator) who is responsible for liaising with the GMB, the constituency and the candidate to ensure that the right support is going in at the right time and the that a relationship is developed. Each Key Seat Co-ordinator was trained and supported by the Trade Union and Labour Party Liaison Organisation (TULO). At a national level, we provided a range of practical resources to support our General Election strategy, a number of these resources are listed below:

- A national print service
- Postal vote registration
- Work place visits for candidates
- Labour Students campaign teams
- GMB MPs campaign visits
- Telephone Canvassing

## General Election Key Seats

The key seats that GMB targeted were:

|                             |      |
|-----------------------------|------|
| Bexleyheath & Crayford      | Lost |
| Wansdyke                    | Won  |
| Selby                       | Won  |
| Putney                      | Lost |
| Burton                      | Won  |
| Wimbledon                   | Lost |
| Elmet                       | Won  |
| Croydon Central             | Lost |
| Hastings & Rye              | Won  |
| Battersea                   | Won  |
| Dundee East                 | Lost |
| Aberdeen North              | Won  |
| Aberdeen South              | Won  |
| Dover                       | Won  |
| Erewash                     | Won  |
| Kettering                   | Lost |
| Worcester                   | Won  |
| Stourbridge                 | Won  |
| High Peak                   | Won  |
| Oldham East and Saddleworth | Won  |
| Norwich North               | Won  |
| Brentford and Isleworth     | Won  |
| Shipley                     | Lost |
| Hendon                      | Won  |
| Yardley                     | Lost |
| Batley & Spen               | Won  |

Of the 26 key seats we retained 18 and lost 8. The GMB group of MPs remained at over 100 with a

number of new intakes, such as Dawn Butler, Jim McGovern, Sadiq Khan, Shahid Malik, Jessica Morden and Kitty Usher.

GMB played a key role in successfully returning Labour MPs to parliament, three of the seats we targeted were held with less than 500 votes; Stourbridge 407, Selby 467 and Battersea 163. Without our contribution these seats may well have been lost.

### **Local Elections 2006**

National Office, in conjunction with the regions agreed a list of key Local Authorities to target for the Local Elections scheduled for May. Working closely with TULO the GMB devised a direct mail strategy aimed at contacting the GMB members living within each target Local Authority. The direct mail comprised of an initial letter and survey to canvass members concerns and opinions about local issues, followed by two follow-up letters detailing the results of the survey and highlight the benefits of returning a Labour Council. The direct mail was followed by telephone canvassing and supported by the production of a range a literature and leaflets.

The Local Elections are important to the GMB not only because of the 200,000 plus members we have working in Local Authorities, but also because of opportunity it presents for us to take our members' concerns directly to the decision makers within each Local Authority, thus giving our members the voice to directly affect the local policies important to them.

### **Political Campaigns**

#### **CASH AND VALUABLES IN TRANSIT (CVIT)**

One of the main campaigns we have been involved in is that of CVIT. A number of our members who work in this sector have been attacked and injured whilst delivering monies to banks. We have been working jointly with the industry in particular G4S, to try reducing these attacks.

The campaign has focused on getting Government to do more. At a meeting we held at the Labour Party conference, one of our members, who had been a victim of a shooting, took the platform with the Home Office Minister. A delegation was also taken to the Home Office to raise our concerns and issues. Further briefings have taken place with MPs and an Early Day Motion (EDM) was laid in parliament.

Our objectives are three fold:

- Reduce the number of attacks by getting more police resources
- Design out the risks of attacks by forcing planners to make safe docking systems and drop off points
- Reclassify the crime - as presently it is reported as a business crime

GMB want to see CVIT crime moved up the political and policing priority list.

#### **EARLY DAY MOTIONS**

Through the closer links established with the GMB group of MPs we submitted a number of EDMs to raise the profile of the broad range of campaigns we are running.

The CVIT attacks and Asda EDM's both specifically mentioned the GMB. A number of EDMs were lodged on the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) issue encouraging the Government to rethink its decision to change the LGPS. A number of other EDMs were supported and publicised by the GMB on a range of issues from council housing to Columbia.

### **EDUCATION**

Since the closure of our National College we have mostly relied on our Regions to deliver and develop basic training. There has been considerable activity on the education front throughout the year with Regional Education Officers meeting regularly in an attempt to reach consensus on a national learning strategy and a programme for activists training. Talks are ongoing with the WEA on developing a partnership arrangement for the delivery of activist courses, but additionally REOs are liaising closely

with the National Organising Team to develop a standardised activist programme that links to the organising agenda. Furthermore a pilot Officers Training Programme has been successfully completed in the Southern Region and talks are underway to roll this out to other interested Regions. The need to bring the Regional Education Officers closer to the CEC Training Committee has necessitated proposed changes to our internal structures.

The key to success for the future must be the development of workplace organising skills and REOs are fully committed to meet that emerging agenda. The opening of a new skills centre by Southern Region for in house and distance learning is a particular advance well worth noting.

Our successful bid in the Union Modernisation Fund involved work by Allan Garley Regional Secretary South Western Region and Dolores O'Donoghue National Office both of whom must take significant thanks from us all for their work.

The objective is to produce a co-ordinated, properly resourced national training programme, delivered by our Regions to meet our members' needs and requirements. New Courses covering the new areas our members work in, where and when they work!

## RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

This report highlights how the GMB Research Department's research and policy team has contributed to implementing the strategy determined by the CEC.

### The purpose and role of the Department

The research and policy team fulfils two main functions:

- Providing information and assistance that GMB officers and activists find valuable in recruiting, organising and representing members, motivating members to become more active, and winning recognition from employers.
- Developing union policy, raising the GMB profile and strengthening GMB influence by providing specialist advice, preparing proposals, drafting consultations and liaising with contacts in government and other relevant industrial political and other bodies in the UK and the European Union.

### 1. Support for recruitment and organisation

The research and policy team undertake a wide range of activities to support recruitment and organisation throughout GMB. In line with the decisions taken by Congress, our priorities during 2005 have included a close focus on supporting GMB organising activities.

Notable examples include:

- Material for newsletters and briefing and a new organising handbook for GMB stewards developed by Dolores O'Donoghue as part of the GMB fightback campaign in logistics company DHL
- Briefings, profiling and analysis produced by Ida Clemo to assist the development of a successful organising strategy within food distribution company 3663
- A schools recruitment guide developed by Helga Pile using best practice advice provided by GMB Regions, along with contributions to the successful GMB school support staff resource pack, which is designed to establish a GMB 'contact' or rep in every school

The Department now services the CEC Recruitment and Organisation Committee and has collated for the Committee's consideration material from regional consultations on recruitment and workplace organisation, and on Fresh Start for Branches, in line with the CEC *Framework for the Future* recommendations.

Ida Clemo has provided a range of membership reports and analysis to assist the work of the National Organising Team, and the Department will continue to work closely with the NOT to support its programme for 2006.

We have also continued to provide advice, briefing and analysis for national officials and senior managers on the implications of policy, regulatory or industrial developments for GMB membership growth – for example security industry licensing, gangmaster regulation, aviation policy, and children's workforce reform.

## **2. Support for bargaining and representation**

The research and policy team continue to provide a range of bargaining support services for national, regional and workplace negotiators. As well as offering advice and information, we have drafted pay claims for a variety of negotiations, and the Department provides a monthly update on key bargaining statistics and information via email and the GMB website.

We are closely involved in supporting a variety of negotiations bringing specialist expertise to a range of working parties and other activities across the sections.

The following activities illustrate some of the work of the Department in this area during the course of 2005:

- The job evaluation exercise for senior managers in the Probation Service is now nearly complete and Gerry Carr has been closely involved in the joint working group which has carried out this work
- Major industrial developments within the MOD have included the HR Transformation project, pay and bonus review and a job reduction programme in Northern Ireland – Charlie King has provided detailed policy and bargaining support across all these areas
- Following the successful dispute which forced Morrisons to enter national negotiations with GMB, Ida Clemo provided considerable advice and assistance in the drawing up of a new collective agreement and the agreeing of redundancy terms
- A suite of new policies and agreements have been developed with Group 4 Securicor and Securitas, with the advice and assistance of Dolores O'Donoghue. These have helped deepen GMB organisation and influence within this major group of companies
- The first ever strike by teaching assistants forced Brighton and Hove Council to go to binding arbitration in the spring of 2005 and the joint union submission for the hearing was drafted by Helga Pile. As a result of the judgement the teaching assistants gained an extra week's pay and this has fed into the wider campaign for national pay and conditions

The Department has shown itself to be a source of expertise on workforce development issues, and 2005 saw Charlie King contribute on behalf of GMB to the development of new national qualifications and apprenticeships in the utilities and recycling sectors. Ida Clemo contributed to a workforce skills project as part of the Tourism Review Implementation Group, and Helga Pile became a member of the board of the Children's Workforce Development Council and secured sub-committee nominations for two GMB regional officers.

We always seek to use policy monitoring and development work to further the interests of GMB members and Gerry Carr was able to put his social security expertise to good use when he compiled a submission to the social security appeal tribunal on behalf of a GMB member. The social security commissioner agreed with the GMB submission and the member went on to win his incapacity benefit appeal with Gerry's support.

## **3. Information, advice and assistance**

The Department produces a wide variety of information resources for officers and activists. In 2005 we produced well-received Bargaining Briefs on Information and Consultation, Childcare Assistance and Sustainable Development.

Members of the research and policy team were pleased to contribute copy for the first ever editions of GMB Official and GMB Public Eye and look forward to continuing to do so.

Other briefings and bulletins produced by members of the for members and activists included:

- GMB school workforce news

- Security industry
- ID cards
- Transport working time and other driving legislation

Once again 2005 saw us handle thousands of enquiries a year from stewards and officers and towards the end of the year Ida Clemo undertook a consultation with regions on their information needs, leading to an updating of the company information system available for regions to access themselves and a considerable cost-saving for the union.

Ida also provided the CEC and GMB's senior management team with regular reports and analysis of membership trends and projections in a new format.

All members of the Department made a major contribution to the provision of policy advice and assistance for the GMB delegations to the 2005 TUC and Labour Party conferences, as well as for Congress 2005. Congress 2005 cannot however be mentioned without acknowledging the great debt of thanks owed by the to former Research Director Phil Wyatt who made a temporary comeback from retirement to ensure that Congress ran smoothly.

### **Policy development and campaigns**

The research and policy team play a vital role in monitoring and disseminating social, political and economic developments, and in producing policy responses which reflect the views and priorities of our members. We have continued to work collaboratively with colleagues across the union to produce targeted responses in key GMB policy areas, including:

- Work and Families Bill
- Age discrimination regulations
- Gangmasters Exclusions Consultations
- Managed Migration, Immigration and Asylum submission
- Review of Gambling Commission
- National Minimum wage review of the 16-17 year old rate, older workers development rate and apprenticeship rate, benefits in kind and the accommodation offset
- Utilities regulation – Ofgem and Ofwat consultations
- Defence Industrial Strategy
- Children's workforce strategy consultation
- Child protection consultations – vetting and barring and dealing with allegations against staff

Alongside our work in responding to consultations, the research and policy team undertake considerable policy development work. Charlie King has been a leading contributor to the work of the Trade Union Sustainable Development Advisory Committee (TUSDAC). He completed his secondment to DEFRA in the spring of 2005 and produced *Greening the Workplace* a major report on the role of trade unions in sustainable development, which was launched at a high profile conference. Since then he has continued to work in TUSDAC on energy policy, including renewables, clean coal, micro-generation and energy and environment.

GMB has led the work of the school support staff unions on the campaign for a national pay framework for school support staff and Helga Pile has supported this by collating evidence from members and negotiators, providing briefings and drafting proposals which GMB has pursued with both the employers and the DfES.

Sometimes policy development work has to give way to more pressing concerns and the Department has shown itself to be flexible in its ability to respond. This flexibility was very much in evidence when towards the end of 2005 GMB disabled members were hit by Croydon Council's decision to close the Crosfield supported factory with the loss of 100 jobs. Gerry Carr stepped in to assist the National Secretary in supporting Southern Region, and has worked intensively on lobbying, campaign leaflets, material for the website and GMB's submission to the Council.

#### 4. Boosting GMB influence and raising the union's public profile

The research and policy team work to ensure that GMB exercises influence within Government, industry bodies, the TUC and international union federations.

We have maintained a voice on migrant workers within the Home Office through Ida Clemo's participation in the Working Party on Work Permits. Ida was also part of a delegation to DEFRA ensuring that GMB concerns about the EU REACH Directive were communicated during the UK Presidency.

The scandal of the increased incidence of violent attacks on Cash in Transit couriers has been a high profile campaign for GMB in recent months and Dolores O'Donoghue has worked on raising the profile of this issue and the development of a Charter for Security Workers at a political level including Ministerial briefing.

Helga Pile has contributed to maintaining GMB's profile with the DfES through the school workforce social partnership, and through interventions on issues of importance to our school support staff members such as pay and grading, pupil behaviour, right to use restraint, and allegations against staff. The GMB contribution to the staging of the first ever school support staff national awards also raised our profile and Helga acted as the GMB contact in helping to organise the event and ensure GMB nominations for the award categories – we are pleased to say that as a result the GMB sponsored teaching assistant of the year award was won by a GMB member.

GMB continues to have a high profile in campaigning activities around support for UK manufacturing and Charlie King has been a major contributor to the work of the TUC Manufacturing Forum, working to give a high profile to GMB priorities such as community development funds and the link between energy policy and manufacturing jobs.

#### Research Department staffing

Staffing within the Department has remained constant since last year.

## REPORT ON MOTIONS AND CEC SPECIAL REPORTS AND STATEMENTS (CARRIED BY THE 2005 CONGRESS)

The CEC reviewed all motions and reports/statements carried by the 2005 Congress and decided what action to take to implement the will of Congress. In each case the appropriate action fell into one or more of the following categories:

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>CEC</b>                        | To note and take into account in its deliberations (such as in deciding what issues to press and how to vote at TUC Congress and Labour Party Conference), and to pass issues for action to the relevant CEC committee. |
| <b>GS/DGS</b>                     | To be noted, actioned or taken into account by the Acting General Secretary (AGS) or Deputy General Secretary (DGS) and the appropriate department(s) of National Office or the National Administration Unit (NAU).     |
| <b>Region(s)</b>                  | For appropriate action by the relevant Region(s).   |
| <b>National Officer</b>           | For appropriate action by the relevant Section Secretary/ National Officer.   |
| <b>Section National Committee</b> | For consideration/action by the relevant Section Committee.   |
| <b>TUC / LP</b>                   | To pursue via TUC or Labour Party channels.   |
| <b>Govt</b>                       | To raise with the relevant government department.   |
| <b>MPs MEPs</b>                   | To raise with members of the GMB Westminster / European Parliamentary Groups.   |

- More information about activities resulting from Congress 2005 decisions is to be found in the relevant sections of this General Secretary's report
- All Rule Amendments carried by Congress are being actioned by the Acting General Secretary + Legal Dept.

#### CEC REPORTS AND STATEMENTS APPROVED

| REPORT/STATEMENT  | ACTION   |
|---|--|
| <b>General Secretary's Report</b>   | AGS  |
| <b>CEC Special Report: A Framework for the Future of the GMB</b> (including Rule Amendments to Rule 8, Rule 9, Rule 12, Rule 13 and Rule 47)  | CEC and GMB Senior Management Team; all Regions; the Recruitment & Organisation, Finance, Communications and Training Committees; the Legal Dept and Congress Working Party. |
| <b>CEC Statement to Congress: General Secretary &amp; Treasurer, and Rule Amendment to Rule 15</b>  | CEC and AGS plus Legal Dept  |
| <b>CEC Special Report: Organising in Security, Opportunity and Change</b>   | Recruitment & Organisation Committee and National Officer (CS)   |
| <b>CEC Special Report: Quality Jobs Quality Lives</b>   | Recruitment & Organisation Committee and Finance Committee   |
| <b>CEC Written Statement: Manufacturing</b>   | Phil Davies  |
| <b>CEC Special Report – Housing</b>   | National Officer (PS) + National Political Officer   |
| <b>CEC Financial Report:</b>  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Recommendations on Contributions and Benefits</b> (including Rule Amendments to Rule 47 Clause 1, Rule 47 Clause 3, Rule 67 Clause 8, Rule 67A Clause 5, and Rule 67A Clause 8)</li> <li>• <b>Lay Reps' Expenses</b></li> </ul> | <p>AGS (+ Finance and Legal Depts)</p> <p>AGS (+ Finance and Legal Depts)</p>  |
| <b>Annual Accounts and Auditors Report</b>  | AGS (+ National Office Finance and Legal Depts)  |

#### MOTIONS CARRIED BY CONGRESS

(† = Carried subject to a CEC Qualification)

| MOTION  | ACTION   |
|---|--|
| <b>Union Organisation - Congress</b><br>Motion 14      Policy   | AGS  |
| <b>Union Organisation - General</b><br>†Motion 21      New Unionism<br>Motion 26      Public Services Magazine<br>Motion 27      Internal Communications<br>Motion 31      Managing Workforce Attendance<br>Motion 34      Sweetheart Deals | <p>CEC</p> <p>National Officer (PS)</p> <p>AGS</p> <p>AGS</p> <p>DGS + National Officers (All)</p> |

| MOTION  | ACTION   |
|---|--|
| <b>Union Organisation - Recruitment &amp; Organisation</b><br>Motion 44 Recruitment<br>†Motion 46 Accompanying Reps<br>†Motion 49 Regional And National Race Advisory Committee   | National Officer (CS)<br>Legal Dept<br>DGS   |
| <b>Union Organisation - Representation &amp; Accountability</b><br>Motion 52 General Accountability<br>Motion 63 Elections<br>Comp 1 Publication - Guardian Article<br>†Motion 67 The Warrilow Report   | AGS + National Officers (All)<br>CEC<br>AGS<br>AGS   |
| <b>Union Organisation - Finances &amp; Contributions</b><br>†Motion 76 GMB Finances<br>†Motion 80 GMB Pensions  | Finance Committee<br>AGS   |
| <b>Union Organisation - Union Benefits</b><br>Motion 85 Benefits of Membership<br>†Motion 89 Discount Purchases   | Finance Committee<br>Finance Committee   |
| <b>Union Organisation - Education &amp; Training</b><br>†Motion 92 National Learning Fund Strategy<br>Motion 95 TUC Academy   | DGS<br>DGS   |
| <b>Equal Opportunities</b><br>Comp 2 Equal Pay<br>Motion 101 Equalities, LGB Issues<br>Motion 102 Employment Of Disabled People<br>†Motion 103 Representation In Public Life  | National Officer (Equal Rights)<br>National Officer (Equal Rights)<br>National Officer (Equal Rights)<br>DGS   |
| <b>Health and Safety</b><br>Comp 3 Corporate Manslaughter<br>†Motion 107 Health & Safety<br>Motion 108 Public Holiday For Workers' Memorial Day 28 April<br>Motion 116 Men's Health<br>Motion 280 Prince Charles  | Health & Safety Dept<br>Health & Safety Dept + Regions (All)<br>Health & Safety Dept<br>Health & Safety Dept<br>Health & Safety Dept   |
| <b>Secondary Smoking</b><br>Motion 109 Casino Workers<br>Comp 4 Passive Smoking   | National Officer (F&L) + Health & Safety Dept<br>Health & Safety Dept  |
| <b>Pensions &amp; Retirement</b><br>Comp 5 Public Sector Pensions<br>Comp 6 Local Government Pensions<br>Comp 7 Pensions Restore The Link<br>Comp 8 Safeguarding Pensions<br>Motion 133 Defend Pensions<br>Motion 134 Pensions<br>†Motion 140 Pensions<br>Motion 144 Pensions | Pensions Dept + National Officer (PS)<br>Pensions Dept + National Officer (PS)<br>Pensions Dept<br>Pensions Dept<br>Pensions Dept<br>CEC/TUC<br>Pensions Dept<br>Pensions Dept |

| MOTION  | ACTION   |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Rights at Work</b></p> <p>Comp 9      Employment Rights</p> <p>Comp 10     Anti Trade Union Laws</p> <p>Comp 11     Central Arbitration Committee -<br/>Recognition</p> <p>Comp 13     Employment Tribunals</p> <p>Motion 166   Employment Legislation</p> <p>†Comp 12    Workplace Discipline</p> <p>Motion 169   Employment Tribunals</p> <p>Motion 172   Exploitation of Labour From Within<br/>The EU</p> <p>Comp 14     Migrant Workers</p> <p>Motion 175   Gangmaster Legislation</p> <p>Comp 15     Agency Workers</p> <p>Motion 178   Fixed Term Contracts</p> <p>Motion 179   Posted Workers Directive</p> <p>Motion 180   Working Time</p> <p>Motion 181   35 Hour Week</p> <p>Comp 16     Statutory Holidays</p> <p>†Motion 184   Fairer Redundancy Pay</p> <p>†Motion 185   Night Workers</p> <p>†Motion 186   No Strike Agreement</p> <p>EM4         A&amp;P Appledore Southampton</p> | <p>CEC</p> <p>AGS</p> <p>Legal Dept</p> <p>Legal Dept</p> <p>Legal Dept</p> <p>Legal Dept</p> <p>TUC</p> <p>TUC</p> <p>TUC</p> <p>GMB Brussels Office +TUC</p> <p>TUC</p> <p>TUC</p> <p>GMB Brussels Office +TUC</p> <p>National Officer (Eng)</p> <p>TUC/LP</p> <p>TUC</p> <p>TUC</p> <p>CEC + National Officers (All)<br/>Southern Region + National Officer<br/>(Eng)</p> |
| <p><b>Rights at Work - Youth Training</b></p> <p>†Motion 187   Youth Training</p>   | <p>DGS</p>   |
| <p><b>Commercial Services</b></p> <p>†Motion 188   Chauffeur Industry</p> <p>Motion 189   Private Care Sector - Pay</p> <p>Motion 190   Guarantee Pay</p> <p>Motion 191   Injury On Duty</p> <p>†Comp 17     Section 127</p>  | <p>National Officer (CS)</p>   |
| <p><b>CFTA</b></p> <p>Motion 194   Composite Companies</p> <p>Comp 18     Remploy</p>   | <p>National Officer (CFTA)</p>   |
| <p><b>Energy &amp; Utilities</b></p> <p>Comp 35     Public Ownership - Coal, Utilities,<br/>Water, Railways (motions 198, 199,<br/>205, 314)</p> <p>Motion 200   Energy And Utilities - Demise Of UK<br/>Industry</p>   | <p>CEC + TUC + LP</p> <p>National Officer (E&amp;U)</p>  |
| <p><b>Energy &amp; Utilities</b></p> <p>Motion 201   Energy And Utilities</p> <p>Motion 202   Energy Policy</p> <p>Motion 203   Energy Policy</p>   | <p>Motions 201-203, <b>along with referred motion 204 on Power Generation Policy</b>, to be actioned by the Section National Committee (E&amp;U)</p>   |
| <p><b>Engineering</b></p> <p>Motion 206   Ship Recycling</p>  | <p>National Officer (Eng)</p>  |

| MOTION   | ACTION   |
|--|--|
| <b>Food &amp; Leisure</b><br>Motion 208      The Right To Recruit In Asda Stores<br>From Day One<br>Motion 209      Cheap Lunches<br>EM 2                Asda  | Harry Donaldson<br><br>National Officer (F&L)<br>Harry Donaldson   |
| <b>Public Services</b><br>Comp 33          Public Services - Two Tier Workforce<br>Comp 34          Public Services - PPP, PFI<br>Comp 19          Public Services - privatisation<br>Motion 220        Local Government Funding<br>Motion 221        Local Government Contracts<br>Motion 223        School Workforce Reform<br>Motion 224        Pay Differentials - Education Learning<br>Staff<br>Comp 20          School Support Staff<br>Motion 230        Public Services - National Pay Award<br>Motion 233        Contractor Shop Stewards<br>Motion 234        Housing For Local Authority Site Staff<br>in 'Tied' Accommodation Upon Their<br>Retirement<br>Motion 235        Childcare | National Officer (PS)  |
| <b>Public Services - National Health Service</b><br>Motion 227        Privatisation Of The Health Service<br>Motion 228        NHS Hospital Cleanliness<br>†Motion 312        NHS Consultants  | National Officer (PS)  |
| <b>Manufacturing</b><br>Comp 21          Manufacturing<br>†Motion 241        Manufacturing Campaign<br>EM 3                Rover And The Phoenix Group   | Phil Davies & TUC Manufacturing Task<br>Group<br>Phil Davies & TUC Manufacturing Task<br>Group<br>National Officer (Eng)   |
| <b>The Economy</b><br>Motion 247        Minimum Wage For Young Persons<br>14-15 Years<br>†Motion 248        Industrial Democracy<br>Motion 250        Working Tax & Family Tax Benefit<br>Motion 251        Tobin Tax<br>Comp 22          Company Assets, Cowboy Employers<br>Motion 253        Fat Cat Payments   | DGS<br><br>CEC<br>AGS<br>International Solidarity Officer<br>MPs<br>National Officers (All)                                |
| <b>Labour Government - Warwick Agreement</b><br>Motion 255        A Radical Labour Government<br>Motion 256        Warwick Agreement   | CEC<br>CEC   |
| <b>Labour Party</b><br>†Motion 257        Labour Party Policy<br>Motion 258        Labour Party<br>Motion 259        Labour Party Conference<br>Motion 260        Labour MPs<br>Motion 261        The Labour Party And The BNP   | Political Committee<br>Political Committee<br>Political Committee<br>Political Committee<br>Political Committee + Mick Rix |

| MOTION   | ACTION  |
|--|---|
| †Motion 262    Sponsored Labour MPs And Councillors<br>Motion 263    Selection Of Parliamentary Candidates<br>Motion 266    Labour Party Funding   | Political Committee<br><br>Political Committee<br><br>Political Committee                       |
| <b>Political Fund Ballot</b><br>Comp 23        Political Fund Ballots  | Political Committee   |
| <b>Democracy and Constitutional Reform</b><br>Comp 24        Detention Without Trial<br>†Motion 277    Local Democracy   | CEC + LP + MPs<br>National Officer (PS)   |
| <b>Racism and Fascism</b><br>†Comp 25        Racism Fascism And The BNP  | Political Committee + Mick Rix  |
| <b>Migrant Workers</b><br>EM1            Migrant Workers   | National Officer (Equal Rights)   |
| <b>European Constitution</b><br>†Comp 26        European Constitution  | CEC   |
| <b>Criminal Justice</b><br>Motion 289     Date Rape<br>†Motion 292    Building A Safer Society   | MPs + National Political Officer<br>MPs + National Political Officer                            |
| <b>Education</b><br>Motion 293     Education<br>†Motion 294    Foundation Schools<br>Motion 295     Education<br>Motion 296     Social Education<br>Motion 297     Vocational Training   | National Officer (PS)<br>National Officer (PS)<br>National Officer (PS)<br>MPs<br>DGS           |
| <b>Social Policy – General</b><br>†Motion 298    Analogue And Digital Television<br>Motion 299    Animal Experimental Science<br>Motion 300    Asylum Seekers<br>Comp 27        Identity Cards<br>Motion 304    Misuse Of Public Funds | MPs<br>CEC<br>CEC<br>AGS + National Officer (Equal Rights)<br>MPs                               |
| <b>Housing</b><br>Comp 28        Housing<br>Motion 306    Public Services - Housing Stock Transfers  | Finance Committee + National Officer (PS)<br>National Political Officer + National Officer (PS) |
| <b>Transport</b><br>Motion 313     Overcrowding On Railways<br>Motion 315     Transport  | MPs<br>MPs  |

| MOTION  | ACTION  |
|---|---|
| <b>Welfare Rights &amp; Services</b><br>Motion 317 Social Service Care Homes<br>Motion 318 Care For The Elderly<br>Comp 29 Security Of Tenure<br>Motion 321 Community Care And Pension Bill<br>†Comp 30 Carers Allowance<br>Motion 324 Child Support Agency<br>†Motion 325 Incapacity Benefit<br>Motion 326 Sick Pay<br>Motion 327 Increase Statutory Paternity Pay<br>Motion 328 NHS Dental Provision - Rural Areas<br>Motion 329 Appeals Panels | National Officer (PS)<br>National Officer (PS)<br>National Officer (PS)<br>TUC<br>National Officer (Equal Rights)<br>MPs<br>Govt + TUC<br>National Officers (All)<br>TUC<br>National Officer (PS)<br>Legal Dept   |
| <b>International</b><br>Motion 331 Labour Standards In The Latin American Banana Industry<br>Motion 332 Solidarity With The I.F.T.U<br>Motion 333 International Solidarity In Iraq<br><br>†Comp 31 Iraq<br>†Motion 338 Future Non Support For US<br>Motion 342 International Globalisation<br>†Motion 343 Middle East<br><br>Motion 344 Privatisation In Developing Countries<br>Motion 345 Star Wars   | International Committee<br><br>TUC<br>TUC + GMB Finance & International Committees<br>TUC + GMB Finance Committee<br>CEC<br>International Committee<br>Govt + National Political Officer + International Solidarity Officer<br>TUC International Development Group<br>CEC |
| <b>G8 Summit – Make Poverty History</b><br>Comp 32 G8 Summit – Make Poverty History   | CEC + International Committee   |

## REPORT ON MOTIONS (REFERRED TO THE CEC BY THE 2005 CONGRESS)

| MOTION  | ACTION   |
|---|--|
| <b>Union Organisation - Recruitment and Organisation</b><br>Motion 43 Resources For Construction        | Since Congress 2005 a major recruitment exercise has been undertaken on most of the prestigious construction sites co-ordinated by the organising team within the SOLO branch. For some time GMB has been the major union on Terminal 5 and significant recruitment has also taken place at Wembley. |
| <b>Union Organisation – Finances and Contributions</b><br>Motion 75 Family Membership Contribution Rate | The Finance Committee has examined the proposals and is considering the options  |
| <b>Union Organisation – Union Benefits</b><br>Motion 90 Alternative Funding For GMB Benefits            | The Finance Committee has examined the proposals and is considering the options  |

| MOTION   | ACTION  |
|--|---|
| <b>Pensions and Retirement</b><br>Motion 155      “Buy to Let” Property Purchases<br>Funded Through Pensions | In his December pre-Budget report the Chancellor announced that this tax break scheme would not now be made available – no further action needed  |
| <b>Energy &amp; Utilities</b><br>Motion 204      Power Generation Policy                                     | The issues and concerns raised by this motion have been considered together with carried motions 201-203 and have been included in the GMB’s response to the Government’s Spring 2006 Energy Review |
| <b>Public Services</b><br>Motion 229      Public Services - No To Percentage<br>Pay Deals                    | Referred to the Public Services National Secretary. There has been no further round of pay talks since Congress 2005.   |

Note: Motion 231, Local Government Craft Pay Claims, was ruled Out of Order when Congress 2005 adopted SOC Report No 1. As a result of an error, Motion 231 was subsequently put before Congress and a decision taken to refer it. The reason given in SOC Report No 1 for ruling the motion out of order was that it “ought to be dealt with by a more appropriate body i.e. the Public Services Section Conference or the JNC for Local Authority Craft Workers.” The motion is directed to the PS Section Conference/Craft JNC, irrespective of whether the route is through SOC report 1 or through referral. Action: National Officer (PS)

## APPOINTMENT AND ELECTION OF OFFICIALS

1 JANUARY 2005 – 31 DECEMBER 2005

### APPOINTMENT OF ACTING GENERAL SECRETARY & TREASURER

Paul Kenny

### APPOINTMENT OF NATIONAL OFFICER

*Energy & Utilities Section:* Gary Smith

### APPOINTMENT OF REGIONAL SECRETARY

*London Region:* Ed Blissett

### APPOINTMENT OF ACTING REGIONAL SECRETARIES

*Lancashire Region:* Paul McCarthy

*Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region:* Charlie Leonard

### APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS

*London Region:* Avril Chambers  
 Shaun Graham  
 Rob Kelsall  
 Dave Powell

### APPOINTMENT OF SENIOR ORGANISERS

*Lancashire Region:* Giovanna Holt  
*Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region:* Billy McCreight

*Southern Region:* Ted Purcell  
Bob Stokes

### **ELECTION OF ORGANISERS**

*Southern Region:* Kevin Brandstatter  
Paul Clarke  
Charles Harrity  
Ivan Mercer

*Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region:* Paul Wade

### **PROMOTION OF ORGANISERS**

*Birmingham & West Midlands Region:* Pauline Brown  
Colin Griffiths

*Lancashire Region:* Alanna Armstrong  
Alan Collinge

*Southern Region:* Andrew Prendergast

*Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region:* Douglas Cooper  
Kerry May

### **APPOINTMENT OF RECRUITMENT OFFICERS (since September 2005)**

*Southern Region:* Gary Cook  
Gavin Davies

*South Western Region:* Paul Gage

## **GOLD BADGE AND YOUTH AWARDS 2005**

### **MEN'S GOLD BADGE**

The GMB Men's Gold Badge recipient in 2005 was Derrick Little, Northern Region (Derrick was nominated for the TUC Organisation Award 2005)

### **WOMEN'S GOLD BADGE**

The GMB Women's Gold Badge recipient in 2005 was Monica Smith, Lancashire Region (Monica was nominated for the TUC Women's Award 2005)

### **AWARD FOR YOUTH**

The GMB Youth Award recipient in 2005 was Leanne Vincent, Lancashire Region (Leanne was nominated for the TUC Youth Award 2006)

*(Adopted)*

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, it gives me great pleasure to ask your General Secretary, Paul Kenny, to move the General Secretary's Report, pages 1-4 and 7-37. Paul?

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Good morning, everybody. If you are not awake by the time the drum went down, then there is nothing I can do to get your attention, really.

Paul Kenny, National Office - sounds very funny coming here and saying that - moving with great pride and a really great degree of humility the General Secretary & Treasurer's Report of our great, fantastic, independent union. *(Applause)*

I am starting off by thanking the National Office

staff, the National Officers, the Pensions Department, Research, Communications, Health & Safety, Legal, and all the back-up and admin team. The work that they do day in, day out, keeps this union going and I am extremely grateful on your behalf for the dedication and commitment shown throughout the last very very turbulent and difficult year. Thank you all, publicly, for the fantastic job that you do. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

In the last year since our Congress in Newcastle the GMB has moved forward in an honest, decent manner, with determination and comradeship seen in equal measures, shifting that culture of fear that used to inhibit the union to one of confidence, boldness, and people being able to make decisions.

Last year I said, "Let's operate on the basis and passions that brought us into the Trades Union Movement. Let's face up to our problems, deal with them, and set new standards for ourselves and for our Movement."

Last year on the eve of Congress some anonymous cretins circulated scurrilous lies attacking our President, and others. I handed those anonymous complaints in full public view to Ian Lowes, together with a letter from me to go to the Certification Officer asking the Certification Officer to investigate. Ian posted them. I am not sure he put a stamp on them but he posted them. The Certification Officer investigated every allegation and gave us a complete clean bill of health.

To you, Mary, and other colleagues, I apologise for the pain that you suffered because of those anonymous attacks but I say this, this union should be incredibly proud of the fantastic President that we have. *(Applause)* I go round the Trades Union Movement, trust me, I go round, and pound for pound (and I know things about pound for pound) there is not a better President of any union in the Trades Union Movement. We are very proud, Mary, to have you and thank you very much indeed. *(Applause)* We have a great Vice President, a fantastic Vice President, Malcolm Sage. He is quick on his feet. Only the other night I saw him in the bar and he asked for two pints of lager, two light and bitters, four gin and tonics, and a glass of orange juice, and the person behind the bar said, "Would you like a tray, sir?" He said, "Don't you think I've got enough to carry?" *(Laughter)*

We have had the King Inquiry that looked at our election processes and the manner in which individuals abused the election process, lied, misused union funds, and accepted cash and kind in order to gain unequal advantage in the GMB elections for themselves or their candidate. The shame they have brought on themselves is their problem. The damage they did to others in the GMB, and some still trying to do, is unforgivable and pathetic. Many of these ragbags ran away from giving evidence to the King Inquiry yet they seek to strut amongst good, decent, trade unionists and pedal their distorted defeatist picture of the world. My message to them is, you are finished. You are over. *(Applause)*

Here we are, a year on, putting into practice the spirit of Newcastle. You told us, "Get out there, campaign, work together to grow, to change, to fight injustice and inequality." How are we doing it? Let us start with the theme that may dominate part of this Congress; in fact at the end of the week you may think this is the Asda Congress. Let us start with Asda and the fundamental issues for workers, like the right to have collective bargaining, to have a say about what goes in their pay packet, and the work rates that they have to operate under, all basic issues for trade unions.

I met the Asda Chief Executive, a lovely gentleman called Andy Bond. I think there are days when he thinks he is James Bond, but he is not. He is more like Stan Laurel. He said, "Trust us." Talk to the Northern Region about trusting Asda. The workers at the Washington Depot took Asda to a tribunal where Asda were fined virtually £1m for trying to circumvent the law and take away or undermine collective bargaining rights. They tried to bribe people to drop their trade union collective agreements.

This fantastic company actually had a battle plan because they presumed that all workers would take the 30 pieces of silver that were offered. They had a battle plan for what would happen with those odd nutcases who might hang on to their trade union membership, "refuseniks" they called them. Their battle plan was to sack them as quickly as they could, never mind that it was illegal, never mind that it was unfair. That was their battle plan, to remove trade union organisation from Asda at all costs.

They employed some interesting people to do that. They paid a lot of money - it is a pity they did not pay a bit more money to their staff - particularly a guy called Tim Allan who used to be in Number 10, in the Policy Unit. He owns a company called Portland PR and Asda hired him for the princely sum of £50,000 to design a campaign to induce people, illegally, to come out of their trade union.

We decided we would have a little look at Tim Allan, and the others. That is why we published this book, "Where Are They Now", which you will find in your packs. There is an interesting document which charts the history of not all, because many have actually been good public servants, but many who have made their way somehow from the inner circle of government ministers, even Downing Street, suddenly into the ranks of PR companies for big business lobbying those same ministers they used to work for.

Call me suspicious but, really, there are standards that we should be able to rely on in our public life. It is not a question any more about what you know, it is who you know and how much cash you can get for knowing them. That is why we published that document and that is why we are calling for special rules to be applied. Massive amounts, hundreds of thousands of pounds are paid out to PR companies like Bell Pottinger to give the image of a company like Asda as being fair and decent when all the time the reality of life is completely different.

To the Northern Region members full marks for exposing that sort of deceit and full admiration for the workers at Washington who had the courage to stand up, and the courage to reject that sort of bribery; you gave us all a good lead.

We are currently in the process of a dispute with Asda and I am going to talk about it a bit more in a minute. Asda may try to use employment agencies to

break that dispute, employ drivers and others to do the work of our members if our members choose to ballot for industrial action and to take that industrial action lawfully. There are two companies, in particular, I want to name - a company called 24/7 Personnel out of Charlton, South East London, and a company called ProTem out of Dartford. We have written to many companies pointing out the likelihood of a trade dispute and pointing out their legal obligations under the current law but these two companies are refusing to talk to us. In fact, it seems Asda are intent on driving a coach and horses through the legislation about hiring labour in an industrial dispute. We are going to send a coach and horses down to visit these two companies. We are going to send some cowboys to go and see the cowboys.

I will tell you this as well, if anybody thinks that I am going to go into an industrial dispute with a company like Asda, or anybody else, playing the Marquis of Queensbury Rules while they hire in labour in order to do our members' jobs when they are in legitimate, legal, lawful dispute, then they are living in cuckoo land. *(Applause)* I will be calling - make no mistake about it - for the mass ranks of the GMB and of trade unionists to picket those depots wherever those scabs come in and try to do our members' jobs. *(Applause)* You cannot have a law that the employer can ignore but that hidebounds us. If we are going to break the law, then we will both break the law. *(Applause)*

Asda offered us an arrangement where they would ask their employees if they really wanted to be recognised by a union and we said, "No, not really. No, thank you very much. We don't need you to tell us." We have seen during this dispute that they have produced "Vote No" posters, stuck them up all over the workplaces, "Vote No in the ballot". They have even been really helpful and put up posters saying, "If you're not sure, bring your ballot paper along to one of your managers." *(Laughter)* Again, call me suspicious! You know what I mean? It is thoughtful.

