

GMB – BRITAIN’S GENERAL UNION

PROCEEDINGS

at the

ANNUAL CONGRESS

The Brighton Centre, Brighton

on

Sunday, 3rd June 2007 – Thursday, 7th June 2007

FIFTH DAY

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FIFTH DAY'S PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY, 7TH JUNE 2007

MORNING SESSION

Congress assembled at 9.30 a.m.

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning, Congress. I hope you all had a good night last night. I would like to thank Browell Smith & Co., solicitors, for sponsoring the President's do last night, the group was absolutely great. This is just to say thank you very, very much indeed on behalf of Congress.

Colleagues, for those who missed last night, we raised £750 on the raffle and that is a credit to everyone. Thank you very much indeed. (*Applause*) I would like to thank Barbara, Brenda, and George, for the hard work they did on it while I have been sitting up here.

I will be taking the business carried over from yesterday after item 5 and the Congress local gift. The campaign on private equity is being featured in the Money Programme which will be shown tomorrow, Friday, on BBC2 at 7 o'clock, so please all watch it. OK?

I am going to move, and this is how I am going to proceed this morning ----

Point of Order.

BRO. V. WEST (London): Thanks, Mary. Congress, President, yesterday Congress voted on Motion 22 which sought to raise the mileage rate for members undertaking GMB business to 40 pence. Whilst Congress was still awaiting the result I am concerned that delegates voted, the majority on a free vote, without knowing from the CEC, whose spokesperson totally failed to mention it, how much the change to 40 pence per mile would cost the union. I therefore call on the General Secretary/Treasurer to make a statement to Congress informing us of the consequences of passing this motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Vaughan. Any other points?

BRO. I. LOWES (North West & Irish): In light of the decision yesterday to raise the mileage allowance to 40 pence, how are we going to pay for it? How much is it going to cost? I think we made the wrong decision.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ian. Can I call on the General Secretary, please, to reply? There is only one General Secretary, I hope, not unless there was another one created last night!

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Mary, Paul Kenny. Can I just say thanks for warning me! Look, you know, you are the Congress of the union. You are the

bosses. You are the bosses. If you tell me to put a red hat on and stick a feather up my arse, that's what I have to do! (*Laughter*)

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes, yes.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: That is the reality of it. (*Applause*) You did not pass that one; sorry! There is an emergency going in, yes. That is the reality of it. You take those decisions and you have to take the responsibility for those decisions, and you have to think about what you do before you do it. I think the mover of the resolution came up and said, "I hope Paul Kenny is not going to come here and say we have not budgeted for it." Actually, no, we had not because we did not believe we were going to go back to the point where people were going to vote a 60%-odd increase in allowances through.

I tell you this, what we cannot do and what I am not going to do, I am just not going to do it, and the senior management team are not going to do it, and the CEC is not going to do it, we are not going to put the union back into deficit and we are not going back to those bad old days. We ain't gonna do it! (*Applause*) I will tell you something else, it is your Congress and it is your union, and you will pass the rules, not me, but if you pass the position where you force the union into deficit then you will do it with a new General Secretary because I will not take the union down that road again. I will not do it. (*Applause*)

So you passed the resolution and we looked at it last night trying to work out how we are going to do it because we ain't got it in the budget. It is somewhere between £210,000 and £250,000 extra pounds. Sometimes you have to think about being responsible for what you do, you know. It is no good saying we cannot afford a contribution increase to maintain where we are and then vote to jack another quarter of a million up. It is collective responsibility in this that we are all about. So, we are going to have to find it. Branches get about £6.3m at the moment. The decision yesterday on contribution increases will put about another £200,000 extra into the branches. We do not know. All I can tell you is that it has to come from somewhere; whether it is from the wages budget and we will not employ as many people. Some of the things we wanted to do, some of the things you have told us to do this week, will not get done, or will be delayed. That is the reality of it. I am sorry but that is where we are at.

I will tell you what we will not do, we are not going to sacrifice the fight to save our members' jobs in Remploy, that is not going to be subject to a cut - (*Applause*) - and we are not going to "stinge" out on the basis of fighting for a decent wage for our members in public services. But I will be honest with you, it ain't a game. It is not a game. You cannot look at the union's finances in separate little pockets like somehow there is a chunk of money here and there is a chunk of money there; there is not. When you make a call, you charge us to do something about it, and it means we have to go back - we will have to go back with the Finance Committee - we have to try and find out how we can pay for it.

We will have to study the resolution. We will have to look at how regions can rely more on public transport for their delegates. Is there a better way of booking conference fares? If people are actually in that position that we are actually forcing

people to drive such vast amounts of miles that it is environmentally unfriendly, it is actually damaging to people, then I think we have to look at what we are asking them to do. We have to look at that. Lots of people in this union who give their time and effort week in, week out, do not claim a penny, by the way. They do not claim a penny.

All I say to you is, maybe the CEC should have said, and I accept the criticism, "Look, it is going to cost you a quarter of a million pounds." But I think the CEC thought, "No, there is no way, having got right, that somehow we will be asked to find another £210,000/£250,000." It is a 60%-odd increase. We will go back and we will try and do it. We will not be able to implement it until we actually go through the Finance Committee to see where the money can be found from other budgets, but I do say to you, if you are going to make spending decisions, remember, there is only one pot of money. There is no more.

So, we will either come back for higher contributions or you cut some of the projects that you want to do; you cannot have both. So, Mary, I am sorry, you cannot change it. The rules are that is what you did. If you want to do something else next year, well, that is up to you. I will finish where I started. It is your Congress, you are the bosses, if you vote for us to do something we will do it, but we have to have a responsibility, and I am not going to shirk it, that we are not putting this union back into deficit, ever. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much indeed, Paul. Can I now move to item 1, Public Services Section, but before I do, Teresa Forshaw, it is your birthday today. Happy Birthday from Congress. (*Applause*) Can I now ask Sharon Holder to move her section report, the NHS, pages 97-99. Sharon?

PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION REPORT: NHS (pages 97-99)

4. NHS

The public sector and particularly the NHS has, over the last 60 years, developed a culture and way of working, the public sector ethos, comprising of, among other things, compassion, pride in ones work, selflessness and a feeling of belonging to a worthwhile and much valued organisation.

That valued public sector culture is under threat by the twin forces of continued reform and progressive marketisation, including the privatisation of NHS Logistics, last September. These twin forces are a cause of concern to the GMB and our members working in the health service. Any lingering doubts about the government's intentions in respect of marketisation have now disappeared in the face of incontrovertible evidence that this government is fully intent on marketising all the public sector, not just the NHS.

GMB and its members are not opposed to reform but the way the reform programme has been handled in the NHS has inflicted unnecessary political damage. Since 1997, there have been 9 significant re-organisations and it is reckoned that each one sets back the organisations involved by a couple of years. In England, 2006 brought radical organisational shifts involving ambulance trusts, primary care trusts and strategic health authorities.

The 2006 Labour Party Conference carried the following motion. GMB continues to campaign for this approach to be adopted:

1. More time and flexibility be offered to Trusts and PCTs to achieve financial balance, to ensure that cuts are not made which damage local health provision and will incur wider costs later;
2. No further extension of payment by results until a full assessment of the consequences for the local health economy has been carried out;
3. The further outsourcing of services to the private sector, such as NHS Logistics, to be subject to review with full consultation throughout the Party and the NHS to consider the impact on trust budgets and the co-ordinated provision of services;
4. All NHS stakeholders, including patient groups and trade unions, to be fully consulted and included in policy discussions.
5. The Government to ensure that structures for patient and public involvement work effectively and that the public have a genuine say over commissioning and configuration decisions.

In January 2006, the Labour government's seventh health White Paper since coming to power, *'Our health, our care, our community – a new direction for community services'* was published. This, Patricia Hewitt, the Secretary of State for Health, called a 'fundamental shift' towards integrated services provided in local communities

The government's rationale for this shift is that it is popular (people want more convenience, better access and more local co-ordination between services); it is cost effective in the short term (avoiding costly hospital treatment); it is better quality (reflecting technological changes) and it will save money in the longer term (better prevention now will avoid costly illnesses later).

GMB continues to call the choice agenda into question. Giving patients choice is one of the Government's key political messages. But is that really what patients want from the NHS? People are quite interested in certain sorts of choice, but they are not very keen on going further away from home for treatment and they want a lot more information if they are to be given the opportunity to make decisions.

The Government has succeeded in upsetting large parts of the NHS workforce, much of which traditionally supported Labour. The investment of enormous sums of money into the NHS has not resulted in much political gain. The staff are worried that their terms and conditions will be undermined because of competition from private providers.

Despite much reduced waiting times, a huge hospital building programme and record volumes of clinical activity, the statement by Health Secretary, Patricia Hewitt, in April, that the NHS had "had it's best year ever," came across as completely out of touch with the mood of both the public and NHS staff. In June 2006, the Public Accounts Committee began an inquiry into the collapse of the Paddington Health Campus scheme, which has been described as a £900m PFI fiasco.

Agenda for Change, the comprehensive system of pay and grading, agreed in October 2004, is still not fully implemented, leaving NHS employing authorities questioning the government's commitment to Agenda for Change.

Pressure from The Treasury for the Department of Health to balance its budgets by the end of the financial year, ending in March 2007, and to recycle savings to pay for budget shortfalls, has created an atmosphere of uncertainty in the NHS: For a number of Trusts, a real deficit crisis! Some unable to meet the cost of their commitments and, consequently, they have cut services, jobs and plan major re-organisation of services leading, in some instances, to the downgrading of posts. This resulted in the NHS staff lobbying Parliament on 1 November 2006, hugely well attended by GMB members working in the NHS. Further local demonstrations are planned for 3 March 2007.

Political pressure from The Treasury was also brought to bear on the 2006 Nursing and Other Health Professional's pay review body process. A letter from the Secretary of State, Patricia Hewitt, sent to the Chair of the Review Body, strongly suggested that the Review Body should recommend no more than a 2% increase in its response to the Staff Side claim for a substantive increase in pay. This was resisted and an award of 2.5% was agreed.

SIS. S. HOLDER (National Officer): Congress, the NHS remains the highest profile public service sector. This year is the 60th anniversary of the NHS. This should be a time of great celebration and pride but it is with regret and disappointment that I am reporting that NHS staff are considering taking industrial action.

Pay is at the heart of NHS employees' discontent. The Treasury has imposed a 1.9% staged offer. I and my trade union colleagues spent years negotiating Agenda for Change for equal pay. I was proud of the agreement, I was proud to recommend it to GMB members. Congress, you can imagine my heartfelt disappointment in this Labour Government, our Labour government, a government we have supported and helped get elected, offering an offer worthy of Ebenezer Scrooge.