Andy Bond said to Jude Brimble, and I when we met him, "It's not in the ethos of Asda to agree to collective bargaining." Let me tell you, Mr. Bond, it is not in the ethos of the GMB to capitulate to tin-pot employers like Asda Wal-Mart in this country. *(Applause)*

Asda unethical? Who says so? The Norwegian Government think they are unethical. They have just decided to put no more of the biggest pension fund on the planet into any Asda Wal-Mart shares. They think they are unethical for their treatment of trade unions and trade unionists.

Asda broke agreements on food safety. Who says so? Actually, the National Farmers' Union, not normally seen as the militant vanguard of the Trades Union Movement, exposed Asda selling Brazilian beef which did not comply with the strict standards that

we all know were put in place after the terrible events of the "mad cow disease". Asda are prepared to damage the beef industry, or their employees, or anybody else, through a desire for quick profit.

I will tell you something else. In the paper this morning it stated, "Asda accused of risking food hygiene to cut costs." The GMB has evidence to support that claim. We have evidence that Asda, through their processes, allow food into their sales points which breach their own guidelines in a manner that would under normal circumstances, or under any circumstances, have that food condemned. You think I am lying? Sue me, Asda. Sue me. If you think I cannot prove it, you sue me and see what happens. I would quite like to see their faces when we show them some of the evidence we have been collecting of their activities over recent weeks.

Again, I make the point that if anybody thinks the GMB is up for being rolled over and tickled, then you have the wrong outfit. We are going to fight and defend our members whenever they are in struggle. Under tremendous pressure the shop stewards at Asda have done a fantastic job. They are balloting now to take their democratic right, a democratic right, to withdraw their labour. In fact we have just had a shop steward suspended for having on a St. George's flag during the England game a "Vote Yes". Asda said, "No, no, we didn't suspend him for having a "Vote Yes" thing on the flag, it was because it was dangerous. It was draped over a radiator." Let me get this right. We are in the middle of the biggest heatwave we have had and a flag..... Yes, okay, maybe! I know that some colleagues, nicely always, sometimes call me Don Paul Leone! Let me tell you, Asda, I am going to make you an offer you cannot refuse. Stop screwing the GMB and get down and sign an agreement. *(Applause)*

What about the political scene, anything happening politically within the last year? Warwick? That is a benchmark for us. If Warwick fails then the relationship with the Party, I think, will flounder. I think it will be increasingly difficult to convince our members of the benefits of voting Labour if Warwick is not delivered in full. It has been good but it is a very slow start. We are still waiting for real positive progress on the issue of bank holidays added to annual leave. We are still waiting for that and, hopefully, someone will ask that question if they get an opportunity this week. Pensions trustees is a really important part of the Warwick Agreement but no progress as yet.

When I first got this job one of the journalists rang me up and said, "Mr. Kenny, do you think Tony Blair should go?" It is the sort of question where you have to be a little bit careful how you answer because you are answering for the union, or that is what they will say. I thought about it for a moment and said, "My view is that really politicians are a bit like babies' nappies, they both need changing regularly for

exactly the same reason.” *(Laughter and Applause)*

When you think about this process, which is going to be a fantastic engaging process for our members, there are important things our members, our activists, our Congress, and our regions, will want to know about who takes over. Do they really want more of the same or do they want change? Are we going to embrace wholeheartedly the wonders and benefits of globalisation, where we all wake up every morning thanking our lucky stars that we are part of? What agenda is going to be put before us?

I do not actually agree that there should be an automatic anointment. I think people should have to lay out very clearly the agenda they want and the agenda they propose to get the support of working people. If we do not reconnect, if the party does not reconnect to its ordinary working people, then the biggest threat of all will happen, and that threat will be the return of a Tory government. People are becoming disconnected from the political process and from the Labour Party; that is a terrible shame. Some of us in this hall remember what the Tories did to us between 1979 and 1997. Some of us in this hall still have the legacies of what the Tories did to us during those years. Do not be impressed and do not be seduced by Cameron, who rides along on a bike saying how green he is and then gets off the bike when the cameras have gone and gets in his 4x4 that takes him to the office. Do not be seduced by that sort of rubbish. Base yourself on the long-term benefits for the country, and like somebody once said, almost, “If the answer is Cameron then it’s a bloody stupid question.” *(Applause)*

I now turn to our regions, if I may, and our branches. Again, I want to make the point, and I will make it every time and I will not be ashamed about it, I am proud of our branches and I am proud of our regions, and no centralisation as far as I am concerned has any part to play in the future of this union. There is a balance in the decision-making and I will defend regions and branches to the last drop of my blood. *(Applause)*

Someone once said, “Ah, well, nobody goes to branch meetings any more. It’s not like it used to be.” What age did they live in? I do not remember going out to a branch meeting with hoards of people, coach loads turning up at 10 past 6. Does anybody remember that? I do not. It is like a golden age that people have invented. The union has always been founded on, run by, driven by effectively, a strata of activists who give more for the benefit of all than they ever take out, and thus it should always be. I have no truck or time for people who try to denigrate or attack the dedication of those activists; I just do not have any time for them. In fact, if they wanted to do something about it, they should get their rears into their branches, get their rears into their regional councils, participate, and organise. Please do not criticise how the branches are run or how the

regions are run if you do not bother to get involved in the union yourself. *(Applause)*

I want to turn to some of the regions and start with South Western, a region that is growing, but a region that has been decimated by manufacturing losses. They are not crying, that is not their way. They are organising. I will give you a little story of a recent incident of a dispute at South Hook, Milford Haven, where workers were sacked. There was another union involved and modesty says I am not allowed to tell you but, anyway, Amicus did not turn up! *(Laughter)* South Western Region just got on with it. They financially supported those members, they demanded reinstatement, and they obtained victory for our members. I pay great thanks for that sort of fighting spirit to John Phillips. I know you are here, John, because I have seen you this week. Where are you? Great spirit from John and the South Western Region, and Alan Rapell. It was a fantastic job showing that if you stand and fight you will win. Well done. That is fighting back and that is organising. *(Applause)*

I have a little bit of indulgence for London: to the officers, the staff, the branches, and activists, I can only say thank you for the comradeship, hard work, the fun, and to a certain degree the love that we exchanged over 15 fabulous years. Whatever else I do in my life, I can never ever replace that time. It was a fantastic time, good hard work with great people. I learned a lot and you taught me a lot. You taught me how to drink, I know that! *(Laughter)* You did not teach me how to sing but you taught me how to drink. I would say a word also to Ed Blissett. I congratulate Ed on his appointment as Regional Secretary in London; a fantastic officer, a really good man, straight as a dye. *(Applause)*

London has a problem at the moment, a recognition claim with the American Dry Cleaning Company, anti-union, persecuting the shop stewards. It can be tough going but I have a message for the boss of the American Dry Cleaning Company: “You ain’t got a clue, son, who you’re taking on. You haven’t got a clue. If you did, you would be down to Ed’s office in Brent Street and you would sign a recognition deal tomorrow.” You give them some pain. That is fighting. That is organising. *(Applause)*

GMB Scotland, there are more members today, more members in GMB Scotland today than a year ago, and they are growing. They have the biggest percentage increase in recruitment of all ten regions. I bet there are one or two people in the delegation who did not think that was possible a few years ago. That is a fantastic performance from GMB Scotland. That is campaigning; on equal pay, on the rights for workers; a fantastic performance GMB Scotland. *(Applause)*

Yorkshire & North Derbyshire, membership growth in seven out of the last eight months, a tribute to the officers and the staff, the regional

committee and the branches; a fantastic performance. Well done. That is campaigning as well, particularly on equal pay.

Nationally, the GMB grew last year, not much but a start with 3,500 more paying members. In the last three months the union has grown by about 4,000 paying members, month on month. It is not the promised land yet by any stretch of the imagination but we can start to see the signposts. We stood up for our members in the security industry, cash-in-transit, CVIT to be precise. Too many are being shot, injured, beaten, and even killed while doing their job. There was campaigning by the Birmingham & West Midlands Region that led the way to raise awareness, demanding change, campaigning, getting the respect of members, employers, and the Government.

Southern Region fought tooth and nail to get the venture robbers who bought out the AA to recognise the union. They conned the workforce and thousands lost their jobs. Paul Maloney must be the scourge of the AA management. That is fighting back.

I will make a prediction based on my knowledge of what Southern Region are doing and what Mick Rix is doing in negotiations with the DHL shop stewards. I predict the death, the death, of the breakaway staff company association of both DHL and the AA within the year. I predict its demise, and so it should be. *(Applause)*

Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region produced the most fantastic programme of women's conferences, giving women more opportunity and confidence to play their full and rightful role in our union. That is organising. The region seeks justice for the Cammell Laird workers who were jailed in 1984 for fighting for jobs. The parallels with Swan Hunter and the stories you heard yesterday are just so real it is unbelievable. Fighting for jobs and fighting for work. In fact, there are some of the lads here from Cammell Laird; I think some of the original lads. Up you get. These are workers who were jailed for fighting for their jobs. *(Standing ovation)*

We do not forget our own in the GMB any more. We do not leave anybody on the battlefield. We do not have casualties any more, we have heroes. So, from this platform I am calling for an inquiry into the events that led to the jailing of those 37 workers. There are only 34 of them left alive. I am calling for an inquiry. I want to know what political involvement there was, what pressure there was from the Thatcher government to put those people in prison. Interestingly enough, we cannot seem to get at the state files that exist. That is funny, isn't it? We are calling for those files to be opened. If there is nothing to hide, then there is no reason to hide them. We are going to launch a petition to lobby every single MP in the House of Commons to join with us in that inquiry to examine the political events of 1984 and, as this says, it is time for justice for Cammell Laird. Twenty-two years on it is time that

they knew the truth about what the political motivation was that sent them to jail for standing up for their jobs and for their community. *(Applause)*

The Midlands & East Coast Region has been ravaged by manufacturing job losses. Are they crying? No, they are getting stuck in. Andy Worth is pioneering a new project in conjunction with the national organising team, an experiment, and part of that strategy is to develop recruitment, activity for migrant workers, a migrant recruitment programme, new direct organising amongst Polish and Eastern European workers, bringing workers into the Trades Union Movement, not leaving them isolated to be exploited.

There is one other thing. The region has, I think, a fantastic idea, to hold regional forums. I was invited to one in Mansfield recently. In fact, when the elections were called they were the first people to write in and say, "We are inviting you to appear before the members in the hustings for the election." As you know, unfortunately no other candidates came forward in the election. I am still convinced it was because they would have had to appear before the Mansfield Branch; nobody fancied their chances, Les! It is a great opportunity for bringing branches and activists together, sharing problems, and giving each other support. I would like to see more of that within the union. Let us not have the fear of talking to each other that used to exist. *(Applause)*

In Lancashire Region it has been a hard year and we are not through it yet. Let us place some tribute for the officers, the staff, and lay members and activists who have stuck in there, who are trying to deal with the problems and refuse to give up or dodge the changes needed. Well done. We thank you. You are keeping the region going. Well done. *(Applause)*

To Paul McCarthy and to Jackie, his wife, a special thank you. Thank you, Jackie, for giving him to us for so much of your time. Paul knows why I am saying that and so does she. I have a personal gratitude to Paul McCarthy for the amount of tireless work he has done, for his humour, and for the amount of times he has picked me up. He has a fantastic ability to give me the most ginormous rucking and then make me feel grateful for it! I do not know how he does it, but keep doing it.

The senior management team was told in the clearest message at Newcastle, "We expect you to work together." That was the message you gave to Congress. We have worked together to introduce a national organising team. We are working together to target recruitment organisation, a national project born out of our commitment to act jointly, not as splinter groups. We worked together to introduce new personnel structures to avoid the problems of the past. We worked together to bring help and hope to colleagues in Costa Rica, and the

London Region will be talking about that later. Fantastic work has been done there, and in Colombia, the most dangerous place in the world to be a trade unionist. In Indonesia, where Securicor workers have been in struggle for a year, the union sent a delegate, Eddie Parker from the Lancashire region, to see the situation. We pledged £10,000, and we have raised it from within the union, to relieve hardship and to pay children's hospital bills. I had news yesterday that those workers in Indonesia had finally won their dispute, a dispute that could not have been continued without the support of the GMB, the branches of the GMB, and the activists. From them, thank you very much. *(Applause)*

At home, our Remploy membership will be asking for our support and you better believe they are going to get it: real jobs and real members. Remploy is badly managed and the GMB will not stand by and let anyone scapegoat our members. Our members at Remploy are proud of their union and let me tell you their union is bloody proud of them. *(Applause)* That is campaigning and that is solidarity.

We have the commitment of the staff and officers, the senior management team, the regional secretaries, and Debbie Coulter as AGS, who I have worked with I think incredibly well over the last year. It has been tough, open and honest, it has been decent, and we have treated each other and our colleagues with respect. We have solved more problems than anyone thought possible but there is still a lot more to do. We have to grow. We have to include more activists in our trade union. We have to expand our influences. We have to attack injustice. We have to get more GMB activists elected to Parliament both here and in Europe.

In summary, we are stronger, we are better, and we are tougher than we were a year ago. We do not fear employers or the Government, we only fear the lack of ambition, courage and unity which has plagued us in the past. I said to you last year, be bold, be yourself, be the union we all joined. Thank you. *(Standing ovation)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Paul. Thank you very much. Can I now move to the General Secretary's Report, page 1, 2, 3, and 4. Any questions? *(No response)* Agree to accept those, colleagues? Oh, there is always one. Come on, Dougie.

BRO. S. MCKENZIE (London): Before I ask the question on page 32 could I just say this to you, Paul. I am a delegate to Dartford Labour Party from the Professional Drivers Branch, I have been an activist in South East London for over 30 years, and I know all the reporters on the local papers. Please let me help you to take these clowns out in Dartford and Charlton who are scabbing on our members in Asda.

Anyway, there is a point I would like to raise on page 32, under the section entitled ---

THE PRESIDENT: Hang on, I am not there yet.

BRO. MCKENZIE: You called me up, Mary. I said down there it was page 32.

THE PRESIDENT: I cannot see you down there, Steve. Carry on, then.

BRO. MCKENZIE: It is page 32, under the section entitled, Commercial Services, Motion 188, passed with qualification at the 2005 Congress in relation to the chauffeur industry. I got up and spoke about men who are working 90 to 100 hours a week, seven days a week, sometimes 21 days non-stop, and the dangers to the public and themselves that they face, and the fact that they were frightened to say no in case they were sacked. That was passed and I spoke to Terry Flannegan, our Branch Secretary, last night and he asked me what was happening about it. We were aware of the fact that there was going to be a presentation in Parliament, perhaps to a minister or someone, with subsequent publicity to try and get this situation rectified. It was meant to be going on in July but he has heard nothing, and I have been asked to get to the rostrum to find out exactly what is going on. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Steve. Dougie? What page are you on, Doug?

BRO. D. RIGBY (London): This has come from my branch, all local authority workers. I have been asked to ask why yet again when we are all locked in horns, this time over a pensions dispute, the information and literature we get as the GMB is appalling. The branches also wondered why when on strike all we ever see on the TV or hear on the radio is Unison. Our branch wants to know why. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Dougie. Before I call you to agree pages 1-4, can I now move to page 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23. Twenty-three?

BRO. J. DOLAN (Scotland): Paul, we appreciate that we had to make immediate decisions last year and the year before, and possibly one of the most difficult decisions was closing the college and its training.

I have been fortunate enough to be a shop steward for the last 21 years and the benefit I had from the Manchester College and the courses that I took, and I imagine with every other region in the GMB, was invaluable.

At the present moment, we only have regional training. We have to get back to national training. I do not know how you are going to do it but we have to do it. As you said, sharing problems, sharing support, that is where we get it, at national college, with every other trade unionist, the GMB, and

regions. Can you tell us how we are going to do that, Paul? Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Pages 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36? You waited till I turned my head then, John.

BRO. J. McDONNELL (Lancashire): Before I start, President, can I use my minute to thank the Liverpool Region and as a big scouse given the honour of wearing this thing for Cammell Laird where one of my family is involved. I thank you very much for making me so welcome and as a big scouse appreciate it.

President, Congress, page 36, Appointments Lancashire Region: I have been a member for some considerable length of time. I have seen many things in the union but none more profound as those under way in Lancashire.

The turning point at the region came when the General Secretary had the foresight, vision, and strength to see the potential for success for the region. His decision to appoint an Acting Regional Secretary with the skills and energy that he possesses has turned our region around, and not forgetting the outstanding contribution of our only senior organiser in place at the present time.

Of course, President, there are still people with the conscience of misguided loyalty to the past but there are also those who believe in a different way. These members are solid, reliable, and genuine, and it will take the region to new heights of achievement; their only request is they be given a chance to do so.

To conclude, President, the Acting Regional Secretary has to contend with institutional resistance to change by a small few. This has not deterred him from his mission. He has spent many long hours changing the culture so I can only congratulate the General Secretary and the Regional Secretary, who, in my opinion, are members of exceptional qualities in both leadership and belief for the success of our great Movement as a whole. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, John. Page 37? Paul?

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: No one told me you had questions. I did not realise that at all. Steve, can I say that I am aware of the resolution, I do know a bit about it, and I do know that both the Health & Safety Department, who we did not get round to fully staffing up until about halfway through the year, and the Political Officer have both done work on this.

I have certainly had several discussions with the Mayor of London over the London licensing system and about the issue of hours. I am really happy, Steve, to do something as soon as we go back, to arrange a meeting with the Political Officer and the National Health & Safety Officer, actually to sit down and find out exactly where we are and plan out a

timetable so that the branch is fully aware, not only of what we have done but actually what the rate of progress is, what meetings are going to take place, what lobbying is being done, what ministers are being written to, and what activity there is.

We did write, I know, to the then minister asking him to intervene on a number of issues for the branch, including the issue about bus lanes, taxi lanes, and so on, and the M4 corridor. Unfortunately, we did not get successful replies but that is no reason not to continue to push on with the other issues. As soon as I get back, Steve, I will get it sorted for you.

Doug, I think you are probably going to ask that question that you asked me during the public services debate but I am not going to knock it to one side. On the communications issue I can tell you that I thought our Communications Department did an incredible job.

I put it into perspective, the Communications Department comprise of about three people in the GMB and in Unison they have 26, yet the coverage that I saw, and I get the printouts from the newspapers, from the TV, and I get the hits, is that our coverage was much stronger. Now, Unison may have been in certain places but they were not in others. In Scotland there was a big rally, and in Manchester, and the Metro newspaper (which is run on the Underground in London, as you know, and is a freebie) had massive pictures of the day of demonstration in colour, and the only banners that were seen were GMB.

I think the point is that there is always going to be a particular shot. The Press Department and the Communications Department issue regular newsletters, regular press briefings, regular press releases, about the impact on local services of a whole range of things from the unpaid council tax right through to the cost of swimming pools, right through to the issue about people employed.

In fact, recently there has been a campaign in your own region run from between London and the national office about assaults on local authority staff, particularly in the King's Lynn area. I think the Communications Department do the very best they can. You cannot guarantee that the line you put, the demonstration you mount, is always going to be the one that the press pick up but, frankly, I think the Communications Department do a fantastic job.

In terms of getting more information out to the members, we can always do that. I have no doubt when Brian gives his report and update about the pensions position and the dispute itself you will hear about the sort of newsletters that we have done. During the process of time but not as part of that dispute we actually issued the first briefing to all public service workers which Congress last year asked us to introduce and we agreed to introduce on a twice-yearly basis.

GMB Scotland asked about the college. The decision to close the college was taken in 2004, and that was a financial issue. That is the truth of it, it was a financial matter. The college has now been sold for £4.25m and we are looking at a whole range of possible inter-regional and national possibilities.

There is not a universal demand for national courses and that is because many people find it difficult to get time away from home for all sorts of reasons, social or domestic reasons. There is clearly and will always be an opportunity for the union to develop national courses which bring together particularly people who work in the same industry or for the same employer. It is illogical not to do that. The Training Committee is working on that and Debbie is also involved.

We have put a tremendous amount of time over the last year in trying to come up with a solution that works for all but it is not going to replace the national college. Too many people had too many good experiences in the national college. We are not going to be able to buy another national college, certainly in the foreseeable future, and it would be wrong for me to try and mislead you. There is no reason to say there are not venues around the country that we can use to develop those sorts of national courses, bringing together people from specific industries.

John McDonnell made the point about change and that people may be resistant to change. John, just keep going. I echo your sentiments about Paul McCarthy; I obviously said that in my speech. I think it was very important. Overall, I am very pleased, I have to say, with the direction and pace at which the union is proceeding but it would be stupid to suggest that we have everything right or we have all the answers, any of us, including me.

We will continue to work on all these issues you have raised and, hopefully, by the time I come back next year – I am making a rod for my own back – I will be able to stand up and say, “These are the number of national courses we have now put together between the ten regions. Is that all right? You have me on a promise, basically.

THE PRESIDENT: We will not tell Pat! Thanks, Paul. Does Congress agree to accept and endorse that area of the report? *(Agreed)*

*(The General Secretary’s Report was adopted)*

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, yesterday I announced some guests that I was told were in the room and I am afraid once again John Coote was trying to mislead me. I did announce Bill Smith was here, but it was a look-alike. Bill is here this morning. Bill, welcome to Congress.

## **SOCIAL POLICY: HOUSING**

### **DEFEND COUNCIL HOUSING**

#### **MOTION 239**

Congress calls upon the GMB to campaign within the Trades Union and Labour Movement to:

- a) ensure that the fourth option that the Labour Conference supported by a vote of 8-1 in September 2004 along with the commitment then given by the Prime Minister is honoured.
- b) that the GMB campaigns within the Labour and Trades Union Movement, including Defend Council Housing for support that Local Authorities be provided the investment and freedom to commence with a major social housing building programme of affordable homes that are desperately needed.

GOOLE BRANCH  
*Midland & East Coast Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. E. BLACKMAN (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, it is estimated 1.5m households are on council waiting lists with 135,000 more families living in temporary accommodation. A recent Shelter report on overcrowded households slammed the Government’s housing policies. According to Shelter, half a million families still exist living in cramped conditions. This is an absolute disgrace for there is plenty of evidence available which shows overcrowding seriously affects children’s health, education, and development, yet the Government’s response to this crisis is not to invest in and build much needed council housing but to continue to force through privatisation of council estates and make home ownership the focus of their existing policy. Their strategy calls for 1.1m new homes over the next 10 years, almost all for home ownership with a small percentage built by housing associations.

Colleagues, in these days of economic uncertainty home ownership is not an option for many families. In 1990, first-time buyers paid around 2.5 times their annual income to buy their first home. They now have to pay four times their salary, and far higher in London and other property hotspots. Shelter and other organisations are becoming increasingly worried about repossessions due to mortgage arrears yet this state of affairs is avoidable as generations of people have been well served by council housing.

The problem faced by local authorities is due to lack of investment. The public subsidy which once went to council housing is now being offered to

private investors. Why is this so when councils can build and maintain homes cheaper than landlords? It does not make any sense subsidising privatisation or taking away local accountability. Could it be that the Government has become so enamoured of its own mantra about mixed communities? They actually talk about creating an urban renaissance. Such gobbledygook, colleagues, should be treated with scepticism.

Consider this, colleagues, public spending on bricks and mortar subsidy for council housing fell from £5.6 billion in 1980 to 1981 to just £0.2 billion in 2003. Over the same period total expenditure on housing benefit rose from £2.7 billion in 1980 to £8.6 billion in 2003. Clearly, colleagues, it is a bonanza for those landlords and investors who are maximising profits.

We know stock transfer has meant giving away homes to private landlords virtually free. What you may not realise is that this giveaway produced a net income of £5.86 billion, added to which there is a further £4.5 billion from the right-to-buy sales, and that is without counting the income from rents, yet the Government still insists the money is not there to improve and extend the housing stocks. The figures give lie to this statement.

As a union we need to join forces with tenants groups and actively campaign for the fourth option, that council housing is cheaper to build and maintain than any of the other alternatives. We need to support local democracy and in doing so we will also be supporting existing council workers in their fight to retain jobs and conditions instead of being TUPE'd over to private companies. We should never lose sight of the fact that decent housing has a major impact on education and health, and by investing in decent council homes we are investing in our nation's future. Thank you. Please support.

SIS. M. DAVEY (Midland & East Coast): May I say I have been extremely impressed by the "Defend Council Housing" campaign. I am impressed because it is a bottoms-up campaign and I personally would like to see more and more of these campaigns in the Movement. We desperately need to inform the Labour Party of what people in this country want and I think this campaign is a prime example of that, so I am really pleased to be here supporting this campaign.

I am not an expert in the subject but I am supporting it because I hope we in the GMB believe in a basic socialist policy that we want the Government to pursue. We all believe it is essential and certainly a right to choose. It is quite ironic, really, because the Labour Government addresses an issue of fundamental concern about public housing introduced in the Wheatley Housing Act in 1924 yet here we are in 2006 trying to defend what was achieved in 1924. The Wheatley Act was designed to

reduce and say goodbye to Victorian slum dwellings and produce quality housing for the working class people. That is exactly what it attempted to do. It was a great example of progressive socialist legislation.

What we have to do now is make sure that legislation is preserved and improved upon. What we want to see is an expansion in council housing and not a reduction. Basically, what we are saying and what you are saying is we all know what our community wants, that is, affordable, good quality, council housing. Congress, I second the motion.

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

BRO. A. HUTCHINGS (Southern): This is my first Congress, President. I have been a union member for 44 years but I joined the GMB in 1997 after I left the MoD and I am damned glad I did because I had a very bad industrial accident. So, thank you to the GMB for what they did for me.

I am very pleased to speak on 239 to defend council housing. I have been a Labour councillor in Weymouth and Portland for 24 years. I say Labour. I have never joined New Labour as Tony Blair said – Tony Benn, I am sorry. I have been a staunch supporter of municipal undertakings in my borough and I am sad to say our borough council sold off the housing stock, all 3,500. I was one of the two Labour councillors who fought to defend municipal undertakings. We also lost our refuse service for five years but I am glad to say we got it back in-house. We privatised the swimming pool. With the privatisation of the housing stock they were able to borrow millions and millions of pounds to do up their council stock; we could never do it. Our council stock was crumbling. Why does the Government not continue to defend council housing? It is very important. I passionately support municipal undertakings and I hope you support the resolution. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. I put 239 to the vote.

*(Motion 239 was carried)*

## **SOCIAL POLICY: TRANSPORT**

### **RAIL SAFETY**

#### **MOTION 247**

Congress supports the rail and fire unions' campaign to retain the 'Section 12' regulations. These essential fire safety regulations for sub-surface stations were introduced after the tragic 1987 King's Cross fire which claimed 31 lives.

The Government planned to allow these regulations to be repealed and replaced by a less specific Fire Safety Order. The rail and fire unions' campaign has already forced the Government to allow the 'Section 12' regulations to continue in operation for at least six months after the introduction of the new order. However, Ministers have indicated that the new Order will itself be delayed. This could leave the existing regulations in place until April 2007.

While welcoming this delay, Congress urges the Government to think again about the wisdom of abolishing specific fire safety measures in relation to sub-surface stations: they have helped to ensure that no lives have been lost due to fire in stations since the tragedy of 1987.

NORTH WEST LONDON BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. T. VAN-GELDEREN (London): This resolution came about from my branch, North West London. As our members are mainly working for the three rail unions we have a particular concern. However, this is something that affects all of us. We do actually have GMB members still in some fire stations and of course as commuters and travellers we are affected by this. It is not just London Underground, these are regulations which also include the Liverpool, Glasgow, Tyne & Wear Metro systems, and some major mainline stations like Birmingham New Street and Glasgow Central.

The motion really says it all. The fire at Kings Cross, which claimed 31 lives, was one of the worst on the Underground's history. Since then these regulations have resulted in not a single death from fire on any UK underground network covered by these sub-surface regulations. The new Fire Reform Order replaces current legislation on fire for all premises and workplaces in the country. In itself it is not a bad piece of legislation but it does not adequately provide safeguards for the particular issues of underground safety that the sub-surface regulations provide.

The unions involved, the FBU in particular, and the RMT, know they cannot prevent the Fire Reform Order but the Government has the opportunity to allow the sub-surface regulations to coexist; in fact, for a yet to be defined period that is exactly what is happening.

As I said, the RMT and the FBU have been involved with the development of specific guidance for transport premises. They were invited on to the working party to allay their concerns. However, they only increased their feelings that the new guidance is totally inadequate; indeed, Bob Crow will be saying in his annual report, I think their conference is next week, to members, and I quote, "Many see the

production of supporting guidance specific to transport premises and facilities as essential ingredients of this regime. While the union has been fully engaged in the development process of that guidance over the past few months we still do not believe it to be sufficient in content or legal standing to warrant the withdrawal of the sub-surface regulations. We will therefore be continuing to campaign as necessary for their retention."

A senior manager representative from LUL commented that he was not going to take part in this whole process at all and he certainly would not be letting his members, his station managers, have a copy of that guidance because he was so concerned about it. The RMT have said they will be continuing their campaign to retain these sub-surface regulations, and I hope we will also be part of that campaign. These regulations have undoubtedly saved lives. Support the resolution.

BRO. J. COOTE (London): I am proudly seconding Motion 247 on rail safety. I am going to come at this from a slightly different angle. The mover of the motion actually covered the actual consequences of implementing these new regulations. What I want to do is reveal to you what I believe is a cost-cutting exercise of the Government.

At the time of the Kings Cross fire I have to say I was around in London. I was very young at the time, actually still at school, but it affected my mother in a big way and I have never forgotten it. I have always been very cautious about travelling on the Underground but it scared me when the London Underground actually then removed all the fire extinguishers; that is now going to be repeated on the trains. That is the first cost-cutting exercise.

The cost-cutting exercise that I am really concerned about is the job cost-cutting exercise. These new regulations will mean that the Health & Safety Executive and other public sector authorities will be able to reduce their workforce because they will not have to investigate as much. Congress, I urge you to support this motion. Thank you.

## **AIRCRAFT TURN AROUND TIMES**

### **MOTION 248**

Congress calls upon the Department of Trade and Industry and the Civil Aviation Authority to condemn the twenty five minute turn around on Boeing 737 800 series operated by Ryanair at London Stansted Airport.

STANSTED AIRPORT BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. D. PARMENTER (London): We call upon the DTI, HSE, and the CAA to condemn the 25-minute

turnaround now operated by Ryanair on their Boeing 737 aircraft operating at London Stansted. Ryanair have reduced the turnaround time from 30 minutes to 25 minutes and yet have increased the passenger numbers from 31 to 189 because of the bigger aircraft. The numbers simply do not add up. How can you increase the passenger numbers and yet reduce the turnaround time?

The basis for the reduced turnaround time is to allow the aircraft to do more routes per day whilst staying within the flight deck crew's permitted flying hours. The fact that Ryanair's contract with their handling agent, Swissport, is performance based causes GMB members employed by Swissport to be put under increased pressure to meet the on-time departure targets which are fundamental to the contract. The reduced turnaround times puts unacceptable pressure on both aircraft cabin crews and GMB members employed by the ground handling agent, Swissport. A recent documentary on Channel 4 revealed that the cabin crew were fatigued because of the amount of routes they were forced to do to such an extent that they were falling asleep whilst on duty. The documentary also revealed that the shortness of the turnaround prevented some of the mandatory security procedures being carried out. As a result of the pressure to meet the on-time departure targets GMB members working on the Ryanair product at Stansted Airport are suffering more industrial injuries than any other group of employees at the airport.

Congress, we must condemn Ryanair for their short turnaround times. I move Motion 248.

BRO. C. KERR (London): President and Congress, because Ryanair operates a twenty-five minute turn around time on their Boeing 737 800 series at Stansted, GMB members are under extreme pressure to meet on-time departures. This situation has resulted in a disproportionate number of injuries to our members who are employed by the agent, Swissport. As a result of the pressure to meet the departure times, the GMB members working on the Ryanair aircraft are suffering more industrial injuries than any other group at the airport. The current situation cannot be allowed to continue. The next time you think of booking a holiday or a weekend break, remember our members at Stansted. Please do not fly Ryanair until their health and safety issues have been resolved. Please support this motion. I second.

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? *(No response)*

On Motions 247 and 248, the CEC is asking you to support those motions.

*(Motion 247 was carried)*

*(Motion 248 was carried)*

## ADDRESS BY BARBARA KEELEY MP

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I would now like to introduce you to our guest speaker to give her report: Barbara Keeley MP. Barbara is the secretary of the GMB Parliamentary Group. She has been a member of the GMB in the north-west for almost 20 years, working first in the manufacturing sector, then with charities and organisations, including working on regeneration across the region. She is on the Constitutional Affairs Select Committee, Parliamentary Private Secretary to Jim Murphy at the Department for Works & Pensions. She is also a member of the National Policy Forum and serves on the Health Commission. Welcome, Barbara. *(Applause)*

SIS. BARBARA KEELEY MP: Good morning, Congress. Let me say, first, how honoured I am to be here today as a member of the group of over one hundred GMB MPs at Westminster to give this Parliamentary Report. I am a member of GMB in the north-west, in fact, the old Stretford branch in the Lancashire Region. I was elected in May 2005 as part of a new intake of 40 Labour MPs.

I would, first, like to thank our National Political Officer, Iain McNicol, for the help and support that came through Iain to me and to all the other Parliamentary candidates for our campaign. Thank you very much.

Our group of 40 new MPs includes 26 women, the first time that a new group of Labour MPs has had more women than men. The new MPs in the GMB Group including Dawn Butler, who was here last year at Congress, Mary Cray, Sharon Hodgson, Sidiq Khan and Jessica Morden. Looking back through the man Bills, policy areas and White Papers that we have worked on in Parliament during the past year, two stand out as being areas where we are tackling social injustice for people at work. The first is action on the report of the Women & Work Commission and the second is the Pensions White Paper. The Women & Work Commission, on which Debbie Coulter served as a member, has brought the question of equal pay firmly back on to the political agenda, not that it had ever really been off the agenda in recent years.

I found a speech given by Mary Turner in 2003, entitled *Time To End The Pay Gap*. As Mary said then, 30 years of the Equal Pay Act operating has not closed the pay gap and too few employers even monitor their workforces to find out if they do have an unfair gap in pay. More than 12 million women working in Britain are being denied more than £80 a week each due to unequal pay.

The main reason to close the pay gap is for justice for the workers involved, of course, particularly part-time women workers who are still

only paid 61 pence in the pound compared to men. But the Women & Work Commission also pointed out that if we could remove barriers to help women move into more highly skilled and better paying work, we could add up to £23 billion to our economy, and those are two very powerful arguments for closing that gap.

The other big area where the Labour Government can remedy injustice is to create the long-term settlement for pensions that we promised in our manifesto. It is time we made this change. It is the first renewal of our pensions system since it was brought in by the post-war Labour Government of Clement Attlee. For me the key points in the Pensions White Paper were the new low cost savings scheme with employers making matching contributions, a higher and fairer State pension re-linked to earnings and help for women's and carers' pensioners both by cutting the number of years needed to qualify for a State pension and by bringing in credits for women and carers. The credits will mean that caring work or childcare counts towards people's pension entitlements in the same way as National Insurance contributions. Finally, MPs were pleased to see that the Financial Assistance Scheme will be extended so that many more workers who lost their occupational pensions when private schemes were wound up can now be helped.

Besides Government legislation, the new GMB MPs have also been active in bringing forward Private Members' legislation. I was one of the sponsors of the Children's Food Bill which was brought forward by Wakefield MP, Mary Cray, who is also a member of the GMB Group and Mary's Bill comes back into Parliament next Friday. We all hope it will go forward.

On 27<sup>th</sup> March of this year I introduced a Bill called Identification and Support of Carers – Primary Health Care. The Bill aims to help carers by ensuring that GPs identify their patients who are carers and give those carers regular health checks. My Bill gained cross-Party support in the House and is due for its Second Reading on 14<sup>th</sup> July.

I am mentioning some of the work of the GMB Group and of the new GMB MPs because it does not get coverage in the media. Week in and week out the media focus not on the work of MPs but on the personalities of our leaders, the gossip they pick up around Westminster and on personal issues and problems of a very few MPs.

David Cameron's strategy is to encourage people to be cynical about the work of MPs and of Parliament so that they give up voting. Cameron's other trick is to try to undermine Labour's trade union links through the debate on Party funding. At the Tories' spring conference in Manchester, Cameron singled out the GMB, UNISON, Amicus and the TGWU for attack in his speech on Party funding.

Cameron's Tories are suggesting a cap of £50,000 on donations with no funding allowed from trade unions. Clearly, the Tories have enough rich donors to be able to raise £20 million for an election campaign from individual donations of £50,000, but we have to face the fact that we do not. So the consultation on Party funding issues will be very important this year. Jessica Morden, who is a new GMB MP, and myself are working on this issue on an inquiry of the Constitutional Affairs Committee.

Soon we hope we will also be working on House of Lords reform, another long-awaited and much needed change. Week in and week out your MPs ask questions, we join in debates and we put down motions in the Commons to move forward campaigns and policies which will make a difference. We want legislation to make a difference for women still suffering from the pay gap, for carers who lose out financially during their working lives and who also lose their right to pensions and for workers whose pension schemes are being wound-up. Now we also have to fight to keep Labour's trade union links, to stop the unelected House of Lords from persistently trying to throw out legislation which was in our manifesto.

The message I bring from the GMB Group of Labour MPs, and particularly the new MPs, is that we are up for the fight with Cameron and his Tories and our opponents in the Lib-Dems and other political parties.

The GMB now has a great track record in campaigning, whether it is working to save social care services and jobs, exposing the tactics being used as ASDA/Wal-mart to stop collective bargaining or high-light asset stripping by venture capitalists, which can damage jobs and services at AA. Your MPs look forward to working with the GMB locally and nationally to make the joint fight for social justice a successful one in this Parliament, and also to move forward on our campaigns and policies like the ones to bring social justice in equal pay and pensions. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Barbara, this is a small gift from the GMB, one bottle of Scotch, a book on British trade union posters and some glasses, all made by our members.

*(Presentation to Barbara Keeley MP made amidst applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to the Public Services Section Report, and I will be moving pages 90-93, excluding the NHS section of the Public Services Section Report because we intend to take a full debate on Public Services later on. I call Brian Strutton to give his report.

## SECTION REPORT - PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION

In the report to Congress for 2005 we showed membership in the Public Services Section of 255,377. It now stands over 260,000 or 44% of the GMB total. This is a fantastic achievement and it proves that the GMB is the Union of choice for public service workers. The National Committee wishes to place on record its thanks to all the lay activists and Officers whose hard work and commitment to members underpins our growth.

The National Committee has met on four occasions since last Congress and membership is currently:

Mary Turner, President - London Region  
 Paul Bedford - Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region  
 Samantha Caveney - Lancashire Region  
 Jean Chaplow - Northern Region  
 Linda Clarke - Birmingham & W Midlands Region  
 Keith Cook - GMB Scotland  
 Gary Doolan - London Region  
 John Faulds - GMB Scotland  
 Gordon Gibbs - Birmingham & W Midlands Region  
 Pamela Hughes - Yorkshire & N Derbyshire Region  
 Brian Jackson - Birmingham & W Midlands Region  
 Kevin Jones - South Western Region  
 Susan Lee - Liverpool, N Wales & Irish Region  
 Evelyn Martin - London Region  
 June Minnery - GMB Scotland  
 Jimmy Philbin - Liverpool, N Wales & Irish Region  
 Robin Richardson - London Region  
 Eileen Theaker - Southern Region  
 Peter Dow - MPO - Liverpool Region  
 Heather Starr - MPO - South Western Region  
 Richard Passmore - Chair of NHS National Advisory Group

It is the National Committee's role to consider policy issues and Section activities at national level across the whole spectrum of public services. Matters actioned by the Committee have included:

- \* Organisation and recruitment
- \* Equal pay
- \* Pensions
- \* School support staff
- \* NHS Agenda for Change
- \* Privatisation and PFI/PPP
- \* Probation
- \* Rent Service
- \* Private care sector
- \* Campaign to defend council housing
- \* Local government pay
- \* Section resources

Despite having a Labour Government since 1997 we still find that we must campaign against privatisation in everything we do. In whatever guise it appears, PFI or PPP or whatever else, we believe in public ownership and the delivery of public services by public sector employees. We will not cease in our calls for public investment whether in hospitals, schools or council housing.

The campaigning theme is picked up in our new Section magazine, "Public Eye", the first issue being sent out in January this year direct to all Section members. This has been tremendously well received and thanks are due to Rose Conroy in our press office for successfully putting this together.

The bulk of the Section's activities at national level have centred around the five priority areas of pensions, school support staff, equal pay, NHS agenda for change and membership growth.

## 1. Pensions

Like the rest of the economy, public sector pensions has been under considerable scrutiny with major negotiations constantly taking place. Section Officials are grateful for the excellent support from Naomi Cooke, Heidi Benzing and Phil McEvoy in the GMB pensions department which is the best in the trade union movement.

Our involvement has been at the Public Services Forum covering public sector pension schemes in general as well as individual scheme negotiations, most notably local government, the NHS and the Civil Service. All of these are extremely detailed and complex. Government policy has been to limit the cost of providing public sector pensions by reducing benefits and/or increasing member contributions for new or existing staff or both. The TU agenda is to protect and, indeed, improve benefits.

As a result, public sector pensions has been on the verge of erupting into a major industrial dispute since the early part of last year. At the time of writing this report GMB and over a million local government workers are balloting for industrial action.

## 2. School Support Staff

Our twin objectives are to organise more school support staff and to secure a national pay and conditions framework for them.

Recruitment in schools has been the most successful area of GMB activity in recent years. In order to support this even further we introduced a new schools project in June 2005 with our best ever organising material and a dedicated reporting system to accurately monitor our recruitment performance. The "Schools Support Staff Resource Pack" has been tremendously well received and helps Officers establish a representative when they make recruitment visits. As for the overall impact, we have recruited an extra 3000 school support staff in the last six months.

Last October the government published a schools White Paper proposing further deregulation of schools which we oppose at a political level. We used the potentially damaging effects that increased school independence could have on our ability to represent members to further our campaign for a national framework for school support staff pay and conditions. We persuaded government to establish a school support working group reporting to the Schools Minister to make recommendation on how to deal with pay, grading, contracts, training and development, and TU recognition.

Not only has GMB been the driving force behind setting this group up, but we have also provided the input. We have drawn up a "Fair Pay Framework" for school support staff covering:

- a national framework of benchmark jobs and associated salary ranges which all schools will adhere to;
- Special Education Needs Allowance for all staff who work wholly or mainly with children with special needs based on teachers' allowances;
- full-year pay for all support staff;
- standard working week;
- national guidance on contracts to end inappropriate use of temporary, fixed-term and multiple contracts;
- a minimum entitlement to paid time off and cover to access training and development opportunities for all support staff;
- entitlements for classroom-based staff to
  - \* guaranteed paid time for planning, preparation and assessment;
  - \* limit on number of sessions deployed with whole classes;
  - \* limit on number of sessions deployed to do cover supervision;
  - \* clear job description which distinguishes between cover supervision and specified work duties.

The employers are, not surprisingly, totally opposed to our Fair Pay Framework. So as well as setting the agenda, GMB has also designed a statutory basis for establishing this Framework using existing powers available to Ministers and making some straightforward changes to School Staffing Regulations to directly bind in schools. In other words, we have set out what we want to achieve and how it can be done.

The hard work behind all this is carried out by Helga Pile, our Senior Research and Policy Officer, who is widely recognised as the pre-eminent specialist on school support staff matters. Helga also produces the acclaimed GMB School Workforce News and represents GMB on WAMG (the Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group).

### **3. NHS**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **4. Care**

The decision by GMB to develop membership in the care sector, particularly the private care sector, is proving the right decision to have made. Many of the UK care providers we had recognition with are no longer in the market, having been acquired by the now largest care home provider, Southern Cross Healthcare.

Southern Cross Healthcare employ over 33,000 employees, nearly one third of the entire 1.6 million care sector market.

Resources in this area of work are largely being spent on improving terms and conditions for this mainly low paid group and harmonising different terms and conditions that each acquisition brings.

Future development in this sector needs to focus on organising, changes to the national minimum standard for care homes, funding, better training for staff and better regulations.

### **5. Equal Pay**

At last Congress we announced the intention to set up an Equal Pay Unit to process equal pay cases in the NHS and local government and this has been successfully established.

For the NHS this means that on assimilation to Agenda for Change members may have outstanding backpay issues that can now be pursued through the Equal Pay Unit. For local government, it means that where single status negotiations stall or are unsuccessful Officers have the alternative of launching equal pay claims.

As a result, GMB is currently taking equal pay cases on behalf of many thousands of members to recover the pay that is rightfully theirs. We have been criticised for our more aggressive approach to equal pay, mainly by the employers of course, but the message is getting across that GMB will relentlessly fight for equality where others only talk about it.

Unscrupulous no-win-no-fee lawyers continue to incite union members to take cases against shop stewards, Officers and their union to break negotiated deals. GMB will robustly answer any such challenges.

## 6. Public Services Growth

Public Services recruitment makes up half of the GMB's total recruitment and is therefore vitally important not only for our overall health as an organisation but also as an indicator of the vitality and effectiveness of the Section, and our appeal to new members. We see successes all round the country.

In the last twelve months we recruited over 35,000 new members giving net growth of over 5,000. The pace of recruitment is increasing, with four of the last five months generating well over 3,000 new members per month and we are looking forward to maintaining that upward trend.

*(Adopted)*

BRO. B. STRUTTON (National Secretary, Public Services): Good morning, everyone. Did you all see Tony Blair last week saying, "I've put all this money into public services - why doesn't everyone appreciate me?" The answer to most of us in this hall is blindingly obvious. The mantra of reform does not guarantee service improvement, and many of his reforms have simply not worked, in particular PFI and all the other guises of privatisation and the management and consultancy bureaucracies which come with it. There is no point spending a fortune on reforming how to provide basic services if it does not lead to better services. The ludicrous philosophy of the past few years that reform to provide the same level of services for less cost is somehow an improvement has, I believe, caused the misdirection and the waste of resources that he is now complaining about. However, it also points to the way forward for Labour if it wants to take it. It is not, as some think, to assume that spending on public services is a waste of time. It is instead to be clear, firstly, that public services has to be a winning trump card for Labour and, secondly, to direct investment at the point of delivery of those public services. Labour can still do that. The Tories, of course, never will.

Ever mindful of our political context, in the GMB Public Services Section, we try to stay focused on those key issues which affect our members in their working lives. As I set out at the last Congress, schools, pensions and equal pay were going to be the big issues and I would like to update Congress on these issues.

Our work for school support staff is something that we can be justifiably proud of. We are now the largest union for school support staff and we are, rightly, regarded as the leading voice on their behalf. The crucial thing for us now is to achieve the National Framework for Pay and Conditions for school support staff to, once and for all, end the abuse of term time and multiple contracts and low pay which has dogged our members in school. We have been

very close to achieving that objective in the recent months, and now with a new Secretary of State and a new Schools Minister in post, we will re-double our efforts to win their support as we have done with their predecessors.

In the substantive area of negotiations, we have spent an enormous amount of the past year involved in pension discussions across the public sector. I will focus on the Local Government Pension Scheme. We have also had 12 solid months of negotiating with Government, the ODPM, the employers and 13 other trade unions. I cannot begin to convey the complexities of the LGPS or the negotiating process, but with the support of the GMB Pensions Department I try hard to provide regular and clear communications setting out what is happening and what will happen honestly and realistically. We have to defend pensions and in the LGPS that means stopping the Tory led employers from doing what they really want to do, and that is to wind-up the scheme and to impose a cheap money purchase arrangement instead. So defending the Local Government Pension Scheme as a quality final salary scheme for all members now and in the future is what the one day strike on 28<sup>th</sup> March was all about. The achievement in mobilising more than a million workers across the UK was an outstanding achievement, thereby forcing the employers to the negotiating table and forcing the Government to guarantee us the money to negotiate with.

As readers of our communications will know, I have always said that the toughest battles are yet to come and the next couple of months will prove that. For me equal pay is something of a defining issue for the trade union Movement. It represents the archetypal problem of an unfunded promise. We are not the cause of that problem but through our strength and resolve we will be the solution. That is why we refute the charge made by a north-east tribunal last week that our officers had discriminated against women in Middlesborough Council. That tribunal got it wrong and we will appeal because it is

the employers who are responsible for not coughing up on equal pay. They should be in the dock, not the trade unions like the GMB who were the proud founders of the equal pay movement and who keep that fight alive today for justice and equality.

Of course, all of our work and the demands put upon us have to be resourced. We are a small team. Since I relinquished my energy and utility duties earlier this year I have been virtually full time concerned with public services. Sharon Holder spends most of her time on care in the NHS but also has onerous MoD responsibilities, so I am pleased that we have been given some of Rehana Azam's time so that she can look at one or two areas that need attention, notably F&HE and the voluntary sector. She has just successfully concluded a good deal in the HE sector pay negotiations yielding 13.6% over three years.

We also know that we need to be more inclusive of members in the contracting sector, so we have agreed to set up a contractors' forum to try and make some sense of that sector and, indeed, to try and make sense of some of the agreements that we have. Officers in those public service responsibilities need back-up. We still need to bolster our research support. Helga Pyle, unfortunately, left in May and her outstanding work on behalf of school support staff is being sorely missed.

Let me say that the really significant feature about the Public Services Section is our organising success. Ever since the written Congress report, I can advise you that the Public Services Section now has more than 268,000 members, or 45% of the entire GMB. That would rank us as the sixth largest UK trade union in our own right. We have grown by just over 10,000 members since last Congress, not as some might think through a one dimensional focus on schools but also through care homes, the NHS, the wider education sector and the local authority activity generated by the pensions strike.

In public services we recruited 42,000 members in the past year with huge scope for further growth in every GMB region.

So, on behalf of the National Committee, I congratulate all the officers and activists who have contributed to a very successful 12 months, and I look forward confidently to an equally successful year ahead. Thank you very much, Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: I now turn to the Report. Page 90? 91?

BRO. H. RAJCH (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): The strike day on March 28<sup>th</sup> was a fantastic day. You were right. It was a brilliant one day dispute where people were actively and enthusiastically picketing their workplaces. That day was a huge success. However, it was disappointing to find that the next series of strike days, including the local government

election day strike, which had been planned, was called off for what, basically, turned out to be three extra years, which is very little. I am really worried that we are going to be sold out at some future time. I hope that will not be the case because the enthusiasm exists amongst people to defend pensions and to strike.

Let me ask a question on the report generally. I think this is a very important question. It is about the future and it concerns potential recruitment. Bearing in mind Gordon Brown's statement about a potential pay freeze for the next three years, that is something we need to oppose. I hope, Brian, that we can look forward to you standing up to Gordon Brown and telling him that there is no way that the GMB will accept that, and that we will fight the decision on the potential pay freeze. I look forward to you leading that campaign for the GMB against the pay freeze and telling him to get stuffed. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: That last bit, Henry, got you off the hook. Page 93?

A SPEAKER *(No name or region given)*: I am referring to page 92, Mary, on equal pay. Brian, I am concerned about the decision in the Middlesborough court case. You have touched on this issue before. You have said you are going to appeal, which is great to hear. I am wondering where we stand on that issue now. I know we will have to wait until the appeal decision. Are you going to send out some proper advice and guidance because not only do full-time officials negotiate but the lay members also negotiate on behalf of our members. We have shop stewards, convenors and branch secretaries who do the negotiating. There will be many worried people out *there* and they will be needing the help, advice and guidance of your good selves. I am wondering if you could get that information out to them sooner rather than later.

BRO. B. STRUTTON: Thank you. Henry had two questions and there was one other that I will try and deal with. The first question was about the one day strike on 28<sup>th</sup> March. I think, effectively, there is concern that we called the action off then. Let me explain to you why we did. From my perspective, and I guess I am probably the closest person to it, I did not see anything that we could achieve from that point going forward that we could not achieve through negotiation. That being so, I took the view that it would be wrong to tell members that they should perpetuate losing days without pay if I did not think their action would achieve anything. I also detected throughout the country concerns about walking into a dispute without an end. So when we took the decision to suspend the action after 28<sup>th</sup> March and we communicated that fact, I have to say that I did not have one single complaint about it. I repeat, not one. Indeed, we did go into negotiations

and we did move the position forward. We have improved, we are consulting on that and we had a good fringe meeting about it yesterday. I hope every rep had a good bit of feedback about that.

The second point which Henry made was about Gordon Brown and his pay freeze comments. If the red light had not gone on, I was going to say something about Gordon Brown but I actually did last week. I gave some interviews to the media about Gordon Brown's statements. I did not see it myself, but apparently on Thursday evening's Newsnight Jeremy Paxman, when interviewing David Milliband, actually quoted me and said: "Mr. Milliband, Brian Strutton of the GMB said today that Gordon Brown does not understand anything about public services. What do you have to say to that?" So, yes, we will be challenging Gordon Brown, but we did last week as well and we will be doing that very, very robustly. It is a nonsense, on the one hand, to be saying that public sector workers have to deliver more but, on the other hand, by the way, "We are going to freeze your pay and we fancy doing away with national bargaining in the process". That is bonkers!

The last question was about equal pay and the Middlesbrough case. I cannot comment in any detail in the Middlesbrough case and we need to work through the full ramifications of it. We will appeal and we will be very robust in that appeal. During the past year we have been issuing good advice on equal pay and one of the positives about that north-east Tribunal case is that they were very complimentary about the position we have been adopting. When we fully digested the implications of that case, we will, of course, update our advice but, to be honest, we have not been standing still on equal pay. We have been ramping up, ramping up and ramping up with a more aggressive style. We will continue to do that not because some useless no-win/no-fee lawyers are trying to wind us up. We do not change policy because of that. We change policy because it is what we want to do. Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: Brian, I think Lancashire were saying that they have not seen the advice which was sent out. The officers may have done but they have not. I think what you were saying is that you would like to receive it? That is what you were asking for, is that correct?

THE SPEAKER *(Same speaker as on previous page)*: Mary, I am not saying we had not received the advice prior, but we have seen it in the branches. In the light of the decision – I know that Brian said he was going to appeal, which is a good thing – there are people who are very weary because they do not know what to do. If there is any new advice, they need it now in the light of the decision. They need to know what we are going to do. Brian explained very eloquently what he is going to do, but I think we need

to get the people out of this hall and the people in the workplaces who are doing the negotiations. They need that information and they need it now.

THE PRESIDENT: As soon as we have it, we will send it out.

Will Congress please accept pages 90, 91 and 93 of the General Secretary's Report. Is that agreed?

*(The Public Services Section Report was adopted)*

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

### **PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION REVIEW**

#### **MOTION 159**

Congress calls for a review of the effectiveness of the Public Services Section.

Each year the continuing dilution of the National Terms and Conditions leaves many members with ever worsening Terms and Conditions, due to local bargaining with employers who have little regard for the important jobs our members do, and only ever see the balance sheet and not the service users.

Currently, Single Status and Local Pay and Grading Reviews, a process designed to eradicate Equal Pay issues, is leaving members worse off and fighting with individual employers to maintain decent terms, wages and holidays.

This review should examine why we agree each year for more of the National Terms and Conditions (Green Book) to be locally negotiated and not kept at a national level. Are we to lead our members into a position where neighbouring authorities are providing very different terms and conditions of employment, or very different rates of pay – where is the logic in that?

Congress demands the GMB resists any further attempts by the Employers to move away from the National Agreement.

**ASHFIELD GENERAL BRANCH  
Midland & East Coast Region**

*(Carried)*

BRO. J. GOLDING (Midland & East Coast): I move Motion 159. President and Congress, local authorities are currently implementing the 1997 National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service, Part 1, which covers principles and agreements and Part II, which covers the key national provisions, which are mandatory. Parts III and IV include job evaluation and national provisions, which may be modified by

local negotiations such as annual leave, premium payments, consolidated pay, sickness schemes, standby arrangements, working five days out of seven, protected pay, back-dated pay, public holidays, concessionary days, pay grading and also car allowances.

Are we as a trade union comfortable negotiating pay cuts and less favourable conditions of employment for our members? Congress calls for a review of the effectiveness of the Public Services Section. Each year the continued dilution of National Terms and Conditions leaves many members with ever worsening terms and conditions due to local bargaining with employers who have little regard for the important jobs our members do. They only ever see the balance sheet, not the service users. Currently, Single Status, Local Pay and Grading Reviews are processed to eradicate equal pay issues, which is leaving members worse off and fighting with individual employers to maintain decent terms, wages and holidays.

This review should examine why we agree each year for more of the National Terms and Conditions to be locally negotiated and not kept at a national level. Are we to lead our members into a position where neighbouring authorities are providing very different terms and conditions of employment, or very different rates of pay? Where is the logic in that?

Congress demands that the GMB resists any further attempts by the employers to move away from the National Agreement. I move.

BRO. T. OWEN (Midland & East Coast): I second Motion 159 – Service Section Review. President and Congress, we know there is a rule of thumb that we maintain National Terms and Conditions within local authorities. However, we recognise that some terms and conditions are amended to save jobs and improve existing terms and conditions. What we do not know is when these changes are made, where these changes are made and, more importantly, why these changes are made. All we are asking is can someone at national or regional level collate any or all locally negotiated settlements and make them available to all officers and shop stewards. This simple measure should enable more effective servicing for the section's members and, hopefully, greater retention and recruitment within this section.

## **PUBLIC SECTOR JOB EVALUATION EXERCISE**

### **MOTION 160**

Congress calls upon Central Government to finance the cost of the Job Evaluation Exercise.

We believe the cost of implementation should be

met from national and not local government.

## **HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS BRANCH GMB Scotland Region**

*(Carried)*

BRO. T. KELBIE (GMB Scotland): I move Motion 160 – Public Sector Job Evaluation Exercise.

President and Congress, I move that Congress calls upon central Government to finance the cost of the Job Evaluation Exercise in the Public Sector, and in particular for that of local authority workers.

Job evaluation was meant to be the mechanism that would address inequality throughout the local authority workforce under the banner of single status. At long last low paid workers in local government service would be seen in their true value, as the integral factors that keep our communities clean, safe and secure. But job evaluation for local authorities will not deliver that because local government cannot afford it without full funding from central government. The cost is being left to each individual authority to fund from already squeezed budgets. That is an impossible task!

The only solution that local authorities have come up with is to restructure, and in that process decrease staffing levels through early retirement and voluntary redundancies. But the staff who are left are expected not just to maintain their level of service but to increase it. Again, that is another impossible task.

In the National Health Service, *Agenda for Change* has been fully funded from central government to the tune of more than £900 million. In education the McCrone Report was instrumental in obtaining the hundreds of millions in costs from central government.

Behind me are two words at the heart of the GMB's purpose and existence: Justice & Equality.

So we call upon the GMB to mount a national campaign to bring about justice and equality for the poor relations of the public service workforce, the local authority employees, and secure full funding for the job evaluation process.

The Public Service Section in GMB is now, through vigorous recruitment by our organisers and activists, the biggest section with regard to membership. Currently, that figure is at 46% and still growing. But that could be severely damaged if local authorities have to bear the cost of job evaluation through job losses and consequently GMB Public Service membership.

Congress, support this motion and sanction a full national campaign for full funding for local authority job evaluation.

THE PRESIDENT: Can the seconder come to the rostrum?

SIS. L. MILLAR (GMB Scotland): Congress, the theme of this Conference is “Justice and Equality”. I work in local government where justice and equality is still to be realised. Some time ago this Union signed up to single status and job evaluation. In practice, it seems more like job devaluation. The process for this has resulted in serious threats to our members’ wages and conditions. We should have been looking forward to justice and equality but without central Government’s financial support our members will once again have the fear of cuts in pay and conditions or council tax will be raised to unacceptable levels. Central Government must be pressurised by this Union to give extra funding or the aim of justice and equality will remain a dream. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, before I move to the next mover, let me put you on alert that we may have to bring forward, with your agreement, some of this afternoon’s business, so let me make the movers and seconders of 1, 2, 3 and possibly 4 to be on alert to give their speeches this morning. I am referring to Motions 138, 139, 213, 214, pages 93-99 of the Birmingham & West Midlands’ Regional Secretary’s Report, including the Commercial Services Report by Gary Smith. Is that agreed? *(Agreed)*

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT SALARY ALLOWANCES**

### **MOTION 162**

Congress notes that many allowances within the local government pay structures, such as sleep in allowances, standby allowances, etc. are paid below the national minimum wage. This is unacceptable and instructs the CEC and the National Secretary to ensure that the next local government pay claim, to be submitted later this year, includes rates for such allowance to be no less than the national minimum wage.

ISLINGTON APEX BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Referred)*

SIS. D. PETERSON (London): I move Motion 162. President and Congress, many allowances within the local government pay structures, such as sleeping and standby allowances, are being paid below the National Minimum Wage. They are paid at £30 for eight hour shifts, which works out to less than £4 per hour. This is not part of the normal working time. This is over and above their 35 hour week. Bear in mind that I am talking about workers who are already at the lower end of the pay scales. Sleep ins and standbys, by their very nature, occur in unsociable hours. Then to pay these workers less than £4 an hour, which is less than the National Minimum Wage

for these essential duties, is not only a travesty but it is an insult and totally unacceptable.

We, therefore, ask the CEC and the National Secretary to ensure that the next local government pay claims, which are to be submitted later this year, include rates for such allowances to be no less than the National Minimum Wage.

Colleagues, I ask you to support this motion.

BRO. M. FOSTER (London): I second Motion 162. Congress, this motion is simply seeking to stop council residential establishments using the sleep in allowance as a way of paying a miserly wage to our members. Our members who undertake sleep ins are at their place of work for eight hours. During that time they can be called upon, and often are, to attend to various client needs. This often keeps them awake for the whole eight hours. However, they are still only paid approximately £30 per shift. As my colleague before me has said, this equates to less than £4 per hour. I ask you, who in this room works for less than £4 per hour? Does anyone? No, of course not. If you will not, why should our members?

Therefore, this motion calls upon the GMB to make every effort to stop this practice which is nothing more than insulting to our members. Thank you.

## **RESIDENTIAL WORKERS – SLEEP IN DUTIES**

### **MOTION 163**

Congress notes that many residential social and care workers are required to undertake sleep in duties in their place of work, either immediately prior to or immediately following a normal working shift. Congress is concerned that such practices may well be in contravention of the working time directive. Congress instructs the CEC and the National Secretary to campaign for such working practices to cease and to ensure that guidance is given to members in such circumstances.

ISLINGTON APEX BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. V. WEST (London): I move Motion 163. This is a short and simple motion calling for justice for our members working in residential establishments. Many are required to undertake, as we have just heard, sleep in duties either immediately prior to or immediately following a normal working shift. The term “sleep in” is, on many nights, a contradiction in terms as our staff are woken up to attend to a child or an old person in difficulties, after which they either end up working all night or not being able to get back to sleep. They could then be expected to do

a full normal seven hour shift the following day. This not only puts them at risk but the clients who they care for at risk. In such circumstances they cannot, even with the best will in the world, be mentally or physically alert enough to offer people proper care and to look after the children and old people who are in their establishments.

The GMB must campaign for these practices to stop. Sleep in duties are work, not a free night's sleep in the office. If necessary, let us take on a legal case and test the issue. Let us campaign across all local authorities and private sector care homes to ensure that shift patterns, rotas and staffing levels are adequate to provide a safe working environment for our members and for the clients who they look after.

SIS. E. KELLER (London): I second Motion 163 – Sleep in Duties. Our demands are simple. The GMB must campaign to ensure that local authorities in private sector care homes treat sleep in duties as work. Our members who are working in this sector should, like every other worker, enjoy the protection of the Working Time Directive. If they are at work, their employers should not be able to avoid their duty of care by claiming it is only a sleep in duty.

On many nights our members are woken up to care for clients and then they have to work a normal shift afterwards. Let us campaign against these and other similar practices to ensure that our members have the full protection of the Working Time Directive.

## **TIED ACCOMMODATION**

### **MOTION 164**

Congress it has come to my attention during recent investigation into tied accommodation rights of the post holder.

A licence to occupy the property was issued when in fact a licence for secured tenant should have been issued.

Reference the post holders position this in effect cancels out any years of service and housing purchase discount had the employee been in council tenancy from the first day of employment. This is a sever blow to employees who have served their local authority in many cases over 20-30-40 years. We therefore request the union – CEC to take immediate action to resolve this action and unfair treatment of their tied accommodation employees.

**STOCKTON 1**  
*Northern Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. A. KIGHTLY (London): I move Motion 164. During the past few years with councils wishing to get rid of

their housing stocks to private companies a very serious problem has arisen. It applies to caretakers like myself who live under a tied accommodation agreement. The problem now seems to be affecting other caretakers where the housing stock is still held by the council.

The fundamental issue is as follows. A condition of service is that you will resign or live on site. It is part of a package. It is a package of your employment which you will adhere to. The serious problem occurs when a caretaker comes up for retirement or to leave his employment because the housing officer, some jumped up little person, makes a decision that because you are a caretaker you are not in secure housing. You only have a licence whilst you are in the job. Thank you very much. That is not what I expect. The housing officer's approach is: "You can apply to be re-housed. We will give you a choice. If you do not accept that choice, you will be homeless." That is after 20 plus years of service! Homeless! I don't think so.

Point 2. "If you take up this housing offer which we give you, you will have no rights" – no rights! – "to purchase this property. You will have to serve a five year period. Within that five years period, we will endeavour to give you up to £9,000 of the council purchase". That is after 25 years! Something is wrong somewhere.

Also no account is taken of your previous service. This includes the previous package that I referred to of £9,000. In some cases, if you have retained your council house, had you been in a council house, it could be up to a maximum of £27,000 or £37,000. Tied accommodation caretakers, whether they be local authority housing, social services housing, etc., are being crapped on.

President and Congress, this shoddy treatment and behaviour must not be allowed to continue. I urge you to support this motion. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Seconder?

BRO. M. NICHOLS (Northern): I second Motion 164 on tied accommodation.

Congress, caretakers in our schools and care homes often have to live on site in tied accommodation as part of their terms and conditions of employment.

In the past there has never been a problem with caretakers automatically getting re-housed when they retire. They always were rehoused in an area of their choice, usually very near to where they worked as they had become part of the local community. However, now things seem to be changing with the outsourcing of council house stock. I am sure that whoever thought up the bright idea of outsourcing council house stock did not think about the effect their decision would have on caretakers, and an effect it certainly is having.

Caretakers are now being discriminated against. It is unfair to treat a person in tied council accommodation any differently than any other council tenant. They should have the same tenancy rights, the same right to buy and the same discounts as any other council tenant.

I urge you to support this motion.

## **STAFFING LEVELS IN RESIDENTIAL AND NURSING HOMES**

### **MOTION 175**

Congress calls upon the GMB to campaign for changes to the national minimum standards for care homes for elderly people contained in the 'Care Standards Act 2000' (section 6 'staffing', standard 27 'staff compliment').

27.1 and 27.3 are too loose, and allow the management to determine what staffing is required. The staffing levels are not published or made public knowledge by either the home or CSCI, which leads to distrust by service users, families and staff.

Staffing levels are constantly being abused, as the homes are determining the number of staff required.

Prior to April 2002 a staffing notice was issued, which stipulated the numbers of nurses and carers required for each home.

All new registrations from April 2002 were required to comply to the residential formula, but this formula is voluntary and not enforceable.

Congress therefore calls for an active campaign to make the residential formula compulsory and insist on staffing levels being published.

**MIDLAND HEALTHCARE BRANCH**  
*Midland & East Coast Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. B. HELEY (Midland & East Coast): I move Motion 175, Staffing Levels in Residential and Nursing Homes.

With an ageing population the care sector is one of the fastest growing sectors within the UK. Every town and village has at least one care home. I would imagine that most people in this Congress hall have a relative or knows someone who is in a care home. At one time the majority of the homes were in the public sector and the staff enjoyed decent terms and conditions which included what has now become a dirty word – pensions! However, due to national minimum standards and escalating costs, the majority of residential and nursing homes are now in the private sector and, guess what, this is one of the lowest paid sectors in the country.

The company I work for has not only bought out that many times that it makes me dizzy, but it has more than doubled in size every time it has changed hands, and it is now one of the largest single providers of care in the UK, which employs in the region of 33,000 staff.

During the past couple of years we have managed to recruit with the company and by servicing we have not only maintained numbers despite the horrendous turnover of staff and despite the fact that for a period of time we were de-recognised as a union by the company. You might ask why? It was because we had the audacity to stand up for members' rights. The company was not happy but we took them to court. We have now almost tripled our membership within the region. Due to the steady build-up of members, we have, for the first time since the introduction of the National Minimum Wage, managed to secure a pay deal which has finally got all staff fractionally, as in 5 pence, above the National Minimum Wage. We have finally got everyone in the company enhanced rates for bank holidays instead of working for flat time.

Yes, care staff are pleased with the increases, but they are not in it simply for the money. They are in it because they care. It is their profession. It is because they care that they end up being morally blackmailed into working, as you have heard, understaffed. They will not see the residents suffer so they work their fingers to the bone but they also put themselves and the same residents at risk because they are permanently working short-staffed. All too often we read reports on a daily basis where, because of staff shortages, residents are suffering detriment in the level of care that they require.

Whatever happened to the philosophy of caring from the cradle to the grave? Have we given it up along with any values we ever had? From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2002 the Government have set up a new regulatory body to police the industry, which is the Commission for Social Care Inspectorate. All newly registered homes have to comply with a residential formula which is based on the needs of the residents. Unfortunately, this formula is voluntary and not compulsory. C-SCI has neither the power nor the authority to enforce the formula. This motion demands that the formula must be not only compulsory but to introduce severe penalties for anyone ignoring the formula and for putting residents at risk.

Paul Kenny at last year's Congress said that we are now a campaigning union. We proved it at Congress in Newcastle by picketing the AA headquarters. Here is another campaign for us. There are approximately 1.6 million employed in the care sector, and 62% of them are within the private sector, which makes 992,000. That is more care workers than we currently have members in the Union. The vast majority of workers have either

never been in a Union or are afraid to join it.

We have proved in my company that the GMB can improve the lives of care workers. Let us go one step further. Let us become the premier union in the care sector, be it public or private. The potential for the Union with regards to membership is tremendous. Pull it off and you know what you can do with any mergers. We can see our nice bright logos and nice colours. Let us use that very popular mobile phone advert, which we all know.

We have proved in my company that the GMB can improve the lives of care workers. Let us go one step further. Let us become the premier union in the care sector, be it public or private. The potential for the Union with regards to membership is tremendous. Pull it off and you know what you can do with any mergers. We can see our nice bright logos and nice colours. Let us use that very popular mobile phone advert, which we all know.

THE PRESIDENT: Your time is up.

BRO. HELEY: The future is bright. The future is the GMB. Thank you.

BRO. I. BURKETT (Midlands & East Coast): I second Motion 175. President and Congress, I, like most of you, either know or have relatives or friends who live in a private nursing home. When we think of friends or relatives living in a nursing home, we have two thoughts. The first one is of guilt that we are not able to manage or to care for them ourselves. The second is that we hope that they are cared for in the way that we would wish to care for them ourselves.

The first thought is a natural feeling and is something that only we can deal with. But the second thought takes people who have the time to give to the people living in these homes the time and attention that that requires. We all know that this costs money, and if it is going to increase costs then this will not happen voluntarily. It will take legislation to ensure a level playing field for all nursing homes. If there are going to be more people employed, then the cost of funding must also increase to match these additional costs.

We must ensure that the Commission for Social Care Inspector (CSCI) has the resource and the power to ensure that the homes comply with the residential formula which is based on the needs of the residents.

So let us start this campaign so that we can ensure, firstly, that we can rest easily, that our friends and relatives are being well cared for but, and just as importantly, that our members who are employed in this so undervalued service are not abused and feel that they can deliver the care that they entered this profession for. Thank you.

## **PUBLIC SECTOR PENSIONS**

### **COMPOSITE MOTION 22**

*(Covering Motions 165 and 167)*

#### **165 – Pensions (Northern Region)**

#### **167 – Local Government Pension Schemes (London Region)**

We call upon the Government to ensure that all public sector pensioners are treated equally. Congress urges the GMB to campaign to stop the erosion of public sector pensions.

Congress instructs the CEC and the National Secretary to ensure that any 'deal' on the Local Government Pension Scheme is no worse than the deal achieved in 2005 for the Civil Service, Health Service and Teachers.

*(Carried)*

BRO. C. WHITMORE (London): I move Composite 22 – Public Sector Pensions.

President and Congress, I am honoured to be moving this composition motion as a first-time delegate which is on an issue so vital to the futures of our members. Before putting to you the reasons why you must support this composite, let me record how proud I was to see GMB members taking industrial action back in March to protect their futures and those of their children who may follow them into public service. I will return to the issue of public service in a while and to that fighting spirit.

First, let me say that the negotiations underway on constructing a new local government pension scheme are both an opportunity and a source of danger. It is an opportunity, Congress, to improve on the accrual rate so that our members' work now earns them a better future, an opportunity to deal once and for all with a fair provision of benefits for members' partners and dependants and an opportunity to improve on death in service benefits to help those who may be left behind. However, there are dangers, too.

At this point, let me take you to the words of the composite. As a wise and old comrade once told me "The words are the words are the words". What we seek here is to emphasise that the deal we achieve must be no worse than that achieved for Civil Servants, teachers and for staff in the NHS. What we are not seeking is a copycat scheme. Such are the dangers. The obvious danger is one of cost and we must beware of deals based on a cap to employer contributions in the future such as that recently agreed for teachers. We want no mortgaging of our members' future. We must beware of any moves which reduce ill-health retirement benefits or create additional barriers, and we must, at all costs, resist

the introduction of any form of any work test for ill-health retirement benefits.

So we are facing opportunities and dangers. What we seek is no worse than what has been agreed elsewhere, but arguments are one thing and I know, as a full-time trade union official, which is what I do with my other hat, that there is a deal to be done by dialogue and there is a deal to be won by fighting for your rights. It is the dedication and commitment of our members in public service that, I believe, means they deserve much more, but it is the fighting spirit of this great Union which means we can achieve much more. Thank you.

BRO. D. LEYLAND (Northern): I second Composite 22 on Public Sector Pensions.

Congress, what more topical issue do we face than public sector pensions? In March of this year we saw one of the most successful days of action in many years. In Northern Region schools closed, car parks closed and the Metro did not run. The strength of feeling amongst GMB members and the other trade unions involved was clear for all to see. What brought us to that point – the topical subject of pensions in the public sector, to be precise. In the year up to this dispute, Local Government Pension Scheme members had seen deals done with the teachers, the Health Service workers and the Civil Service. All of a sudden, what had been good enough for those public sector workers was deemed too good for local government workers. This situation cannot be fair, this situation cannot be fair and this situation is clearly unjust. Public sector pensions are one of the good things about working in the public sector. Pay may not always be as high as the private sector but public sector workers have always thought that they would be okay in their retirement as they would have a decent pension to pick up.

It is crucial that the National Secretary in doing a deal on the Local Government Pension Scheme ensures that any deal is no worse than any deal given to our public sector workers in 2005. We want one public sector and fair treatment for all. Thank you.

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME**

### **COMPOSITE MOTION 23**

*(Covering Motions 166 and 168)*

#### **166 – Local Government Pension Schemes (London Region)**

#### **168 – Pay As You Go Pensions (London Region)**

Congress agrees that it would be in the best interests of our members for the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) to be unfunded. Congress therefore instructs the union to campaign at all levels and as part of all

negotiations, for the LGPS to be an unfunded scheme.

**Congress agrees that Pay As You Go (PAYG) pensions for local government workers are the safest way to ensure our members have financial security when they retire. Congress instructs the union to adopt a policy of PAYG pensions and to negotiate and campaign for their earliest introduction.**

*(Carried)*

SIS. S. VINCENT (London): I move Composite 23. In 2003 the GMB Congress passed motions on pensions opposing raising the pension age. It was also agreed that a study should be made into finding an alternative to existing defined benefit schemes that are dependant on returns from the financial markets. The authors of the paper rebut the Government's assertion that the LGPS is not viable because retired workers are living longer and the retirement age must rise and benefits reduced. We agreed with the Government about our pension scheme. It is not viable for us, the members.

The Pension Commission said: "The British pension system is both one of the least generous in the developed world and one of the most complex." Our funded scheme is unusual in Europe. Our money has historically been invested in Government fixed interest securities as opposed to a pay-as-you-go scheme. The Green Paper published in October 2004 complexly states that it proposes to make a cut in benefits to future pensioners.

Congress, our money is simply being invested in the stock market. In the 1950s and 1960s there was an illusion that this was a successful way, but the position was bound to reverse as schemes matured and the ever-increasing proportion of funds were paid out in pensions. Quite simply, gambled money paid high returns then. Gambled money pays low returns now as stocks and shares fall. It is not hard to see who are the losers – us! Funded schemes prop up the establishment.

As workers we, the people who are putting the money in, are not guaranteed anything. It is time to say that enough is enough. A pay-as-you-go pension scheme run by an independent accountable body that is responsible to its members – yes, that is you and me – would ensure that what we put in can be taken out without being gambled away. Thank you.

SIS. J. SMITH (London): Congress and President, I am enforcing the mover's sentiments to Composite 23. In doing so through Congress, the Union, our proud GMB Union, campaigns at all levels for a pension which will give retirement financial security. Not having to worry where the next pound is coming from to buy a loaf of bread is vital, as many pensioners and

people at that level have to worry about where the next pound is coming from? Please support this motion because it will ensure our financial security in retirement. I second this composite motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on the debate on any of those resolutions and composites?

BRO. K. ROBERTS (Southern): President, on a point of clarification on Motion 159. The first line says: "Congress calls for a review of the effectiveness of the Public Services Section." The bottom line-and-a-half says: "Congress demands the GMB resists any further attempts by the Employers to move away from the National Agreement." When we vote we will be voting on two issues, which I believe are separate. We are being asked to vote for a review of the Public Services Section and then we are being asked to vote for something else at the bottom. I seek clarification, please.

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, it has been accepted as one – I will call the mover before we finish – so I cannot split one resolution into two votes. Does anyone else wish to speak to this composite?

SIS. R. HAYWARD (South Western): I am speaking in support of Motion 163 – Sleeping in Duties.

Congress, we have to tackle the coercion our members experience in residential homes to work beyond the Working Time Directive. We must re-look at section 3 of the Green Book to stop this abuse of our members having to make-up their 37 hour week when they have actually been sleeping in between 12 midnight and 7 a.m. If they had been working between 7 a.m. – 2 p.m. that would be deemed as their normal working hours. It is absolutely outrageous that our members are being pressurised in agreeing to local agreements which actually give away their rights of the Working Time Directive. Our members are worth far more than that, and the GMB is a campaigning union. We ask you to support this motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Rowena. Does anybody else wish to speak? *(No response)* I ask the mover of Motion 159 to come to the rostrum.