The members feel rightly insulted and appalled. We support them wholeheartedly in their legitimate claim for a decent pay increase above the level of inflation. GMB members were consulted earlier this year and voted 97% in favour of taking some form of industrial action. Other health service unions are also preparing to ballot their members.

There are various other issues highlighted in the report which are of great concern to our members: the issue of funding the NHS is continuing to have a direct impact on jobs. Many jobs have been lost through huge deficits arising in trusts that have been woefully mismanaged. The creeping privatisation of the NHS concerns us all and especially our members delivering this frontline public service. This is something we will continue to oppose to ensure the true nature of the NHS is maintained, a health service free at the point of use.

The Warwick Agreement still is yet to be implemented and contract staff are still not paid the same as NHS staff despite our agreement with the Department of Health and the CBI. The problems lie with the NHS employers. GMB will continue to campaign to ensure Tony Blair's commitment is honoured.

GMB's focus in the care sector remains largely with Southern Cross Healthcare. This has been an uphill struggle mainly due to the appalling levels of pay awarded to our members, which is just above the minimum wage.

The difference between health and the care sector is profound. Local authorities are currently top-slicing a percentage of central government funding to the sector. There is simply not enough money in this sector and this not only impacts on individual care but also on GMB members. We will continue to campaign for better funding, better pay, better quality care.

Lastly, I just want to inform Congress that some of my time is also allocated to the MoD. Our MoD membership currently sits in the engineering section but we aim to

transfer those Civil Service members to the Public Services Section. Congress, President, I move my report.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sharon. I will now take the report and if there are any questions on the report would you please raise your hands: pages 97, 98, and Which one are you on, 97? Come on then. Colleagues, today could I ask you, unless there is a real burning desire to second, because I do not like asking delegates to formally move their resolutions, if you can formally second it I would be grateful. Thank you.

BRO. R. GEORGE (Southern): I was pleased to hear Sharon's commitment in terms of what she was saying in terms of the pay and in terms of campaigning against the privatisation of the Health Service. There are just two things that I would draw Congress's attention to on page 97-98. The first is the use of the word "marketisation". Fair enough, I would use "privatisation". I think it is clearer and less ambiguous. More importantly, as far as I am concerned, is the statement at the bottom of page 97-98, where we are holding, "The 2006 Labour Party Conference carried the following motion. GMB continues to campaign for this approach to be adopted".

I think when Mr. Brown came to see us the other day Mary asked him quite frankly --

THE PRESIDENT: -- a question on Sharon's report. We know what Mr. Brown said.

BRO. R. GEORGE: Right, Sharon, given the light of Mr. Brown's clear commitment to continue with PFI and the modernisation which is a privatisation programme, do you not think it is untenable to maintain a position where we are endorsing Labour Conference policy in relation to the Health Service? We need something a bit more.... You get the drift.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Page 98 and 99. Mick Rix? Sharon?

SIS. S. HOLDER (National Officer): Thank you, President. Rufus, I probably agree with you, actually. The term "marketisation" is one I would prefer not to use in future and I will not, and I did not in my report. In relation to the report itself, dealing with our commitments from the Labour Party, I think it is my job to ensure that the policies that we have agreed are the ones that we ensure are implemented. If the Labour Party Conference decides or the GMB decides at the Labour Party Conference that we will take a different route, then we will.

What I am doing here is reporting on the activities over the last 12 months and since that Labour Party motion, or resolution, was passed, I might add, we have had closer working relationships with the Department of Health through a social partnership forum and a more closer working relationship directly with the Secretary of State. So in terms of what we have done so far over the last 12 months, I think we have ensured that that policy implementation has taken place. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sharon. I now move to item 2, and I will be calling Motions 60, Composite 23, Composite 24, Composite 25, Composite 26, and Motion 243, and Composite 27. OK, colleagues?

SOCIAL POLICY: NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

MOTION 60

VIOLENCE AT WORK

Congress instructs the Union to press the Government to extend the minimum penalties against those who assault health workers, to all workers who suffer violence and abuse.

NOTTINGHAM COMMUNITY BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Carried)

BRO. M. WIDDISON (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, Congress acknowledges the announcement by Patricia Hewitt at last year's Public Service Conference in Nottingham that members of the public who assault health workers face a minimum penalty of £1,000. It is a start but only a start. This motion calls for this minimum penalty to be widened to cover workers from all industries who suffer sometimes daily abuse.

At Nottingham Trams from April 2005 to February 2007 there were 53 physical assaults, and 298 serious verbal assaults were reported as well. This is in a company of 130 frontline staff. It is also recognised that not all incidents are reported as members feel that nothing will happen to the offenders. But it is not just tram members who suffer. We have known of plumbers who have needed a police escort to service a boiler and taxi drivers not knowing what is going to happen on the end of their shift. We heard about the airport workers the other day, the security staff, retail workers, council workers, and many more, all working with the threat of violence and not knowing when it will be their turn.

As I have said, this is only a start and any laws that are passed need to be enforced as well. In my area I do not know of any fines that have been issued under this law. The Government claims to be tough on crime and this motion is a simple easy way to help deter the threat to our members. Please support. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder?

BRO. B. HELEY (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, no one should have to suffer violence or abuse at work. There need to be measures in place to protect them. The Health Service has £100,000 fines. Hospitals can use the red card and refuse treatment to violent patients. Pubs and clubs can bar violent customers from all the towns. Violent members of the public can be banned from public building areas but what about the other frontline staff, as Mick said, trams, public transport, they are naming just a few. They have nothing in place. Why not? Equal opportunities has been given a big push. What is more equal than fairness for all? This motion seeks to exert pressure on the Government to give protection to all. I second.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Birmingham & West Midlands to move Composite 23, Yorkshire & North Derbyshire to second.

COMPOSITE MOTION 23

(Covers Motions 234 and 235)

234 – NHS – (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region)

235 – National Health Service – (Birmingham & West Midlands Region)

NHS

Congress reminds the Government of the original intention of the NHS 'Free at the Point of Need'. Congress believes that the introduction of Foundation Trust Hospitals heralds the death-knell of the NHS and calls on the Government to bring back control of all hospitals under state control.

(Carried)

BRO. T. HACKETT (Birmingham & West Midlands): Foundation Trusts are hospitals which are part of the NHS in England. They seem to have more common sense in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland where they have a significant amount of managerial and financial freedom. The introduction of these foundation trusts represents a profound change in the history of the NHS and the way in which hospital services are managed and provided. For example, they will be able to borrow from the private sector, retain their services, keep all money from the sale of land and assets, and also to exercise a greater degree of flexibility in setting pay and benefit packages for all their staff.

It is widely known by activists employed in the NHS that management believe that this will be to the detriment of the unions. Why have national pay awards? At present all NHS trusts have recognition agreements in place meaning that all bargaining has to be done with the unions/organisations. With foundation trusts non-unionised members who for years have been the bane of our bloody life will now have seats on trust boards and they will be able to undertake some bargaining. I urge any member here who has a foundation trust in their area to please put their name forward to be a foundation trust member.

When I first went to our foundation trust hospital I met the Amicus Regional President. He was that far up the backside of the Chief Executive you could see the bloody soles of his feet. We do not want union members like that on the trust, we want people who will speak out for us.

NHS staff support the reform that delivers better patient care but this has been replaced by untested rapid changes with no staff involvement. This fragmentation of the NHS threatens the NHS values that bind it together. The Government's relentless changes and preference for privatisation is causing growing concern and frustration amongst staff who want the NHS to succeed, but they feel, and rightly so, that their views have not been taken into account.

Unless this Government listen to those working in the front line and work in partnership with those they rely on to deliver change, it is undermining the principle on which the NHS was built. Patricia Hewitt, a lovely woman, but she must live in cuckoo land. She has stated that this is the best year ever for the NHS. It is not the NHS I work in. There is no need to bring in the private sector to show NHS staff how

to do their jobs but with the right policies, right resources, and if we could find them good management, they are world-beaters.

People delivering end-user public services want better quality service, not more choice. We welcome better funding of these vital services but we do not believe that more privatisation is the answer. All the evidence and experience shows that when services are run for private profit the quality of care is reduced and the public service ethos is replaced by a hardnosed profit motive.

Most foundation hospitals, and as of March 2007 there were 59, are restricted in their ability to charge for healthcare services but they will have considerable ability to charge for other services not directly related. I so move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Yorkshire & North Derbyshire? Morning, Pam.

SIS. P. ROSS (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, visitors, and guests, the National Health Service was created in July 1948 just in time for my sister to be born, had she not chosen to arrive in a military hospital. So, whatever happened to those principles laid down almost 60 years ago, everybody being eligible for care free at the point of need - long gone, if you read recent news items.

The British Medical Association said, resources are finite, the NHS must stick to core services. Core services, what does that mean? An apple a day keeps the doctor away? Doctors at York Hospital have expressed alarm at the drastic NHS cuts. An internal email detailed doctors' grave concerns about a seismic change in local healthcare, potential danger to patients as NHS managers attempt to claw back millions in debt. It said with this degree of poor planning and hoping for the best it approaches criminal negligence.

Then there is the 10-year old boy, could not have a dental check-up as the dental surgery had used up all its NHS allocation two months in advance, but that pales into insignificance beside the man told by our primary care trust he cannot have the drugs he needs to save his life. There is a woman in the Wrens, paid taxes all her working life, cannot get an eye operation on the NHS. A free NHS is a mirage, say doctors.

A study claims patients pay to get better treatment or to escape waiting lists and postcode lotteries. We have seen Charles Clarke calling for some level of charging for NHS services. Why should the ordinary patient have to pay to be ill? Surely, being ill is bad enough without having to worry about how you are going to pay for it. What about the mistakes, the maladministration that has taken place? "£500m too much paid for drugs," shouts the newspaper headline. There are huge disparities in the system and worst affected are the most deprived, the most likely to suffer from health problems, and the least likely to get the healthcare they need. My sister is coming up to 60 being fit and healthy and it is a pity the NHS is not, too.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Pam. Composite 24, North West & Irish Region to move and London Region to second.

COMPOSITE MOTION 24

(Covering Motions 236 and 237)

236 – National Health Service – (North West & Irish Region)

237 – National Health Service Finances – (London Region)

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE FINANCES

A lot of money has been invested by the Government in the past 5 – 6 years into the NHS, but the situation has not changed. In fact, its deterioration has escalated. It seems no matter what money is invested, conditions continue to get worse.