BRO. J. GOLDING (Midland & East Coast): I am not too sure what I am expected to say.

THE PRESIDENT: I did not think you were. What our colleague from Southern Region is saying, and there is not very much you can do about it, is that at the beginning of Motion 159 you are asking for a review of the Public Services Section, and then at the bottom of the motion you are demanding that the GMB resist any further attempts by the employers to move away from the National Agreement. It is as clear as mud to me, but you will be all right.

BRO. GOLDING: We should not be moving away from the National Agreement. It should be at a national level and we should stick to the national level.

THE PRESIDENT: And the review is the internal one?

BRO. GOLDING: Pardon?

THE PRESIDENT: The review is the internal review on Public Services?

BRO. GOLDING: Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: So there are two separate issues. Is that clear to my colleague in the Southern Region? One is internal and one is external. One is our own review, which is internal, and the other one is that we do not do away with national agreements with the national employers. I just wanted clarification.

BRO. J. PHILBIN (CEC, Public Services): The CEC is supporting Motion 159 and Composites 22 and 23, but with qualifications which I will explain in turn. The CEC is also asking Congress to defer motion 162 because this is plainly a matter for the normal consultation process for formulating items which then go forward to the negotiating body.

Motion 159 is not concerned about the Public Services Section but it is about local government pay and condition negotiations. With that qualification, it is in line with current policy.

Turning now to Composite 22, the GMB continues to campaign for fairness and equity in retirement for all Public Service Sector pensioners. Here "fairness" means fairness across the generations. That is why the GMB does not support the 2005 deal covering the Civil Service, NHS and teacher schemes. We now at the scheme specific negotiating stage with the potential for each to develop in line with the best interests of each workforce.

THE PRESIDENT: I now come to the vote on this section. In relation to Motion 159, the CEC is asking for support with qualifications. Does Midland & East Coast accept the qualification?

The GMB aims to get the best deal in terms of fairness and sustainability throughout negotiations.

Regarding Composite 23, the CEC acknowledges that there may be substantial merit in the argument that the Local Government Pension Scheme should be unfunded, and the GMB demands that a change in the funding basis of the scheme to a pay-as-you-go be considered alongside other proposed changes.

Before embarking on any campaign, the CEC needs more evidence that this would be a direct benefit to members and would not be at a prohibitive cost, such money being better spent on improved benefits.

It is imperative that the issue of risk is

addressed. Local Government Pension Scheme members' benefits are currently guaranteed by statute, giving them the strongest pension protection possible in the current system. Any policy involving such fundamental change to the Local Government Pension Scheme should be carefully considered, mindful that radical changes may be exploited by a future Tory Government.

The CEC asks that Congress supports Motion 159 and Composite Motions 22 and 23 with the qualifications I have set out, and refers Motion 162.

BRO. A. WORTH (Midland & East Coast): Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 160. Public Sector Job Evaluation Exercise, GMB Scotland. The CEC is asking for your support.

*(Motion 159 was carried)*

*(Motion 160 was carried)*

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 162 – Local Government Salary Allowances – the CEC is asking you to refer. Is London Region prepared to refer?

BRO. E. BLISSETT (London): Yes.

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

*(Motion 162 was referred)*

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 163 – Residential Workers – Sleep In Duties. The CEC is asking for support for this Motion.

In relation to Motion 164 – Tied Accommodation – the CEC is asking for support.

On Motion 175 – Staffing Levels in Residential and Nursing Homes – the CEC is asking for support.

*(Motion 163 was carried)*

*(Motion 164 was carried)*

*(Motion 175 was carried)*

THE PRESIDENT: I now come to Composite Motion 22 – Public Sector Pensions: Local Government. Does the Region accept the qualification?

BRO. E. BLISSETT (London): Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: In relation to Composite Motion 23, is London Region prepared to accept the qualification?

BRO. E. BLISSETT (London): Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: The CEC is asking for support for Composites 22 and 23.

*(Composite Motion 22 was carried)*

*(Composite Motion 23 was carried)*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, before I move to the next part of the business, I have a couple of announcements to make. There will be a fringe meeting at lunchtime given by the LGBT at 12.45 in the Windsor Bar. All are welcome.

We have the AA Disability Discrimination Campaign today. That will take place at 12.45 in the Arena. Please support.

The Charity *When You Wish Upon a Star* is raising funds to send terminally ill children to Lapland at Christmas. The more money raised means the more children we can send. Please give generously.

Can all speakers in the Equalities Session this afternoon please meet with Debbie Coulter at the platform at the end of Congress this morning. They are Dianna Yach, Lucinda Yeodon, Brian Shaw, Rowena Hayward and Jurgita Prancylte.

I now have some sad news to announce, which I have just been informed about. Tony Humphries, ex-officer from Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region passed away, sadly, on Saturday, aged 73. I know this Congress would like to send condolences to his family. It is very sad news. I am sorry to hear it. Colleagues, I am now vacating the Chair for the Vice-President. I will see you all tomorrow.

## SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF

### MOTION 169

Congress notes the increasing professionalisation of school support staff, within the framework of Workforce Re-modelling. Whilst much of this is to be welcomed, in terms of career development and structures, access to training, etc. for school support staff, it is clear that what remains lacking is a national framework for pay and conditions of service.

If teachers can enjoy the benefits of national pay and conditions why shouldn't other school based staff.

Congress therefore instructs the CEC and the National Secretary to campaign for a national structure for the pay and conditions of all school based staff.

ISLINGTON APEX BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. L. ELVIN (London): I move Motion 169. Support staff provide a vital role in the smooth running of

schools and children's educational needs. As the work in schools is continually changing and developing, so support staff are taking on additional duties over and above those they were originally contracted to carry out.

Support staff are having more contact with pupils and are working more hours. It is estimated that in excess of 100,000 hours per week unpaid time is put in with only minimal recognition. These unpaid hours are likely to increase with the introduction of extended day schools, the planning/preparation/assessment time off for teachers and supervised school trips. It should be recognised that support staff cannot be pressurised into taking on these additional duties without the duties being evaluated and reflected in the grading of the job.

We sometimes hear reports of a them and us culture within schools, no access to the staff room, no acknowledgement of their roles when the schools celebrate success, to name but a few.

In order to make their workload more manageable they regularly come into work during their holidays to prepare for the new term, but the problem is pay and conditions, when some staff are paid all year round, some are paid retainers and some are paid nothing. Additional unpaid work should be reflected in the pay and conditions.

A grading framework is specifically designed to promote equality across schools. It will assist schools in deploying teacher assistants at the appropriate levels of responsibility and the appropriate levels of pay.

The commitment of all support staff to the role of schools is a key factor in achieving success and this commitment should be matched by a grading scheme which covers all aspects of career and development. This will assist schools to recruit, retain and develop a skilled and committed workforce. All school support staff are education's hidden professionals.

I ask Congress, therefore, to instruct the Central Executive Council and the National Secretary to campaign for a national structure for the pay and conditions of all school based staff.

SIS. C. HOLLAND (London): I second Motion 169. I am a first-time speaker.

Colleagues, this motion calls for the GMB to push this Government to establish a national framework on pay and conditions for school support staff. The difference between one school and another is vast, let alone one authority to another. The service that our members, the hidden professionals, provide needs to be recognised. For too long head teachers and local authorities have taken advantage of the goodwill that our members have given. What was favour has become today's task. Our members deserve the correct pay and conditions. These members are hidden professionals. Thank you.

## SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF

### MOTION 170

Congress calls upon the Government to ensure:

- i) Remodelling is funded in its entirety to ensure staff are deployed in their new roles on a full contractual hours basis.
- ii) HLTA's are not used to teach English and Maths on the cheap.
- iii) That firm guidelines are produced to protect staff from false allegations with the right to a full independent investigation

ESSEX PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH

London Region

*(Carried)*

SIS. C. HOLLAND (London): This motion examines the changing role of the teaching assistant in our schools and the implications it is having on them and the children they help. I welcome the fact that the GMB is working on national pay grades and terms and conditions of employment. This will, hopefully, go some way to recognising the situation.

In my role as Essex Public Services convenor I visit many schools in which many of my members are employed as teaching assistants. In recent months I have spent a great deal of time talking with this group of people who advise me how their job has evolved in recent years to a role which is very similar to that of the old-fashioned teacher; that is to say, they are no longer assistants but they are expected to take lessons, to do preparation and to stand in for teachers on a regular basis.

The problem is that the people undertaking this role are paid a pittance and they are expected to do much more work over and above the original expectations of the role. Let me give you a recent example. One of my members had to take two hours worth of preparation work home because there was not enough time to undertake the task in class time. When this issue was raised with the member of the teaching staff as an issue, they were advised that if they were not happy with the situation then maybe they should consider if they were in the right job. Very often this group are empowered and encouraged to perform an enhanced role but they are not recognised when it comes to the appropriate remuneration. Career development is poor due to the pressures in the class and the nature of the role, and training is not always offered which leads to a lot of friction and frustration.

When I have offered advice to my members about working within the scope of the job specification and no more, they all argue vehemently, "But the children will suffer" if they reduce their input. This is quite clearly not what they want.

The commitment of these people is enormous

and steps should be taken to remedy the situation immediately. I will be intrigued to see how national terms and conditions will eliminate the problem. This motion calls for Congress to urge the Government to support the re-modelling, to be funded in its entirety to ensure that employees are deployed in their new roles on a full and contractual basis and firm guidelines are produced to protect staff from false allegations with a right to have a full and independent investigation.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Can I have a seconder?

BRO. J. COOTE (London): I am proudly seconding Motion 170. There is not much else that I want to cover because the points which my colleague referred to are very valid. As when I seconded the earlier motion, I want to expand on what actually these motions are calling for.

My background is further education, which is very often called the "Cinderella service" of the education sector. Pay in the FE sector is some 17% behind that of pay in the local authorities. School support staff and teaching assistants in the colleges do exactly the same task now, and in fact probably a more challenging task because the Government's recent changes in terms of who has access to colleges of further education, which what used to be for the age group 16 – 19 has been extended to 14 – 19, where excluded children are often placed into an FE environment and the teaching assistants are required to handle their needs.

I had the luxury through another union at the time when I was in FE to do a mapping programme of the FE sector. Congress, in FE there are four unions which are recognised for support staff, the GMB being one of them. Yet despite there being four unions, only 20% of the support staff in FE actually belong to a union. There are very small pockets. Certain colleges in certain large cities are actually unionised, but the rest of them seem to have been ignored.

I urge you, wholeheartedly, to support these motions. Spare a thought for those teaching assistants and the support staff who work in FE and actually get out into the field and organise them.

## **LOCAL AUTHORITY CONTROL OF EDUCATION**

### **MOTION 171**

Congress believes that the control of school policies and procedures should lie with the Local Authority and not individual schools. Only by this can a consistent, fair and open approach to our school membership be achieved.

CAMBRIDGE 2 BRANCH  
London Region

*(Carried)*

BRO. A. RULE (London): I move Motion 171. We believe that to ensure fair and consistent treatment for our school-based members that control of policies and procedures should lie with the local education authorities, not individual schools. On too many occasions where schools are applying their own policies, mistakes and unfair outcomes occur. This situation, Congress, is unacceptable. We believe that the same policy and practice should apply to all school-based staff within their respective authorities. If individual schools are allowed to implement their own policies, there will be no consistency in terms of good disciplinary, single-status job evaluation, workforce reform or health and safety matters. This situation could result in an increase in grievance and employment tribunal cases.

This Congress believes that all of our school-based members have a fundamental right to be treated in exactly the same way as other local authority staff, not worse. Members such as teaching assistants, cooks, mid-day supervisors and admin staff play a vital role in the running of our schools and should be treated with the dignity and respect their efforts deserve. For too long these members have been treated like second-class citizens. This trade union will not tolerate any further erosion of their basic employment rights. Any further educational legislation needs to improve the rights of schools, not to erode them. Congress, please support this motion.

BRO. J. TENNISON (London): I second Motion 171. To me this motion is about two things, really – accountability and democracy, or at least that is what underpins this motion. I think moves away from local authority control undermine our members' rights both in directly employed but also in terms of their rights as voters to have a say over what happens in local schools. Local authority control certainly is not perfect but it is better than nothing and it is better than having anonymous figures controlling the policies of our schools. So I urge you to support this motion.

## **TEACHING SUPPLY AGENCIES TO BE ABOLISHED**

### **MOTION 172**

Congress calls for teaching supply agencies to be abolished.

Education staff at all levels are continuously under threat of redundancies yet Local Authorities pay the agencies who contribute nothing to the Education Service.

GUILDFORD G38 BRANCH  
Southern Region

*(Carried)*

BRO. K. ROBERTS (Southern): Teacher supply agencies are the new kid on the block. Teacher supply agencies are otherwise known as the teaching assistant/learning support assistant exterminator. In the Thames Valley, which is the area I work and live in, schools pay £45 per hour to a supply agency for one of their retained teachers. In order to pay for this, the headteacher cuts the hours of teaching assistants and learning support assistants. A teaching assistant/learning support assistant earns on average between £6.30-£6.75 an hour, which is £40 for a six hour day. To pay for a supply agency teacher for one day, we lose one-and-a-half week's worth of TAs or LSAs. Twenty-six days of an agency teacher means we lose 39 weeks worth of TA or LSA hours, which equates to a full academic year, so actually, in effect, it wipes out the TA's job.

If a school uses an agency teacher for an entire academic year, and this situation has occurred on a number of occasions, then eight TA and LSA jobs are lost. We need to put pressure on and work with local education authorities to initiate supply teacher registers. Local education authorities should have more teacher supply agencies. They should instruct schools that they may use only teachers from the LEA supply register. If we do not allow supply agencies to provide teachers to schools, then they will wither and die. If we do nothing, if we do not act now, then the TAs and LSAs, many of whom are fellow members, will wither and die instead. Please support. I move the motion.

*(The Motion was formally seconded)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, Motions 169 and 170 are being supported by the CEC with a statement. I call upon the President, Mary Turner, to give that statement on behalf of the CEC.

SIS. M. TURNER (President): I speak in support of Motions 169 and 170. Schools and school support staff are very close to my heart, as this Congress knows. As you all know, our Union has been extremely active on the school front. Earlier this year, we published our Fair Pay Framework, and I am pleased to report that we are making solid progress. The National Schools Support Working Group has considered the GMB proposals. It is working out the details for a system which will apply to all maintained schools, both community and self-governing.

The Group aims to deliver a common contract with minimum conditions of service and one which deals with the issue of term-time pay. Congress, if teachers are entitled to be paid all through the year, then so are our members who are carrying out an awful lot of their duties. *(Applause)* I am afraid we suffer much discrimination. The biggest discrimination in this country is snobbishness and seniority.

As a teacher, you are entitled to the best. If you are a low paid public service workers you are entitled to be paid the minimum. I think that is discrimination by any standard. The Working Group will consider national salary levels linked to nationally standardised jobs, profiles and job components. New negotiating machinery is also being considered and that could mean a new national structure for all school support staff. You will agree that much is good but, unless we get recognition, representation and facilities rights we will not be able to deliver for our members.

The *Government* plan to allow more schools to become foundation and trust schools. These schools could employ support staff directly rather than under local authority arrangements. Our education system is becoming increasingly fragmented. More and more schools are operating as independent employers and many, many employers in schools, heads and governing bodies behave like cowboy employers. They are operating now as independents, and that is one of the reasons why we were opposing the Education Bill.

Congress, let us be clear about one thing. GMB is opposed to this approach, but we are also determined that it will not stop us from representing our members. It is vital that we get full representation rights, and myself and this Congress are committed to that. As the saying goes, much progress has to be made but there is much more to do. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does London Region accept the statements on Motions 169 and 170?

BRO. E. BLISSETT (London): Agreed.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does Congress support that? *(Agreed)*

The CEC is supporting both Motions 171 and 172.

*(Motion 169 was carried)*

*(Motion 170 was carried)*

*(Motion 171 was carried)*

*(Motion 172 was carried)*

## **SOCIAL POLICY: EDUCATION**

### **EDUCATION**

#### **COMPOSITE MOTION 31**

*(Covering Motions 216, 217, 218 and 219)*

**216 – Education (London Region)**

**217 – Education (Lancashire Region)**

**218 – Trust Schools (Lancashire Region)****219 – Schools (Lancashire Region)**

Congress believes that the Government's proposals to make every secondary school an Independent Trust School is not in the best interest of our young people. In reality it will give schools a larger say in administration and Trust Schools will be able to get support from businesses and charities.

City Academies, Trust or specialist schools, etc. are nothing more than a back door means of re-introducing selection and introducing privatisation. We believe this move to a free market for admission to school will be detrimental to the education of our children and ultimately lead to a reintroduction of a form of eleven plus selection for school admissions.

The plans threaten the whole ethos of comprehensive Education; Conference is aware that trust schools can lead to a selection process that filters out the less-abled and favours the bright pupils. We believe that the successful schools will cherry pick the brightest.

Choice is only an option for middle class parents who can play the system or suddenly find they have deep religious convictions when their child reaches the age of 11. The majority of parents from inner city areas or those with children of special educational need will have no choice and be left in sink and failing schools.

Congress remains totally opposed to selection within secondary education.

Furthermore, Conference is also deeply concerned that the Labour Government is content to take away the role of Local Education Authorities, then place the running of schools into the hands of those with self-interest at heart.

Congress remains opposed to any legislation which divorces or weakens the link between LEA's and schools. The fragmentation of the education system will inevitably weaken the GMB's bargaining position and our ability to effectively represent our members amongst school support staff.

This Congress totally opposes any move by the Labour Government to remove overall responsibility for education of our children from the local education authorities.

Congress instructs the CEC to campaign against any legislation which introduces selection through the front or back door, weakens the link

between LEA's and schools, creates more City Academies, trust or specialist schools or removes the rights of LEA's to control school admissions policies. Conference asks that the CEC campaign to repeal Trust Schools status.

*(Carried)*

BRO. J. ISAACS (London): President and Congress, education – trust schools. You might ask what's all the fuss about. So just in case there is anyone who does not know, trust schools are the Government's proposals to encourage every primary and secondary school to become a self-governing trust school backed by business, charities, faith groups, universities or parent and community organisations. Any school can become a trust school. A trust school could support a single school or several schools. As in the case of academies, trust schools will be able to appoint the majority of the governing body, own their land, control their assets, have control over their admissions policies and, potentially, vary the National Curriculum.

The school's governing body will decide if it wants to become a trust school and who it wants to work with.

What does this all mean to our education policy? The Comprehensive system is already riddled with selection. There is selection by postcode and wallet. There are those who have the ability to buy their way out of poor schools by moving into pricey homes near to the better ones.

With trust schools the situation is going to get far worse. Trust schools will set their own admissions arrangements which will create a two-tier education system. Pupils from poor backgrounds will be discriminated against and there would be no return to selection by ability. Local education authorities will change from being a direct provider of services to a more strategic commissioning role and will be less involved in the day-to-day running of individual schools. City academies, trust schools or specialist schools are nothing more than a back door means of re-introducing selection and introducing privatisation. This move to a free market for admission to schools will be detrimental to the education of our children and ultimately lead to a reintroduction of a form of 11 plus selection for school admissions.

Fairness in education demands either entry by catchments area or selection by exam. The current plans offer neither. The plans threaten the whole ethos of comprehensive education. Conference should be aware that trust schools can lead to a selection process that filters out the less-abled and favours the bright pupils. The successful schools will cherry pick the brightest.

Choice is only an option for middle class parents who can play the system, or suddenly find they have

deep religious convictions when their child reaches the age of 11. The majority of parents from inner city areas or those with children of special educational needs will have no choice and be left in sink and failing schools.

We should be deeply concerned that the Labour Government is content to take away the role of local education authorities, and place the running of schools into the hands of those with self-interest at heart. When New Labour came to power David Blunkett said: "Read my lips. No more selection". Tony Blair repeated the pledge by saying: "No return to academic selection", and Ruth Kelly chimed in with: "It will be illegal to select by academic ability." Even the Tories' David Cameron agreed: "No going back to 11-plus selection".

So what are we here for today? Colleagues, up to 100 Labour Backbenchers have voiced concern over the Government's proposals to reform secondary schools. We must oppose any legislation which divorces or weakens the link between local education authorities and schools. The fragmentation of the education system will inevitably weaken the GMB's bargaining position and our ability to effectively represent our members amongst school support staff.

There is nothing more important than educating our children. Doing the best for their child is what every parent strives to do, and we must make sure that our school system is one that helps them to do that.

Colleagues, Congress must totally oppose any move by the Labour Government to remove overall responsibility for education of our children from the local education authorities.

Furthermore, Congress instructs the CEC to campaign against any legislation which introduces selection through the front or back door, weakens the link between local education authorities and schools, creates more City academies, trust or specialist schools or removes the rights of local education authorities to control school admissions policies.

Conference requests that the CEC campaign to repeal trust school status. It is time we stood firm and fought back. We owe it to our children and to future generations of this country.

Colleagues, I urge you to support the motion.

BRO. J. McDONNELL (Lancashire): I second Composite Motion 31. It has always been a long-standing belief within the trade union Movement that education is the rock upon which the future of our country depends with opportunities for all no matter what walk of life you derive from.

The recent Education Bill passed in Parliament undermines that opportunity for all. We are all painfully aware of the sacrifice that our forbearers had to endure to fight for the right for a decent

first-class education for our children, and with a vision of protecting the existing education system we, along with other like-minded unions, voiced our total opposition to the proposed changes to our education system. Not only would it take the fundamental responsibility of education away from the local education authority sphere of influence, but it will destroy the underpinning foundations and lessen the impact and the sphere of influence that the Comprehensive system brings. Any system that is able to choose the best of a community's brightest pupils and leave the less gifted pupils having to endure a quality of education that may be in some cases of a lesser quality is a system that is, basically, unfair and unjust. Schools will be choosing pupils rather than pupils choosing schools.

President, our fear is that a financial organisation would buy an influential seat on government bodies within the trust school status, and that a child's education would become one of direction, that influential money men with their pockets stuffed with cash would be given preference. Institutions would become involved with trust schools because they would see a profitable situation developing before them. They would have an ulterior motive.

Furthermore, we have a considerable number of sponsored MPs and how many do you think supported our policy and position on this issue? Exactly nine! Nine out of a hundred, 9 per cent! That begs the question. Just how accountable are our sponsored MPs to this Union? The political levy was designed to aid political Parties that would represent trade unions in Parliament. We should be asking what they did not understand, and we should be demanding answers as to why only nine out of one hundred of our sponsored MPs did, in effect, vote for our policy on education reform? Perhaps the aim of the levy has been lost and forgotten by our sponsored MPs but we can assure them that we know and we demand from them this privilege. It is a privilege which should be cherished and not squandered. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, the CEC is supporting Composite 31.

*(Composite Motion 31 was carried)*

## **APPRENTICESHIPS**

### **COMPOSITE MOTION 32**

(Covering Motions 220, 221, 222 and 223)

**220 – Skills Shortage (Southern Region)**

**221 – Apprenticeships (London Region)**

**222 – Modern Apprenticeships (Midland & East Coast Region)**

**223 – Modern Apprentices Scheme (Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region)**

Congress must address the skills shortage and the effects on the economy. The Government must address this shortage giving young people the chance to learn a trade by becoming an apprentice.

We must also train older people at Government-financed skill centres, giving them a second chance to learn a trade. This must be a long term strategy to make the country prosper.

Congress:

- Calls on the GMB to raise the profile of modern apprenticeships, as many companies are still labouring under the misapprehension that appointing an apprentice is a costly and lengthy process.
- urges CEC to pursue the re-introduction of traditional apprentice training schemes and ensure that it is quality training, appropriate to the trade and not delivered by training providers, who are only interested in using it as a profit making exercise.
- instructs the CEC to initiate a robust and professional campaign which engages government, business and young people in a public debate in highlighting and addressing the current weaknesses in the Modern Apprenticeship Scheme, with a view to establishing a tripartite structure consisting of employers, unions and government, thus ensuring the development of high quality apprenticeship schemes which give our young people the skills required to ensure the future productive prosperity of our people and economy.

*(Carried)*

BRO. R. GUNN (Liverpool, North Wales & Irish): President and Congress, the purpose of this composite is outlined in the first paragraph. We must address our skill shortages and give our young people, in particular, the opportunity to learn a trade by becoming an apprentice. Skill shortages are all too evident at present and will certainly become a major concern in the coming years unless we take action now.

The possibilities created by the London Olympics and other major projects in the coming years, not only in construction but in a whole range of industries across the UK, will afford us the opportunity to put in place a properly funded and regulated apprenticeship scheme. You will recall that yesterday we debated Motion 25 which estimated around 50,000 jobs being created. That figure is to be welcomed but it also begs the question: how many apprenticeships will it create?

During the past 20 years we have had a number of schemes and so-called initiatives. You will all recall the YTPs. We have had industrial training boards, training organisations and Enterprise Councils, all of which have been unsuccessful. The current modern apprenticeship scheme is failing because it is provider led and funding driven. The validity of many of the apprenticeship schemes is questionable. Consequently, this leads to high dropout rates and low qualifications. The programme is often used as a recruitment sifting device by employers and it is a social inclusion device by Government.

It is our belief that we can best address these issues by implementing tripartite arrangements by involving the Government, employers and employees through their trade unions. Those tripartite bodies need to be properly funded and should only involve people who have a commitment to investing in the provision of skills and motivation.

The motion refers to raising the profile of modern apprenticeships. Last November Liverpool, North Wales and Irish Region had a very successful one day seminar at Belfast City Hall. The theme was: Realising Apprentices. Speakers included employers, trainees, MPs, academics and the trade unions. This report has been produced which contains all of the contributions and recommendations, and I would recommend it to be essential reading for everyone. Colleagues, that seminar was the first step and we are certainly proud to say that the GMB is again leading. There is still much to do. We know that, given the opportunity, our young people will deliver. As the composite says, it is down to us to deliver the opportunities. I move.

*(The President took the Chair)*

BRO. B. BURTON (Southern): I second Composite 32. This motion calls on Conference to address the skills shortage. The Government, at long last, have woken up to the fact, and that is a result. My concern is that it is not too little, too late. I know there has been a decline in manufacturing and the shopfloors have got smaller. The approach to practical education in some places has been a little more than DIY, teaching young people to hang doors, to connect up radiators, but not to be carpenters or plumbers. This is not the answer, nor is foreign labour! Colleagues, we are facing a crisis and it affects each and every one of us. Without the skilled worker who is going to build our houses, our schools, our hospitals and who will build our weapons of defence? The young people are out *there* waiting to be trained. Let us not forget the older ones who deserve a second chance.

Support this motion. Let us make sure that the money is available today to train apprentices. Then we will have our tradesmen of the future. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Priority in debate is to the London Region.

SIS. J. SMITH (London): Congress, apprenticeships. This motion is a very important motion for our tomorrows. I would like in this debate to highlight some of the comments and what has been written in my local newspaper starting from 30<sup>th</sup> May. The first one came from a 16 year old youth, who is still at school, who has written to 19 companies in trying to get an apprenticeship or in-house training. To date he has had no response. He is asking if anyone else has had that problem or is it just him. He is just wondering where he is going to go and who will be prepared to take over from the older generation? He is concerned that he is not being given that chance.

Following that letter, on 5<sup>th</sup> June another young lad answered the reply and he agrees with Liam, who was the first writer, that he is also looking for an apprenticeship on plumbing. He has also written numerous letters and made numerous phone calls. He has also taking his JCL aptitude test and, yes, he is also asking who is going to give him a choice?

To follow that up, in great dismay, within Norwich we have a City College, a proud City College, which has just announced that they are going to make 200 cuts. One of those cuts is going to be motor engineering. The lad on the front *there* has completed the first two parts of his training and passed. However, these cuts will mean that he will not be allowed to take the third part of the course so, at the end of the day, he will not get the job that he is looking for. We need these apprenticeships so please support these motions.

THE PRESIDENT: If anyone wishes to speak in the debate, please indicate.

BRO. P. SOPER (Midland & East Coast): Congress, all this motion is calling for is to raise the profile of the modern apprenticeship. Even in the Warwick Agreement of 2004, Labour committed itself to the expansion of the apprenticeship schemes. The UK is a nation suffering from a crippling shortage of skills. Government figures indicate that almost two-thirds of companies are still in need of skilled workers to satisfy the demand, which is particularly felt in engineering. The key to solving the skills shortage is the appointment and placement of apprentices, who are the lifeblood and future of the engineering industry. There is no doubt of the validity of apprentice training and the difference it can make to a company's future. Even though the Government have poured millions of pounds into raising the profile of the modern apprenticeship, many companies are still labouring under the misapprehension that appointing an apprentice is a costly and lengthy process. In a bid to dismiss these common misconceptions, I think the GMB should

start a major campaign to push forward apprenticeships on all recruitment and retention drives. This is also a way to bring young members into the Union and also secure the future of the GMB. I support.

## ADULT EDUCATION CHARGES

### MOTION 224

Congress is concerned that changes in funding from the Learning Skills Council (LSC) will affect the future provision and viability of adult and community education courses. These courses will be at risk because of increased charges, which will bear disproportionately upon pensioners and others on low incomes.

#### LEICESTER HOMECARE & GENERAL BRANCH

*Midland & East Coast Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. E. BLACKMAN (Midland & East Coast): I move Motion 224. Colleagues and President, the Government's Five Year Strategy for Children and Learning makes it clear that the Department for Education and Skills have much higher priorities than adult training and learning for the rest of the decade. Since 1999 the Government have increased public spending in this area and, yes, it did expand opportunities for adults, but from 2005 onwards the position changed. Whilst the Government have an ambitious skills strategy they do not have enough money available to be able to deliver it. There is a national target to improve the basic skills of more than one million adults during the next five years but to deliver this remedial training the Learning & Skills Council has to divert public funds from other adult learning budgets.

Colleagues, please believe me when I say that my region has no problem whatsoever with improving basic skills and education standards for many of our youngsters, but it begs the question of why our present 14-16 system fails so many people.

This year a National Employers' Training Programme will be launched but, again, the national programme is only partly funded. To be successful, such a scheme has to be adequately funded. If not, we are facing the following consequences. Course fees will continue to rise at the rate of 10% - 15% per year regarded of one's ability to pay. Older workers will be unable to update their skills, which is a short-sighted prospect in an ever changing world. The LACs will need to divert funds to pay for this training programme forcing colleges to raise fees and cut courses which are not covered, resulting in limiting the choice of courses available. There will be fewer free concessions for workers and those courses which are available will be dependent on one's ability

to pay. This situation will affect our members' job prospects and will – make no mistake about it – result in the closure of some colleges.

Colleagues, is that what we wanted when we worked our butts off for the return of a Labour Government? I think not. There is a dearth of joined-up thinking from Government on education and training. Their approach, as far as I am concerned, is schizophrenic.

In 2010 we will be feeling the full effects of the demographic timebomb with the numbers of people in the 16-24 age group falling. To counter the effect a dwindling workforce will have on our economy and the knock-on effect it will have on taxation, the Government's own target is that the percentage in work should rise from 75% to 80%. The Government has already indicated that as people live longer, they will need to work longer, which means that workers will need facilities to retrain or to develop new skills. Our future economic growth depends on retraining the current workforce.

It seems to me, the simple soul that I am, that this Government's thinking is crazy. In other words, they have abdicated and the lunatics have finally taken charge of the asylum. Congress, I am sure you will agree that access to non-vocational courses are equally important for the mental health and well-being of retired people. This will not happen if adult learning and activities go now. If we do not act now, we will pay for it later. Please support.

SIS. A. HARRY MBE (Midland & East Coast): President and Congress, the Government have admitted that the cost of evening classes is set to double for more than two million people. Classes from flower arranging to foreign languages are expected to close. Leaders of further education colleges estimate that one million places will be lost overall. Ministers believe that night courses should not merely be about self-improvement. They consider that the taxpayers money would be better spent improving skills of adults and young people who have left school with few or no qualifications.

As the mover has already said, my region has no quarrel with that statement, but it does beg the question on why present education systems fail so many of our children? The present education fees for everyone else will rise sharply during the next few years. State subsidies will be cut from 73% to 50% of the course of courses by 2010. Individuals or their employers will have to pay the other half. Colleges are already talking about shutting down in the evenings because of the reduction in adult learning and the full cost facing young people.

The director of funding and development of the Association of Colleges said that it will be the end of evening classes. People gain pleasure in taking courses that do not lead to qualifications, but they face even bigger increases. Annual funding for

personal and community development learning will be frozen at £210 million for the next two years. There will be an increasing expectation that individuals should pay for the educational provision where they can afford to do so.

A Government White Paper issued yesterday set out a new economic mission for colleges. The Association of Colleges said that up to one-third of the 3.4 million adult places will be lost as a result of the changes. Up to 70 of England's 380 colleges could close. Current spending projections predicted a loss of five hundred thousand college places, and a further five thousand places could disappear by 2010. One-third of adult places could go.

State funding could cover half the fees wherever people were studying courses valued by employers, but it does not say who will pay the other half. We believe that this would impact more heavily on lower paid workers who wish to upgrade their skills. Equally, we believe that funding for recreational courses, which depend on local choices about how to use the allocated resources, would impact heavily upon the elderly who are less likely to organise and to fight for a greater share of resources.

THE PRESIDENT: Colleague, you have had your time. Please wind-up.

SIS. HARRY: Congress, I ask you to support this motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? *(No response)*

I now take Composite 32. The CEC is supporting.

*(Composite Motion 32 was carried)*

*(Motion 224 was carried)*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, would you please make sure that you visit the stalls and the exhibitors because these individuals do come every year to support the GMB and are a great asset to us.

An ASDA shop stewards' meeting will be held today that Nick Brown is visiting. Nick has been working with Paul to try and sort out the ASDA situation. He will be addressing that fringe meeting.

We have a fringe meeting which is very important to this Union entitled *Target the BNP*. We do have a meeting in the Balcony Bar at 12.45 today. Colleagues, this is a very important issue. The GMB nationally and regionally has worked its socks off during the local elections to stop the advance of the BNP and, in particular, in areas like Barking & Dagenham, we have been very successful until a Minister decided to put her mouth in action before engaging her brain and gave respectability to the

BNP. I have said this publicly and privately before, I expect Margaret Hodge to apologise to the GMB for the damage that she has done across the country in giving credibility to the BNP. *(Applause)* I have asked for an investigation into those areas where the BNP were not standing as to the number of damaged ballot papers which areas witnessed.

Colleagues, please make sure that you attend these fringe meetings. I now close Congress for lunch and I will see you at 2 o'clock.

*(Congress adjourned for lunch)*

## AFTERNOON SESSION

*(Congress reassembled at 2.00 pm)*

THE PRESIDENT: Will Congress please come to order and will London Region take their seats, please? Roll call: is Ian Lowes present? Right, mark him down! Tell him to report, he is on a disciplinary. Okay, colleagues. Is there football on this afternoon? I move now to agenda item 1 for the afternoon.

# COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION REPORT

## INTRODUCTION

Since last year's Congress in Newcastle I have continued (up to the end of January this year) to take responsibility at national level for our members in the Commercial Services Section. My focus has been on the Security Industry as we are by far the largest union in this area and the prospects for growing our membership are huge. Nonetheless I have also, with the Section National Committee, looked after our Commercial Services membership as a whole and identified areas other than security with real growth potential (see recruitment priorities below). As the UK economy continues to change and as the pace of that change accelerates in the move from manufacturing to service provision – the GMB must change as well. It is this expertise that drives and shapes our priorities. The rest of this brief report picks up some of the points which highlight the last year or so.

## SECURITY INDUSTRY

Since last Congress there has been a series of major developments in the industries driven by and/or impacting on the GMB. Some of the key points are:

### i. **Securicor Cash and Valuables in Transit (CVIT) Harmonisation**

Since 1997 as a result of a crass decision by the major employer of GMB members we have struggled with the nightmare of two separate – and potentially different – contracts producing two sets of terms and conditions amongst the workforce. After 15 months of tortuous negotiation I am pleased to be able to report to Congress that – following no fewer than three consultative ballots of over 4,500 members – a harmonised contract was signed off on 21 October 2005. This so called New Deal has many radical features:

- it sets terms and conditions over a 4 year period with a retrospective start date of 1 May 2005
- it increases basic pay for the bulk of our members over the lifetime of the agreement to 56%
- it reaches the GMB benchmark hourly rate of £10.00 as agreed by Congress last year and sets the standard for the industry
- it restores equity, fairness and transparency to our members
- it will help end the culture of low pay/long hours which has characterised the industry.

This major achievement would not have been possible without the support and enthusiasm of our Branch Reps, our Regional Officers and above all our Securicor National Negotiating Committee – a group of lay members who bore the brunt of the prolonged negotiations. Sincere thanks from me as National Officer – I was privileged to lead the efforts of all concerned.

### ii. **G4S Guarding**

In 1997 (clearly a bad year) the former Securicor Guarding derecognised the GMB. In 2004 Securicor and Group 4 (where we are still recognised) merged to form the largest security employer – G4S – in the UK. As a matter of urgency the Section National Committee set out to re-establish our position in the new company as a whole. I am pleased to report that

again after difficult talks and with the full participation of our G4 NNC on 1 February 2006 a recognition agreement was signed by me on behalf of the Union with G4S Guarding.

I believe that as it covers 15,500 guards and other security workers this is the biggest recognition agreement secured by the Union in the private sector for many years. It offers us the opportunity by being present at the induction training to recruit, literally thousands of new members. My colleagues on the National Organising Team have followed up the opportunity as a priority and no doubt Congress can be updated as to progress to date.

### iii. **Securitas CVIT**

The second stage of the agreement with the above company came into effect on 9 October 2005 taking the basic rate up to £8.55 per hour. At the time of writing the GMB has prepared and submitted a claim on behalf of our members for a new pay and conditions package to come into effect on 1 April 2006.

### iv. **Securitas Guarding**

Following up the signing of a skeleton single union recognition agreement covering the 4,500 or so guards employed by Securitas in the UK, negotiations have been proceeding since last Congress to flesh out this deal. At the time of writing this process has been all but concluded and no doubt an update will be available at Congress.

All our recently concluded agreements incorporate a guarantee pay clause and in line with Congress 2005 resolution 190 this will continue to be a guiding principle in negotiations.

### v. **Industry Licensing**

The Security Industry Authority – the SIA – established by the Government to regulate the key industries has continued to roll out its statutory licensing scheme. As this report is being written we are nearing the end of the period to license the 140,000 or so guards reckoned to be employed in the UK. As the Union in the industry the GMB has played the role of constructive critic of the moves and continued wherever possible to stress the point that all costs associated with obtaining the license should be borne by the employer and not the employee. I am pleased to report that Securicor, Securitas and Wilson James have accepted our line on this point. Others have not been so progressive and we will continue our “name and shame” policy agreed at Congress last year on this issue.

On the issue of injury on duty (Congress 2005 resolution 191), as part of our discussions with the large companies and the Trade Association (the BSIA), we have canvassed the idea of an industry wide injury on duty scheme. This would allow us to set the payment conditions for the whole industry. Our attempts to persuade the SIA to incorporate reasonable employment standards as a registration criteria have not thus far proved successful, but are still being pursued.

### vi. **Thompsons Solicitors**

I have conducted – with the assistance of our Officers and Thompsons NNC – one pay round with Thompsons legal practice since last Congress. After a few stumbles a 12 month settlement effective from 1 October 2005 was reached. This involved a basic rate increase of 4% plus various improvements such as increased annual leave for those with less than 5 years service, introduction of a long service award and so on.

### vii. **Criminal Justice sector**

In line with Congress 2005 Composite resolution 17, work has continued on lobbying for the repeal of Section 127 of the 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act, which prevents members in this sector from taking industrial action without the risk of an injunction and unlimited damages against the union. Barry Smith of the GMB Legal Department has pressed John Hendy QC drafter of the Trade Union Freedom Bill to incorporate the repeal of Section 127 in the draft. Following pressure from GMB on the TUC Executive Committee, the TUC has also agreed to support its inclusion in the Bill.