We know a lot has been spent upgrading facilities, but this money comes from a separate budget. Staff numbers, according to various sources, have been drastically reduced. So where is the money going to. So who is responsible for monitoring the use of the money invested, as there is no point in funding something if patients are not benefiting from the services the money has been given to provide. It is time the Government investigated how the money is spent.

Congress agrees the inability of up to 175 National Health Service Organisations to break even despite stringent cuts to services and staff is testimony to the incompetence of their management.

The past year has seen monumental increases in payments to consultants, temporary doctors, agency nurses, private contractors and fat cat payoffs to failed executives and for what? More ward closures. More A & E departments axed. More MRSA. More redundancies for our members. And more misery and less care for patients.

The government claims it has provided more and more cash for the NHS. If that is true then failure of an NHS Trust to provide its obligatory services and balance the books must be the fault of the trust management.

Congress calls upon the CEC to make urgent representation to the government to hold these failed NHS trusts to account and to ensure they are replaced with management teams who can deliver.

(Carried)

SIS. R. SOWERBY (North West & Irish): I am a first time delegate and speaker at Congress. *(Applause)* Thank you. Congress, millions of pounds have been invested in the NHS in the last five to six years and, unfortunately, as we all know, the situation has continued to deteriorate, conditions do not improve irrespective of how much money is invested. Why is this? Is it because we pay large sums of money to private companies to carry out work within the hospitals or is it the increase in salaries to managers of trusts, or the wages paid to agency staff at premium rates, or, Congress, is it all of the above?

Staff numbers, we are told, have been drastically reduced so where is the money going? It is your money, it is my money, and it is taxpayers' money. Who is responsible for monitoring the money being invested? There is no point in this funding if we have no way of tracking it and our patients are not feeling the benefits. We have lots of questions and very, very few answers. We are aware that some of the facilities in hospitals and NHS are being upgraded but this money is being provided from a separate budget.

Congress, please support this motion in asking for answers to the questions. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Well done. London Region? Formally? Thank you very much indeed.

Composite Motion 24 was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now ask the mover of Composite 25 to be moved by London and seconded by London.

COMPOSITE MOTION 25

(Covering Motions 238 and 239)

238 – NHS Job Losses – (London Region)

239 – National Health Service – (London Region)

NHS JOB CUTS

Congress is appalled that a Labour Government has overseen redundancies and mass deletion of posts within the NHS. We demand that this cease with immediate effect, and that the GMB campaign vigorously on this issue.

Congress deplores the lack of no job security particularly midwifery nurses at the end of their training.

Congress calls on the CEC to campaign against job cuts which affect our much needed nurses.

(Carried)

BRO. J. ISAACS (London): President, Congress, I am not a nurse and I do not work in the National Health but because I believe this motion to be of the utmost importance I sought the advice of a student nurse who is in her third and final year of training. She said, “Instead of giving you advice I will write the motion for you,” so here it is in her own words.

She said: Currently the Government puts approximately £40,000 into training one nurse. It takes three years of training to be qualified as a nurse and then to go on the National Register. Nurse training has changed over the past few years and has now become much more academic recognising the fact that nurses today are professionals in their own right. Their career is one of continuing lifelong learning and to enable them to stay on the National Register education is continuous. Therefore, we are now taught at universities through integrated study of theory and supervised nursing practice. During the three years of training the student nurse has to complete 50% of training on practice placements in the community setting, including children, adults, and mental health and learning disability placements.

Nursing as we know is a 24-hour a day, seven day a week, 365 days a year profession. This means the student nurse will be working all types of shift patterns, including night shifts. Nowadays nurses do not have to be working in acute mental health

wards to be abused both mentally and physically by patients. This is now a common and everyday occurrence.

At the end of the three years in the current climate there are no jobs. Seven out of 10 nurses will not find work. In addition, the hospital staff banks or agencies are not able to give you any work due to no funds. During this long arduous training student nurses are constantly being told there is no money and there are no jobs. Apart from the low morale building up around nurses, we must also ask is the situation going to put patients at risk? The answer is yes.

On one occasion the sister in charge of a ward suffering herself from laryngitis at 6.30 in the evening said that she had not had a break since 7.30 that morning. Why? Not enough nurses on the ward. Instead of the priorities being health and wellbeing of patients, nurses and doctors are constantly under pressure by continuously ensuring that patients are not kept waiting longer than the Government recommended waiting times.

For example, a patient in an A&E department can only be there four hours. If they exceed this it affects the figures for the hospital resulting in less money in the following year's budget. There are people actually employed in the National Health to walk around hospital departments with clipboards checking times. Would it not be more beneficial to patients if this money was spent employing more nurses?

It is no different in midwifery. The Minister of Health, Patricia Hewitt, recently announced plans that midwifery is changing. Hurray, I hear you say. There will be more home births, she says. So, are women expected to deliver at home without a midwife? Well, they must be because she said there is a desperate shortage of midwives.

By the year 2012 there will be a shortage of nurses as many are due to retire. Unless something is done now to help and encourage and support staff nurses the shortage will be upon us much sooner. Surely having this huge shortfall of qualified nurses will put patients at risk and although I have highlighted the situation for student nurses and midwives, the same scenario applies throughout the National Health.

After talking to the student nurse, who happened to be my daughter, I said, "Can I ask you one question: if the pay is so poor and the hours and shifts are so long, you get mentally and physically abused and there are no jobs, why on earth do you want to become a nurse?" The answer came back without hesitation, "Because I care about people." Please support the motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Jo. Secunder? Thank you.

Composite Motion 25 was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now move to Composite 26, NHS Cleaning Contracts, to be moved by Northern Region, and London to second, priority in debate will be given to South Western Region.

COMPOSITE MOTION 26

(Covering Motions 240, 241, and 242)

240 – NHS Cleaning Contracts – (South Western Region)

241 – MRSA Hospital Cleaning – (Northern Region)

242 – Hospital Superbugs – (London Region)

NHS CLEANING CONTRACTS- MSRA

Congress Believes the recent announcement that the NHS will fail to meet its target of reducing MRSA infections by 50% by April 2008 is completely unacceptable. It is unacceptable that patients must take part in a form of Russian roulette with MRSA and other super bugs taking the place of the bullet in the gun. Congress agrees that pressure must be brought to bear on the NHS and the Government to eradicate these superbugs by increasing research, investment and investigation and, where negligence on the part of the cleaning contractor is found, severe financial penalty must be imposed on these contractors.

Congress calls upon the CEC to monitor what action is being taken against companies operating cleaning contracts who do not reach the standard of cleanliness required in hospitals and care homes. This is of utmost importance where people's lives are at stake and this should be constantly assessed and where a high level of standard is not reached that the powers are in place to withdraw that contract and wherever possible return the contract "in-house."

Congress calls for an Independent Public Enquiry into the standards of hospital cleaning and the increase in cases of deaths related to MRSA and other treatment resistant viruses. The above enquiry should include within its remit the fact that over £100million was spent by hospital trusts on public art works in 2005/2006 and the impact that expenditure would have in saving lives if diverted to cleaning hospitals. Congress believes that all hospital cleaning should be brought back in-house to be employed as direct labour.

(Carried)

BRO. G. ROWLEY (Northern): Congress, the presence of MRSA and other superbugs in our hospitals is a national disgrace. Hospitals should be places of safety, places designed and operated to the highest of standards, places where we can trust that our loved ones will be looked after and cared for in a safe and above all clean environment. Instead, colleagues, all too often our hospitals are havens of dirt and disease where otherwise fit and healthy people who are in hospital for a specific reason are subjected to dangers of killer bugs.

Congress, thousands and thousands of tabloid pages, in hours of parliamentary debate, have been devoted to the subject of MRSA. The Health Secretary has issued instructions from on high, targets have been set and repeatedly missed and yet, Congress, the answer is very simple, hospital infections are caused by dirty hospitals and dirty hospitals are caused by outsourcing work to private cleaning contractors. Their major concern is profit and not the care of patients because, Congress, that is what private companies are all about, profit. It is not their fault, it is what they do. Their interests are the interests of their shareholders and their shareholders' interests are to make as much money as possible, as quickly as possible, and if a few patients die as a result, tough, it is not their fault.

No, Congress, the fault lies with the politicians. They are the ones elected to care for the health of the nation. They are not responsible to shareholders, they are responsible to us. Congress, in 2005 and 2006 the National Health Service spent over £100m installing artworks in hospitals and in addition spent many more millions on plush new offices and fancy facilities for senior managers, and yet year in, year out, the budgets for hospital cleaning are cut and cut and cut again.

President, surely the time has come to say enough is enough. We the taxpayers demand an independent public inquiry into the state of our hospitals. We want cleanliness before profit. Congress, I urge you to support Motion 26. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. London Region? Thank you.

Composite Motion 26 was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Does South Western Region wish to come in on the debate? (*Confirmed formally supporting*) Thank you. Can I ask for the mover of 243, National Institute for Health & Clinical Excellence (NICE), Southern Region to move.

MOTION 243

243. NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH & CLINICAL EXCELLENCE (NICE)

This Congress recognises the good work undertaken by "NICE" in licensing new drug use by the NHS and ensuring that new drugs are properly tested.

We also recognise the pressure applied to "NICE" by multi-national drug companies to licence every new drug, regardless of cost.

However, this Congress is concerned that "NICE" does not take into consideration quality of life when considering new drugs.

This often results in patients suffering unnecessarily during the last months or years of their lives. This criteria has stopped the licensing of Alimta, a drug that assists patients with asbestosis and industrial disease. Without this drug many people will suffer unfairly.

Congress calls on the CEC to lobby the government and "NICE" to licence Alimta and other similar drugs that improve the quality of life for terminally ill patients.

CROYDON C60 BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

SIS. B. TERRY (Southern): President, Congress, I know my colleagues recognise the good work that is being undertaken by NICE concerning the use of drugs being used properly. However, we would like to see patients that are suffering from long-term and terminal illnesses to be helped with the quality of life improvements and pain relief. They should be given the help they need, certainly they deserve it. Things that you or I take for granted, a walk to the shops, a day trip out, even a holiday, this could alter their lives so much for the better. People suffering from asbestos related cancer

having to re-mortgage their homes, some even having to sell them to pay for treatment they should be entitled to, how can this be right?

One example, a war veteran being forced to pay with his life savings for his eye condition and when his money runs out faced with blindness, how can this be acceptable? There are too many examples to name. I could mention lots and lots more but instead will ask for your support.

I have one more thing to say before I go. Since the Congress there has been a breakthrough and one cancer drug is now going to be available. Let's hope there will be more to follow. I would like to add a similar motion was done last year by the Birmingham Region. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder? Formally? Speak to Mary. Thank you.

Motion 243 was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Can I ask the movers of Composite 27, Birmingham & West Midlands to move and London Region to second.

COMPOSITE MOTION 27

(Covering Motions 244 and 245)

244 – Prescription Medicines – (London Region)

245 – NHS Care Provision – (Birmingham & West Midlands Region)

PRESCRIPTION MEDICINES AND POSTCODE LOTTERY

Congress says that all male and females should be entitled to all drugs and treatment for life threatening illnesses and it is morally wrong for treatments to only be available in some areas and not in others creating a post code treatment zone.

Congress calls on the CEC to use its entire political links to stop the post code provision of CPAP machines on the NHS for people suffering from Obstructive Sleep Apnoea. These machines are vital life support need for our members who suffer this condition and stop breathing during their sleep. They also ensure that people have a night's deep sleep and do not constantly partially wake up during the night leaving them liable to fall asleep at any time during their waking day. The dangers of this are that they may fall asleep whilst driving or operating machinery putting other people's lives at risk.

(Carried)

BRO. C. MURRAY (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, we cannot allow the provision of lifesaving NHS equipment and drugs to be controlled by where you live creating a postcode lottery. I will talk about equipment, mainly CPAP machines, which I know very well. The seconder was going to talk about drugs, I do not know whether she will be coming up or not, but whatever I say applies equally to drugs.

I was personally very lucky when I required treatment for sleep apnoea; because they did not do anything in my health area I was referred to a neighbouring one and received the equipment free of charge. It was only at a later date, a much later date, that I discovered members of my branch who suffered were being charged between

£800 and £1,000, causing financial hardship and having to do without because they could not afford to pay. These machines are only guaranteed for five years and the pipes and masks are not guaranteed at all.

The action of not using CPAP machines put the individual at risk of dying in their sleep or from road and traffic accidents, or when using dangerous machinery. It also puts others in danger of serious injury or death. I suffer. I know that you do not know when you are going to fall asleep with this disease. I did it on several occasions. This machine has saved my life and it hurts me when I know that a lot of my brothers and sisters out there who are paying contributions to this union have either had to suffer financially or cannot afford them.

Mind you, there is a lot of people wish that I was dead and I probably increased that this week! Anyone who is diagnosed and does not have a machine because they cannot afford to purchase will have their driving licence suspended by the DVLA and their insurance will be null and void, a matter our colleague down there, the Branch Secretary for the Professional Drivers, might wish to take note of.

There is also an extra cost on the NHS because not using these machines puts extra strain on your body, giving risks of strokes, heart attacks, and other respiratory diseases. Should our members be put at risk because they do not live in the right postcode area? I would just like to finish by saying that a road and traffic fatality costs this country over a million pounds. How many bloody machines will that buy? I move. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. London Region to second? Thank you very much, Ed.

Composite 27 was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now ask for the mover of 246, NHS Information Technology (IT), GMB Scotland.

MOTION 246

NHS INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)

Congress calls on GMB to campaign within the NHS for compatibility of IT systems across the Service to ensure that records can be accessed quickly and thus treatment started immediately.

As it stands NHS Health Boards and trusts buy independent computer systems and telephone systems to meet their own individual requirements within their operational areas.

These systems are incompatible with neighbouring boards and trusts – even less so across the NHS generally.

This leads to delays in the transfer of medical records and prescribed medication that an individual may be on. This information is critical in dealing with emergencies and in turn increases the time that an individual has to spend in triage awaiting the arrival of this information.

Within internal operational areas there is often a mixture of analogue and digital systems and this again causes operational difficulties.

(Carried)

SIS. A. DEAN (GMB Scotland): GMB must campaign for compatibility of IT systems across the organisational boundaries within the NHS for the following reasons. For the past decade despite the efforts of policy documents and IT investment within the system, health boards continue to purchase communication systems which meet their own very specific needs rather than taking the commonsense approach of looking at the whole region or country. Such an approach would cut costs, waiting times, reduce bureaucracy, and save lives.

Workers must be accessed quickly for reasons of accuracy and effectiveness. Medical records in particular should be available across primary and secondary care settings to ensure early diagnosis and access to treatment available to patients within reasonable timescales. This would prevent stressful and costly delays in treatment. No multinational company would survive in today's world with the lack of IT infrastructure that currently exists in the NHS. What was acceptable only a few years ago has become totally unacceptable due to the way the public use information technology, and this perception is not wrong.

Too often we hear of people being left in the dark for too long waiting to hear potentially bad news. Too often we hear of people being left in corridors and Accident & Emergency Departments while staff search for vital clues as to what is known about a patient and what has been tried and tested previously. In fact, it would be easier and quicker for staff to run a credit check on patients.

This is unacceptable in today's world and by today's standards. Recent stories have been flooding the news about the misfortune of individuals who have been treated too late or not at all due to the lack of available information about their care needs. Consultants letters can and do take weeks to reach GPs who are in the meantime left struggling to help patients with unexplained symptoms, and they are at times unable to offer any treatment for fear of complicating the patient's condition even more.

Much is made of confidentiality around the access and storage of medical records within the professions and to some extent this is justified but it is also used as an elitist means of gaining power and privilege within the system. NHS staff are also left embarrassed and losing their jobs when complaints are being directed at them, quite unfairly but quite understandably, by frustrated and dissatisfied long-suffering patients and relatives. People are unable to move on and get on with their lives. This is a drain on the wider resources such as the benefits system and the economy. It erodes the confidence of staff and de-motivates everyone in the system.

There is no point in speeding up the thinking of NHS professionals through training and development when simple diagnostic results are unobtainable due to systems that are, in my terms, steam-driven. The Government needs to take a reality check of the scandalous under-investment in the NHS despite what they claim to have done over the past 10 years. We in the NHS have been on overdrive trying to make up for what the Tories did all those years ago. The time has passed for excuses and casting blame,

the Government needs to wake up and smell the coffee, or should it be the cappuccino. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder?

SIS. E. McLAUGHLIN (GMB Scotland) seconding Motion 246 said: President, Congress, we do have excellent IT in the NHS. This Labour Government has committed billions of pounds in modernising communication in the NHS through information technology. Unfortunately, it is not fully joined up and used to its full potential. For example, in my workplace the technology is in place and we can access expertise of healthcare professionals through videolinks, etc. yet in another hospital that I cover it takes three weeks for a letter to go from the ground floor to the first floor because of an archaic system that some consultants insist on using, ignoring the technology that is available to them.

It is not enough for the Government to simply provide the technology, government ministers must ensure that it is used to its full capacity thus effecting a faster, more streamlined service. Utilising IT properly will lessen the stress patients endure by minimising the timescale for test results, etc. More importantly, it has the potential to save more lives. Please support this motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Liz, can I say welcome back to Congress, and it is good to see you looking so well. Welcome. (*Applause*) Colleagues, I am now going to ask is there anyone that wishes to come up in this debate?

BRO. A. HUTCHINGS (Southern): Strongly supporting my colleague on Composite 27. I suffer from obstructive sleep apnoea. Up until six years ago my life was pretty rough. I did not know what was wrong with me. You go to the doctor and he would say it is stress, "Oh, don't worry." I was falling asleep all the time. I fell asleep on trains, fell asleep in the doctor's surgery, fell asleep in the dentist's, fell asleep in church, fell asleep in the cinema, so I was falling asleep in pretty good places. On the railways it was a problem because I used to miss my stops. When I got back to Weymouth my good colleagues in the RMT were pretty used to me and they used to wake me up. What do I do? I finally had a doctor who said to me, "You've got sleep apnoea." I said, "What is that?" So I looked on the internet and there are pages and pages on sleep apnoea. He said, "I will refer you to the sleep clinic." There is a problem with the sleep clinic because it takes up to six months to get referred. In the meantime, I lost six stone in weight, I had to. I went to the slimming clinic with about 50 ladies and I was the only male in the class, so I had a good time!

THE PRESIDENT: I was going to say, I hope you are not complaining!

BRO. A. HUTCHINGS: No. (*Laughter*) I thoroughly enjoyed myself losing six stone. I have not done too well this week. But then I was ----

THE PRESIDENT: You did not sleep through it, did you?

BRO. A. HUTCHINGS: No, no. (*Laughter*) I finally went to the sleep clinic and my life changed, I was given one of these CPAP breathing machines. I am trying to get used to using one of those, it is very hard, but it has saved my life. The worst possible

thing is when the Secretary of State sends you a notice to say, “The Secretary of State revokes your driving licence.” I lost my driving licence for six months. I strongly support my colleague on Composite 27. Yesterday there was a £505m surplus in the National Health Service yet we cannot give these machines to people. I have one but there are other people suffering. Do not let them suffer.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. A very serious subject and I know we were flippant there a bit.

BRO. D. SUTCLIFFE (North West & Irish) speaking to Composite 26 said: I apologise if people feel I do not appreciate you want to get on. I totally support the contents and the issues about the motions but MRSA and C-Diff (if that is the correct word for it and I will be corrected if I am wrong) is not just a cleaning issue. It is a cleaning issue because obviously dirty hospitals create the issue but it is not only the cleaners, it is methods and procedures that hospitals use by having a pen, going from one patient to another, touching them, and not making sure their hands are clean. There are other issues on MRSA, it is not just cleaning. Yes, I support the motion but take that on board. My wife is a domestic – that is not the right word, she will kill me – in a spinal unit and she is aware of these issues, but it is not just cleaning. Thank you.

BRO. S. HATTON (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): We have talked a lot about difficult companies at this Congress and I just want to say that foundation trusts can be as difficult as anyone. In the trust where I work they have recently introduced a workforce strategy that involved a number of highly skilled operating department practitioners and lead nurses being downgraded. These 40 highly skilled people would not accept that and recently took one day of action, industrial action that is. Other trusts are looking at this situation at my particular trust and if they win this battle it could be rolled out across the NHS and what will happen is your loved ones will be getting cared for with low skill levels and not high-skilled operating practitioners and lead nurses. You must support this motion. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague.

A SPEAKER FROM THE FLOOR: Mine is just an observation. It is to do with Composite 24, about the finances and the spending. My husband last year went into an NHS hospital to have his hip done. Everything has turned out all right. He is fine now. But a colleague and a colleague’s husband at work also went into hospital to have their hips done by the NHS but they did not do it, they sent them to BUPA, which obviously must be very expensive; they have a consultant all the time, and they are checked on more, and they are given more physio, etc. This is to keep the waiting lists down. The cost to the NHS must be colossal. Surely this is not right.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Just on that last point, my understanding of the rules is that if you are sent to another hospital or BUPA, the same cost is paid to them as it costs in an NHS hospital. That is my understanding. Anyone else?