### vii. **Recruitment Priorities**

The Section National Committee identified the following areas as potential growth areas for

the Section:

- Security Industry
- Civil Aviation
- Employment Agencies

Congress will note from the above report that the first of these has been rapidly adopted in line with the CEC Special Report *Organising in Security, Opportunity and Change*, adopted by Congress 2005. The others are under scrutiny by the National Organising Team.

### **CHAUFFEUR INDUSTRY**

In line with Congress 2005 resolution 188 we continue to press Government – both national and local – to further regulate this industry along the lines proposed in the resolution.

### **SECTION NATIONAL COMMITTEE**

Since last Congress the reinvigorated SNC has had three meetings. They have collectively set priorities, monitored progress and provided a direct link back to the Regions. Their help, guidance and comradeship is much appreciated.

### **CONCLUSION**

Many colleagues in Congress will be aware that as a result of reorganisation at National Office I changed responsibilities with effect from 1 February 2006. I would like to record my thanks to the Commercial Services Section National Committee ably chaired by Bob Crosby. To all of the GMB Regional Officers with responsibilities for the section - their commitment, good humour and friendship was invaluable to me over the last 12 months. I would also like to thank all our Commercial Services Section lay reps who do such valuable – and often under- appreciated work – for our members. Finally I would like to thank Dolores O'Donoghue from the GMB Policy Department at Worple Road who kept me informed and up to speed with changes in rapidly evolving industries. Finally I would like to record my appreciation of the work of Kerri Harding my PA at Worple Road. Kerri has for many years worked with my handwriting, rambling requests and sometimes erratic behaviour. She does so with professionalism and humour.

My best wishes go to my successor in the Section, Gary Smith. I know he will receive the full support of all those who assisted me.

*(Adopted)*

THE PRESIDENT: I call Gary Smith to give his first report and to respond to questions, if any.

BRO. G. SMITH (National Officer, Commercial Services): Congress, President, I am absolutely delighted to be moving the Commercial Services Report this afternoon. Beginning my comments could I pay tribute to my predecessor, Allan Black, who for a whole period of time has done an excellent job on behalf of the section.

I hope in the time that I have I can give you some flavour of the type of activity that I have been involved in on behalf of the section since I took up post in January. I make no bones about it, delegates, I have been on a very steep learning curve.

President, if you bear with me just for a second, I would like to thank all those who have helped me and supported the section over the past few months. Kerry Harding, the PA at National Office who did a terrific job in organising a very successful section conference. Dolores O'Donoghue, who is at the top table today, did a great job around Congress but in

her day job supports the section in the Research Department and did some sterling work particularly on licensing in the security industry.

I have to say, Congress, that whenever I have called upon any department at National Office to support the section they have not been found wanting. Pensions, Political Department, Press in campaigns, they are doing an absolutely first-class job on behalf of the membership.

I also appreciate the work that has been done by Kathleen Walker Shaw over in Brussels supporting the section. Many of the delegates will be aware of Kathleen's activities around the Services Directive but probably less familiar with the work she is currently doing around the debate about a cashless society in Europe. This is a debate that has been driven by the big banks and it has profound implications for some of the socially disadvantaged in our society as well as for jobs within the cash and valuables in transit industry.

I have to say, colleagues, that I have had absolutely wonderful support from the lay

representatives in the section and I thank them very much for their ongoing hard work, not least the section chair, Bob Crosby.

In the limited time that I have, colleagues, it may seem that I focus primarily on the security industry. I want you to be aware that I do understand a lot of the work that has been undertaken in many of the industries across the section, be it the professional drivers, aviation, and the ports. I know there is a lot being done and I know there is more to be done, and I am very keen to support the positive work that is currently going on within the different regions.

Turning my comments to the security industry, specifically, I am very pleased to tell Congress that we have signed two new major recognition agreements within the guarding side of security, those with G4S and Securitas. Those agreements cover something like 20,000 workers. They represent a huge step forward for us as a trade union but I have to say, Congress, there is a lot of work that is going on and will continue to go on around developing bargaining structures to fit in with those agreements.

There is a huge challenge and I will just give you some idea of the type of issues that we are wrestling with. G4S supplies labour for something like 4,000 establishments in this country and in real terms represents hundreds if not thousands of different contracts of employment. We are working hard to put a robust and effective representational structure in place. I know that the growth within the guarding sector has to be sustainable growth based on strong workplace organisation which ultimately is focused on giving our members a strong voice with the employer.

Cash and valuables in transit has been a substantial part of my workload over the past few months. Some colleagues may be aware that at the end of last year a new agreement on pay and conditions was concluded with G4S. I know that our representatives within the industry went through a lot of pain and there is a number of contentious issues within that agreement. I have to say, broadly speaking, it is a very positive development, incrementally, that will see our membership move to £10 an hour and is now setting a benchmark for the industry in its entirety. This month we will be talking with Securitas. We begin formal negotiations with the Securitas cash-in-transit sector in order to move our membership on to the £10 an hour arrangement.

Colleagues, the General Secretary touched upon the cash-in-transit attacks in his contribution this morning. Can I just say to you that that is a campaign in the best traditions of the GMB, led and driven by lay activists, developed in the region, and now being supported at a national level with continued lay representative input.

Let me quantify exactly what we mean when we say a campaign on attacks. 836 workers, low-paid

workers, carrying out an essential public service were attacked last year delivering and picking up cash from establishments. The GMB is leading a fight to raise this issue to make sure it is high on the political agenda, to pressurise the police, and to take action. The campaign will continue to develop over the coming months, including the launch of a security industry charter later on this year.

Within the criminal justice sector I now have a feeling for the enormity of some of the problems facing our membership. We have services being procured by central government at low cost and that is having a huge impact on our members' terms and conditions. Can I say to the members within that area that we are committed to seeing the repeal of section 127.

In conclusion, can I say that within the section we have many industries typified by low pay, long hours, and exploitation. It poses huge organisational challenges for us but massive opportunities as well to grow the organisation. We will be bold, we will campaign, we will fight, and we will strive to put strong workplace organisations in place in order that we can grow the section over the next year. It is an honour to serve the union. I formally move the report. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Gary. Can I now move to pages 47, 48, 49? Does Congress agree to accept the report? *(Agreed)* Thank you very much. Well done, Gary.

*(The Commercial Services Section Report was adopted)*

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

### **HEALTH & SAFETY**

#### **MOTION 138**

Congress 2006 welcomes the joint approach by GMB and Security Industry Association (SIA) to the Home Office to highlight safety concerns for Cash in Vehicle Transit (CIVT) Officers whilst transporting cash, and welcomes the protective measures sought. We also call on SIA to monitor the attacks on our security staff in high risk public areas that includes Benefit Agency and Hospital A&E areas. All such high risk staff should be provided with protective vests.

We further suggest security companies lone worker procedures should be checked on a regular basis to ensure compliance with Health & Safety guidelines.

**GMB LONDON SECURITY BRANCH**  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. D. TAGGART (London): Most of us are aware of the successful campaign by the GMB, as has just been stated by Gary, at the British Security Industry Association (the SIA) to encourage the Government and police to assist in reducing the number of attacks against cash-in-transit couriers. The security industry is already investing heavily in security measures to protect staff, with a little prompting. It is about time. This is an industry with an estimated £500 billion transported each year, or £1.4 billion a day. As Gary has said, there were 836 cash-in-transit attacks in 2005, a 10% increase on the previous year. 170 couriers were injured in 2005 from shooting, stabbing, pistol whipping, beating, broken bones and stress. These statistics are recorded but there is a hidden set of statistics for security workers who perhaps have a lesser profile, working in hospital accident & emergency centres, and the benefits agencies.

I attended a security awards ceremony recently where a female security guard was commended for disarming a benefits claimant wielding an axe. She was not being attacked but had gone to the defence of a benefits worker. She was fortunately uninjured but in an emergency situation her security blazer would have proved a poor defence. Myself, I work in security in a clearing bank. It is very exciting, as you can imagine. At night I slip into the bank and I lock all the doors, put the kettle on, and perhaps have a biscuit. These are a few of the exciting decisions I have to make during the night. I lock those doors because potentially outside there is a very dangerous customer, called the general public.

Security offices in accident & emergency departments do not have these options. They often find themselves subject to attacks fuelled by drink, drugs, and I expect in some cases occasionally sheer frustration. There is no excuse for such behaviour but our members are at the cutting edge of it. It is not unreasonable to ask for the issue of a protective vest. Give them the tools and they will do the job at about £7 an hour and perhaps even less than that. Also, the Security Industry Association needs to keep a record of these attacks. Even though they are not perhaps considered areas of high risk, contracting security companies and their clients cannot be allowed to bounce the ball of workers' safety between them.

Finally, I know from my own experience on the NMC with a major security company that it is possible the maintenance of the check calls infrastructure to lone worker security sites can be considered low risk and therefore perhaps an area of saving. There needs to be some independent monitoring by the SIA to see that these health and safety guidelines are adhered to. I move.

BRO. D. GLANVILL (London): President, Congress, you may or may not know, and it is a sad fact, that the

grounds of a hospital are one of the most violent places in our society. Assaults on staff are unfortunately a daily occurrence, sometimes even resulting in death. As a London ambulance man I am lucky, I am issued with a protective vest. This is not the case for hospital security staff who are there to protect other hospital staff, and the public, until the police arrive.

I have spoken to a number of staff at the main hospital I use in East London and found out that only half the permanent staff, about 15 of them, are issued with protective vests. The rest are waiting for one and have been for some months. There is also a number of temporary staff, some having been there for over six months, who are doing the same job and taking the same risks; they have no vests and they are not likely to get one.

Congress, I call upon the GMB, together with the Security Industry Association, to continue highlighting the health and safety concerns and press for the issue of protective vests for everybody who is involved in high-risk security jobs. I second the motion.

## **SAFETY CONCERNS FOR CHECK-IN AGENTS AT LONDON AIRPORTS**

### **MOTION 139**

**Congress calls upon the Health & Safety Executive to investigate the growing number of verbal and physical assaults on check-in agents at London Airports.**

**STANSTED AIRPORT BRANCH**  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. D. PARMENTER (London): Over recent years there has been an increase in both verbal and physical abuse to our members at airport check-in desks. A recent survey was carried out of our GMB members at London Stansted Airport revealing that 98% of check-in staff had suffered verbal abuse and that 8% of them had suffered physical abuse. Our members are becoming increasingly concerned about the level of security at our airports and are feeling increasingly vulnerable whilst at work. We all know that you can purchase a train ticket with a protective screen in front of the staff for their security and you can purchase a bus ticket with the same security measures, so why can our members who work at our airports not have the same basic protective measures?

Congress, I will read my survey out again: 98% of our members have suffered verbal abuse and 8% have suffered physical abuse, some of whom have received hospital treatment within the last month. So, we call upon the HSE to look into the ever increasing level of both verbal and physical abuse to

our members at check-in desks at all our airports. Please support my motion. I move Motion 139.

BRO. J. TENNISON (London) in seconding Motion 139, said: I think we can probably all speculate as to the reasons why there might have been an increase in physical and verbal attacks on our members: the expansion of workloads at the same time as there has been a decrease in the number of staff in our airports, the increasing demands made on employees, and the security agenda since September 11<sup>th</sup>, all adding to the stress of people undertaking air travel. That is speculation and I think it would be ideal if we could actually get a formal report from the HSE to support some of these ideas and introduce some more. I would urge you to support the motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Does anyone wish to come into the debate both on 138 and 139? *(Call from the floor)* All right, I have not forgotten you. I call Bob Crosby.

BRO. R. CROSBY (CEC, Commercial Services): Congress, attacks on cash-in-transit crews are an escalating problem. Across the UK in 2005, as you have already heard from Gary Smith, there were 836 attacks with 200 involving a firearm, and 170 couriers were injured, 26 of which were life-threatening or disabling. On a day-to-day basis GMB members carrying out this vital job, which keeps the money in our pockets and the cash in the tills, are suffering stabbings, pistol whippings, severe beatings, and broken bones, not to mention the long-term physical and mental effects of these attacks on the people concerned, and their families and loved ones.

For too long this has been a hidden crime. No official statistics are kept on these attacks, they rarely make the headlines, and get precious little media attention unless a member of the public becomes involved, or there is a major heist which temporarily raises public interest. But our members risk being attacked every day of their working lives. The GMB, in particular the Birmingham & West Midlands Region, has done sterling work to raise this issue through their charter and campaign for the security industry, and we are making progress at last.

The GMB is working with the British Security Industry Association and we have highlighted this issue at the highest level. The General Secretary, the Regional Officers, stewards, and Colin Baker, our member who suffered a terrible and disabling attack last year, have met with the minister and action has been promised. Our parliamentary campaign has raised the awareness of MPs and there are 100 MPs who have now signed the early day motion on CIT crime, and an adjournment debate was held in April. We will continue to raise this issue and campaign and fight on behalf of our members in all areas of the security sector who deserve no less than the right to

carry out their jobs in a secure and safe environment. Congress, please support Motion 138.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Bob. Does London Region accept the statement? *(Agreed)* Thank you. The CEC is asking you to support. Can I now take 138 and 139?

*(Motion 138 was carried)*

*(Motion 139 was carried)*

## **SOCIAL POLICY: CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

### **DECRIMINALISATION OF PROSTITUTION**

#### **MOTION 213**

We call on Congress to oppose a 'zero tolerance' approach to prostitution and the criminalisation of sex workers' clients. To improve the situation for all those in the industry and the communities in which they operate, we urge Congress to lobby government for the full and complete decriminalisation of prostitution.

The Home Office's recently announced strategy on prostitution consists mainly of a 'zero tolerance' approach towards street prostitution and kerb crawling; it is based on the government's incorrect perception of prostitution as exploitation and anti-social behaviour. Prostitution is work.

There is a vast body of research that shows that the kind of approach the Home Office is proposing is counterproductive, and actually increases levels of violence and harm. Further criminalisation of commercial sex (either selling or buying), drives the industry further underground and puts workers at risk. These approaches have not been successful in either preventing or abolishing prostitution - they merely move street-based sex work from one place to another. Forced to use more isolated areas, workers are at greater risk of violence and abuse. If clients are criminalised, workers have less opportunity to negotiate safe sex and ensure their own physical safety.

We oppose the notion that women are victimised by their experience of sex work. Policy concerned with coerced sex work should address the offences related to coercion and those who have been coerced – irrespective of gender.

LONDON ENTERTAINMENT & I.U.S.W. BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. J. COOTE (London): I move this motion on behalf of one of our newest branches, the London Entertainment Branch. Congress, our union is as diverse and varied in the occupations we represent as there are dialects in the counties of the UK. This motion has been written by one of our region's most recently established branches and by some of this union's most vulnerable members. This motion deals with the very specific issue of prostitution and highlights the pitfalls that workers in the sex industry may face. Proper regulation of this industry will allow our members to work safely and legally without the fear of rape or violence, or prosecution by the taxman, or prosecution by the VAT man, or the very real reality of a stint in prison.

Congress, my day-to-day job recently required me to examine in detail the sexual offences legislation of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. In 2003 the Sexual Offences Act implemented some of the most wide-sweeping changes to affect our sex lives in the UK. We saw the rape laws truly beefed up, we saw the eradication of discrimination between gay sex and straight sex, we welcome the tightening of the anti-paedophile laws, and the introduction of the sex trafficking laws. What we did not see was any changes to the antiquated prostitution and immorality laws.

Congress, I would like to share with you just a few snippets of what I found. Did you know that sex workers are liable for VAT, Income Tax, and all relevant business taxes on their earnings? Did you know two women sex workers cannot share the same property, even if they do not use it as their place of business? Did you know that a man found renting accommodation to a women sex worker could be liable for criminal prosecution for living off immoral earnings?

Congress, regulation, or ideally legislation, will allow our members to set up or partake in a legitimate business, pay their taxes on time, and where the workers can work safely without fear of violence from the customer, the employer, or the police. Congress, I move.

BRO. J. TENNISON (London) in seconding the motion, said: Congress, President, I think underlying government policy towards sex workers appears to be a very Victorian attitude towards sexuality that really criminalises sex workers and I think government policy really seems to ignore the real reasons why women and men are pushed into this area of work in the first place. The real reasons are economic drivers and economic factors that push people towards this area of work. Unless we actually look to tackle the social and economic reasons as to why prostitution happens in the first place then we are never going to see a decrease in prostitution. Actually criminalising the people involved in the sex industry is not a way of tackling prostitution. I would

urge you to support the motion.

## **FIRST COURSE OF CONDUCT WARNINGS ISSUED BY THE POLICE**

### **MOTION 214**

Congress, we call upon the CEC to start a campaign immediately to vigorously lobby all members of parliament, to put pressure on the Home Office to alter the way that First Course of Conduct Warnings are issued to our members and the general public. At present no proof of guilt is required at this stage. To alter the fact that once they are issued to anyone they are unable to refuse them at the time they are served, bringing family suffering and in extreme cases causing dismissal, leaving no alternative other than to contest such warnings through a court of law. Only then are the police forced to conduct a thorough investigation to prove any guilt.

**HOME OFFICE PROFESSIONAL STAFF  
BRANCH  
London Region**

*(Carried)*

BRO. R. SLADE (London): Mary, if you could just indulge me a moment, I have a preamble to this. I am presently employed at Oakington for Global Solutions at a detention and reception centre. Paul, you will remember this. Two years ago it was reported in the national press that Oakington was closing to make way for a housing development. All the staff were going to be made redundant. Paul Kenny, who was then the London Regional Secretary, challenged David Blunkett to visit Oakington to speak to our members. That did not happen.

On 7<sup>th</sup> June 2006 we were informed by management that the Home Office has offered an extension of the site until 2008. We believe that this is done because of the continuous pressure from the GMB on its members in Parliament who we support, and the Home Office at high level. The 200 members at Oakington can only say, thank you, Paul, thank you, Ed, and thank you, GMB. This gives my branch motion of 214 even more importance, if you read it, and a matter of some urgency. Thank you.

Congress, these "first course of conduct warnings" are at present issued by the police to anybody who has a verbal complaint made against them by any other person or persons. Legal advisers inform me that when you are given a first stage warning you are unable to appeal against them in the normal way, they have to be challenged through a court of law. The police do not have to conduct an investigation to prove any guilt to issue such a warning. It appears that statements made by others are enough for the police to proceed with this course of action. You cannot refuse to accept a warning

from the police, only when you make a legal challenge in the courts will the police be forced to conduct a thorough investigation into any complaint that has been made against you.

If your employment subjects you to complying with Home Office rules and passing vetting, such as I have to, and this includes anybody that has to do this, then if you are issued with a police warning you are liable to be dismissed from your employment, either for breaching Home Office rules or for bringing your company into disrepute under those rules. If you seek further employment, you will fail any future vetting procedure. With the police not having to investigate any complaint made against you or show any proof of guilt, this system is being used to assist the police in showing a vastly improved crime clean-up rate in solved crimes: “detected, no proceedings”, is the way this crime is recorded by the police, with very little work having been done prior to issuing a warning.

Our members are suffering because of this system. We have had a recent case where a member was advised by an independent legal adviser at the time of an incident to accept this police warning. As a consequence of this, the company dismissed the member as the police had issued him with a verbal first course conduct warning. This situation cannot be allowed to continue. Innocent people are being denied the right to challenge the first course of conduct warnings at the time they are issued by the police. This is restrictive and costly, especially if you are unemployed, possibly shunned by your peers, family and friends, who might doubt your innocence. It might in some cases, as I understand, lead to a person attempting to self-harm.

We usually accept that the police in this country do not take action without proof of guilt. We see in the press that chief constables have now decided they no longer have to class certain crimes as spent after a period of time; in fact, they could stay on your record for up to 100 years. If these warnings are not challenged in court, you could as a result of this action have a police record for the next 100 years. What chance of continuing in your chosen employment then? The answer is, none, with no proof of guilt having to be shown by the police and with no police investigation having to be carried out to prove your guilt.

Will we suffer in silence while the police and the Home Office, and the Government, crow about improved crime rate figures? There was a time when British justice was the envy of the world; not now. We should be ashamed when we find action like this being misused by the police. Do crime clean-up figures mean more than a person's chance of natural justice? I am absolutely disgusted that Parliament and the Home Office, and the police, are colluding to manipulate figures in an attempt to convince us they are solving crime when a crime might not even have

been committed in the first place. The police are justifying this method as a way of keeping court cases to a minimum. It is cost-saving.

This type of legislation is having a direct effect on everyone employed in the security industry, in prisons, immigration, court services, cash-in-transit, and door supervisors, in fact any industry where you are required to operate under government licence or accreditation. I ask all delegates to vote in support of this motion. I move.

BRO. P. MEDDES (London): President, Congress, brothers and sisters, this first course of conduct warning is issued by the police against a verbal complaint that has arisen by person or persons, no investigation, no establishment of facts, just a complaint, true or otherwise. The police just issue the warning without any proof of guilt. This would seriously affect people who need CRB checks for their employment in the future. The worst scenario would be a young life blighted for ever because of a warning that had been issued wrongly. Congress, it is just not fair on families around the UK. I support. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? (*No response*) Can I call Sheila McKane?

SIS. S. MCKANE (CEC, Clothing & Textile): The CEC is supporting Motion 214 but with a qualification that I am about to give. Harassment blights the lives of those affected impacting on their health, their jobs, and their families. Victims can feel powerless. It is often difficult for them to prove that they are being harassed as there may be no, or very little, evidence to prove what has happened. However, the flip side is those wrongly or maliciously accused; this can be for the same reason, difficult to defend themselves against false accusations. Clearly, victims need protection as they know that the authorities will take their fears and concerns seriously and take the appropriate action but for those falsely accused they also need safeguards against finding themselves in a situation where they are erroneously labelled and unable to clear their names without recourse to the court.

We are aware that members who have been suspended by their employers having been issued with a first course of conduct warning. The burden of proof is placed on the individual to demonstrate their innocence and, failing that, individuals are in some cases being summarily dismissed. As you can see and as I have said, it is difficult to strike the correct balance between these conflicting rights. First stage warnings may be useful for the police in addressing harassment complaints. However, they should not be used indiscriminately without investigating the veracity of the allegation.

This motion asks for a campaign to alter the use of such warnings. The qualification is that, while we

must campaign against the injustices outlined, the Harassment Act has given some important protection which they previously did not have. The CEC recommends that you support this motion with the qualification I have explained.

THE PRESIDENT: The CEC is asking you to support 213 and 214 with a qualification. London Region, do you accept the qualification? *(Agreed)* Thank you. I now put to the vote 213 and 214.

*(Motion 213 was carried)*

*(Motion 214 was carried)*

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, this is just briefly to say that we have been joined on the platform by Trevor Phillips, who is Chair of the Commission for Racial Equality. Could I say welcome to Congress, Trevor. Trevor will be addressing you later. *(Applause)*

## REGIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT - BIRMINGHAM AND WEST MIDLANDS REGION

### 1. Membership and Recruitment

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| Total membership                              | 51,794 |
| Women membership                              | 17,941 |
| Section membership (by each Section):         |        |
| Clothing & Textile                            | 284    |
| Commercial Services                           | 5,150  |
| CFTA  | 2,156  |
| Energy & Utilities                            | 4,864  |
| Engineering                                   | 13,192 |
| Food & Leisure                                | 3,665  |
| Process                                       | 1,786  |
| Public Services                               | 17,553 |
| Grade 1 members                               | 37,525 |
| Grade 2 members                               | 7,294  |
| Sick, retired & unemployed members            | 3,831  |
| Total number recruited 1.1.2005 - 31.12.2005  | 7,340  |
| Gross increase/decrease 1.1.2005 - 31.12.2005 | -1,217 |
| Net increase/decrease 1.1.2005 - 31.12.2005   | -655   |
| Membership on Check-off                       | 34,875 |
| Membership on Direct Debit                    | 9,069  |
| Financial membership                          | 48,650 |

### RESPONSE TO CULTURE CHANGE AND RECOMMENDATIONS WITHIN THE REPORT 'A FRAMEWORK FOR THE FUTURE'

As a result of the culture change and since the report 'A Framework for the Future' was endorsed by Congress 2005, we have within the Region, reorganised our unspecified membership. All unspecified members are now under the responsibility of one full-time Officer. Unspecified members in the main can take up a considerable amount of full-time Officer's time dealing with individual cases, to combat this and also to assist in the efforts not to have Branches and general membership too dependant on full-time Officer servicing we have established within the Region a dedicated team of eighteen Accompanying Representatives. These Accompanying Representatives come under the supervision of one full-time Officer who has responsibility for all unspecified membership. Any first-line grievances or disciplinary hearings in companies that are either unspecified or do not have an established shop stewards' committee are dealt with by one of the team of Accompanying Representatives. I think it is safe to say that the increase in membership that was expected with the introduction of Section 10 of the Employment Relations Act 1999 has not materialised. What did happen as a result of the Act was Officers' time being taken up dealing with individual cases which is why the team of Accompanying Representatives needed to be established. The Region continues to receive annual recruitment plans from almost all Branches and in November of 2005 we began a restructure of Branches whereby those Branches that can be merged without causing too many strategic or political problems will be merged as soon as possible.

### RECRUITMENT TARGETS AND CAMPAIGNS

From January 2005 through to December 2005 a variety of different strategies were put into place in an

effort to stimulate an organising philosophy. Unfortunately, the strategies that were put into place in the early parts of the year were dependant upon full-time Officers dedicating time within their diaries for organising, setting this as their priority. What was found in practice was that although time was set aside, as and when servicing responsibilities came up the organising took second place. As a result of this and through part of the national strategy that was being formulated, a dedicated organising team headed up by one Senior Organiser with total responsibility for organising within the Region was established. The team has a blend of experience and enthusiasm and is made up of five full-time Officers, the Senior Organiser and a dedicated Administration Assistant. Their role is not to recruit on behalf of the rest of the Region but rather to direct organisation across the Region. The strategy was discussed fully across the Region with all full-time Officers and Staff members, this was then endorsed by the Regional Committee and Branches were informed of the Region's intentions to ensure we have full cooperation from the Branches and Activists which has been forthcoming. The new organising strategy went live on 1 November 2005 where we were aiming, in line with the national strategy, to increase our average recruitment figures by approximately 200 per month which gave us a regional target of around 730 new members per month based on a rolling monthly average. November and December delivered growth for the Region in each of those months. Unfortunately, manufacturing continues to be in decline, our membership in engineering which was once the largest membership within the Region has again dropped by 1,024 members from 14,216 at the end of December 2004 to 13,191 at the end of December 2005. Thankfully, however, our membership within public services continues to grow. At the end of December 2004 it stood at 16,548 and at the end of December 2005 that had increased by 1,005 members to 17,553. However, within that success lies a potential problem, that being that the increase in public services membership is in the main grade 2 membership, therefore, financially for each grade 1 member we lose we should be enrolling two grade 2 members. The Region continues to attempt to expand our membership base and since January 2005 through to the 31 December 2005 recognition agreements have been signed with the following companies:

Fascenda Group Limited  
 Groundwork Black Country  
 The Edgbaston Assembly Rooms  
 Kimal Plc

2005 has seen significant changes in our organisation and we have been through some difficult times which have affected Officers, Staff and Activists within the organisation. However, this has resulted in the organisation pulling together for the benefit of the GMB and its membership so much so that by the end of 2005 we had seen a clear improvement in both morale and commitment throughout the whole of the organisation and the organisation is moving in the right direction in a very positive manner.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE REGION'S ECONOMIC & EMPLOYMENT SITUATION**

The West Midlands had an unemployment rate above the national average of 2.9%, the West Midlands average was 3.8% which shows a rise from the end of 2004 when unemployment across the Region stood at 86,000 to the end of 2005 when unemployment has risen to 101,800. The figure becomes even starker if we use the Labour Force Survey count which puts unemployment in the West Midlands at 139,000 that is a rise of 5.3%. Unfortunately, the manufacturing sector continued to shed jobs throughout 2005 and during the third quarter of 2005 manufacturing employee jobs were down by 97,000 compared with a year earlier, this is the lowest level since records began in 1978.

### **2. General Organisation**

|                                       |     |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Regional Senior Organisers            | 3   |
| Membership Development Officers       | 0   |
| Regional Organisers                   | 15  |
| Recruitment and Organisation Officers | 1   |
| Regional Recruitment Officers         | 2   |
| No. of Branches                       | 116 |
| BAOs                                  | Nil |
| New branches                          | 2   |
| Branch Equality Officers              | 13  |

### **3. Benefits**

|         |        |
|---------|--------|
| Dispute | 19,540 |
|---------|--------|

|                                 |        |
|---------------------------------|--------|
| Total Disablement               | Nil    |
| Working Accident                | 2,130  |
| Occupational Fatal Accident     | -      |
| Non-occupational Fatal Accident | 2,155  |
| Funeral                         | 11,752 |

#### 4. Journals & Publicity

The Regional magazine GMB Centrepoin is now well established within the Region having been launched in 2002. It has become an important means of communicating with our activists; the magazine itself is made up of stories and articles by the Branch Activists which makes it a more interesting read. The regional website is now linked to many Branches within the Region that have also set up a Branch website. The regional website seems to be very popular as it is being hit on a regular basis and we also receive many applications to join the Union via the website. There have been TV and radio interviews by the Officers throughout the Region throughout 2005 and there have been literally dozens of press releases on issues such as redundancies, pay disputes, pension problems, industrial action and manufacturing. I also continue to provide fairly regular articles for the Birmingham Evening Mail. In October 2005 the Region held a Women's Conference which was a very successful conference and at the conference the Region launched the GMB Birmingham & West Midlands Women's Charter. The conference was such a success that we now intend to make it an annual affair. We will be convening the conferences where we held the 2005 conference which was at the Black Country Living History Museum and will be encouraging family members along by providing entertainment. We continue to raise the regional profile in a very positive light and continue to work with our regional MPs and Councillors to promote the GMB Birmingham & West Midlands Region.

#### 5. Legal Services

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

|  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| Applications for Legal Assistance          | 971                 |
| Legal Assistance Granted                   | 969                 |
| <b>Cases in which Outcome became known</b> |                     |
| Total                                      | 1,188               |
| Withdrawn                                  | 347                 |
| Lost in Court                              | 1                   |
| Settled                                    | 484 (£1,185,370.60) |
| Won in Court                               | 356 (£2,549,520)    |
| Total Compensation                         | £3,734,990.60       |
| Cases outstanding at 31.12.2005            | 1,502               |

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

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| Claims supported by Union                  | 36          |
| <b>Cases in which Outcome became known</b> |             |
| Total                                      | 8           |
| Withdrawn                                  | 1           |
| Lost in Tribunal                           | 0           |
| Settled                                    | £218,730.68 |
| Won in Court                               | £0          |
| Total Compensation                         | £218,730.68 |
| Cases outstanding at 31.12.2005            | 28          |

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

|                                 |        |
|---------------------------------|--------|
| Supported by Union              | 10     |
| Unsuccessful                    | 0      |
| Damages/Compensation            | £40.00 |
| Cases outstanding at 31.12.2005 | 4      |

##### (d) Social Security Cases

|                                 |    |
|---------------------------------|----|
| Supported by Union              | 14 |
| Successful                      | 5  |
| Cases outstanding at 31.12.2005 | 3  |

#### 6. Equal Rights

The main work of the committee in the Region in the past year has been to raise the profile of the GMB

as the champion organisation for addressing inequality issues. Full-time officers have been encouraged to use RERAC as a resource for organising the workplace and to be a part of any recruitment campaign in the Region.

The Birmingham and West Midlands Region continues to champion lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender issues circulating advice and information to members and non-members. The Region sent a full delegation to the National Equalities Event held at UMIST in Manchester. The Regional Equal Rights Officer Martin Bevan ran a workshop at the event along with the Regional Equal Rights Officer from Lancashire Region, on confidence building and life coaching.

The Regional Equal Rights Committee played an active role at the Regional Women's conference at which a Women's Charter was launched, with members of the Committee running a workshop on engaging women activists.

### **REGIONAL RACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT**

The Vasakhi Festival (Sikh Religious Day) was not attended in 2005 because of the lateness of notification of the date, but endeavours will be made to attend this Festival in 2006 which is due to be held some time in April with the exact date yet to be confirmed.

The Birmingham Schools' 'Kick Racism out of Football Competition' was again a successful event and continues to promote racial awareness within local communities.

Local meetings have been taking place to promote racial awareness and at these meetings Warrinder Juss of Thompsons Solicitors has been in attendance to give support and to answer individual queries. The Race Committee is made up of 9 current members, the ethnic origin of which is broken down as follows:

|                 |                      |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| Pakistani       | 1                    |
| Afro Caribbean  | 3                    |
| Indian          | 4 (incl 1 Gurgarati) |
| White - British | 1                    |

We have invited a further 2 members to join the Committee and their acceptance is awaited.

We have once again written to Branch Secretaries requesting meetings to discuss the ongoing strategy to race issues and how we can work together within the Branches. Some meetings have proved worthwhile, but generally there has been a poor response.

We intend to hold a Regional Race Conference at Halesowen on May 17<sup>th</sup> 2006 and will be attending the Afro Caribbean Carnival in August 2006. However, Black History month will not take place in 2006 but will be held in Birmingham in 2007 and we will be heavily involved with the organisation of this particular event which we hope will again prove to be a success.

### **7. Youth Report**

Following is a brief report of the Birmingham and West Midlands Regions organising activities to encourage trade union membership within the younger generation.

We have maintained our presence at music and local festivals highlighting the importance of belonging to a trade union to the future workforce. Attendance at other local shows have also given the GMB opportunities to engage youngsters of all ages in a fun and relaxed environment which hopefully will bring some understanding of the Trade Union Movement along with raising the profile of the GMB. However, the current perception of the role that the Trade Union plays within the workplace continues to be an ongoing issue.

Presentations have continued within the further and higher educational sector to both full-time and part-time students giving them an insight into the role of the Trade Union within their workplace/future workplaces in support of this concern. The college sessions have given rise to much debate and have also been a platform for immediate recruitment, although limited, and for future workplace meetings. However, links through centres based at colleges and universities such as job centre plus, are still to be realised.

In an endeavour to engage the 'very young generation' in social and environmental issues, a local Branch ran an art competition across the nursery, primary and secondary schools within an education authority. This was very successful in not only linking the Trade Union within the school environment but has allowed further access to the Staff who work there – many of whom have become GMB members fitting into the young members category.

The Young Members Section on our regional website is now up and running, however, to date has brought minimal focused organising activities within the young members section and is an area for considering how we can engage youngsters through the use of ICT for the future.

To date we haven't held a specific Regional Young Members conference, however, we have continued to engage younger members of the school workforce through a variety of other meetings and conferences which has led to some success in mobilising younger activists.

## 8. Training

|  | No. of Courses | Male | Female | Total | Total Student Days |
|--|----------------|------|--------|-------|--------------------|
| <b>(a) GMB Courses Basic Training</b>          |                |      |        |       |                    |
| Introduction to GMB (2 days)                   | 5              | 46   | 15     | 61    | 305                |
| GMB/TUC Induction (5 days)                     | 5              | 49   | 18     | 67    | 335                |
| Branch Officers                                | 5              | 51   | 14     | 65    | 325                |
| <b>(b) On Site Courses</b>                     |                |      |        |       |                    |
| Accompanying Reps                              | 2              | 5    | 0      | 5     | 10                 |
| <b>(c) Health &amp; Safety Courses</b>         |                |      |        |       |                    |
| GMB Introduction Health & Safety               | 5              | 51   | 14     | 65    | 325                |
| <b>(d) Other Courses</b>                       |                |      |        |       |                    |
| <b><i>Northern College</i></b>                 |                |      |        |       |                    |
| Employment Law (5 days)                        | 2              | 6    | 1      | 7     | 14                 |
| Advanced Health & Safety (5 days)              | 2              | 7    | 0      | 7     | 14                 |
| Tackling Racism: The Trade Union Role (3 days) | 1              | 1    | 0      | 1     | 1                  |
| Industrial Relations ( 5 days)                 | 2              | 7    | 0      | 7     | 14                 |
| <b><i>GFTU</i></b>                             |                |      |        |       |                    |
| Basic Reps (3 days)                            | 1              | 1    | 0      | 1     | 1                  |
| Dealing with Bullying & Harassment (3 Days)    | 1              | 3    | 0      | 3     | 3                  |
| Public Speaking (3 days)                       | 1              | 2    | 0      | 2     | 2                  |
| Leadership Skills for Women (3 days)           | 1              | 0    | 5      | 5     | 5                  |
| Union Learning Reps 1 (5 days)                 | 1              | 0    | 1      | 1     | 1                  |
| Effective Representation (3 days)              | 2              | 2    | 0      | 2     | 4                  |
| <b>(e) TUC (STUC &amp; ICTU) Courses</b>       |                |      |        |       |                    |
| Union Reps stage 1 (10 days)                   | 2              | 1    | 1      | 2     | 4                  |
| Union Reps stage 2 (10 days)                   | 2              | 3    | 1      | 4     | 6                  |
| Health & Safety 1 (10 days)                    | 1              | 0    | 2      | 2     | 2                  |
| Health & Safety 2 (10 days)                    | 2              | 2    | 1      | 3     | 6                  |
| Understanding Pensions (10 days)               | 2              | 2    | 0      | 2     | 4                  |
| Union Learning Reps (5 days)                   | 2              | 3    | 0      | 3     | 6                  |
| Information & Consultation (2 days)            | 2              | 1    | 1      | 2     | 4                  |

|  |   |    |   |    |    |
|--|---|----|---|----|----|
| Stepping-up Union Reps stage 2 (10 days) | 3 | 5  | 0 | 5  | 15 |
| Computer Beginners (10 days)             | 3 | 10 | 0 | 10 | 30 |
| Spanish for Trade Unionists (10 days)    | 1 | 2  | 0 | 2  | 2  |
| Grievance & Disciplinary (2 days)        | 1 | 1  | 0 | 1  | 1  |
| Paint Shop Pro 8 (10 days)               | 1 | 1  | 0 | 1  | 1  |

## 9. Health & Safety

The Birmingham and West Midlands Region has continued to carry out the Union's policy with regard to health and safety. We continue to offer advice and assistance to our representatives, by providing both an information service and workplace visits when requested.

In the past year the health and safety department has been involved in a number of workplace organising campaigns. The safety department has recently produced a organising booklet for workplace safety reps based on how they can use inspections and workplace mapping as an organising tool. This was launched at a Regional health and safety training seminar for officers run by Thompsons Solicitors in January of this year. The safety seminar was based on how officers can use organising safety in their workplaces as a recruitment tool and organising base. This concept is also integral to the safety training of our representatives.

The Department has been driving health and safety issues and raising awareness throughout the Region. This has been achieved by using the Media Officer to promote health and safety campaigns in the media along with providing materials for the Centrepoint Regional magazine and the regional website.

In the past year the health and safety department has been involved with the HSE in their induction process for new inspectors which are held twice a year. The health and safety officer has also been involved in a number of seminars; one for the NHS in Northampton on the role of the safety representative and one for senior HR managers at a Chartered Institute Personnel and Development (CIPD) seminar on the role of the safety representative in sickness absence processes.

### Union Learning Agenda:

The Birmingham and West Midlands Region have also developed in partnership with the WEA a GMB badged ULR course and the first raft of ULR's will be starting this course at the end of February. Promotional and marketing materials have been designed and printed and recently a ULR learning section of the regional GMB website has gone live. This has helped to disseminate the message about the learning agenda to staff and our members.

It is not always understood about the impact learning can have in the workplace and contribute towards recruitment and organising. A recent report by the Labour Research Group has highlighted that ULR's and the learning agenda is having a significant impact on recruitment and organising, increasing union membership and helping to educate activist making a positive impact in the growth and sustainability of trade unions.

*(Adopted)*

*(The Report: was formally moved)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Joe. Could I now ask Congress to move to pages 93, 94, 95, 96?

BRO. J. COOTE (London): President, thank you for allowing me to ask a question on page 96 in regards to Birmingham and West Midlands equal rights paragraphs. The question I have is this. Although we acknowledge all the work that the region has done, something quite important within that region is that one of their members has recently been elected to stand for the TUC LGBT Committee. That is not in the

report. I am just hoping it is an oversight. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Could I ask, is this recently? When was he elected? *(Confirmed February)* It would not be in the report until next year. Pages 97, 98 and 99? Joe, am I correct, next year's report? Okay. With that qualification, Congress agrees to accept? *(Agreed)*

*(Regional Secretary's Report - Birmingham & West Midlands Region was adopted)*

# EQUALITIES REPORT

## Introduction

This past year has seen some positive movement in equality legislation. In 2005 there were more women in the labour market than at any other time previously. Women now constitute almost half of the labour market and over its period in office the Government has introduced legislation intended to strengthen gender equality. Maternity rights were increased under the Employment Act 2000 and the Work and Families Bill seeks to extend some of these rights from 2007. It is also intended that the Equalities Bill should come into force in 2007. This Bill stipulates that local authorities, voluntary and private sector bodies working in the public sector will be bound by a gender equality duty which requires them to comply with specific requirements and pay due regard to eliminating unlawful sex discrimination and promoting equality between women and men. In addition to these advancements, Age Discrimination legislation will come into effect from October 2007 in an attempt to bring an end to the inequality of opportunity suffered by people in their 50's and early 60's.

Despite the positive movement being made in legislation, the UK still has a long way to go before it can boast employment equality. Although the Work and Families Bill has identified that maternity allowances should be increased, as the increase in maternity leave of 3 months can be sacrificed by mothers to increase the father's paternity leave by the same 3 months, in cases where this sacrifice is made women are individually no better off than under previous legislation. As pressure will be high on working mothers to use this option to spread family rights equally between parents, the new law increases the possibility of family disputes at a sensitive time for all parents.

The Equal Opportunities Commission states that over the next five years 1 million women will be discriminated against. By the time we enter Congress the Women and Work Commission will have published its recommendations. This body, which is attended by our Deputy General Secretary Debbie Coulter, has been commissioned to examine the disparity in earnings between women and men despite thirty years of equal pay legislation. Even so, at the time of writing it is expected that the Commission will reject union calls for mandatory pay audits and statutory rights for union equality representatives. It is also likely that the Commission will place a good deal of emphasis on social stereotypes adopted by women that lead to their seeking employment in jobs with poor expectations of pay and progression. It is hoped that the Commission will make recommendations that will signal and end to the inequitable treatment of roles that are traditionally held by women and the disparity between women and men in senior positions. Our response will be determined by how far the Commission goes in meeting these demands.

## 1. National Equal Rights Advisory Committee

A key focus of NERAC's activities in 2005 has been to address the lack of activism on regional equal rights committees. The theme of the 2005 National Equalities Event was moving forward in the GMB through the empowerment of women and the exchange of best practice. The unanimous response from participants was that the event had been a great success and that delegates felt empowered to develop their regional equalities structures. This work will be complimented by NERAC's determination to increase the number of Branch Equalities Officers. As well as the individual work being done by individual members of NERAC in their regions, the revamped Branch Equalities and Race Officers Pack will help Branch Equalities Officers to define their position and responsibilities and understand the resources open to them.

In addition to this focus, NERAC have been working on the Refuge Campaign to raise domestic violence as a workplace concern. This has focused on working with Refuge nationally by raising funds through recycling old mobile phones and raising awareness of the support available to women suffering from domestic violence. NERAC is also currently undertaking an assessment to build on the Daphne project (raising domestic violence as a workplace concern), and is looking to explore funding avenues with this in mind. The Committee has also made links with the Women's Association of Slovakia who are interested in adopting GMB practice.

As stated above, our Deputy General Secretary sits on Women and Work Commission and we've been following its progress very carefully. The National Equalities Officer Rehana Azam has also met with Meg Munn the Deputy Women's Minister to discuss the consultation exercise on the remit of the Women and Work Commission. The GMB has also been working nationally with the Equal

Opportunities Commission on a number of campaigns involving the under representation of Black and Asian Women in the labour market and on issues to do with progression and promotion.

NERAC's is currently undergoing an assessment of the training that it needs to carry out its role more effectively.

The National Equal Rights Advisory Committee is made up of the following:

Richard Edmunds, Birmingham & West Midlands  
 Jayne Norton, (Vice-Chair) Birmingham & West Midlands  
 Linda Clarke, Birmingham & West Midlands  
 Sandra Tanner, Birmingham & West Midlands  
 Shirley Buckley, Lancashire  
 Margaret Gregg, Liverpool, N Wales & Irish  
 Jackie Nield, London  
 Alistair McLean, London  
 David Lascelles, Midland & East Coast  
 Charlie James, Yorkshire & North Derbyshire  
 Sharon Nicholson, Southern  
 Jean Chaplow, Northern  
 Cathy Murphy, (Chair) GMB Scotland  
 June Minnery, GMB Scotland  
 Jennifer Cole, South Western  
 Brian Farr, South Western  
 Jill Richards, South Western  
 Noreen Metcalf, Yorkshire & North Derbyshire

## **2. Membership Development and Organisation**

It is advisable that GMB activists and officers examine developments in equality legislation and utilise these in the recruitment of workers affected by the changes. Although the Equalities Bill comes into effect from April 2007, this is the date by which local authorities, voluntary and private sector bodies working in the public sector have to comply with the requirements of the Bill and they should therefore be making the relevant changes between now and then. Women working in these sectors may be asked if their employers are working towards meeting their future obligations. The GMB needs to be proactive in pushing these duties as it is expected that over the next year the relevant unions will be using them to encourage membership across a host of areas.

## **3. National Equality Event**

The National Equalities Event for 2005 focused on empowering women activists. The activities on the first day began with a panel discussion during which members spoke about how they became active in the GMB. This was followed by workshops on Life Coaching and Confidence Building given by Regional Officers Martin Bevan and Karen Lewis, Domestic Violence given by Peggy Blyth and Joan Keane, Women Workers in the Security Industry with Jan Thomas, and a Law Update delivered by Sarah King of GMB National Office. The morning of the second day brought reports back from the workshops in which there was a clear desire on behalf of the delegates present to get up and take part. As well as identifying a host of issues that need to be addressed if more women are to be brought through the GMB, delegates spoke with a unanimous voice of the need to take responsibility for addressing these issues themselves.

## **4. Disability Forum**

R. Azam was asked earlier this year to take responsibility for the Forum from P.Davies, National Secretary. Similar to the NRC and NERAC structures the National Disability Forum members are keen to develop regional forums. Training needs have been identified and a training programme is being devised specific to the needs of forum members to build and develop skills. This will empower our members to be better equipped on building campaigns and engaging all members and activists within the campaigning agenda for better jobs and access for disabled workers. Lobbying to make Disability Audits mandatory for all employers will focus on the forthcoming Single Equalities Act. The Forum's members consist of the following:

Pam Benham, Birmingham & West Midlands  
 Brian Davies MBE, Lancashire

Andy Griffiths, Liverpool, N Wales & Irish  
 David Rose, London  
 Julian Siggee, Midland & East Coast  
 Jim Hollern, Northern  
 Jeff Hills, GMB Scotland  
 Vacancy, Southern  
 Neil Evans, S Western  
 Terry Patten (Chair), Yorkshire & N Derbyshire

## **5. Shout Forum**

This Forum has just been launched by building on the success of the regional forums in London and Southern Region. At the first meeting the group agreed aims and objectives, an action plan in building regional forums, key campaigning issues and also to devise a membership strategy in line with the GMB's national organising team. The Forum's members consist of the following:

Tony Hughes, Birmingham & West Midlands  
 David Hope (Vice Chair), Lancashire  
 James Lamb, Liverpool, N Wales & Irish  
 Brian Shaw (Chair), London  
 David Lascelles, Midland & East Coast  
 Peter Foley, Northern  
 Vacancy, GMB Scotland  
 Jordier Ollier, Southern  
 Mark Bowler, S Western  
 Vacancy, Yorkshire & N Derbyshire

Our members within this Forum have been actively campaigning to amend the Equalities Bill to cover sexual orientation and goods and services provided to the LGBT community. In the forthcoming Single Equalities Act we have been given some indication that the Act will cover goods and services, however there is a concern that this will not cover transgender. The campaign to have this rectified is continuing.

## **6. TUC**

2005 saw an active GMB delegation to the 2005 TUC Women's Conference. The GMB motion concerned the need to reform the Child Support Agency, and although some movement is being made on this issue by Government it is too soon to say what the outcome will be.

The GMB Delegation to the 2005 TUC Disability Conference was made up of Forum and Remploy members. The GMB motion which was passed by Conference called for reserved seats on Skills Sector Councils for disabled people.

The GMB delegation to the 2005 TUC LGBT Conference represented the majority of regions. The motion which was passed by Conference demanded that public sector workers with responsibility for LGBT adopters be provided with training to understanding their needs, and that employers adopt a flexible, understanding, and proactive approach towards understanding the needs of workers who are LGBT adopters and protecting them from discrimination.

## **Conclusion**

NERAC is very confident about the future of equalities in the GMB following the National Equalities Event. Whilst our Union has to support our members in meeting the challenge of becoming active the equalities event gave positive signs in this direction.

The Union is also waiting with baited breath on the outcome of the Women and Work Commission. 2007 will see new equalities legislation come into effect, but it will also see the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of votes for women. The challenge is still there to close the gender pay gap and bring real equality for women and the GMB has a big role to play in this. By next year the Women and Work Commission need to have given women something that they can really celebrate.

2006 is a conference year for National Equalities and this year's conference is planned for November.

Rehana Azam would like to thank NERAC, Disability and Shout Forum representatives and all the

Regional Officers for their support and for working to make this a positive year for equalities in our union.

*(Adopted)*

## RACE REPORT

### Introduction

2005 has been an extremely challenging year for our black members, and black, minority and ethnic communities in general. The London bombings that took place on 7<sup>th</sup> July of that year have raised fundamental questions about, among other things, our personal rights and security, the issue of integration versus community identity, and the racial stereotyping of entire communities in the press. Equality legislation that the Government has initiated has sought to push forward the rights of protected groups and communities, but in their determination to prevent similar attacks in future it has pushed bills through Parliament which threatens to widen divisions in society. The advances made in community policing as a result of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry may already be endangered by use of the Counter-Terrorism Act. The Home Office have attempted to make a case for a Commission on Integration, seeking to address issues of inclusiveness and social inequality whilst advocating common values. Muslim communities however have witnessed a growth of Islamophobia fuelled by media stereotypes and believe that their concerns are not being addressed by Government. This tension has been amplified by the deeply disturbing comments made by Nick Griffin and his acquittal on charges of Incitement to Racial Hatred and the insensitive response of a Muslim minority to the publishing of equally offensive Danish cartoons. Trevor Phillips of the Commission for Racial Equality has warned that some parts of Britain are 'sleepwalking towards apartheid'.

All of this brings into focus the relationship between unions and their members. In 2005 the TUC Race Relations Committee launched the first in a number of forums across the country in which black trade unionists and grassroots organisations can meet and support one another in the workplace and community. The first discussions held in Birmingham identified how far unionists have to go towards meeting the needs of BME communities. The overall feeling was that there is no communication between trade unions, black workers and their communities, and where they do have a little knowledge of our work and aspirations there is a lack of belief that what we do is relevant to their needs. Those black workers that do become active often feel isolated within their workplaces and unions, and feel that our organisations are bureaucratic and unwelcoming. In 2005 the GMB continued in its attempts to address these problems. The revamped Branch Equality and Race Officers pack has clarified the responsibilities of these positions, the resources open to them, and their place within the structure of the union. In addition the National Race Committee is committed to increasing the number of regional activists and improving communication between them. It has long been recognised that the membership losses as a result of industrial decline can be compensated for by recruiting groups which are under represented in the union movement and the work being done by the equalities committees is of central importance to this. But their success depends on the union as a whole asking serious questions about how its work can meet the needs of black minority and ethnic communities.

### 1. National Race Committee

In 2005 the NRC identified that its profile needed to be raised both regionally and nationally. It committed itself to addressing the lack of activism on Regional Race Advisory Committees by targeting those branches that do not have Branch Race Officers and helping those that do by overhauling the Branch Equality and Race Officer's Pack. In addition to this the NRC have conducted an audit of training needs within the group to determine what the NRC needs to carry out its role more effectively. The Black History Month Event held in Liverpool was also intended to raise the group's profile on a national level. The event was extremely encouraging in that it provided a model of what the GMB can achieve with the BME communities. On a less positive note participation from across the union was weak despite advertising, and this has increased the NRC's determination to mainstream issues of race within the union.

In addition to working on this long-term goal, the NRC have been looking at regions that have organised migrant workers with a view to sharing best practice across the union. Of particular note has been the work done by Midlands and East Coast Region.

The NRC has also been working with Liberty and other trade unions on a 'No2ID Cards' campaign. The NRC sees the introduction of ID cards as threatening to civil rights and believes that their use will deepen divisions in society.

The National Race Committee is made up of the following:

Harpal Jandu, (Chair) Birmingham & West Midlands  
 Edna Greenwood, Lancashire  
 Steve Westergren, Liverpool, N Wales & Irish  
 Andy McGivern, Liverpool, N Wales & Irish  
 Simon Carter, London  
 Richard Robinson, Midland & East Coast  
 Peter Foley, Northern  
 Georgia Cruickshank, (Vice-Chair) GMB Scotland  
 Cathy Murphy, (NERAC) GMB Scotland  
 Dotun Alade Odumosu, Southern  
 Vacancy, South Western  
 Charlie James, Yorkshire & North Derbyshire

## **2. Membership Development and Organisation**

In 2005 the NRC also committed itself to the promotion of particular issues faced by black minority and ethnic workers on pay and discrimination. It has long been recognised within our movement that if there no halt to the decline in traditionally unionised industries, its future membership and so its aims and aspirations must come from other areas. Obvious targets of future recruitment are those groups that are underrepresented in the union movement, of which black workers are one. With this in mind, the NRC believes that our union needs to mainstream attention on issues such as direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, victimisation, harassment and bullying. Other issues that straddle the interests of both unions and black workers however include the local regeneration of deprived areas, inclusiveness in welfare and employment and addressing social inequality.

The NRC believes that greater focus should be placed on the duties of local authorities and the private sector under the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 (RRA), and that the union should promote proactive practices with regard to race such as the adoption of Equal Opportunities Policies and the use of Statutory Questionnaires to address direct and indirect discrimination. By placing greater focus on issues and practices raised in the RRA the NRC believes that we can spread knowledge of unions' goals and activities and the belief that unions are relevant, and so help to address the isolation that is felt among young black workers within society and the unions. Proactive ways of organising black workers will place the greatest emphasis on the issues highlighted above.

In addition, union structures need to be strengthened in relation to black workers. The revamped Branch Race and Equalities Officer Packs have helped to identify the duties of Branch Race Officers and the resources at their disposal but more needs to be done regionally in identifying and encouraging branch and workplace activists. Again, emphasising issues of direct interest to black workers will encourage this development.

## **3. Black History Month Event – Liverpool Adelphi**

As part of Liverpool's celebrations during Black History Month, the GMB hosted an event to celebrate equality and condemn the injustices of inequality. The event, which took place at the Adelphi hotel and was free to the public, highlighted the contribution that BME communities make to British culture.

The event was opened by an African Band and a Chinese Dragon Dance, and proceeded with live music from across the UK including hip-hop, reggae and diverse music from around the globe. There was a tour of Liverpool with a commentary on its historical role in the slave trade Films were also shown on the history of anti-racism in UK music, and on the deaths of Black men held in custody. Love Music Hate Racism provided DJ's for the night. Alongside the entertainment there were children's activities.

Families from across the country attended and the only complaint seemed to be that there was too much to choose from on the day. During a night that will be remembered by all who attended, our Nigerian friends from Birmingham took to the stage to sing traditional songs and taught everyone how to dance along. The event was a glowing advert for what the GMB can achieve if it embraces diversity

and inclusion, but the poor attendance from within the union was a serious disappointment. As one young activist said at the end of the day, 'I know what I want from my union, but I don't know where this fits in with the union'. Black History Month is to be the focus of the NRC's biannual event and the next is planned for Birmingham 2007.

#### 4. CEC Race Task Group

Last year Dawn Butler left the GMB to start her career as a Labour MP and we send our heartfelt congratulations for her success in last year's elections. Her role on the CEC Race Task Group was adopted by the National Race and Equality Officer, Rehana Azam, and she continues with the task to ensure that equalities is mainstreamed in all of its structures. Last year the results of the Race audit were collated and confirmed Dr Henry's findings about institutional racism in the GMB. With this in mind the GMB's Senior Management team undertook equality and diversity training and there are plans to role this training out to officers and activists. In addition the CEC Race Task group are exploring ethnic monitoring and also developing a national shadowing and mentoring initiative.

#### 5. TUC

2005 saw an active delegation from the GMB to the TUC Black Workers' Conference. The GMB's motion concerned the Government's withholding of the right of asylum seekers to apply for work for 6 months. The GMB argued that the right to work is a fundamental and universal human right and therefore that this right is not forfeited upon leaving one's home country.

The motion to the TUC Black Workers' Conference 2006 asks the TUC to produce material for distribution in workplace that counteracts the rise of Islamophobia and media stereotypes.

#### Conclusion

Despite the obvious challenges ahead the NRC have been very upbeat this year. The challenge to collectively work together is greater than ever but the determination following last year's event is meeting this challenge.

Whilst the NRC appreciates the need for reserved seats on the CEC it recognises that this measure is intended to compensate for the lack of representation of black workers throughout the union. With this in mind the NRC believes that the GMB must express a firm commitment to bringing more black activists into our union structures.

The National Race Conference is planned for Black History Month in October.

Rehana Azam would like to express her warmest thanks to the NRC for their hard work and support over the past year, and she extends this to all Regional Race Officers and activists.

*(Adopted)*

THE PRESIDENT: Rehana is to give a report and after Rehana has spoken I will invite questions on pages 39-42, and Rehana will be jointly doing both Race and Equality. Rehana?

SIS. R. AZAM (National Officer, Equal Rights): Thank you, Mary. Congress, I have responsibility for equalities and will be moving both the Equality and Race reports.

Congress, I would like to begin by thanking all of the members of the equalities committees, the National Race Committee, the National Equal Rights Committee, the National Disability Forum, and now our National Shout Forum, for the excellent work they have contributed to the GMB in the last year. Each group has recognised that there is a job to be done if we are to widen participation in our union. All of the committees have risen to meet this challenge.

Whilst continuing to applaud the reservation of seats on the CEC for our black minority ethnic members, the National Race Committee recognises that this is only designed to compensate for the fact that these groups are under-represented in our union. This committee is focusing all of its national efforts on improving the representation and training of lay activists. Although the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Committee is still in its infancy, it already has an organisation that any Labour group would be proud of. Whilst this group maintains a keen eye on improving legislation and working practices that will protect our members, it is also developing an exceptional profile for its work in building membership, and since its re-launch in a short period of time we have gone from strength to strength.

Congress, for a while now our membership

figures have remained steady and from exerting all our efforts in trying to stem the tide of membership losses it is easy to return to a more relaxed and complacent attitude. Being optimistic about the future of our union is a good thing but this optimism is only good if our confidence is based on hard facts and how we are going to attract members in the future. The vision of the future shared by the equalities committees is little more than common sense. If you want to know how to make our union grow, look for those workers who are not members; that is obvious.

We are still under-represented in all of our equality groups, except women. Although the equalities committees are working hard to improve activism, this work must be promoted throughout our union if under-represented workers are going to believe that we have something to offer. This is not rocket science and, given our experience, it is not even that difficult. Our union needs to mainstream attention on issues such as direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, victimisation, harassment and bullying. We must examine developments in equality legislation and use them in organising workers.

For women the Equalities Bill comes into effect from April 2007 and by this date all local authorities, both voluntary and private sector bodies working in the public sector, have to comply with the requirements of the bill. Women working in these sectors should be canvassed to ask if their employers are meeting their future obligations. Greater focus must be placed on the duties of local authorities and the private sector under the Race Relations Amendment Act.

As a union we should be promoting good practice, such as the adoption of equal opportunity policies. When I say policies I am not talking about policies that gather dust in cupboards but policies such as the adoption of equal opportunities policies as well as the statutory equality questionnaires to address direct and indirect discrimination. Other issues that straddle the interest of both unions and black workers include the local regeneration of deprived areas, inclusiveness in welfare and employment, and measures that can be used to address social inequality. Only by engaging in the concerns of segregated workers can we promote an understanding of unions' goals and activities and give them a reason to believe that unions are relevant to them.

In 2007 the National Race Committee and Equal Rights Committee will be hosting their biannual event as evidence of the GMB's commitment to become more representative. They expect a large turnout from this union. What they guarantee in return is that you will walk away with a spring in your step and a new perspective on trade unionism. For example, the National Equalities event that was held

last year focused on empowering women activists. Those who attended shared the experience of how they became trade unionists and what this has meant to them at difficult times in their lives. Everyone involved felt inspired to express themselves and to move forward to bring more women into this positive empowering environment. I am really pleased that this afternoon's session is very similar to the one we did at the equalities event and I really urge everyone to participate. We will all get a lot from it.

Also as part of the Liverpool celebration during Black History Month, the National Race Committee hosted an event to celebrate equality and to condemn the injustice of inequality. It was a fantastic event for those who were there. We opened it up with an African band, we had a Chinese dragon dance, there were films, live bands from across the UK, and a tour of Liverpool. This event was a glowing advert for what the GMB achieves if it embraces diversity and inclusion and the equalities committees hope that all such events will become a major part of the GMB calendar in future years.

President, Congress, the thing for this year's Congress is equality and justice and I hope that everyone here will learn about some issues that they may not have considered otherwise. One of the principles upon which this Movement is built and without which it could not survive is that we should put aside our own interests and think of others. Congress, the more people we bring into our considerations the more optimistic we can be for the future of our union. The equalities committees are meeting this challenge. I invite you to take your part.

On another note, I have been asked to do an interview with the Guardian at 6 o'clock on specific issues that affect millions of women, for those women who have to leave their fulltime employment for caring responsibilities and are unable to continue with fulltime employment because the employer will not offer flexibility. I am looking for an individual who has been directly affected and who would agree to be part of this interview. I am just at the front, so if anybody could come forward I would be really grateful. On that note, I move my report. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now move to page 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44 and 45? Congress agrees to accept? (*Agreed*) Thank you.

*(The Equalities Report was adopted)*

*(The Race Report was adopted)*

#### **ADDRESS BY TREVOR PHILLIPS, CHAIR, COMMISSION FOR RACIAL EQUALITY**

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, it gives me great pleasure to welcome Trevor Phillips to our Congress.

I think, Trevor, it is the first time; as a journalist you may have been here at some time or other. Trevor has been chair of the CRE since 2003, between 1978 and 1980 he was President of the National Union of Students before going into broadcasting where he started as a researcher, became a producer, and then in 1992 became Head of Current Affairs for London Weekend Television, from 1987 to 2000 was variously the editor or presenter of the London Programme, won the Royal Television Society Award in 1988 and 1993, voluntarily at present a board member of the Almeida Theatre, Islington, the Bernie Grant (great friend of the GMB) Centre at Tottenham, and the Sickle-Cell Society, and between 1993 and 1998 was chair of the Runnymede Trust. Trevor, please address Congress.

BRO. TREVOR PHILLIPS (Chair, Commission for Racial Equality): President, Congress, thank you very much. It is a great privilege to be here at all and an honour to be asked to address you, not just because I am chair of the Commission for Race & Equality but, frankly, because I can now report back to Billy Hayes, who is the General Secretary of my union, the CWU, that the GMB has had the fraternal discipline to give the floor to a rank-and-file member of the CWU before it gave it to the Gen. Sec. I know from my dad, who was an NUR man and a Post Office worker, what a serious privilege this is so let me try and use it briefly and efficiently.

It is a pleasure to be on this stage today and, as you referred to, I came here many times in my student days. I remember then, of course, I had a little bit more hair, had some hair, I carried a little less weight, and I wore even bigger glasses, but although the appearance has changed I have to say that the message has not and should not change.

In the year of the CRE's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary the message is that trade unions are a vital lynchpin in the struggle to defeat racism. We cannot do this without you. So, first, let me say thank you to all the GMB members and officials who worked so hard in the run-up to the local elections to defeat the British National Party. Yes, they made gains. Yes, there are far too many of them in council chambers around the country. Yes, we need to attack their lies and their aggression.

Also, let us give credit where credit is due. They made little headway in the Midlands, in Inner London, or in the North, and even where they benefited from the oxygen of publicity, in places like Barking, their share of the vote actually declined from where it was last year. In particular, I would like to point to the brilliant work done in Oldham led by Phil Woolas, your own former Communications Director who is now the minister responsible for race equality. In Oldham the BNP hope to win seats. A campaign led by Phil, Michael Meacher, the local council, the trade unions, and supported by our own local arm, Oldham Race

Equality Partnership, sent the racists packing. In Oldham their swaggering so-called leader, Nick Griffin, became "Nicky No Seats".

The lesson from all this could not be clearer. We cannot afford to be in denial over the threat of a right. We cannot hope that they will go away by themselves. They did not go away in France, Germany, or the Netherlands, and that is why my first duty here is to thank you all for what you have done to keep this threat in the minds of voters. We depend on you to help us and you have not let us down.

Second, may I say it is a pleasure to be speaking on the same platform this week as my CRE Commission colleague, Gloria Mills. Gloria, as well as being reappointed to the Commission for a second term, has recently made history again by becoming the first black woman to be President of the TUC. This is an extraordinary event in Europe and where, for example, in France they have only just seen their first non-white newscaster. It is one more sign that the British Trades Union Movement, when it wants to, can lead the world.

I want to congratulate the GMB specifically on winning £400,000 from the union modernisation fund for the specific purpose of addressing diversity. The fact is, colleagues, we are running out of white men in the workplace. The future is diverse and dealing with that diversity is going to take leadership. In the age of globalisation that leadership from trade unions could not be more important.

In the past few weeks the impact of change on our communities has been all over the news. The advent of over 300,000 workers from Eastern Europe could be the signal for further exploitation of all workers. It could mean the driving down of wages across the board. It could lead to neglect of training for British born workers who should be filling the high-skilled jobs of the future and it could be the start of a resurgence of anti-immigrant bigotry.

We have seen already this year an attempt by Wal-Mart to return to the practices of the past. I want to say how pleased we are that we have been able to work with you in terms of dealing with the kind of practices that we have seen Wal-Mart trying to introduce at Asda, calling out the names of workers who sound like they might be foreign. We know where that leads. Let me say this. We endorse the tough stance taken on this by the GMB and by Paul Kenny, including leading to industrial action. We cannot and must not go back to the days of intimidation, threats, and racial and ethnic division. So, Paul, when you join battle with the employers on this, the CRE will not be behind you, we want to be in the front line with you.

The reason is we have seen all of this before. In the 1950s, the British Government actively encouraged immigration to meet severe labour

shortages. After the Second World War people from Africa, the West Indies, and the Indian subcontinent came to Britain to help with the task of post-War reconstruction. As late as 1956, six years after my own family came here, there were 174,000 unfilled vacancies in sectors such as engineering, transport, textiles, construction, agriculture, and of course the newly established National Health Service.

The migrants came as British subjects from territories that were still mostly colonies and they were key to the reconstruction of all these sectors, but it was natural. Many, including my own father, had fought in the War, spoke English, and were willing to work for low pay. But like all migrants to Britain throughout the ages they also had to contend with resentment, sometimes with violence against foreigners, alien hoards endangering local custom and culture. They faced exclusion from public places, pubs and clubs, they faced discrimination by landlords when they tried to rent accommodation. We all know of the signs in the windows of houses, “no blacks, no Irish, no dogs”. Such a public display of outright racism is almost unheard of in today’s society because strong anti-discrimination laws, fought for by progressives, by trade unionists, have led to the near disappearance of the commonplace racist practices that disfigured our society for so long; but let us not imagine that we have vanquished prejudice.

The CRE is the body with the statutory power to enforce the law but we cannot do that without help. Trade unionists are our eyes and ears in the workplace. We rely on you to make sure that employers are operating within both the spirit and the letter of the law just as you have always done, and where our partnership can make an example of those employers let us not hesitate to do so. We do not want to take legal action. Frankly, that just means more money for lawyers, which cannot be a good thing. We prefer people to do the right thing but we will not hesitate to take that action.

Over the past year or so the Commission has undertaken over 400 compliance actions against public sector organisations who try to get around the 2000 Amendment Act, including several local authorities and four government departments. I regret to say that there is probably more to come. We have won settlements against private sector employers totalling over a million last year and this year our latest large settlement in an individual case exceeded £1.5m. This is not to rack up scores but the point here is that we want to see an end to discrimination and increase equality, and we want people to help us in achieving those ends because it is right, because it is moral, and because it is good for business. If that is not enough for them, we want them to do the right thing because we are going to make it cost them dearly.

I cannot stress how urgently we need change. It

is still the case that whatever class you belong to race is an obstacle by itself. Ethnic minorities earn up to £7,000 a year less than white people and their progression up the career ladder is still slower. It is for these reasons that the Government’s ethnic minority employment taskforce has set a national target that within a decade nobody should be disadvantaged at work because of their ethnicity. Right now we are way off the target. So, getting race equality right is going to become ever more important in the future. Society is going to become increasingly multi-ethnic, and it will become more so over the next two generations, as will the labour market. Ethnic minorities are predicted to account for half the growth in the labour market over the next 10 years. Many of those people from ethnic minority communities are home-grown but some will be new migrants. Today’s migrants are no longer dark-skinned people who speak English, share a legacy of imperial culture, they come from Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Horn of Africa, some may look more like those who are here already, they may not speak English, and they may not worship a Christian god.

Research shows the majority of people in this country actually welcome this new wave of immigration, no matter what you might read in the Daily Mail, but for many work is the principal place where they come into contact with people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. We all know that tensions can and do arise and these changes are going to present new challenges for employers, for trade unions, and staff.

Trade unions can play a crucial role in negotiating those challenges. In my parents’ time it was trade unions that stood between them and exploitation, but they had to join trade unions first. So throughout our joint TUC-CRE partnership, under the leadership of Gloria Mills, we pledge to do all we can to aid you in organising these new workers, bringing them into the light, protecting them from the sort of fate that befell the Chinese cockle pickers just up the coast from here, or the fate that faces people working in the twilight zone of the catering industry, or the parts of public service that no one wants to notice.

Finally, I hope that you will help us with another less spoken of aspect of this challenge. In recent weeks the cost of teenage gang violence has become tragically evident. The death principally by knife crime of young people has shocked our society. Let me say publicly what people I think are reluctant to say but may have been in many minds. These young people, many of them coming from poor and disadvantaged backgrounds, were not all in these situations because they were victims of poverty. Many band together to protect themselves from attack, often by those from another gang of people who have a different heritage, a different culture, a

different colour. This is the grim truth that many of our communities still feel marginalised, many are fearful, many are excluded, and many turn on other minority communities.

Here again I believe that trade unions have a very special role. In my own community it was through participation in this Movement that my parents and their friends met people who were not like themselves. It was from this Movement that they learnt to trust, that taught them to trust across the barriers of colour and faith. It was this Movement that gave them the chance to be trusted themselves. The Trades Union Movement taught us that we have more in common than separates us and this, after all, is the labour movement's historic role, to remind us that we are stronger together than we are apart, and never has this message been needed more, especially by our young people. Together we can create an integrated society where difference does not have to mean division, a state where everyone has the chance to participate in making the decisions that count, a country where your origins do not determine your destiny.

So, please, let me ask you never to underestimate the critical role that you play not just in the workplace but in our communities in promoting equality and social justice. Once again, I say thank you for all that you are doing to challenge discrimination, to change attitudes, to make sure that everyone has a chance to achieve their full potential. We talk a lot these days about flying the flag. Let us fly the flag for the people out there in Germany and beyond that. I know that you will continue to fly the flag for equality for the next 30 years, and beyond. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Trevor, thank you for addressing our Congress and to show our appreciation would you like to accept a gift from this Congress; one is pleasure, one is for reading, and one is for looking at, all made by our members. Here are some glasses made by our members in the region, and they are wonderful. There is your reading material, and there is your drinking material while you are doing that, made by our members.

*(Presentation made amidst applause)*

## **EMPLOYMENT POLICY: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

### **CHARTER FOR WOMEN**

#### **MOTION 66**

This Congress recognises that in real terms, and despite the raft of legislation, women's situation in the workplace, in society and in the labour movement is much the same as it was 30 years ago.

Congress also notes that the differential in women and men's pay has remained fairly constant, and many women pensioners are struggling due to pension inequality.

The Charter for Women is a platform of demands for women that the labour movement can adopt and work towards which once attained will improve standards for all working people. Most of the major affiliates to the TUC are already signed up to the campaign.

Congress therefore agrees to:

- Sign up to the Charter forthwith
- Instruct the CEC to nominate a woman to sit on the National Steering Group to ensure the views of GMB members are taken into account

LONDON NORTH WEST BRANCH

*London Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. T. VAN-GELDEREN (London): The Charter for Women was launched at a fringe meeting at the TUC Women's Conference in March 2003. Its aim is to connect the struggle against women's oppression in society, at work, and in the labour movement. It covers a number of issues which I will just touch on now, a lot of which are already GMB policy or things that we have been fighting for.

In society it is to highlight the feminisation of poverty and to campaign to reverse cuts in welfare state and public services, to campaign for greater support for lone mothers, carers, and women fleeing domestic violence, improve access and rights to abortion, and women pensioner policy by increasing the state pension in line with average earnings.

At work it is to campaign to reduce the gender pay gap and highlight its causes, to ensure that unions fight more equal opportunity claims, to campaign to raise the level of the National Minimum Wage to at least half and rising to at least two-thirds of male median earnings, demand full rights for part-time workers, campaign for affordable childcare, including pre, after school, and holiday provision, improve maternity leave and pay, including paternity leave. In the labour movement it is to tackle the under-representation of women in the labour and Trades Union Movement structures, to maintain and extend women's committees, and so on. These just touch upon some of the demands within the charter. Women constitute half the working population in Britain and yet the gap between men and women's earnings is widening.

I have read out a lot of things here and it is like déjà vu to me. The déjà vu goes back over 30 years. I was involved, and I think there are people here who are probably old enough perhaps to remember and

have vague memories of NJACWER (the National Joint Action Campaign for Women's Equal Rights). It was quite a high-profile campaign at the time and involved many Labour MPs and so on, but the demands, I am sorry to say, have not really changed over 30 years. We do need to get together and start working to make sure that we actually begin campaigning to make sure these things happen.

Women over 21 have had the right to vote since 1928 and yet only 20% of local authority councillors are women, 18% of all MPs, and 25 MEPs are women. You know the statistics. I have another statistic, that one in 10 women experience domestic violence each year, and so on. Women's membership of trade unions is rising and it is rising in the GMB. However, women are not necessarily represented in proportion to their numbers within the trade union structures. The position for black women is even worse.

Women have always fought for their long-denied rights and we must do so again. It is hoped that this charter will motivate a new generation of women activists and revitalise the fight for women's liberation. We want to make this a campaigning programme. This charter has already been adopted by a whole number of trade unions and women's organisations. Do not hiss at some of them, please. In alphabetical order they are: Amicus, Aslef, AUT, FBU, NATFHE, POA, TSSA, UNISON, National Assembly of Women, and STUC Women's Rights Committee. That is just a few.

We are asking that we do the same and send a representative along to the steering committee. It is only £50 so it is not going to break the bank. The Charter for Women contains broad principles that this union would already say that they support. Now we want to start implementing those policies so that it becomes clear that even with the raft of available legislation women are still nowhere achieving equality and the aspirations laid down in most unions' equality policies.

I am asking you to support this resolution, to support affiliation to the Charter, and to send someone along from the GMB to the steering committee. I move.

BRO. J. COOTE (London): I am doing a double act, I think, with my colleague, Tess, but proudly seconding Motion 66.

I only found out about this Charter this weekend. I have to say that it is probably one of the best written charters focusing on women's issues ever but, as usual, I would like to focus on just a few parts. As you know from my speeches earlier, I come *from* an FE background. It is only just recently that I have left the FE environment and one of the worst things I discovered before I left and actually was the cause of me leaving was they tried to change the maternity policy without negotiating with the unions. They tried to introduce a repayment clause for women on

maternity leave who did not return within three months. Congress, that is disgusting. Signing up to this Charter will mean that the GMB will commit itself to fighting injustices just like that. Congress, I support.

## **EQUAL PAY**

### **COMPOSITE MOTION 5**

*(Covering Motions 67 and 68)*

#### **67 – Equal Pay (Northern Region)**

#### **68 – Equal Pay (London Region)**

The GMB are successfully continuing to campaign for equal pay in the public sector, some 30 years after legislation on equal pay.

The private sector however remains a huge area of inequality. Congress calls on the CEC to campaign for equal pay legislation to be implemented in the private sector.

This Congress notes the potential that currently exists to exploit the equal pay for work of equal value legislation.

Congress therefore calls on the NEC to ensure that an in depth investigation with a view to understanding the full potential of this legislation takes place. The aim would be to enact practical steps to pursue equal pay for work of equal value cases.

*(Carried)*

SIS. E. JEFFREY (Northern): Congress, it is a disgrace that more than 30 years after equal pay legislation was enacted in the UK we are still having to campaign for equal pay to be implemented. There have been massive strides forward in the public sector where through negotiation and the courts we have managed to get good resolution for our members.

It is the case that we have reached agreement with the majority of local authorities, established equal pay, security of employment, and compensation for past services. However, a firm of "no win no fee" solicitors has not only interfered with this process but challenged our right to negotiate collectively on behalf of our members through an employment tribunal. They have succeeded. Litigation carries no guarantee of success, which we learnt to our cost in Cumbria when we lost a claim on behalf of women care workers and yet this tribunal suggests that we should litigate in all cases. This decision, we believe, is perverse and we will leave no stone unturned to see this decision overturned.

The private sector has been virtually untouched as far as equal pay is concerned with gross

inequalities not being unusual. Once again it is for the trade unions, the GMB, to campaign for equal pay legislation to be implemented in the private sector. In the year 2006 it is embarrassing for me to stand here and say that I am calling on Congress to campaign for equal pay, but that is the reality of the situation. We must address this issue so that at future congresses we do not have to revisit an issue that should have been dealt with years ago.

There is potential to exploit the equal pay for work of equal value legislation. We must deal with this. It is far easier to exploit existing legislation than to get new legislation passed. Northern Region therefore asks Congress to call upon the CEC to investigate fully the legislation that already exists and to look for ways in which to further the cause of equal pay in the private sector. Congress, I move.

BRO. S. MCKENZIE (London): Comrades, the fact that 30 years after the Equal Pay Act women workers are anything up to and sometimes over 30% worse off than male workers speaks volumes about the continuing discrimination inherent in an economy and a society based on theft, dishonesty, and exploitation. Left to resolve the problems of discrimination in isolation that system, parliament and the legal system, is not going to achieve a great deal, but effective trade union organisation, acting audaciously, can use legislation at its disposal to alter dramatically the situation.

We have on the statute books the equal pay for work of equal value legislation, which I understand originated from Europe but has already been used by many unions to secure hundreds of millions of pounds in upgrading and back pay for their members. The effects have been dramatic. Comrades, I am going to give an example and you may think I am lying and giving you a bit of bull, but I implore you to check on this. I am telling the absolute truth.