BRO. R. GEORGE (Southern): With reference to Composite Motion 24, I think delegates are absolutely right to point out the recent job losses the Employers Confederation estimated around Christmastime was about 20,000. It is also right to

emphasise the huge sums of money going to the health service. It was not quite correct to say the Government is not aware of where that money is going. In an answer to a parliamentary question from the Shadow Health Minister the Government put the cost of the Private Finance Initiative at £45bn, that is the cost of 83 hospital building projects worth £8bn will total around £53bn under PFI, and this is enough to reverse the present cuts and lay a firm foundation for the future of the NHS.

My one concern, and I completely support the sympathies put by that composite motion but it is in 237, is the last paragraph, “Congress calls the CEC to make urgent representations to government to hold these failed N HS trusts to account and to ensure they are replaced with management teams who can deliver.” That is precisely what has happened in our trust, we have had a turnaround team in, and what they did was pushed for 500 redundancies and they pushed for £15m worth of cuts this year, £28m next year, and £32m the year after. The Chief Executive went. Unfortunately, that is the strategy the Government is pursuing in order to push through privatisation and really to clear the ground by redundancies for the private sector.

So, although I agree with the sentiments of that motion, I would urge that that is a mistaken strategy and I would urge that last paragraph be removed.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. We cannot remove paragraphs from a resolution because they have been cleared and signed by the regions and the delegates. That is not our priority. We cannot do it, I just looked at the note. OK? Can I now move to the vote? I am looking to see if there is anyone else. Motion 60, Composite 23, Composite 24, Composite 25, Composite 26, Motion 243, Composite 27, and Motion 246, can I put those to the vote, colleagues? All those in favour please show? Anyone against? They are carried.

(Motion 60 was carried.)

(Composite Motion 23 was carried.)

(Composite Motion 24 was carried.)

(Composite Motion 25 was carried.)

(Composite Motion 26 was carried.)

(Motion 243 was carried.)

(Composite Motion 27 was carried.)

(Motion 246 was carried.)

THE PRESIDENT: Can we now move to Social Policy: Welfare Rights & Services. I will be calling Composite 28, Midland to move, Yorkshire & North Derbyshire to second, and then I will be calling Eileen Theaker to reply. Thank you.

SOCIAL POLICY: WELFARE RIGHTS & SERVICES

COMPOSITE MOTION 28

(Covering Motions 259 and 261)

259 – Care Home Standards – (Midland & East Coast Region)

261 – Retirement Homes – (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region)

CARE HOME STANDARDS AND INSPECTIONS

Congress believes that increased pressure should be directed at the present Government on the plight of people having to depend on after care in homes and that better inspections should be made to guarantee better conditions.

Therefore Congress agrees to lead a campaign within the TUC and Wider Trade Union Movement to ensure that this Government implements enforceable standards of care in residential / nursing homes that are rigorous enough to ensure:

- proper administration of medication
- staffing ratios that are adequate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- proper cleaning / hygiene standards
- all bedrooms in new build to be ensuite

(Carried)

BRO. B. HELEY (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, I am not sure how many people keep abreast of the media reports on the care sector. Some of the documentaries and reports are horrific. Staffing levels and training are amongst the issues most often raised by the staff in the sector. Due to funding restraints homes are only staffed to the legal minimum. This is causing undue stress to the staff involved. They cannot physically give the care they feel is needed or that the residents deserve. One of the effects to the residents is lack of stimulation. With insufficient staff on the floor to assist them, at times they just sit round the communal areas staring at each other or staring into space, some are totally switched off and just stare at walls. Congress, where is the dignity and respect in that?

A lot of homes are staffing to the old system of 1:5, 1:8, or 1:10. One coroner reported the death of a resident to both the Government and to Csky. He stated it could have been avoided if sufficient staff had been on shift to cater for the residents' needs. At night the staffing levels are the most dangerous. You can have three staff looking after 30-plus residents. This is spread over two floors. Because of the way regulations stand at the present time, you do not need as many staff during night-time hours.

To move and toilet residents normally takes two care staff. As these are the only staff in the building at night, they not only have to care for the residents, they also are responsible for the security of the building as well as the residents and themselves. Some of this can be blamed on the Government for not giving strict enforceable staffing levels but the rest is due to councils' fiscal policy where they are trying to balance their budgets so only the most severe are being funded. This in itself has put even more demands and strain on the staff who are already struggling to cope with the increased needs of the residents.

Proper funding is also required to ensure thorough training in the safe use of the administration of medicines. Mistakes are being made but only the most serious hit the headlines. The staff responsible administering the drugs in a lot of cases are not nurses, they are carers; they have not had the four years training that is required of a nurse. In some cases they may have only received a couple of hours training before being thrown into the deep end. Most of you will be aware of MRSA and C-Diff from the NHS. Well, Congress, it also applies to care homes. Cleaning and hygiene standards need to be closely monitored as an aid to reducing normally the headline grabbers but there are other contagious diseases that can affect the staff.

Bedrooms in the new-builds need to include en-suite facilities to give residents more privacy and dignity instead of being stuck in the middle of the bedroom on a commode. Congress, as you are aware, we have an increasing elderly population who have worked all their lives and paid their dues and demands for the upkeep of the country. It is only fair that the country pays that debt with decent care and conditions for what little time they have left in this world. Congress, I move.

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

Composite Motion 28 was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Can I call Eileen Theaker or does anyone wish to come in on the debate before I do that? (*No response*) No. Thank you. Eileen?

SIS. E. THEAKER (CEC, Public Services): Congress the CEC supports Composite Motion 28 but with the qualifications that I am about to give. Motion 259 calls for a number of measures, including staffing ratios that are adequate 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and for all bedrooms in new-build to be en-suite. The first qualification is that the key issue for GMB concerns the staffing notice in this document which sets out staffing levels required, but it is not a public document and it is not shared with our workplace representatives and officers.

The second qualification is that the requirement for en-suite facilities for new-build has been in place since 2002. The CEC asks Congress to support Composite Motion 28 subject to those two qualifications. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Eileen. Does the region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Can I put Composite 28 to the vote? All those in favour please show? Anyone against? That is carried. Thank you.

(Composite Motion 28 was carried.)

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now move to Motions 260, 262, 263, 264, and 265. I then will be calling Composite 29, and be asking Trevor Fellows to reply on behalf of the CEC. John?

MOTION 260

NURSING AND CARE HOMES

This Congress demands more funding from the Government to feed our elderly people in nursing and care homes.

MANCHESTER 101 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

BRO. J. McDONNELL (North West & Irish): Congress, in a society where it is boasted there is more opportunity for old people and amongst claims that diversity and appreciation for everyone is now more prevalent than ever before, why is it then

that the most vulnerable and valuable part of our communities have been left abandoned by the very people that they hope will support them? In January this year the Commission for Social Care show that 1,538 care homes are failing to meet key targets on meals and mealtimes. Homes are inspected on their ability to provide a wholesome diet in pleasing surroundings but, President, 15% of care homes and 20% of nursing homes, are failing to meet their commitment.

Ivan Lewis, a Junior Health Minister, admitted that many in care were effectively being starved to death, and I checked this out, in some cases they are given only a single scoop of mashed potato as a meal. This has a devastating effect on families seeing their loved ones suffer, and also our members who have to work in these establishments. But what is most alarming is the Junior Health Minister has stated there is no more funding available. This is a sad indictment once again of New Labour. That tells me that there is no compassion or understanding of the needs of our families in these care homes.

This attitude of New Labour politicians is exactly what our Movement was founded on many years ago to oppose. It seems that our struggle never ends, with ignorance and bureaucracy, but that is no problem because we enjoy a fight to protect others more vulnerable than ourselves. This motion is not about winning or losing, it is about what is right. Politicians are also accountable to the very people who are suffering these sometimes draconian conditions.

To conclude, President, I urge Congress to button all our politicians and say to them, if you can support an illegal war in Iraq costing billions of pounds in which thousands of men, women, and children, are being maimed and killed, then surely you can vote to give our families in care three square meals a day? I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, John. Secunder? Thank you.

Motion 260 was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 262, London.

MOTION 262

RESIDENTIAL CARE FOR THE ELDERLY

Congress demands that the CEC lobby the Government to ensure that unscrupulous private sector companies, such as Excelcare, are barred, nationally, from taking over local authority care homes.

ESSEX PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. LINDSAY (London): President, Congress, care services for the elderly have suffered greatly from under-funding by all local councils and they have had to ration services severely. It is thought that 1.2 million pensioners who should have had home care are unable to access it meaning pensioners and relatives have to decide to sell their homes to go into residential care. Some of these end up in council homes and are contracted out to private nursing homes.

In the course of my work as a disabled equipment service engineer I visit many residential nursing homes and care homes and carry out safety checks in one of the London boroughs for those receiving social care in their own homes; therefore, I see a range of different care funding regimes. Some care is directly controlled by local social services and others are contracted out. It seems it is in the contracted out private area where I have seen the greatest differences in standards of care.

In the private sector some of the problems seem to be low staff and issues of staff training which you have heard about. There are many cases where there seems to be language difficulties, particularly as many staff are agency workers. These workers themselves do their very, very best in the circumstances but agencies seem to lack the proper training facilities to give their workers full confidence when working in nursing homes. The standards in controlled homes in my view appear to be higher as many of their carers are trained to NVQ qualifications.

Some of the recent cases that have come to light you have heard about in the media, about poor training, and inappropriate use of sedatives used to restrict movement and also affect appetite. Cruelty by staff can also arise due to them not having correct training to deal with clients with a mental handicap or some of the biggest problems associated with dementia and Alzheimer's Disease, which is after all one of the biggest reasons for social care.

Inspection of homes is somewhat limited and only seem to be carried out when there are direct complaints from relatives or from members of staff in these establishments. This may be unfortunate lack of funding and trained council officers to carry out these inspections. Many homes go uninspected regularly.

I would like to end my speech with a few sobering facts. For every man in this Congress there is a high possibility that you will never go into residential care because nature dictates that men normally die before women and also your wife, or partner, will be caring for you if you are sick or disabled. If you visit an old persons' home you will find about two men to 20 women in residential care. If standards are left to deteriorate, this will lead to old people contemplating other serious actions to stop them from going into care.

We therefore need to demand the CEC lobbies the Government to ensure that certain unscrupulous private sector companies are barred nationally from taking over local care homes. Please support this motion. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Seconder? Thank you.

Motion 262 was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Can I ask the mover of 263, London Region to move.