A certain person I know, who is a full-timer in UNISON and I have known him for years, won a case for the Cumbrian nurses in the Cumbrian Health Authority, the value was £340m in back pay and upgrading for 1,600 women members. The branch concerned, unfortunately a UNISON branch, not a GMB branch, trebled in the time that that case was going on, or almost trebled, from 2,800 members to 7,300 members.

There is a number of examples that we could go on about. The PCS, ourselves, UNISON, have all taken out cases and won huge amounts of money for their women members by using this legislation. As far as I can see the potential that exists, if we exploit it right, could actually be the making or breaking of this union on this issue alone but, as we have heard from comrades and the sister from Newcastle, things can go wrong. You cannot rely on the law. You cannot rely on the legal advice you get sometimes. You cannot rely on the way people at tribunals are

going to interpret things no matter how well you present them. It is an horrific legal minefield.

We really do need an in-depth investigation into this. If we get it right, I think far more importantly than even the making or breaking of our new reborn union is the question of millions of women out there who week in, week out, are being underpaid and discriminated against and we have a weapon that we can use to put an end to that. I think we must have an in-depth investigation and if we find that we can use this in whatever way, shape, manner, or form, to end that discrimination we must do so. Please support.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. The CEC is both supporting Motion 66 and Composite 5, with qualifications. I now call upon Mary Hutchinson to give those qualifications on behalf of the CEC.

SIS. M. HUTCHINSON (CEC, Clothing & Textile): The CEC supports Motion 66 and Composite 5 but with the following qualifications.

Dealing first with Motion 66, the CEC supports signing the charter but it may not be in our power simply to nominate a representative to the national steering group. Further investigation into its constitution and nomination process is needed. We propose referring the matter to NERA for approval and nomination, if necessary.

Moving to Composite 5, it is existing policy to lobby for mandatory equal pay audits and equality impact assessment for all employers in both the public and private sectors. We have established with GMB solicitors an Equal Pay Unit to pursue claims in the public sector. Equal pay with private sector employers is increasingly on the bargaining agenda. This has to be addressed so as to avoid instances where settling substantial equal pay claims results in redundancies or worse, business closures. It would, therefore, be appropriate to develop a clear strategy on how we address this issue. We assume that the reference to NEC in the motion text should in fact be CEC. Equal value cases are one aspect of the equal pay legislation.

GMB policy is to campaign for a general improvement to the legislation. Equal value claims are particularly complex and slow. Legislative changes regarding the procedural rules for handling equal value claims came into force in October 2004. Before undertaking an in-depth investigation into this narrow area of equal pay a general review of our handling of equal pay claims, our progress to date, and the obstacles encountered may be appropriate. As part of the discrimination law review, the DTI are seeking informal views regarding group litigation and the possibility of allowing trade unions and others to bring representative actions. This could have a significant beneficial impact on our ability to pursue equal pay cases.

Congress, please support Motion 66 and Composite 5 with these qualifications.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mary. Does London Region accept the qualification? *(Agreed)* Thank you. Does Northern Region accept the qualification? Somebody's hand is up.

BRO. P. PERRY (Lancashire): It is just a point that I want to raise while we are on equalities.

THE PRESIDENT: No.

BRO. PERRY: No, I am not making speeches just a point of order.

PRESIDENT: No, no. Hang on, wait until I finish asking Northern whether they are accepting because I did start it. Are you accepting the qualification? *(Agreed)* Thank you. Okay, carry on.

BRO. PERRY: Sorry about that, Mary. It is just a point I want to make about equality. I think we should treat all delegates here with equal opportunity. I think it would be advisable if we get a microphone put on the base floor for people that have a disability because today quite a lot of people have struggled up this gantry to get to the rostrum. I think to save such indignity we should have a mike on the bottom floor. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I will put in that request.

*(Motion 66 was carried)*

*(Composite 5 was carried)*

## **SOCIAL POLICY: GENERAL**

### **GAY ASYLUM SEEKERS**

#### **MOTION 233**

Congress calls upon Government to eradicate discrimination and homophobia against gay asylum seekers.

At present gay people seeking asylum have to prove that they are homosexual, this has to be done to the appeals panel and more often than not they are not believed.

This can result in the individual being deported to their own country such as Uganda, Jamaica or Saudi Arabia where they are beaten, imprisoned or killed.

Congress please support.

177 TYLDESLEY BRANCH  
Lancashire Region

*(Carried)*

SIS. E. GREENWOOD (Lancashire): Chair, comrades, Moses is a gay asylum seeker. He fled Uganda in May 2004. According to law, religion, and culture in Uganda homosexuality is strongly criminalised. The official maximum penalty is life imprisonment. The president of Uganda once proposed to arrest all homosexuals and imprison them. Moses lived in secret for many many years as a young gay man but the pressure from his family forced him into an arranged marriage. After 13 months of marriage Moses separated but after a few weeks his wife came back and caught him with his long-time partner. She went to the police and had him arrested. Moses was sexually abused for seven days by the security forces but he actually managed to escape and came to the UK where he applied for asylum straightaway. At his hearing the adjudicator refused Moses asylum saying she finds it hard to believe that in a country where homosexuality is against the law Moses was a subject of sexual abuse. She did not believe he was gay. Of course Moses now is not able to go back into the closet and if he was forced to return to Uganda the police have evidence of his homosexuality because his father-in-law is a police officer and likely to use his influence to get Moses imprisoned on his return.

Uganda is not the only country where gays live in fear. Jamaica, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Egypt, and Malaysia, etc. etc., are just a few of the countries where homosexuality is outlawed. Last year in Iran two gay teenagers were beaten repeatedly before they were hanged. These incidents are just examples of why the Home Office needs to update its stance on gay asylum seekers. It is absolutely appalling that the Home Office has no specific guidelines to deal with LGBT issues on asylum. The notion that gay people can simply return to their home countries and be discreet, as is often requested of them, is nothing short of homophobic. No British citizen could be expected to live under the same conditions so why should we allow this to happen to asylum seekers that are prejudiced against already because of their sexuality? Please support this motion. I move.

SIS. A. MURPHY (Lancashire): Gay asylum seekers who have been beaten up, arrested, tortured, jailed, raped, and threatened with death, are being deported back to their country of origin on the orders of the Home Office. The Home Secretary refuses to give them asylum. He is sending them back. It is an outrageous violation of Britain's responsibility under international human rights law. Despite evidence of severe homophobic persecution, immigration appeal tribunals are dismissing many applications by genuine gay refugees. The adjudicators say gay people will not be at risk of victimisation in violently homophobic countries like Jamaica, Iran, Algeria, and Zimbabwe, if they hide their identity, avoid effeminate mannerisms, and either never have sex or have sex with discretion.

A 29-year old gay Iranian was ordered by the Home Office to be deported back to Iran, despite the fact that he was at risk of public execution by stoning or beheading under the fundamentalist regime's savage anti-gay laws. Terrified of the fate that awaited him, Israfil Shiri decided to make sure he would not die at the hands of the Ayatollahs. An inquest in Manchester heard how Shiri walked into the offices of Refugee Action last year, doused himself in petrol and burned himself alive in preference to being deported back to Iran. Israfil Shiri fled Iran when the authorities there discovered he was gay, fearing arrest and execution. He fled to Britain in 2001 and claimed asylum.

At his asylum hearing the adjudicator turned down his application citing lack of evidence. Unable to find a lawyer willing to represent him or to produce evidence on the persecution of gay people in Iran, he lost his appeal. Within days the national asylum Support Service ordered his eviction from the asylum hostel where he had been housed, turning him out in the street. Simultaneously, the Government cut off his benefits and banned from working Shiri ended up homeless and destitute. Like many other asylum seekers he was forced to sleep on the streets and scrounge discarded food from rubbish bins. His health deteriorated rapidly but having no address he could not register with a GP.

In a crisis situation for asylum seekers because of the cuts in legal aid budget, many gay law firms are doing very few legal aid asylum cases. Gay refugees are forced to turn to Home Office nominated solicitors who have no expertise in gay cases and no knowledge of the specialist evidence needed to win asylum claims. For Shiri and all gay asylum seekers' sakes I urge you to support this motion. Thank you.

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

BRO. J. STOKES: Speaking as an individual, while I agree that the country should take in asylum seekers I do think Congress should not support this motion. The current law states asylum seekers should go to a first safe country of refuge. If you are coming from Iraq, Iran, or Uganda, Britain is not your first safe country. If you are gay you should not have to prove you are gay once here, but they should go to their first safe country. This is what is causing problems in this country with the rise of the BNP. This is why people are turning to the BNP, because of liberals allowing these people into the country. I urge Congress not to support this motion. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I will now put 233 to the vote. Edna?

SIS. E. GREENWOOD (Lancashire): Congress, I am

asking you to support this motion and I strongly object to that person over there calling asylum seekers "these people". *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Edna. Can I now move to the vote for 233?

*(Motion 233 was carried)*

## **INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: FOOD & LEISURE**

### **MIGRANT WORKERS**

#### **MOTION 157**

Congress is concerned that some employers are using the "FEAR OF VICTIMISATION" of migrant workers not to issue legal contracts of employment. This is a major concern for the GMB, and is an obstacle when trying to recruit members among ethnic minorities and migrant workers. This Conference calls on the GMB National Union to work on the following measures to overcome this problem and highlight their plight.

- 1) To make the public aware of this situation, which is opposed to the basic principles of democracy, through meetings and union campaigns.
- 2) Put pressure on Food and Leisure sector employers to facilitate trade union access to workplaces.
- 3) Force employers to give their employees written individual guarantees that they will not be victimised for joining a trade union
- 4) Increase the number of GMB Union representatives dedicated to investigating different forms of abuse within the sector, and take legal re-address when necessary and work via GMB Race Committees in protecting workers interests at the workplace level.
- 5) Ensure a level of contact with the Home Office when addressing some work permit issues and ensure the new influx of migrant workers from Eastern EEC countries are advised of their rights at work and to join a trade union.
- 6) Work with GMB Learning Reps, TUC and Skills Councils to promote training needs.

This will go some way to protecting new workers and will ensure there is no two tiered Terms and Conditions in the service industry, including the Hospitality sector.

LONDON HOTELS & CATERING BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

THE PRESIDENT: Come along, Raj. I will see you Thursday! I know you can run quicker than that.

BRO. R. GILL (London): Thanks, Mary. President, comrades, I think after Trevor Phillips' speech on race and immigration this should be a lot easier. Unlike the asylum seekers for which the union is fairly confident there will be a positive view in terms of their human rights, most of the recent migration into this country from European countries, Poland, Lithuania, Turkey, Spain, South Africa, is legal migration.

The first paragraph of this motion says: "Congress is concerned that some employers are using 'FEAR OF VICTIMISATION' of migrant workers not to issue legal contracts of employment." That is the opening paragraph of the motion. Let me say this. Migrant workers in the UK, I believe, represent between 6-8% of the workforce and over half of these workers are part-timers. When a survey was done by the Home Office 40% said they were not aware of their employment rights or their right to join a trade union. I think, comrades, we have a problem in terms of trying to get these workers organised. Within the hotel and catering hospitality sectors there is only 5% union density.

Let me give you an example of the kind of problems faced. There was a man from Thailand in Bristol who was paid £150 for 60 hours. Is that fair? A Ukrainian couple working in a London restaurant received no holiday pay for four years. Portuguese and Polish workers were forced to sleep in their cars as a certain hotel in High Wycombe did not afford them overnight accommodation. Polish workers and Indian workers are in a dispute, in a struggle, because they have joined the trade union. The company I am talking about that Paul Kenny has touched on is the American Dry Cleaning Company. Eighty-five workers work there and most of them have joined the trade union. The company is now, because they are mostly Polish and Indian and English is their second language, victimising two GMB activists, Adil and Bala, and this is the subject of a tribunal.

I think we rattled the company in so far as we went out there on 31<sup>st</sup> May and stood outside the factory with our banners supporting these workers. I give due credit to our organisers, such as Rob Kelsall and Warren Kenny, and others, for doing that. I would just like to say that we are having a demonstration outside the factory at 9 o'clock on 20<sup>th</sup> June which I would like the Congress and colleagues to support. Thank you. I move.

BRO. H. SMITH (London): Congress, President, I open my reference to a quote on page 103, the era of freedom, the birth of a new unionism. The man or woman who honestly toils no matter in what capacity is of the most vital concern to the community and

those who do not like it had better prepare at once their best weapons to meet us. A major flaw with European transitional workers, as I refer to them, is the slave trade mentality adopted by bogus agency operatives who fail to inform the migrant workers of their rights for trade union support and representation. I believe the GMB must take steps to bring these agencies to right so that we can support and represent these lawful workers. I second the motion. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Anyone wish to speak in this debate? I see a hand up. Come down, then. Anyone else?

SIS. T. VAN-GELDEREN (London): President, Congress, I am in support of this resolution but I just wanted to draw your attention to the last clause in relation to training. I was going to say something under the further education one but I will link it to this because the same problems arise in terms of funding.

For quite a while now those who need English, speakers of other languages, and what is known as ESL have had to abide by this three-year rule of residency which, to be honest, a number of providers have managed to get round. As part of the cuts in funding generally for adult education that is ending, which means that the workers we are going to represent are going to have real problems in getting ESL training before they have been here three years. Think about that, Congress, this is people who are doing services for us where they will need English. Health and safety will be a really serious issue without that type of ESL education. We need ESL training. When we look at this resolution and come to implement it, I think we need to work with the providers and the TUC, and the Trades Union Movement as a whole, to see how we can overcome this very serious problem.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. The CEC is supporting. Can I put it to the vote?

*(Motion 157 was carried)*

## **UNION ORGANISATION: GENERAL**

### **EQUALITY AND SELF-ORGANISATION**

#### **COMPOSITE MOTION 3**

*(Covering Motions 35 and 36)*

#### **35 – Equality and Self Organisation (London Region)**

#### **36 – LGBT Equality (Lancashire Region)**

This Annual Congress of the GMB welcomes the changes in legislation introduced by the Labour Government since 1997, providing legal protection and equal rights for lesbian, gay,

bisexual and trans (LGBT) members of the GMB. However, Congress recognises that many LGBT members still feel isolated in the workplace and are unable to tackle the discrimination they face.

This Congress notes the success of the TUC LGBT Committee and how other unions organise around equality issues with self organised groups.

This GMB Congress further calls on the Central Executive Committee to review with the women, black and disabled members how their equality issues are progressed in the GMB and report back to Congress 2007 with any recommendations for further rule changes.

*(Referred)*

BRO. J. TENNISON (London): I move Composite Motion 3 on Equality and Self-Organisation. I think the text of the motion is fairly self-explanatory. I do not think we are really asking for a great deal from the CEC in terms of wanting a review alongside women, black and disabled members as to how equality issues have progressed in the GMB and to report back to Congress next year with any recommendations for further rule changes. I appreciate that some of these matters are going to be dealt with later on in the afternoon in terms of the Equalities Report but, at the same time, I would strongly urged all branches to support this motion.

*(The Motion was formally seconded)*

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

BRO. J. COOTE (London): I speak in favour of this motion. I am a little bit disappointed about the mix-up between Lancashire and London Regions as which one was moving and seconding this motion. I thought it would be quite prudent of myself as the secretary of the London Region GMB *Shout Group* to say a few words. GMB *Shout* first started two years ago in London. We were inspired by the work of David Lascelles, who I would like to congratulate on his civil partnership, who is obviously known to many people here today.

However, we are concerned about the lack of progress that LGBT members have experienced in the GMB. We found ourselves taking action by ourselves. We started off with just five members in London, mainly from the trade union side and also from the public sector. Congress, today we now have more than 200 people in our network – 200, and that is in every single region! Even the regions when quizzed actually do not realise that they have lesbian, gay,

bisexual and transgender people working within their organisations. Here we are. We have achieved so much in a short period of time. We have responded to every Government consultation on LGBT issues and we have also put forward a whole load of correspondence and made briefings available to people.

This composite motion is asking for a comprehensive review of the equalities bodies. Please support the motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Samanda Caveney to speak on behalf of the CEC.

SIS. S. CAVENEY (CEC, Public Services): The CEC is asking the movers to refer Composite 3 for the reasons that I will explain. Congress, we welcome the developments in the discrimination and equalities field in addition to the established strands of race, sex and disability discrimination. We now have legislation outlawing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, religion and belief and, come October, there will also be protection against age discrimination.

We have been successful in placing equality and diversity firmly on the workplace agenda. This has made a positive difference to many members. However, our work is far from done. The equalities landscape has changed enormously since our equality structures were established. We must ensure that they remain appropriate and effective in meeting the challenge of securing equality of opportunity and treatment for all of our members.

Regions have designated officers for equal rights and race and two regions have officers designated for LGBT issues. The allocation and combination of duties depends on regional organisation and deployment of officers. It is important that sufficient resources are dedicated to diversity and equality issues within the GMB, and that there is a clear link with the workplace organising agenda. Likewise, officers must have specific duties clearly allocated.

Composite 3 calls for an inclusive review encompassing how LGBT, women's, black and minority ethnic and disabled members' issues are progressed within the Union. The composite, rightly, points to the need for self-organisation and support for LGBT members.

The TUC's and other models are not necessarily the best models to follow.

Congress, we are asking for referral to ask for a comprehensive review of all of our equality structures to take place with consideration of all issues. If not referred, we ask you to oppose Composite 3.

THE PRESIDENT: Is London Region prepared to refer?

BRO. E. BLISSETT (London): Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: Does Congress agree?

*(Composite Motion 3 was referred)*

## **RULE AMENDMENTS**

### **RULE 10 CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

#### **RULE AMENDMENT 283**

Insert new Clause:

“20 The Central Executive Council shall create a National forum for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) members to advise the Central Executive on matters relating to LGBT members, and to act as a contact and support for LGBT members of the GMB. There shall be one LGBT representative of such a forum from each of the GMB Regions.”

WESTMINSTER TUPS BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Lost)*

### **RULE 20 REGIONS AND THEIR MANAGEMENT**

#### **RULE AMENDMENT 357**

Insert New Clause

“14 The Regional Council shall create a forum for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) members at Regional level to advise the Regional Executive on matters relating to LGBT members, and to act as a contact and support for LGBT members of the GMB in the Region. Each Region shall be able to send one LGBT representative to the GMB National Forum.”

WESTMINSTER TUPS BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Lost)*

### **RULE 21 RESERVED SEATS ON REGIONAL COUNCILS**

#### **RULE AMENDMENT 359**

Insert: New Clause:

“5 One Regional Delegate shall be elected to a seat on the Regional Council from the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender forum.”

WESTMINSTER TUPS BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Lost)*

THE PRESIDENT: London Region will be moving and seconding the rule amendments to Rules 10, 20 and 21.

BRO. J. TENNISON (London): I am moving the three rule amendments which are before Congress now.

First of all, I would like to thank, on behalf of the LGBT *Shout* Group, the help and support given by both Ed Blissett and his predecessor, Paul Kenny, who helped to set the group up in the first place. Much help and support has come from them, so thank you for that.

I would like to start by describing a little bit of the activity of the group, really, to put the issue into context before I get on to the reasons for amending the rules. The *Shout* group has now got a national forum and operates a national helpline and email address. There is an active network in the London and Southern Regions. Actually, not a week goes by without the helpline being contacted by GMB members. Activities take place on a regular basis at events which recruit members to the GMB. I think there is a real need for a forum amongst our lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members who suffer discrimination both at work and, on occasions, violence at work, as well as in the community.

The rule changes ask for a reflection in the Rule Book of the work that is being done to help members to take new work forward.

Looking at rule amendment 283, it says: “The Central Executive Council shall create a National forum for LGBT members”. Really, we are asking to move forward to having a seat on the Central Executive to be able to advise and help to support the CEC in dealing with matters raised by LGBT members.

Similarly with rule amendment 357, we are asking for a regional reflection of what is beginning to happen already in relation to LGBT members, in the sense that we already have a forum and this will enshrine it in the Rule Book. I think this would be a significant step forward for the Union. A similar position relates to rule amendment 359.

I think the most important factor is that here we have a group of members who are getting out *there* and getting on with it. To amend the rules to reflect the current situation would be a big step forward for the Union in supporting who are already undertaking activities. I urge you to support all three rule amendments.

BRO. J. COOTE (London): I would like to clarify that myself and the previous speaker are speaking without the support of our Region, which is a great disappointment.

THE PRESIDENT: Let me clarify the position. When the mover spoke, he did not say that he was speaking without the support of his Region and I need the position clarified. Is that correct, mover?

BRO. TENNISON (London): Yes.

BRO. J. COOTE: As the mover was saying, Congress, we have come a long way in a very short space of time. I

was caught on the hop earlier because I was not intending to get involved with Composite no. 3, so some of my speech has been stolen. Actually, in helping your thinking on these three rule amendments, I want you to focus on what Paul Kenny said earlier. He wants to recruit more activists in our Union in order for it to grow. He wants us to be bold, to be ourselves and to be the Union. That is us. We are being ourselves. We are being out, we are being proud, we are going out and we are recruiting people to the organisation. We are growing the GMB in every shape and form.

Last year at every single Pride event, without any financial support from the GMB – we did it off our own backs and out of our own pockets – we came back with a fistful of application forms to join the GMB and also people are prepared to take the issues forward.

Trevor Phillips said that you do not see direct racism any more; it is indirect. Congress, we see direct discrimination on the grounds of our sexuality every day. We have set up a national helpline, again, out of our own pockets to help LGBT people. We have had to deal with people who were raped in the chiller of a supermarket in the north of England. We had to give advice to somebody, when outed at work, whose boss told him to fight with the person who challenged him in the car park. He is now being prosecuted by the police. He won the fight, his boss kept him on but he has to go to court because the person who he beat the living shit out of has complained. Please excuse my language.

We are one of the under-represented groups. We are a minority. We have taken the very essence of trade unionism to heart. We act as a collective, we move forward and we do everything to support the GMB. We are proud to be GMB members, but we are just as proud to be out and gay.

In the General Secretary's Report, the LGBT *Shout* Group had no less than eight mentions. This is serious stuff, Congress. What we are asking you to do is to allow us to establish the groups which currently exist into the Rule Book. We are not asking for anything else. The issue of reserved seats is a big issue, and that is a matter for you to decide, but we are asking for no more or no less than what you have done for any other minorities group. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, John. Does anybody else wish to comment? *(No response)* In that case, I call Rehana Azam.

SIS. R. AZAM (National Officer): Colleagues, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC.

The CEC recommends that you oppose rule amendments 283, 357 and 359. A National LGBT Forum has now been re-launched as an advisory body. It is open to regions to decide to establish regional forums as the basis of nominating to the National Forum. Creating a new forum for one good in isolation would be anomalous. There are women's and race reserve seats on the CEC. The logic of reserved seats on regional councils would suggest reserved seats on the CEC, too, but the rule amendment does not ask for this to be extended. All existing equality structures are advisory. A comprehensive review would need to take place before appropriate rule amendments are considered. For this reason, we recommend that you oppose rule amendments 283, 357 and 359.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Rehana. Does the remover want to exercise his right of reply?

BRO. J. TENNISON (London): President, thank you. I apologise for not pointing out at the beginning that I was moving without the support of my region.

THE PRESIDENT: Accepted.

BRO. TENNISON: This is a group of members who are already actively going out and getting involved themselves. That is the reason why I think you should support all three rule amendments. Yes, I accept that, effectively, it is one self-organised group moving forward without the others but, at the same time, I think the most important point is that if there are people actively doing activities, the Union needs to support them straightaway. That is why we are asking you to support these rule amendments today. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: I am now going to put rule amendments 283, 357 and 359 to the vote. The CEC is asking you to oppose all three rule amendments.

*(Rule amendment 283 was lost)*

*(Rule amendment 357 was lost)*

*(Rule amendment 359 was lost)*

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I now move to the CEC Special Report: For Justice and Equality.

## CEC SPECIAL REPORT: FOR JUSTICE AND EQUALITY

### Introduction

GMB continues to champion the way in the fight for justice and equality both for our members and for all vulnerable and disadvantaged members of society. As such, equalities issues continue to form a

central plank of GMB's campaigning, organising and bargaining strategy.

Although a great deal of progress has been made in tackling discrimination at work, it persists in all forms blighting the lives of too many members and their families. Recent reports from the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Women and Work Commission are reminders, if any were needed, that women still face huge disadvantages at work, particularly when they become mothers, and as we know too well, though the gender pay gap has narrowed, it refuses stubbornly to close completely.

Similar situations prevail in relation to the other discrimination strands: unemployment rates among black and minority ethnic people remain disproportionately high; although 1 in 4 people of working age are disabled, only half are in employment as opposed to 80% of the able bodied; gay and lesbian workers continue to be subject to homophobic bullying and harassment; both young and older people face barriers to employment and progression at work.

It is clear from the above that GMB's agenda in promoting equality at work - representing our members who suffer discrimination including where necessary in employment tribunals, ensuring that employers comply with the legislation and encouraging best practice in the workplace - is as crucial as ever.

This special report focuses on two specific areas of GMB's equalities agenda: Equal Pay and Race and Diversity. The CEC believes that these effectively demonstrate the approach the Union needs to take to effectively deliver justice and equality for our members. We must continue to implement effective and targeted strategies, as set out in the section on Equal Pay. Additionally, we must meet the challenge of looking inwards to ensure that our own structures and policies do not inadvertently disadvantage particular groups of our members – the Race and Diversity Project outlined below is a significant step towards meeting that challenge.

### **Equal pay**

There are 4 million more women in work today than there were in 1971. The proportion of women working has risen from 56 per cent to 70 per cent over that time period, while the proportion of men working has fallen from 92 per cent in 1971 to 79 per cent today.

Over the coming decade some 1.3 million new jobs are likely to be created and over one million of these are expected to be taken by women.

The main growth in women's employment since the early 1990s has been among women with young children. For example the proportion of mothers with partners working has risen by 6 percentage points, while the employment rate for lone mothers has risen by 14 percentage points. However, women are less likely to work full-time once they have children and employment rates fall the more children they have.

The recent Women in Work Commission report, *Shaping a fairer future*, documented the persistence of the gender pay gap. In the thirty years since the Equal Pay Act was introduced, the gender pay gap for full-time women has narrowed from 36 per cent to 17 per cent. But the pay gap for part-time women compared to full-time men is more than double this, at 38 per cent.

The Commission highlighted the negative impact of childcare and other responsibilities on women's lifetime earnings capacity. It also identified occupational segregation as one of the key causes of the gender pay gap – women's employment is concentrated in certain occupations and these are undervalued.

The 1.3 million new jobs expected to be created by 2016 are likely to be concentrated in certain occupations: management and the professions, sales and customer services, and personal services – particularly caring jobs. While women are currently underrepresented in management roles and in some professions, they are highly concentrated in Caring, Cashiering, Catering, Cleaning and Clerical – what the Commission report calls the five "C"s which make up traditional "women's jobs".

### **GMB agenda**

As the labour market has become more feminised so has the composition of GMB. Between 1997 and 2006 men dropped from 64 per cent of total GMB membership to 58 per cent while women rose from

36 per cent to 42 per cent. This has been driven by the falling share of GMB membership accounted for by manufacturing and the rising share taken up by Public Services. These shifts in membership composition are also reflected in the fact that grade 2 members now make up 20 per cent of total membership compared with 13 per cent back in 1997.

GMB membership surveys have shown that equal pay is by far the most important item on the equalities bargaining agenda for our members. It is clear from the labour market trends outlined above that new jobs, and hence new potential members, will be concentrated in sectors of the economy where the equal pay problem is most in evidence. So there is an organising imperative for GMB to tackle equal pay as well as our wider commitment to fighting for equality and justice.

The CEC asks Congress to adopt the following measures to support an equal pay lobbying, organising and bargaining strategy:

### **Action by Government**

We should continue to lobby Government to introduce:

- Mandatory equal pay reviews – the Government’s voluntarist approach is not working. The proportion of large employers to have conducted EPRs has stagnated at 34% over the past couple of years
- Statutory provision for equality representatives
- Provisions to allow class actions or representative equal pay claims to be taken to employment tribunal by unions
- Funding to allow implementation of equal pay proof pay structures across the public sector
- Funding regimes which support investment in better pay and conditions for traditional women’s jobs across the childcare and social care sectors – society must pay for the true value of these occupations
- More extensive family-friendly rights e.g. paid parental leave, flexible working rights for parents of older children

### **Action by GMB**

We should ensure that:

- We campaign to establish Equal Pay Reps within the workplace
- Equal pay training forms part of the core Union education programme
- Guidance is developed on how to conduct equal pay reviews *and* how to respond to the results
- Outcomes of equal pay reviews are monitored and lessons shared
- Guidance is developed on how to protect jobs and avoid “levelling down”
- Occupations and organisations with a high density of part-time working are targeted
- The success of the Equal Pay Unit within public services is monitored and evaluated, and the feasibility of extending the approach to private sector employers is explored
- That successes in tackling equal pay in the private sector are shared and a strategy for targeting private sector employers is developed

### **Race and diversity**

Ethnic minorities are seriously under-represented within the ranks of the GMB, both as members and activists. If the union is to be seen as a truly modern and inclusive one, it is essential that we take action to increase participation of black and minority groups at all levels. For this to happen, minority groups need to be assured that GMB recognises not only their needs but also the value of their experience and possible contribution; they need to see people who look like them represented within the union.

To successfully develop an effective strategy to tackle this under representation, we need to understand the barriers which prevent black and minority ethnic groups both joining the union, and once

they have joined, becoming or remaining active. In May 2002, the findings of the McPherson Report into the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence and the newly introduced general race duty on public bodies to promote equality of opportunities, prompted the GMB to commission a Race Equality audit of the Union. In concluding that the Police Service investigation into the teenager's murder had been hampered by institutional racism, Lord MacPherson also warned about complacency in other organisations:

**“It is incumbent upon every institution to examine their policies and the outcome of their policies and practices to guard against disadvantaging any section of our communities”**

Recognising the truth of those words, GMB commissioned Dr Elizabeth Henry of ERAH Training and Consultancy to conduct a root and branch race audit of the union. Her efforts were overseen by the CEC Race Task Group. The objectives of the audit were:

- To provide a demographic profile of GMB officers, employees and lay activists;
- To understand the ways in which GMB relates to ethnic minority workers;
- To assess the impact of recruitment and retention efforts on ethnic minority workers; and
- To provide recommendations which will ensure that GMB's employment practices are a model of best practice in the area of race relations.

Positively, Dr Henry's research found that the Union was largely viewed as an “open, modern and supportive union progressing well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century”. However although the research found that there was no evidence that overt racism existed at any level within the GMB, it also found “evidence that institutional racism is at work in GMB”. In her conclusions Dr Henry noted:

- “the low numbers of black and minority ethnic people in this research raises questions about proportionality, representation and who gets heard”
- “the absence of a basic monitoring system means that GMB has no way of assessing fairness in recruitment, progression or operations”
- “concerns included...the absence of ethnic minorities in high-profile positions of influence”

The Henry Report left us in no doubt that concerted action was required on our part not only to attract members from black and minority ethnic groups, but to ensure that existing and new members have confidence in their Union's capacity to effectively represent their needs and concerns and to actively encourage their advancement within the entire union structure.

### **GMB Race and Diversity Project**

The Race and Diversity Project has been designed and developed in the wake of the Henry Report, taking the Report's recommendations into account. Funding in order to make the project proposal a reality was then sought from the Union Modernisation Fund. The CEC asks Congress to endorse this project which will shape GMB's future equality and diversity strategy.

GMB is committed to achieving a more representative profile within the union. The Race and Diversity Project is a pro active attempt to address the issues identified in the 2002 Race Audit. The “traditional” workplace based on the white male model is evolving as the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace becomes increasingly diverse. Women now make up nearly half the workforce; recent European Union expansion has brought new opportunities for recruitment and organisation and with predictions of future shortages in the domestic labour market, migration is set to continue. It is essential to our future survival and growth that GMB's profile reflects that diversity.

The project has a wide remit, encompassing members, staff and lay structures and an ambitious training programme. It will help us implement some of Dr Henry's recommendations, notably providing a comprehensive training programme and informing the development of our membership growth strategy. It is also supportive of recommendations 1,2,4,6 & 8 of ‘Framework for the Future’. Our successful bid for project funding from the Union Modernisation Fund, together with the GMB contribution, takes the total project value to £398,000. The UMF support provides external recognition for the project objectives, as well as a financial foundation for this ambitious programme of work”.

Membership development strategy

Included in the project are proposals to identify the specific issues of concerns of ethnic minority members and produce a membership development strategy using information gathered. This will result in:

- a greater level of participation in the union by ethnic minority members,
- a more diverse profile of activists,
- better access to and use of union services by ethnic minority members.

Training

The project includes an ambitious training programme in Equality and Diversity issues and awareness for all officers and staff (just under 600 in total). Completion of the training will contribute to:

- a better understanding of the needs of ethnic minority members by staff at all levels;
- a positive and proactive approach by staff to achieving greater participation by ethnic minority members;
- a more diverse staff profile.

GMB is committed to addressing the issues of all minority groups. The project takes race as a primary focus but the training included will address awareness and discrimination issues in general and thus provide the basis for future work.

Equality and Diversity Strategy

A range of measures built in to the proposal will ensure that the GMB continues to develop a pro active strategy on equality and diversity. These are:

- development of a network of in-house trainers
- production of a membership development strategy that will include targets and a review mechanism
- mainstreaming and embedding of Equality and Diversity awareness into training for new staff and activists
- establishment of a monitoring system
- setting of strategic targets beyond the end of the project.

This ambitious and forward looking project will be taken forward in close cooperation with the CEC Race Task Group and the Regions, led by a project management team drawn from the Senior Management Team of the Union. The project is both challenging and exciting, and on completion will leave the GMB equipped with clear strategies for diversifying the Union's profile and implementing equality and diversity in all our structures.

*(Adopted)*

THE DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY: I move the CEC's Special Report: For Justice and Equality. I am really pleased to be moving this report which is the first clear, all encompassing statement on equalities that the GMB has made for a long time.

Equality and social justice have always been at the heart of our core values, and equal pay and race equality continue to be crucial trade union issues. Having said that, this document is not just about fine and worthy sentiments. It is an action plan, a positive and inspirational guide directing us on a way forward that will not only benefit women and minorities within the GMB but will signal to potential members that it is the GMB which is at the forefront of the equalities agenda and will be leading the way on

equal pay, race and diversity.

Our speakers in the forthcoming Equality Session represent perfectly the diversity of our membership base and they are able to articulate the myriad of issues and difficulties that their representative groups encounter both within the workplace and in broader society. Above all, they will be addressing the central issue of why equalities matter.

The session will be facilitated by Dianna Yach, who will be joined by her colleague, Eric Smellie from Ionann Consultants, who are our chosen providers to deliver training for all officers and task, cascading down in time to all GMB activists. Dianna and her colleague, I know, will be invaluable new friends and allies, helping us to achieve our objective of

becoming the beacon of good practice, the union that is leading the way on equalities as we have done historically.

Paul and myself were watching some old TV footage of the Cammell Laird workers last week and, coincidentally, the next news item was the ground breaking successful Julie Hayward equal pay story. It reminded us of our proud record on equalities and the continuing efforts that we make year-on-year. As Brian Strutton said this morning, our officers and members have been battling for equal pay tirelessly for years. Our negotiators have brokered award winning agreements on work life balance arrangements. We have successfully litigated in numerous discrimination cases and campaigned vociferously against injustice as we have seen in the recent ASDA race discrimination and AA disability cases.

As John Coote has just said, it has been our members who have led the way in the campaign for LGBT rights. On migrant workers, currently we are recruiting and representing migrant workers across the country and we are the only union to be developing new initiatives in this area.

So, all in all, we have a proud record on promoting equalities. We have active equality committees, a dynamic national equal rights officer and regional equal rights and race officers, but we can do more and we must do more. We must focus on equal pay in the private sector, in particular, and develop an equal pay, lobbying, organising and bargaining strategy.

Our second initiative is in the shape of the GMB Race and Diversity Project, which represents our wholehearted commitment to achieve a more representative profile within the Union. Dianna will be saying a bit more about this in the next session. While the project takes race as its primary focus, the training will address awareness and discrimination in general.

Colleagues, I ask you not only to endorse this report but to return to your workplaces and prepare for the campaign *For Justice and Equality*.

BRO. P. FOLEY MBE (CEC, Energy & Utilities): I second the Special Report: For Justice and Equality.

I do not need to tell you what a pleasure it is for me to be speaking on this report. I am proud to be a member of this Union and proud too see equalities at the top of our agenda, which is where it needs to be. This report is a stepping stone to take us forward with our equality agenda.

Britain today is a more culturally acceptable and tolerant place than it has ever been. Foods once considered exotic and ethnic now form part of our daily diets. How many of us will be enjoying a chicken tikka massala or some special friend rice as we watch the World Cup? Many Britains will be supporting more than just our home team due to affiliations

with other World Cup teams, such as Trinidad and Tobago or Ghana. However, we cannot afford to take our eyes off the ball, not for one second. British National Party successes in the recent local elections are a stark reminder of this.

The racist murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993 stunned the nation. However, these senseless killings continue. Recent race murders include that of Anthony Walker, a young black man killed by a young white man; Christopher Yates, a 30 year old white man killed by a group of Asian youths; Isiah Young-Sam, a black man murdered by Asian youths and Shibli Rahman, a 34 year old Asian man killed by a gang of white youths. All these deaths have taken place since 2001.

We all need to play our parts in challenging the misunderstanding, misplaced fear and mistrust within our communities which fosters tensions between different groups.

Congress, we must use our workplaces as a classroom where we learn about each other, so that we can rejoice in our similarities but also in our differences. We all have something to contribute. But, Congress, to do this credibly and effectively, we must also ensure that our own house is in order. It has now been several years since the Henry Report threw a shot across our bow. Might I remind colleagues that when Elizabeth Henry was giving this report, the Congress hall nearly emptied and not one question was asked. It is time we stepped up the challenge. The proposals outlined in the Special Report are a crucial step in that direction and I urge you to support it.

THE PRESIDENT: I will now go round the regions to find out if each region wishes to put a speaker in on the report.

SIS. R. HAYWARD (South Western): I am speaking to the CEC Special Report: For Justice and Equality. We welcome this report and the action plan to tackle the equal pay gap and promote race and diversity. The South Western Region is especially pleased because we have obtained, nationally, £400,000 to fund the Race and Diversity Project. However, we must ensure that we link our strategy across all equality strands. Congress, we must continue to fight for equal pay by addressing occupational segregation, especially those jobs where part-time hours are prevalent. We need to ensure that percentage pay awards are avoided and move towards bottom loading with cash sum increases for lower grounds, with percentage increases for higher graded staff. We must not forget our successful pay campaign in 2002.

Job evaluation has still not been implemented in many councils. However, we must not become complacent and assume that we have tackled equal pay through job evaluation. Sadly, in most cases it reinforces job segregation. The Women in Work

Commission Report called feminised work groups the 5 Cs: catering, cleaning, caring, cashiering and clerical. Where men do enter these work groups, the cleaner becomes a hygiene technician; a cook in a school is called a chef attracting higher grades, thereby reinforcing the difference between women's and men's work and pay.

We must continue to improve childcare provision but we must also include support for carers. Many of us find we are in role reversal, caring for our parents or loved ones. This can put a lot of emotional, physical pressure and stress on the carer. Many of our members find the pressure too much and may actually have to leave their jobs. They find themselves catapulted into emotional despair and enforced poverty with no way out. We must continue to urge the Government to treat carers the same as parents, with financial concessions for the cost of caring, the ability to spend time as a carer but still able to remain in employment.

The public sector already have good practice examples. We need to role these out into the private and voluntary sector. The Government must make audits mandatory. Congress, we have to link all legislation, existing, new and proposed together, ensuring that the GMB's equality and diversity strategy puts the equalities into actions through the Race and Diversity Project. We support this report.

BRO. D. FAITH (London): President and Congress, I would like to make a few brief remarks. The issues raised in *this* report, in other words, the equalities agenda, are central to our work in building the Union and should not be seen as an optional extra. Our region, therefore, welcomes this report which seeks to re-double our efforts in pursuing the campaign to make equal pay for women a reality. We also welcome the specific proposals to improve the level of involvement of ethnic minority workers in our Union.

We, therefore, hope and expect the measures outlined in this report to be implemented in short order, but we also believe that this is just half the story. We think the other key to greater involvement of ethnic minority workers lies in the continuing push to make this a more out-going, open and campaigning union. We hope that this combination of internal reform and external focus will ensure a union which more accurately reflects the 21<sup>st</sup> Century workforce. We, therefore, endorse this report with enthusiasm.

BRO. N. DAY (Southern): Southern Region speaks in support of the CEC Special Report: For Justice and Equality. The Southern Region fully supports the GMB's commitment to champion the continued fight for equality and justice. The GMB must continue to encourage women, ethnic minorities and activists from all backgrounds to play a full part in the functioning of this great union of ours.

The GMB has worked hard to fight the injustices of equal pay and to fight tirelessly to defeat the Fascists of the BNP, to protect the rights of our members from the ethnic minorities, but more remains to be done.

Dr. Elizabeth Henry's Report, which audited the GMB, concluded that that there was evidence that institutional racism is at work in the GMB. To be a fully representative union, we must have more diversity in our GMB officials and activists. The CEC Special Report suggests, however, that more can be achieved, as we see in the recommendations from the report. We would like to see more regional officers appointed from an ethnic background.

We call on regional education officers to lead in providing both support and training for lay activists from ethnic minorities in areas such as preparing CVs and interview techniques. This would show a commitment from the GMB that it welcomes and encourages applications from all backgrounds. We need to reach out to migrant workers who are carrying out vital jobs within our economy. For many of these workers, their knowledge of the English language barely exists.

We call upon regional education departments to provide officers and activists with basic lessons in the relevant languages to help us communicate with these members who need our help so badly.

Regarding equal pay, we welcome the intention to continue lobbying the Government for funding to allow the proper implementation of single status. Local government employers are using single status to level down pay under the premise that it is making pay and grading fairer. The purpose of single status was to allow large groups of predominantly female workers to be paid fairly. However, because of the lack of funding, employers will be considering measures such as making these workers go out to tender. That was not the intention of single status. To place these workers in such a vulnerable position is not acceptable.

To conclude, please accept this report. I recommend it.

BRO. C. ROBERTSON (GMB Scotland): GMB Scotland welcomes this report in full on Justice and Equality covering equal pay and setting out the GMB agenda action plan. We welcome this all-encompassing statement as a positive guide, setting out the position and setting out the standards and ensuring that equalities are at the heart of our agenda.

This document ensures that the GMB is leading this agenda, delivering justice and equality for all of our members and as a beacon for new members as the preferred union of choice.

SIS. M. INGRAM (Birmingham & West Midlands): I am a first-time speaker.

THE PRESIDENT: Well done.

SIS. INGRAM: Conference, in welcoming this Report it also serves as a stark reminder of the work that still has to be undertaken in the area of equality. With a rise in the number of women at work from 56% in 1971 to 70% now, making up nearly half of the nations workforce, there is still a pay gap of 38% between part-time females and full-time males. Equal pay is a major issue for many of our members. There is no justice where there is inequality. The under representation of minority groups in our and in the majority of other organisations is no longer acceptable.

Paul Kenny said yesterday that politicians and the Government should be made accountable but we all have to be responsible in making sure that justice prevails. Discrimination is still rife within our society and it falls to the GMB to take up this fight.

We welcome the actions detailed in this report. Actions by Government are a necessity to enable us to fight injustices, especially the action on family/friendly rights, such as paid parental leave, flexible working rights for parents with older children.

The actions by the GMB will arm our representatives with the tools they need to take up and win their issues and enable this organisation to become truly representative of our members. This will be a long and hard campaign but one we can win if the actions in this report are fully implemented as promised. We must keep the pressure on to achieve justice to win equality for everyone, everywhere, every time, particularly those who may not be able to speak for themselves.

SIS. E. BLACKMAN (Midland & East Coast): I am speaking to the CEC's Special Report: For Justice and Equality.

Recently I attended my region's Equal Rights Conference together with our National Equal Rights Officer. I listened with a growing sense of de ja vous because the issues under discussion were issues which had been debated more than 30 years ago, many of which have ended up here as Congress motions. Nationally we have many excellent policies on equality, race and injustice, but somehow or other they see to disappear into a black hole. Part of the problem occurs where we have failed to provide or insist that all GMB officials and lay activists undergo training on equality, race and justice issues, which is why I welcome this report and congratulate the CEC on producing a clear and concise statement.

The format of the report is excellent and the areas of concern and the need for action are clearly identified. However, I do have a number of criticism to make which I hope the CEC will take on board. We believe that it is not good enough merely to lobby the Government to take action. They have had nine

years to take action if they were going to do it. I am sick to death of listening to people paying lip service to equality issues. Nor do I wish to see my granddaughter in a few years hence standing at this rostrum arguing for what her grandmother stood at this rostrum or fought for 30 years ago.

I believe we should demand action as part of the price the Government should pay for our continued financial, physical and facilities support.

On the issue of race, we have an ambitious programme of work, work which I believe is long overdue and essential if we are to deal effectively with the BNP and also to encourage active participation of our black and ethnic members. Take a look around the hall at people. How many black faces do you see here? I think it is self-evident that our structures are not particularly working.

I do have another criticism. I would have liked to see in the report measures to encourage and support for our female ethnic minority members who face particular difficulties, often from within their own families and within their own communities. On that issue, I can speak with particular clarity. One of my young Asian lasses was a member of our Race Committee and the only way she could attend the committee was if I attended alongside with her as a chaperone because her family objected to her being with different males. Thank you. Please support.

SIS. J. JEPSON (Northern): Northern Region supports this Special Report. We are particularly pleased to see that the recommendations from the Elizabeth Henry Report are finally being implemented following a successful bid to the Union Modernisation Fund. The Race and Diversity Project is tangible proof that our Union is taking this matter seriously. GMB has an open door policy to all workers, regardless of race, religion or sexuality and we should do more to get this message across.

BRO. K. FLANAGAN (Lancashire): President, I hope the senior politician comes by train.

Brothers and Sisters, it is with pleasure that I speak on behalf of the Lancashire Region to support this very important report. It says on the cover: "Justice and Equality". I say "brothers and sisters" because, brothers and sisters is a term that I do not think we should use lightly. It goes to the very heart and principles of what this Movement stands for. It goes to the very heart of what we need to do in order to address the division and those things which separate those who are weaker in our society from those who are strong. On the whole, trade unionists are stronger. When we use that term it brings with it an obligation and a responsibility to carry out the responsibilities that come with the title "brothers and sisters". We are, after all, our brothers' and sisters' keepers. We are in place to try and represent and ensure that those people, those organisations

and those policies that would divide us and separate us do not see the light of day. Can we accept division based on the fact that you are male or female? Can we? No, we cannot. Can we accept a situation where a young mother is excluded from essential parts of the economy because she cannot find affordable childcare? Is that acceptable. No. Is it acceptable that we can have organisations in this country that can be purveyors of hate and division? All they want is to see our communities destroyed by violence, hatred and division. There is no place for those policies or, for that matter, those views inside this trade union Movement.

Therefore, we need a campaign, not just words, that will deliver in action and in deed what it means to be brothers and sisters. It means we will fight inequality no matter where it is. It means we will educate people to understand and rejoice in the diversity of those people from other ethnic backgrounds. It means we will educate each other to be tolerant, caring and supportive of those who are weaker in our society.

Support the policy by all means but, most important of all, let us practise it. Let us do it ourselves in our own organisation so that we are a mirror for justice and equality in this Movement. Why is it when we have a 40% female membership in the GMB that we still have only 20% female officers at regional level? It is not good enough and we need to be seen to be doing more by our actions, not just words.

I am proud to support this paper. Take it to your hearts and deliver it to people out *there*, because by that we will be measured whether we are just and equitable in the society which we serve.

SIS. D. BRUNO (Liverpool, North Wales & Irish): I speak in support of the CEC's Special Report of 2006: For Justice and Equality.

I would like to congratulate the CEC on such an informative report. However, it is a sad reflection on our society today that women are still seen as second class citizens and that all women are not receiving equal pay to that of their male co-workers. Employers take their lead from government policies and legislation. If the Government continues to under-value women, then so will employers. It will bode the Government well if it looked to the Nordic system of social welfare, the values and contributions that women make to their society, from the workplace to the home, where women are the main carers. Knowing that the GMB continues its fight to address this injustice facing women should give us all hope for the future.

Turning to the second part of the report, "Race and Diversity", the under-representation of black and ethnic members is painfully obvious to everyone in the GMB. Reserved seats is one way to address this issue, but black, minority and ethnic members want

to progress through the Union on their skills, abilities and experiences, not because we are people of colour. The GMB has a long way to go yet in addressing this issue and, as today proves once again, I am attending a conference where black and minority ethnic members are woefully under represented. The battle goes on.

The CEC has profiled the action which needs to be taken. We ask Congress to endorse this report. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to speak against? *(No response)*

I will now put the CEC Special Report: For Justice and Equality. Those in favour, please show? Anyone against?

*(The CEC Special Report: For Justice and Equality was carried)*

## CONGRESS SPECIAL EQUALITIES SESSION

THE PRESIDENT: Delegates, we now come to the Congress Special Equalities Session, to be chaired by Dianna Yach, the Director of Ionann Management Consultants Limited. Whilst Dianna is coming to the platform, Dianna is a co-founder and President of Ionann Management Consultants Limited who work with companies to ensure that equality is integrated into their core business functions. Dianna is a specialist in equality and anti-discrimination law and practice. Recent Ionann projects include working with senior managers on human rights and equality audits. Dianna helps to promote equality issues and good practice and she works with key stakeholder groups to raise equality issues such as harassment and bullying. Dianna, welcome to Congress. *(Applause)*

MS. D. YACH (Director, Ionann Management Consultants Ltd): Thank you very much for inviting us here today. I would like to invite my colleagues to join us on the platform.

Good afternoon, everyone. I must tell you that I am really encouraged and heartened at the fact that Congress has devoted a whole afternoon to equalities issues. I must say that Ionann began work about a year ago, or probably longer now, with senior managers at GMB. We all left the senior manager event very enthused and positive. You say the usual nice things to each other like "We hope we will be working with you in the future", and here we are again. We are delighted to be with you. In the meantime, we have actually worked with several regions and got to know colleagues and the issues. For us at Ionann – I am speaking on behalf of Eric Smellie, who some of you will have met – *this* is quite unusual because we do a lot of work with government departments. I have heard reference to a couple of

our clients, notably the Home Office, Immigration, Probation and Prisons, various police services, universities, colleges and local government. So often we come out of training sessions, particularly with senior people who think they know it all, who always tell us how good they are and how well intentioned they are and nothing ever changes. For me, really, a big thank you for not only inviting us back here today but for really demonstrating what you are committed to in action. Many of you have stayed in touch with us since we began the journey with you and it really is encouraging.

Also your commitment to these issues is not just a fly by night or a tick box. Usually, when we work in these areas so often it is all about the legal bottom line. We have been enormously encouraged by the fact that you are switched onto these issues because this is a lifestyle issue. It is not a fashion accessory. We are talking about people's human rights, and that is central to everything you do as trade unionists wherever you are located. I know that social justice is very close to your heart. I also know that having worked with many of you, you cannot understand how you can talk social justice and not delivery equalities. I thank you for really involving us in your challenges and all the opportunities for the future.

Almost as a last point because I explain what we are going to be doing with my colleagues on the platform, we are delighted that you have won the Union Modernisation funding. We will be working with you to deliver equality and diversity training for everyone across all the regions. This is something that I know the top team has been promising and wanting to do for some time. It is finally happening and we have even got dates in the diary. So the Ionann roadshow will be coming to you, at a place close to you, sooner than you think and we hope we will see you all there.

Just to let you know that we try to do things slightly differently at Ionann. What we have is not just me and my colleagues talking at you but we engage with our actors in real issues which affect people's lives around equality so we are hoping that many of you will be attending over the coming months and years.

Now to our task this afternoon. I have been struck, personally, by the passion and enthusiasm of colleagues who we have met just today at Congress, but I have also been particularly struck by the commitment and enthusiasm by people who have joined us on the Panel. How we are going to organise the session is in this way. I am going to invite each of my colleagues in turn to talk about equality from their own perspective and to tell you from their own experience what equality means to them and what are some of the opportunities for the future in relation to the GMB. We will then, after hearing very brief presentations from our colleagues, open the debate to the floor and you will have a chance to ask

questions and make very brief observations.

Without much ado, what I would like to do is, really, to introduce our first speaker who is Rowena Hayward. Rowena, I know, has already spoken to you earlier in the day, but I think that Rowena has a particular story to tell you about how equality has impacted on her life and the difference roles that she plays in GMB. Without saying very much more, Rowena I hand over to you.

SIS. R. HAYWARD (South Western): Thank you. First of all, I would like to share with you why I am an activist for the GMB. The story starts a long time ago. I had two very strong women role models; one was my mum and the other was my grandmother. My mum was widowed when I was seven and she became the main provider. She was unskilled, worked in a factory, then in the canteen at the Post Office as well as working as a cleaner in the evening. We lived on a daily basis. We could not afford to shop weekly but, again, day to day. We paid our electric by the slot meter and she struggled to provide for me and acted as a role model.

My grandfather used to drink and when he drank he would hit her. In those days, you stayed. You did not do anything about it. She actually left him and she lived out of wedlock with who I took as my grandfather, who was fantastic. For me, they were my two real role models.

I have three children and when they were young I worked at Asda – yes, Asda, Paul – on the tills and I had to make my hours up on bank holidays when the store was closed. Later I returned to secretarial work on a job share basis. There was no hope of career progression. In 1996 through Hay Job Evaluation I had my salary reduced by £3,000 per annum. At the same time, my council were proposed to stop the holiday play scheme for employees' children. The woman who was sitting next to me was distraught, and I still remember her now. She had four children under the age of 13 and she really could not see any way of continuing in paid employment because she could not afford child care.

We actually won that fight. We still have the holiday play scheme and that is what really got me going, because of the inequality, the inequality of the organisation and the unfairness. During that time I was invited by the GMB actually to attend the meeting on behalf of the region with the TUC and employer's organisation to consider piloting work/life balance, flexible working, in my organisation. I actually jumped at the chance because once I heard the principles of "no change to terms and conditions" and of it being optional, of it being by mutual agreement, I could see the benefits of addressing some of those inequality issues which had been going on for so long. I still firmly believe that today.

It does tackle occupational segregation in a small

way. In my organisation we have two second tier officers who are working job share. That shows that in the organisation that anyone can work differently and still get progression. Part-time working is prevalent, yes, and we still have a long way to go, but it is a message which I am proud to be associated with as a GMB activist.

On learning, when I left school I had very few formal qualifications. I have had continually to learn all the time and catch up. Having been able to access developmental learning through work/life balance, flexible working and through union learning, for which I am also a union learning rep, I see this as an opportunity of being able to offer access and options to those of our members who have not had those opportunities in the past. Equally, work/life balance and assisting with childcare issues. Again, there is a whole range and I am sure that some of you are sick to death of hearing about flexible working and the different working patterns but it does make a difference to people's lives. It actually enables people, both men and women, to stay in paid employment, to play more of a role in the bringing up of their children or, as we said earlier, about the parenting responsibilities that now face a lot of us with elder care.

Leisure time. Not many of us get that these days. It is necessary to have leisure. Sometimes you just need to have time to reclaim yourself and, again, through being able to look at different ways of working, not necessarily reducing your hours but maybe working on a compressed working week or fortnight, you can actually have some time to play golf or just to sit out in the garden with a chilled glass of wine.

We have found that such developments are having an impact on the GMB organisation in terms of membership. Within the organisation itself we are widening our recruitment pool because we are able to offer different hours, thereby meeting or enabling different pockets of the community to apply for jobs. This, again, means diversity and membership, and we really do need to capitalise on that.

Employees feel valued. I have to say, as a GMB activist, it is so much better to be meeting with a member on a positive note rather than just representing them at disciplinary hearings or when they are facing dismissal. By working with them, in order to enable them to stay in paid employment, to take up learning, address child care and elder care and gain promotion, it is a positive and inclusive process because you are working with the member. Further, the member is also in control and that is so important.

Equality is on the bargaining agenda. Equality and diversity is core to our organisation. It is part of our negotiations and bargaining. It is the strand which runs through the agenda. It is about making a difference, treating people with dignity and respect.

To be honest, anyone can do this. If I can do it, anyone can do it, and we do do it. Everyone of us out *here* does this on a daily basis as GMB activists, as reps and as members of the GMB because it is our core. It is why we are involved in the trade union Movement. You do not need to be special. I have to say that I do owe a lot to the GMB for giving me so much opportunity because seven years ago I never, ever, thought that would be standing here talking to you in this way. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

MS. YACH: Thank you very much, Rowena. Can we now hear from Lucinda.

SIS. L. YEADON (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Comrades, there are many reasons why people join a union. Some join for protection in the workplace, but many join because of a passionate belief in the ethos, the ideology of the trade union Movement – solidarity. We cannot have a discussion about equality issues without mentioning that word – solidarity. The point is that true solidarity is about the many defending the rights of the few and that is what the equality movement is about.

To undermine the rights of the few, to undermine the rights of women, people from the LGBT community, people with disabilities, the black, minority and ethnic communities and the rights of young people is to undermine the rights of us all, every single member in this room.

I am here to talk to you about the young members in the GMB. We must recognise that there has been a change in the trade union Movement. Young people no longer leave school, get a job and join a union. Times have changed. However, what remains are the many reasons why trade union membership is vital for young people today. Young people are generally employed in low paid and unorganised workplaces. The businesses which are more likely to employ young people, who are least likely to be trade union organised, call centres, hospitality and retail. Furthermore, a high percentage of young people are working for employment agencies with outrageous employment rights. We still have a minimum wage which differs depending on age. If people fear about their pensions now, what are they going to be like in 35 years time when I retire?

In short, trade union membership for young people today is just as important as it was for the young people of the 1970s and '80s. Very often young people will only engage with an organisation which they can relate to. We must remember that encouraging young people to join a union is just as important to the GMB as it is for the young individuals. When we talk about young member issues we are actually talking about the future of our Union. I once heard a statistic that the average age of a trade unionist was 53. I am not sure if that was

true, but if it was what is going to be the average age in 20 years? We have a responsibility to secure a safe and fair workplace for our future generations and we can only do that if we have a sustainable trade union Movement.

The equalities movement, as well as young members, is the key to achieve a sustainable trade union Movement. To embrace diversity is to embrace more members. Where are we now? Let me thank those of you who spoke in support of young members yesterday. Only through a commitment for change can we actually achieve our goal. I joined the GMB whilst I was at university, and at that time the GMB had an established young members' structure, which for one reason or another ended.

It was this young members' structure which first attracted me to join the Union and it was a young member who recruited me. I am overjoyed to see that four years on young member issues are back on the agenda. As Vice-Chair at the TUC Young Members' Forum, I am very aware of the successful young members' structures which exist in other unions. However, I was extremely proud that at this year's TUC Young Members' Conference the GMB was not only the largest delegation but one of the most active, many of whom join us today in the hall. Imagine what we could do if we had an active young members' network.

GMB young members have also played a huge part in our own region. In Yorkshire, which is my own region, the GMB young members have played a key part in fighting the Fascist BNP, and earlier this year several young members worked with the TUC to steward the protest outside Leeds Crown Court. In other areas, young members have campaigned on pension issues, disability rights and have organised strong recruitment drives. They have also had teams of young members regularly raising money at workers' events. However, we only need to look around this room to recognise that young people are still not truly represented within the Union at regional or national level. If we talk equality, we must walk equality. However, the situation is going to change. Young members are extremely pleased to have Yue Ting Cheng seconded to the GMB for a period of time to specifically look at improving communication with the Union and its young members. We also welcome the commitment shown by Debbie Coulter and the GMB on a national level to work towards a greater inclusion of young people within the Union. Young member issues are not about giving young people an unfair advantage to progress within the Union. It is about giving young members the opportunity to develop so that in the future our Union is in safe hands. Thank you.

MS. YACH: Thank you, Lucinda. Brian.

BRO. B. SHAW (London): Congress, I am the Chair of

the National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Forum, GMB Shout. Let me start by paying tribute to Rehana Azam from the National Office, Kelly Rogers and Ed Blissett from my own region, London, for their support and help in getting the forum re-launched earlier this year.

Many may wonder why we need such a forum since the Labour Government have introduced legislation to address the inequalities. They have outlawed discrimination in the workplace, they have introduced civil partnerships, pensions, adoptions and now goods and services, to name a few. Like any other area of equality, legislation needs translating into reality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members in the workplace. I have dealt with some pretty horrendous cases, such as members followed home from work by work colleagues and work colleagues sitting outside their homes to see if they are gay; a lesbian hounded by her manager because she was a lesbian and ended up having a nervous breakdown because of his actions; a transgender person banned from using the toilets, and a GMB member beaten up by his colleagues because he was gay.

As a person who has suffered homophobic bullying, I feel passionate that others do not have to face such behaviour. I remember a friend of mine being told not to go drinking with me because may think that he was gay as well. I can mention more cases that the GMB have been involved in tackling. However, what *Shout* wants to achieve is to ensure that our rights are translated into the workplace making cases like those I have mentioned history. I know it will not happen overnight but the challenge to us all starts here and now. We need training of shop stewards on tackling homophobia and transphobia in the workplace, training for LGBT members on how to tackle discrimination and harassment, raising the profile of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members in the GMB so that anyone facing discrimination can get help and also to breakdown the stereotypes, the camp gay man and the butch lesbian.

The TUC did a survey of LGBT members of all unions including the GMB which showed that LGBT people were more likely to join a union if it had an LGBT group and more likely to remain in the union because of that group. The Government estimates that 10 per cent of the UK population identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender. That means that in the GMB there must be around 54,000 members who are LGBT.

The main aims of GMB *Shout* are to reach out to those members and recruit to the GMB. Congress heard yesterday how the Central Executive Committee has put recruitment as central to the aims of this Union. *Shout* has attended events around the country recruiting to the network and to the Union. In London Region we have grown from 5

to more than 200. We now have a committee to take the work forward. This is now supplemented by the National Forum. Whilst I am disappointed that the motions were lost earlier today, I will pledge the *Shout* National Forum to work with the Central Executive Committee. Who knows? The Central Executive Committee may even invite me to come and talk to them about our work and what we want to do on LGBT issues.

Congress, every region needs to build its LGBT network and forum. *Shout* will be the voice of LGBT members in the GMB. We need a voice in the decision-making bodies of this Union. The National *Shout* Forum is here to help in that process and to share best practice across the regions and to help recruit new members to the GMB. *Shout* will be here until LGBT people can love the person they choose to love, free from discrimination and harassment. Equality has to be at the heart of this Union. As Trevor Phillips said, the future is diverse. Thank you.

MS. YACH: Thank you, Brian. I would now like to call on Jurgita Prancylte to take the microphone.

SIS. J. PRANCYLTE (Midland & East Coast): Thank you for inviting me here today. There are many reasons why the GMB Union should take the issue of migrant workers seriously. Almost half-a-million reasons, actually. That was approximately the number of migrant workers entering the UK in 2004 and 2005, and the figures are rising. The vast majority of migrant workers are under 35 years of age and recruiting these workers into the GMB would almost double its membership. It is also our duty as trade unionists and human beings to support and welcome migrant workers into our Union.

Migrant workers are human beings often with families to support. They come to Britain to work hard, often for very long hours and often in areas of work where British workers do not wish to work. Migrant workers bring new skills and challenges for everyone. Without foreign workers economies, such as that of Lincolnshire, would collapse. Migrant workers are also vulnerable and need GMB protection. They face many issues, such as exploitation by less reputable employers, prejudice, racism, fear, exploitation by greedy landlords, over-crowded living conditions and language barriers and isolation in the workplace. They work very long hours and very often for less than the minimum wage. They have a lack of understanding of health and safety. They have a lack of knowledge of their rights in the workplace and they do not know about the good work that the trade unions or that they can even belong to the GMB. They do not know how to open bank accounts, how to access childcare or healthcare services and so much more that UK workers take for granted. They also are victims of employers who will use them to breathe fear into British workers in order to drive down GMB

members' terms and conditions and divide workers where there should be unity.

The GMB has achieved much already but there is so much more to do. More migrant workers will be coming to the UK. The GMB has to position itself as a union that is seen to be campaigning and meeting the needs of migrant workers. There is so much potential and so much need for our support. This is an agenda where the GMB, our Union, can be the driving force for bringing together so many diverse and disparate communities. We can be a support to both employers and workers.

This is an agenda where we can be proud to be enabling migrant workers and their families to reach their full working and economic potential and thereby to contribute positively to the UK economy. This is an agenda that by working together we can truly win together, creating positive opportunities for all, positive partnerships, stable workforces and growth for our Union. Thank you. (*Applause*)

MS. YACH: Thank you, Jurgita. I think we have heard from all of our speakers and what really came home forcibly to me from hearing each of you speaking is how we are not talking about a pick and mix, we are not talking about whether we will have one woman, one black person, one Indian person, somebody who is gay, tick the box and end of story, but actually talking about human beings and their differences and celebrating those differences and actually saying, "Yes, we share a lot in common but when we come to work, inevitably, we bring ourselves and all the things which make us who we are".

Thank you very much for your personal accounts and also being honest about some of the challenges. I think that in these sessions we sometimes get a bit complacent. Just looking around the hall – forget the age issue because that applies to me as well – the issue of race is vitally important. We do not have in the hall many people from visible black, minority and ethnic communities and not many young people, although I was pleased to see some people waving from the back of the hall. It is wonderful to see the mix of people who are here but I think the issue was pointed out very clearly in each of the testimonies. At the end of the day it is about reflecting your membership, and I really applaud all the energy which is going into that in order to meet their needs.

I would now like to ask you for questions and comments. To ensure that we do not have the person passing the microphone round running backwards and forwards, we are hoping to take a few questions in different sections and Erica is going to help identify those who have their hands raised. So does Congress have any questions?

BRO. J. COOTE (London): I want to congratulate the Central Executive Committee for actually organising this event. It is marvellous and it actually

demonstrates just how widespread the equalities issues are. First of all, I would like to congratulate the CEC.

My question is this. Within the GMB *Shout* Group we have taken on the issue of young members very seriously. I want to know what the Young Members' Group intends doing about LGBT issues and for Brian, given the result on the rule changes, where do we go from here?

SIS. C. MURPHY (CEC, Food & Leisure): I know that the race and diversity training which has been rolled out is for senior managers. Can you tell me when it will be available to all of the activists?

BRO. J. STRIBLEY (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I have two questions. The first one is for Lucinda. What does the Young Members' Section intend to do to help the GMB recruit more members? You are the future. We hope you have some ideas for us to secure it for you.

My second question is a general question. You said many things about equality but I did not hear anything about disability.

MS. YACH: Thank you very much, indeed. Okay, Brian and Lucinda, the first question was directed very much at yourselves, which concerned young members? What are you doing, Lucinda, in relation to LGBT members?

SIS. YEADON: I think our problem at the moment is that we do not have an established Young Members' group. Unfortunately, until we have got something established, there is very little that we can do around LGBT issues. We are having a meeting tonight to discuss how we can take young members and young member issues forward, and I would hope it would concern not only LGBT issues but also disability issues and all equality issues would automatically be within Young Members. You may be a young woman. I am a young disabled woman and we may have many other issues within that. We are looking at working towards some kind of young members' group and we have to be completely representative within that group as well.

MS. YACH: Thank you, Lucinda. Brian.

BRO. SHAW: In terms of look at how we go forward because the motions were not actually passed, we need to be working with the Central Executive Committee and talking about their concerns about us having reserved seats and also building the network around every single region so that even if we do not agree with the Central Executive Committee about the way forward, we can actually have motions from every region in the country to this Congress looking to get that rule change through. So it is a two-

pronged approach, I would have thought in terms of talking directly and having that dialogue with the Central Executive Committee but also doing the campaigning work in each of the regions.

MS. YACH: Thank you. Lucinda, let us move to the other question which concerned how will the Young Members' Group help in recruitment?

SIS. YEADON: As I said, we do not really have a young members group at the moment, but if we did I think it is very important to recognise that young people are more likely to join an organisation if they can see that young people are in it. We do not want to be the only person there. I think that young members play a really key part in recruitment, especially around people who are, possibly, at college and moving on into employment. I think that is the key time to catch people. The TUC actually has run a scheme where they have trade unionists who go into schools and that approach has proved to be very effective. I think that would be a great opportunity for the GMB to get involved in something like that.

On the disability issue, I am disabled and I do think it is very important. I tend to speak about young persons' issues, but I think that disability issues are equally important, especially when, within the GMB, we have a large membership of disabled people in the Remploy factories. It is vital to represent the needs of people with disabilities at work. So, yes.

MS. YACH: Thank you very much. Rowena, would you like to say anything on those points.

SIS. R. HAYWARD (South Western): I do not think I qualify to talk about young members because I think I have gone beyond the age limit, so I will not visit that subject.

However, on disabilities, when talking about the work/life balance, what we are doing is to enable more disabled people to get into employment by working through the Disabilities Discrimination Act, ensuring that organisations make reasonable adjustments to keep disabled people in paid employment, to look at different work locations and to look at different hours. The reason why I am so keen to talk about the work/life balance is because it goes across all equality streams. We are talking about employment and enabling our members, or employees, to stay in paid employment, whether they are men, LGBT, disabled employees, black and minority ethnic employees and young members, it is about the whole equality issues and goes across the whole equalities sphere. I think that that is something we have to look at in its entirety and, yes, we do have to monitor, but we have to look at the individual and not at the box we put them in. I think that is so important.

MS. YACH: One question asked when is the training to be rolled out for staff and activists across the board? The training that we have been involved in providing will commence from October, so watch this space. We hope as many people as possible will engage and get involved.

SIS. T. VAN-GELDEREN (London): I do not mind who answers my question. I have been involved in a number of unions and it is always an issue as to how you make sure, over the years, that the Union is going to reflect society, really. I am a first-time Congress attendee, but I am an older member. I agree that you are not ticking boxes, but every time we want to encourage people to stand for positions, be it full-time positions, lay positions or as delegates, some of us have to stand down. We have to do a Bambi, the father goes and Bambi takes over. We have to look and see how that is going to be achieved without causing lots of divisions within the Union as well. This is quite a big question and fundamental but if any of you have any views as to how you can make the likes of me to go away and be replaced by somebody else, please could you tell Congress.

SIS. YACH: Could we have any possible help from the Panel?

SIS. HAYWARD: I think that is how we will be judged by our success, surely, if next year, the year after and the year after that, when we have Congress, we have a wider representation of the diverse workforce in which we work and within the actual communities in which we live. When you talk about standing down, yes, I think that is absolutely true. We must be looking at positive action. We have to be looking at our options, but we must acknowledge the experience and the expertise that we have in the room. We must ensure that we do not disenfranchise anyone, any activist in the GMB. We are all valued, and I think that is so important. So, yes, we do need to be looking at working in a way in which we can be much more inclusive and reflect the workforce we represent. Such an approach has to be done properly, in a sensitive way and with consensus.

MS. YACH: I would like to add to that and say that I think that is one of the biggest challenges for many organisations because, historically, the patterns of recruitment and annexion have meant that they have a certain look about them. It is not about saying ditch the old and in with the new. I think that there are many people in the organisation already who may also need assistance in growing and developing. I do not think that we should just focus our attention on new members, but we must say, "What can we do to grow the skills and talents of the members we already have in order to help them progress within the organisation?" There is much that we can be

engaging in in relation to culture. I hope to enjoy that debate with everyone in the training.

Are there any other points or questions which anyone would like to raise?

BRO. J. DOLAN (GMB Scotland): I have listened to the debate and I have heard about gays, lesbians, blacks and single mothers, but I have never heard anything said about equality for single fathers who have children to look after, who have to give up work, who are treated worse than single mothers. Could you tell me about that, please?

MS. YACH: Does anybody from the Panel wish to make a comment?

BRO. SHAW: You need to put forward motions to Congress so that we can discuss those issues and take them forward via the Central Executive Committee. If you are coming forward to any of the equality groups and asking for some support, we will be supporting you in terms of those issues. I do not see that there is a problem. It is making sure that you get those issues aired at this Congress.

MS. YACH: Thank you. Are there any other questions and comments? *(No response)* Again, I think a lot of this is not about excluding anyone. We are trying, at the end of the day, to create an environment in which all of us feel a sense of belonging. Are there any final questions which anyone wants to raise? *(No response)* Let me now ask the Panel for their last comments and their views of the way ahead. I will start with Lucinda.

SIS. YEADON: I think the point about single fathers is important because if we are speaking out about equality issues we should be speaking out about all equality issues. We do not need to have a single father to speak out about issues in relation to single fathers. Anyone could do that if we are truly being equal. I would hope that I could speak out on issues concerning migrant workers or the issues about which have concerned other people who have spoken today. We have to remember that equality include us all and that by all of us representing those issues truly, that is what gets the job done.

MS. YACH: Thank you. Brian.

BRO. B. SHAW: The important message to go back to the leadership of the Union is that we need active, well-supported and funded equality organisations across the whole piece; disabled, women, race as well as the LGBT side, so we are actually encouraging people into the Union and then the face of the Union will change to reflect society and, indeed, the membership of this Union. I think that is what the central message needs to be.

MS. YACH: Rowena?

SIS. HAYWARD: I think, in some ways, we are doing part of this. It is building on what we are already doing, and that is about the fact that individuals are different. We must enquire that everyone has an equal opportunity to participate. That is so important.

MS. YACH: Jurgita?

SIS. PRANCYLTE: Because I am a migrant worker myself, and I know it is not very easy. I think that migrant worker issues are very important. Thank you.

MS. YACH: Eric, do you want to say a few words?

MR. E. SMELLIE (Ionnan Management Consultants Ltd): I am very conscious of time, and I am not quite sure how we were supposed to end this session. I have volunteered to say a few words. In terms of summing-up what I saw here today, I have been very encouraged. The situation is interesting because some of you in the hall, if you have not met us yet, you will in due course meet us as we roll out the rest of the training to the GMB.

I have a couple of phrases which I think are all-embracing which, if you like, summarises what "equality" means. Trevor said, "It is good for business". It is good for all of us that we treat each other with respect. It is good for business. It is good for the GMB and it is good for you as individuals. The other phrase which I heard today, which I thought you ought to remember is "Anyone can do this". There is no need to be special and there is no need for boxes. All of us are special. Thank you.

MS. YACH: Thank you all very much, indeed. From the unique experience of this afternoon, I would echo what has been said, that it is just about everyone doing their bit to make a difference. On that positive note, I encourage you to continue the work which you have begun and to continue to be open, responsive and to encourage dialogue around these issues. Sometimes it is quite difficult and emotional to talk about the issues we are addressing in Congress. People are worried about saying the wrong things or doing the wrong things. I would encourage you to have an open dialogue and actually begin to understand each other even more and, particularly, people's perceptions, because at the end of the day perception is reality.

Thank you very much for inviting us here to participate in your Congress. We wish you an excellent rest of the week. I am sorry that we have to get back to London, but I know that you are going to have a wonderful time. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Eric and Dianna, I would like to say thank you to everyone who participated. It was excellent. Dianna and Eric, would you come forward please.

*(Presentation made amidst applause)*

### **TRIBUTE TO DAVID LASCELLES, MIDLANDS & EAST COAST REGION**

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, it is right for this Union to pay tribute to a young man called David Lascelles from the Midland & East Coast Region who led the way in equalities on behalf of this Union. As you are aware, David is not here today. I have known David for a long time. He is a great friend. Of course, his partner, Jason, was always here taking the pictures. We called him "the runner". I have always been proud to have known both of them. He worked at British Steel. He was a shop steward, a branch secretary, a regional council delegate, a Congress delegate, elected to the General Council of the TUC, Chair of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Committee, activist and, believe you me, a great trade unionist. It is sad to say that David suffered a stroke. His health restricts his involvement in trade union activities for the foreseeable future.

We, the GMB, felt it was right to honour David for his services to this Union. I am going to call on Andy Worth, his regional secretary, to come forward so that I can present the award. Thank you, Andy.

*(Presentation made amidst applause)*

BRO. A. WORTH (Regional Secretary, Midlands & East Coast): In receiving this gift on behalf of David Lascelles, you gave Congress a bit of a feel for what David did as an activist. He has been an activist in the Midlands & East Coast Region for quite some time and he acted nationally and internationally. I think the best way of describing David for those who do not know him, as sadly he has suffered a stroke and he is still suffering the effects of the stroke, as has been said, is to point out that not only can David not be here because of his ill-health but, typical of David, he wanted me to let Congress know that actually he did not want an award because he did not do what he did for reward. The best way of expression that is probably to read David's letter to myself when he was notified that the Union wanted to pay tribute to him.

He wrote: "Dear Andy, I write to express my regret at not being able to accept the kind award at the forthcoming GMB Congress. I had initially allowed my heart to rule my head and my heart will be in Blackpool still fighting for the rights of our members. Sadly, neither the local doctor, who it took some time to contact", so he has not given up fighting about the NHS, I guess, "nor the rest of the shell connected to this rather cold and cramped arm, believes in

accepting awards when my past efforts were intended solely for the benefit of others. I do not think that accepting awards is the right thing to do. If you happen to get the opportunity, please pass on my thanks to the Central Executive Council of the GMB and to Congress for their kindness in remembering me, but the driving force behind my past efforts was the awful tragedy of the '70s and '80s, of Aids and the appalling Section 28, which continued to guarantee that young people would die in this country. I do not think it is right to accept an award when so many of my friends have died in Scunthorpe alone. I accept and appreciate the kindness but few could really grasp today where the motivation that drove me on came from for that which is now history."

In reading David's own words, President, is the best way of paying tribute to him. David earned the respect of many throughout the world. Thank you for the gift.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Andy. *(Applause)*

Congress, I think that was a lovely way to end Congress today. The bucket collection for the *Wish Upon a Star* charity raised £367.12p. Many thanks to everyone who donated. I have just twisted the General Secretary's arm and I can assure the region that that will be doubled by the CEC. *(Applause)*

Colleagues, you know that tomorrow, I am sure you are aware, that we have the Prime Minister addressing Congress. It has been many years since we had a Prime Minister to address our Congress. Now, I am sure, like me, many of you will have issues, questions and concerns which you wish to raise. The Prime Minister will not be coming here to deliver a long speech. We have requested that he comes here to take questions from you and not long speeches. This Congress has a great history of being well organised and respectful to the guests we invite. Tomorrow, it will not be just the Prime Minister on show to the media but the GMB. We are not looking for you to pull punches.

I sincerely request that you handle this session in your usual courteous way. With regards to security, security will be a lot tighter tomorrow morning. There will be a bag search on entering into the ballroom so please come in with as little extra as possible. You will not be able to gain access without your credentials, so make sure you have your passes with you. The Prime Minister will give a short introduction, and then I will be calling regions in turn so that the delegates can ask their questions. I do not want too many questions on the same subject. I hope Congress has got the message. Please make sure that you state your name and where you are from, keep to your questions and do not make speeches or statements. Do not waste this great opportunity.

The doors will be opening a bit earlier tomorrow

morning at 8.30. Congress will start at 9.30 as scheduled.

*(Congress adjourned)*