MOTION 263

CARE FOR THE ELDERLY

This Congress opposes any further privatisation of care homes and domiciliary care services. The GMB will vigorously campaign and oppose local authorities seeking to privatise care of the elderly, whether care homes or home care. Furthermore the GMB will continue to campaign for those care homes and home care services that have already been privatised to be brought back in house.

ISLINGTON APEX BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. E. KELLER (London): President, Congress, we as a union must oppose any further privatisation of care homes services by local authorities and to bring back in-house those that have already been outsourced.

Southern Cross Care Homes pay 10p above minimum wage. They say they cannot pay sick pay or anything but they can afford to buy 200 new homes. These services are provided for vulnerable people who deserve the best we can provide. These people build up a relationship with home care workers that visit their homes often on a daily basis. These workers need to be honest, reliable, and caring workers with whom they can build up trust. These services need to be provided by local authorities, not private firms who are only looking to make profits. Local authority staff are trained and vetted. This is vital. In the news we see yet more private homes where fears of ill-treatment and neglect are under investigation. I urge Congress to support. Who knows, we may all need these services one day.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Eileen. Secunder?

SIS. L. ELVIN (London): President, Congress, getting older in this society and requiring care services can be unsafe and undignified. All they ask for is some basic needs to help them maintain their independence and not become a dependent. The first steps are elderly and sometimes vulnerable people who require care services are to be means tested. This is more like a fine for being old. All our evidence and experience shows that once services are run for private profit the quality of care and service is reduced and the public services ethos is replaced by hard-nosed profit motives. We ask Congress that GMB continue to campaign for in-house quality services. Please remember we do not have an option in getting old. I second.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Linda. Can I ask for the mover, Midland & East Coast, on Motion 264?

MOTION 264

ACCESS TO SOCIAL CARE SERVICES

This Congress agrees to lead a campaign with the TUC and Wider Trade Union Movement to ensure that this Labour Government brings legislation onto the statute book within the next two years under national qualification criteria for social care services that Local Authorities have a legal obligation to implement, and that such criteria ensures that the threshold that determines who qualifies for state funded social care is not a barrier to those who are in need.

MIDLAND HEALTHCARE BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Carried)

BRO. B. HELEY (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, this motion is a direct response to the second annual report to the Government by the Chief Inspector for Csky, in its report entitled, State of Social Care in England 2005/06. It stated, individuals and families are increasingly having to find and pay for their own care. The Chair of Csky, Dame Edna Platt, said, as councils face an increase in the number of older people and disabled people and the costs of care, many have responded by raising the threshold people have to pass before they are entitled to a council-funded service. This is also reported in the day care briefing of January this year. In response to budget concerns two-thirds of councils set their eligibility criteria at “substantial” with more expected to follow.

What this means is that due to a growing elderly population and according to councils, insufficient funds are there to meet the needs of care. They have increased the threshold entry level for those services. Only the most severe will get state funded. The rest will either have to do without or totally fund their own care. This is causing a three-tier care service, those who are funded, those who can afford it even if it means selling their birthright, this is despite Tony Blair’s promise that no one would have to sell their home to provide for care, and last not least those who will have to suffer and rely on family, friends, and handouts from wherever they can because they do not have the funds to pay for care and they no longer meet the raised council criteria. Congress, whatever happened to the concept of care from the cradle to the grave?

This motion is seeking to ensure that it is not a postcode lottery based on individual council’s fiscal policy with criteria set too high and only helps the most severe and critical, and bars those who are still in desperate need. At Congress 2005, in Newcastle, Paul stood on the platform and told Congress we would become a campaigning union. Congress, we have become that campaigning union. Some of you may have read in the report, Inspector, which is the employees’ rag, the headline banner, The Brothers are Back, stating we had our PR machine in full swing and we were winning our campaigns. Well, Congress, here is a campaign to support. The most vulnerable in our society, they are too weak, too old, or too infirm, and have no one to fight for them.

Congress, GMB have thousands of members working in this industry, they are short-staffed, they are under-funded, and they are demoralised, yet they are providing this essential service. One day it could be any one of us or a family member that requires that care. Let us use whatever means we have at our disposal to put right this injustice. Congress, I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder?

SIS. L. BLACKMAN (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, because of time restraints I am going to cut out virtually what I was going to say but one thing I would like to say, the Government’s emphasis is on choice yet downward pressure on local authority budgets and the focus on the politically sensitive issue of acute hospitals make it difficult to support frail and dependent people within their own homes. Change in family patterns also increased the need for community care. Therefore, my region believes the rhetoric of choice is inappropriate.

The current position is untenable. What choice does a frail and dependent pensioner living alone in poor housing have if no one is responsible for providing their care? Moreover, given that social care is to be purchased on a fixed price budget, what is the choice if specialist services to meet your special needs are not provided: wait for it here, go elsewhere, like it or lump it?

Colleagues, since the mid-1980s my region has been increasingly concerned at the under-funding of residential and social care. Our concerns which are supported by independent research claim the private sector requires investments of millions of pounds to ensure adequate purpose provision.

Colleagues, finally, the concept of social and community care is brilliant. It is a pity they threw the baby out with the bath water when they virtually destroyed the home care service, a service which enabled people to retain their independence and dignity. My region believes that no longer can the Government prevaricate. It must hold an urgent review of the reality of community and social care, ensuring that increased funding is in place but also ensure it is passed to the point of need. I support.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Liz. Motion 265, Midland.

MOTION 265

LIFE LINE SERVICES

Life Line Services is a scheme run by local Councils for vulnerable people living on their own. They provide a telephone which is connected straight to their control room back at the Council and a buzzer for the person to wear around their neck so that if they fall or take ill and cannot get to the telephone, they press the buzzer and it rings the control room for them to then contact a given phone number to alert them that something is wrong. For this service they charge £44.30 per quarter of which £6.60 of that is vat at 17.5%.

We feel that they should not have to pay any vat on a vital service like this, and we ask the CEC to ask all our GMB sponsored MPs and MEPs to lobby the Government to abolish all vat on Life Line Services.

MANSFIELD CENTRAL BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Carried)

SIS. A. HARRY MBE (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, lifeline services is a service that local authorities run for the aged and the disabled people that live in their area. It consists of the telephone and the buzzer that the person can wear around their neck so that if one falls or takes ill and cannot reach for a telephone they can press the buzzer and it will alert someone who is back at the controls who will then ring a given number to alert them that something is wrong at that address. For this service there is a fee of £44.30 quarterly for which £6.60 is VAT at 17.5%. We feel that there should not be VAT on such a vital service like this and would ask the CEC to lobby all our MPs, and MEPs, to try to get that VAT on the service abolished. Gordon Brown said on Tuesday at this Congress he wanted a Britain where all the people were afforded dignity and respect, and now receive a free television licence,

free travel, and a winter fuel allowance, and yet the elderly and the disabled are paying a tax on their safety protection. Congress, I move.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Audrey. Secunder?

SIS. M. DAVEY (Midland & East Coast) seconding Motion 265 said: President, Congress, there is a service set up to help older people live independently in their own homes. Remote monitoring enables people to have a different relationship with health and social care systems. It enables people to feel constantly supported at home rather than left alone and reliant on occasional home visits. Telecare or any other services bringing health and social care directly to a user generally in their own home supported by information and communications technology has the potential to postpone and divert older people from moving into residential care, and possibly hospital.

People are living longer but less likely to have family support. Over the next 50 years 65s will rise from 9.3 million to 16.8 million. The number of people requiring community-based health and social care support is expected to increase considerably over the next decade. People will have higher expectations and greater control to be able to manage their own risks. People want independence and dignity. 90% of people want to live in their own home. Some 80 million in grants financed over two years from April 2006 is designed to help local authorities and partners address the challenging and changing ages in society. Around 1.5 million are thought to have community alarm services.

Grants should be used to increase the number of people who can afford to remain independent with the telecare. A lot of people are paying VAT on this service and are not made aware that they are able to claim this back. They are not told this when applying for it. When I rang and asked I was told the onus was on them to ask for the form to fill it in. I say it should not be charged in the first place especially when grants are given. VAT charges should be abolished and this service should be given as a right to all old people and disabled people as a matter of course. I support this motion. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I now ask GMB Scotland to move Composite 29 and Northern Region to second.

COMPOSITE MOTION 29

(Covering Motions 266 and 267)

266 – Flexible working/Carers Allowance – (Northern Region)

267 – Means Testing for Carers Allowance – (GMB Scotland)

CARER'S ALLOWANCE

Congress welcomes the Government's extension of the right to request flexible working to the three million workers who combine work with caring responsibilities.

With pensioners now living longer, it's unfortunate that many find that either they or their partner may require to have care due to disability or deterioration of health due to age, the burden of providing care then usually falls on the fittest partner.

A Carer's Allowance can be claimed if caring for a person for 35 hours weekly however:

- we believe that the current Carers Allowance of just £46.95 a week is unacceptably low and;
- if the carer is receiving any other benefit, the overlapping benefit rule comes into play and only the highest benefit can be paid - For example, a carer receiving Carer Allowance and then becoming eligible for Retirement Benefit loses the Carers Allowance.

Furthermore we condemn the "gainfully employed" rule that withdraws the allowance from carers earning more than £84.00 a week.

Congress therefore:

- calls on the GMB to campaign to abolish means testing in respect of the Carers Allowance and the application of the Overlapping Benefit Rule.
- agrees to campaign for an increased allowance that will be paid regardless of the level of a carers earnings – All carers should receive Carers Allowance as a right.

(Carried)

SIS. A. DEAN (GMB Scotland): We welcome the Government's extension of the right to request flexible working for the three million workers who strive to manage their time between work and caring responsibilities. With the ongoing societal changes brought about quite rightly by social policy, public health advances and education, more people than ever are living longer but with the rapid progress in medical science people are also surviving in circumstances that would not have been possible in times past. This has created and will continue to create an enormous dependency on our society for those who cannot survive without the help of their partners, families, and friends, in other words, carers.

What does society do to encourage and award those six million carers for their very hard efforts: very little. A carer's allowance of £46.95 per week is available to a carer who is able to prove that they are providing informal care for 35 hours a week or more. That is £46.95 for the privilege of working a fulltime job, or longer. So much for the minimum wage there.

If that is not bad enough, then check this out. If as a carer you have found the time to combine this 35 hours-plus a week job with another real job that earns you the princely sum of £84 per week, or more, then you are denied the right to that carer's allowance. Now, aside from all the new European working time legislation which puts into question the logistics of balancing all this responsibility, not to mention the effects on the carer, the cared for person and the wider family around them, how many of you would go out to work knowing that it was actually going to lose you money? This gainfully employed rule within the benefits guidance acts as a barrier to carers being encouraged back into the workplace under any circumstances, no matter how flexible.

Here is another take on the rules. If the carer receives another benefit for any other reason then an overlapping benefit rule comes into force so that only the highest benefit can be paid. Most commonly the carer's benefit loses out to the retirement benefit. So much for just deserts!

Congress, we call on GMB to campaign for the abolition of this demoralising means testing in respect of the carer's allowance and the overlapping benefit rule. Perhaps a fairer means of measurement should be to base the benefit on the amount of hours and/or effort involved in the carer's actual role. GMB must also campaign for an increase in the carer's allowance that should be paid regardless of the carer's circumstances. Carer's allowance should be a right for all carers. Congress, I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Northern Region. Thank you.

Composite Motion 29 was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? Come forward. Just to tell our delegate from GMB Scotland, I have already raised that issue with the minister, all right, and am waiting for a reply.

BRO. T. FLANAGAN (London): I make it clear, I have not discussed this with London Region, this is a personal comment. I do not like Motion 265 on the VAT on lifeline services. That motion accepts that the payment is legitimate, that you are charging people for a lifeline service, £44, whatever it is. That is an outrage. The motion should say they should not pay anything. By accepting the VAT you are accepting the charge. It is a disgrace.

BRO. A. GOODFELLOW (Southern): I will keep this brief. Like many of you I volunteer for quite a few things. For two years I was chairman of Age Concern in the New Forest and a trustee of Age Concern Hampshire. I can confirm that most of the things in this section are true. Like Monica Smith said yesterday, today it is them, tomorrow it is you. The sad fact is that we found out with our research through Age Concern that we spend more as a nation on pet food than we do on our old people. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

SIS. J. JEFFREY (GMB Scotland) supporting Composite 29 said: President, Congress, I would like to take two minutes of your time to tell you about my own experience as a carer of a small child. In August 2004 my husband and I were awarded care of a one-year old grandson under a supervision and protection order. At present we are in the legal process of applying for a parental rights order and a permanent residence order. Prior to our grandson coming to reside with us he stayed with foster parents for five days. The foster parents were awarded the usual financial remuneration and allowances for clothing, etc. The biological mother is given weekly expenses by the Social Work Department to cover access visits and is also provided with taxis to take her to and from these visits, even if she does not turn up. If my grandson has an overnight stay she is given money for his dinner. The only financial benefit that we as his carers are entitled to is child benefit, not much to feed and clothe a small child or pay for nursery fees.

In our fight to keep our grandson residing with us we had to employ a solicitor who deals in family law. Our legal bill for this case at present stands at £1,500. I have asked the local Social Work Department for funding towards this case as our grandson is still attached to the Family & Children's Unit within the department.

That was four months ago. The department has still not informed us or our solicitor that there will be any financial help to us.

Congress, this is a disgrace. There are many carers like myself who are in this position whether it be caring for the elderly, the disabled, or children. The point is we are saving the social work, the NHS, and other relevant agencies and departments a fortune by looking after our loved ones. We should be remunerated with appropriate financial aid. Carers should not be penalised even though on benefits themselves, or in my case because we are working and earn too much, allegedly.

This Government needs to take into account that all carers are valued for the work that they do for their loved ones and should be remunerated accordingly. If the foster parents, nursing homes, or any other agencies involved in caring for our relations get paid the same, then we as carers should receive the same irrespective of income. Congress, I ask you to support this motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

SIS. A. POULTON (London) supporting Composite Motion 29 said: President, Congress, I personally have experience of carer's allowance. I have a disabled son with quadriplegic cerebral palsy. I did not find out he had that until he was eight months old, so I had eight months of nothing. Later on you get these people who say, "What do you do for a living?" Well, carers are not even included in working, so £46 is about the same amount as an unemployed person gets a week, but we are doing a job, they are not. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: Anyone else? (*No response*) In that case, I call Trevor Fellows.

BRO. T. FELLOWS (CEC, Commercial Services): President and Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC. The CEC supports Motion 264 but with the qualification I am about to give. This motion correctly identifies the barriers people face in qualifying for social care. But it fails to mention that councils charge for these services primarily because central Government funding for social care is currently inadequate.

This motion calls on Congress to lead a campaign in order to have legislation enacted within a two year period to remedy the problems in social care provision. Such a campaign would have immediate resource implication without any prospects of a return in membership growth.

The CEC's qualification is to recommend a more practical stance in which the union continues to call for increased social care funding and consider lending support to those organisations which campaign on this issue. The CEC asks Congress to support Motion 264 subject to that qualification.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Trevor. Does the mover of Motion 264, Midland & East Coast, accept the qualification? (*Agreed*)

Can we now move to the vote on Motions 260, 262, 263, 264, 265 and Composite 29. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against?

Motion 260 was carried.

Motion 262 was carried.

Motion 263 was carried.

Motion 264 was carried.

Motion 265 was carried.

Composite Motion 29 was carried.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, at this stage I want to congratulate Tim Roache on becoming the Regional Secretary of the Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region. We wish him well. *(Applause)* I ask the Region to move their Report pages 179-192.

REGIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT: YORKSHIRE AND NORTH DERBYSHIRE REGION

YORKSHIRE AND NORTH DERBYSHIRE REGION

1 MEMBERSHIP & RECRUITMENT

Financial Membership	59,294
Section Financial Membership (by each Section):	
COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION	16,271
MANUFACTURING SECTION	15,945
PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION	2,7078
Grade 1 members	35,014
Grade 2 members	14,727
Retired, Reduced Rate and others	9,553
Male Membership	31,560
Female Membership	27,734
Total number recruited 1.1.2006 - 31.12.2006	6,822
Increase/Decrease 1.1.2006 - 31.12.2006	+523
Membership on Check-off	38,845
Membership on Direct Debit	10,036

THE REGION

2006 has been a "game of two halves" in terms of performance and membership growth. Having restructured the region's approach to organising activity in 2005 a sustained period of recruitments growth followed. This saw the regional rolling average reach a high of 699 in May 2006.

This general growth continued throughout the first 6 months of 2006, Indeed for the first time in Public Services, Yorkshire region saw a month on month growth in membership in that period.

Unfortunately this growth was not sustained in the second half of 2006 and this was a major disappointment; officers, staff and activists are committed to a return to "winning ways" and towards

the end of 2006 each of the three Organising Teams within the region was re-focused on the GMB National Recruitment target.

The regional economy continues to change and this has been reflected in the region's membership levels and profile. The manufacturing sector continues to shrink, a GMB analysis showed that in the period from 1997-2006 337,900 new jobs had been created in Yorkshire – and over the same period the total number employed in manufacturing fell by 96,600. So although Cities such as Leeds, Sheffield and Rotherham could claim to be areas where most new jobs were created – Leeds lost 12,300 jobs in manufacturing, Sheffield 11,500 and Rotherham 4,700. Kirklees lost 10,600 jobs in manufacturing, Bradford 12,700, York 5,300 and Barnsley 2,400.

There have been some notable redundancy and closure announcements within the region. Following on from the loss of the Terry's chocolate plant in York we have seen the run down and closure of the British Sugar plant announced and the unveiling of a major restructuring by Nestle which could lead to a loss of around 500 jobs through redundancy.

The GMB local officials and activists have spearheaded the campaign against these job losses taking the fight to Europe, the Prime Minister the Labour Party 2006 Conference and using every available media opportunity to decry the employers' proposals.

GMB members have fought hard to maintain and improve their terms and conditions. There have been some important industrial disputes within the region in the past 12 months. At the Initial Laundry in Bradford a predominately female workforce took action to secure dignity at work. At Chep UK in Pontefract our members took on one of the biggest and richest global employers in an effort to improve their terms and conditions. Both disputes received widespread media coverage, attracted huge support from across the community and sent out a message about the importance of trade union solidarity to working people.

We have built on our organising efforts to secure recognition at a number of workplaces including Kerry Foods in Barnsley, Lloyd Fraser in Wakefield, Linpac Flexible in Featherstone, ABN Foods in Northallerton, Rhodia in West Yorkshire.

Recognition campaigners continue at Ahed Engineering, Vokera, TK Max, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals and others. We hope to report that recognition has been achieved in due course.

Within the region we have re-launched our education programme for GMB activists. Our 1100 representatives now have a higher number and wider variety of training opportunities available to them. This has led to a "tangible" boost in interest and confidence within our teams of shop stewards and safety representatives.

We have re-launched a campaign to attract more union learner representatives to come forward.

We have secured the services of around 15 accompanying representatives across the region. We have spent time with them providing support, training and ongoing communication and they as a team have proved to be a great source of support for the region and individual members within it faced with disciplinary action or with a grievance to raise and no established trade union recognition to support them. Our accompanying representatives have been magnificent over the past 12 months taking trade unionism into unrecognised workplaces and offering protection against bullying and unscrupulous employers.

Our activist base generally has responded to the many challenges of the past 12 months. In Public

Services in particular our local authority 'Core Group' of senior representatives has continued to meet every two months to co-ordinate GMB strategy within local government equal pay, pay and grading, outsourcing and membership growth.

In the NHS our NHS representative's forum responded to the emergence of the giant Yorkshire and Humberside Strategic Health Authority by joining forces with representatives from neighbouring Midlands and East Coast region. Two very constructive joint meetings were held in 2006.

We have re-launched the RLPA. The Union learning fund project "Conversion to Learning" aimed at preparing those involved in sport – particularly Rugby League and boxing for life outside the game via access to life skills, training, education and learning, has given the GMB a new impetus within the game.

We have re-focused our political activity within the region taking a more active approach to communication with local MP's and elected Councillors to further the interest of GMB members. Some MP's have responded, some have not. Those who have can look forward to the ongoing support and solidarity of the GMB.

ECONOMIC & EMPLOYMENT SITUATION

COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION

Membership within the section continues to increase slowly for which our workplace and full time organisers deserve full credit.

In line with national organising targets, the private security industry continues to yield rich pickings in terms of recruitment and organisation with every induction session within the region being attended by recruiters who maintain a steady success rate. Access is freely given by the two main players G4S Security Services and Securitas Security Services following recognition agreements in recent years. Organising weeks where dedicated resources are directed towards national and regional targets enable teams of full time Officers supported by local activists to concentrate their efforts which are reflected in growing membership. The regional plan also provides for new workplace activists to be identified, nurtured and trained and for the GMB benefits and services package including our partners at Whittles and GMB Financial Services to be promoted. Industrial responsibility for the industry transferred to Doug Cooper at the Brighouse office during the last six months who will concentrate on the organised employers with the smaller unorganised workplaces being allocated to the three geographical teams based in Brighouse, Wakefield and Sheffield facilitating a sharing of the workload and more localised targeting of workplace campaigns.

Within the former energy and utilities sector, the trend towards increasing out sourcing continues with the electricity distribution companies keeping a tight grip on costs. The largest coal fired power station in Europe at Drax continues its remarkable turnaround in fortunes with credit due to the workforce who in the past had to endure savage attacks on terms and conditions of employment. Members in UK Coal also deserve praise for their hard work in preserving employment now that coal appears once more to be on the agenda despite environmental concerns. One further encouraging piece of news over the last year was that flue gas desulphurisation (FGD) equipment was to be fitted at Ferrybridge power station, albeit by a Polish contractor utilising its own workforce. Efforts continue to recruit and organise amongst the migrant workers as a worker is a worker regardless of the country of origin.

Mixed fortunes within the former food and leisure sector can be reported with a successful campaign to secure collective bargaining rights within the two Asda Distribution sites in Wakefield. The dispute increases GMB membership by over 100 new members which continues to be built upon by local activists. On a downbeat note, York was particularly hard hit by job losses with British

Sugar announcing the closure of its sites in Alscott and York resulting in over 330 redundancies. Nestle Rowntree also announced major job losses in York stating that the site was uneconomical. At the same time notice was served on terms and conditions of employment for those that remained. A successful local and international media campaign resulted in the company agreeing to suspend the termination of terms and conditions. An exit agreement was also negotiated by the local officer to ensure that as many members as possible retained GMB membership with the region's support team consisting of local Officers, solicitors, financial advisors and the education team were on hand to give advice and assistance.

Hard work in the sports section continues to spread the GMB word amongst the local professional and amateur sporting community with the Region's ULF supported "Conversion to Learning" project at the forefront of raising awareness of what GMB can offer. At the same time, the last year saw the re-launch of the Rugby League Players' Association and Rugby League Coaches' Association giving GMB new and fresh impetus within the game, the aim being to build on the already high profile within the sport to better organise players at all levels.

MANUFACTURING SECTION

Remploy

The campaign continues to support our members in Remploy. Over the last 12 months demonstrations have taken place throughout the region and we hope we are making headway with the Government to secure our members jobs.

Clothing and Textiles

The only surviving quantity producers of garments is Burberry, but the Company is looking to close the sister factory to Castleford and Rotherham in Treorchy in South Wales. We are actively supporting the campaign to keep Treorchy open. Low wages are still a major factor, the National BCIA/GMB rise of 2.25% was poor but with local argument around the National Minimum Wage and the impact on Piece Work rumbling on at Burberry things are not looking good for the future of this once proud industry.

CFTA

The Production of furniture in the region is under pressure from imports from Europe and the Far East. Redundancies have taken pace at:

- Magnet Joinery, Bingley
- Flexiform, Bradford
- Carlton Furniture, Pontefract
- Abseal, Leeds
- J T Ellis, Huddersfield

Other Manufacturing

The future of manufacturing looks bleak with the continuation of most retailers to source production from outside the EU.

The once massive textile industry in the region is now in ruins.

The Government is for what ever reason not backing UK manufacturing and unfortunately the situation is not going to improve in the near future.

There has been a bitter industrial dispute with pallet manufacturer Chep UK regarding the imposition of the 1% pay increase and the amount of Polish agency workers employed. I would personally like to thank the Shop Stewards' Committee and Colin Burgon, MP for his involvement and support in this dispute. Fortunately the membership at the company is still strong even after the

decision to return to work without victory.

The only bright spot in the wilderness of gloom is Kalon Paints (Jonsons), Birstall who are increasing the amount of paint produced and have intimated that they are competing at all levels in the Industry.

PUBLIC SERVICES

Local Government

Equal Pay/Single Status continues to dominate our activities within the region.

Equal Pay campaigns on behalf of women workers across our local authority have seen hundreds of ET cases lodged and 'settlement' back pay offers put to our membership. Equal Pay compensation has been secured in Leeds, Rotherham, Doncaster, Barnsley, Kirklees, Sheffield and York.

Pay and grading negotiations are ongoing in all authorities. Few authorities were on course at end of 2006 to meet the 1 April 2007 deadline for the introduction of a new equality proofed pay and grading system.

Regional membership with Public Services continues to grow and now stands at 27,078.

Our Local Government Core Group of senior representatives continues to meet to oversee and co-ordinate GMB campaigns within the region.

West Yorkshire Police

We have consolidated our presence within West Yorkshire Police. Our membership and activist numbers continue to grow. The merges of forces has receded as a threat – although across force co-operation is having a direct impact on our members jobs as forces seek to "rationalise" the service.

NHS

This report is made during a time of unprecedented unrest within the NHS. Much of the unrest is due to Agenda For Change. However, the real cause of this unrest is a direct result of management attempts to deal with their projected financial crisis. Agenda For Change should have been the vehicle that addressed the anomalies in pay, and to a certain degree it has done so. It was never intended to be used as a driver for change, nor should it be used to deliver organisational change or financial overspend. It is agreed that almost every Trust has projected an over spend this financial year and this is causing major problems not only to our members, but also to the long term provision of service to patients, which makes a mockery of the D o H Patient Led NHS document. I would challenge any member of the public who would accept treatment at the cost of an NHS job. The public value NHS staff – what ever their role

- At Barnsley Hospital, due to a projected over spend, the Trust made a decision to implement cost cutting measures;
- Down grading of posts: Band 6 & 7 posts to be down graded to 5. It is important to note that these people include Operating Department Practitioners, specialist nurses, lead nurses whose job requirements include, lead nurses running minor injury clinics, paediatric asthma nurse specialists. The option that was offered is to accept down grading or leave. We are in the process of balloting for industrial action for both groups of staff.

Leeds Teaching Hospitals, their ongoing financial crisis stands at £56million. To cut costs, they want to reduce services to Wharfedale Hospital, a brand new state of the art hospital. This PFI

hospital ties the trust into a 25 year contract. The plan is to change the provision of services to a 5 day week/day care site. No mention of the Patient Led NHS. No mention of the impact on staff. GMB members who work week ends have been given the ultimatum of travelling to Leeds. However, buses do not run until 8.45am at week ends. Better still it adds an extra hour each way travelling time to the working day. Hardly suitable alternatives!

York Hospitals; 40 medical secretaries have submitted a collected grievance regarding their pay banding. The Trust argues that this cannot be done and we await further discussions on the matter.

Sheffield Children's Hospital have opted to save some money by stepping outside of National Agreements by refusing to pay student rates as contained in the Terms & Conditions Handbook (A 4 C, annex u). The case has been referred to employment tribunal. We continue to pursue formal recognition and it remains the case that this is blocked by colleagues from other trade unions. We are meeting with some Sheffield MP's on 16th February 2007 to discuss the 'financial crisis', and David Blunkett to discuss the recognition issue.

Rotherham Health branch secretary, Brian Milnes has retired from his position as branch secretary. Our thanks to Brian for his hard work in the past and his determination in ensuring GMB recognition at Rotherham Hospital. The new branch secretary is Les Dickinson and we welcome him and offer full support.

Private Contractors

Within the NHS; none of which have begun the process of implementing Agenda For Change. ISS staff at Rotherham Hospital have submitted a collective grievance against the Trust who should provide the funding (or part of). We are optimistic of an outcome in the very near future for this group of staff who have had no pay rise for 2 years!

- ISS at Barnsley have yet to implement the interim agreement. Again we are confident of an outcome soon.
- Whilst this report makes grim reading, membership levels continue to increase consistently. We have a group of well organised, very capable, and hardworking reps in all NHS Trusts. In all areas where we are active, we continue to build strong work place organisation and continue to raise the GMB profile. Our members know the GMB is the best union for NHS employees.

Yorkshire Ambulance Service

In July 2006 Tees East and North Yorkshire Ambulance Service, South Yorkshire Ambulance Service and West Yorkshire Ambulance Service merged to create the Yorkshire Ambulance Service.

This is one of the largest Ambulance Services in the country.

One of the first actions of the Yorkshire Ambulance Service (YAS) was to send out 400 redundancy notices to staff just before Christmas, this was done without consultation. Thankfully after pressure from the GMB the notices were withdrawn in early January 2007. This is not the end of the possible job losses as we believe the redundancy notice will be served again in April 2007.

Meal Breaks

Meal breaks are a major issue within the service, with each of the Trusts having different procedures. There is a lot of confusion as to whether staff are protected under the Working Time Directive. Many staff do not get a break within the 6 hours; some never get a break at all. Discussions are now taking place at national level with the unions and the Ambulance Trusts to try

and get a national agreement.

NHS Professionals

We are in discussions with management about the transfer of the National Finance Centre to NHS SBS (NHS Shared Business Services) this is a fifty, fifty joint venture with the Department of Health and Xansa. The transfer will affect employees at the Tingley and Sheffield sites.

Technically speaking, staff will transfer into NHS Shared Employee Services (NHS SES) which is a dedicated employment vehicle irrevocably linked to NHS Shared Business Service but part of Xansa's employment group.

Bradford District Care Trust

We have managed to find two new shop stewards, which has been a great help in organising our members in the mental health side of BDCT. However, we have two shop stewards who are retiring in March 07' from the learning disabilities side, work is ongoing to find replacements. A big thank you to Marjorie Jones and Geoff Glassbrook for their commitment over the years to the GMB and for their help in keeping the GMB at the forefront within the Trust.

Airedale PCT

Airedale PCT has now merged with other PCT Trusts in the Bradford area. We have managed to find a shop steward who is busy lifting our profile within the new Trust.

Airedale NHS Trust

The Trust is thinking of outsourcing the kitchen contract. However, after a meeting with us the Trust is now putting an in-house bid in, unions are working with the Trust on this.

Equal Pay claims have been lodged and a date has been set for them to be heard at the tribunal - July 2007.

ISS Halifax Hospital

The porters are now working to a new shift system; I have had no reports of any problems. Finally, I would like to record my thanks to all NHS branches, and representatives for their continued hard work and dedication. Their efforts are very much appreciated.

Thank you all.

2 GENERAL ORGANISATION

Regional Senior Organisers	3
Membership Development Officers	0
Regional Organisers	16
Organising Officers	1
No. of Branches	128
New Branches	1
Branch Equality Officers	24
Branch Youth Officers	25

3 BENEFITS

Dispute	4,391.00
Total Disablement	0

Working Accident	6,811.00
Occupational Fatal Accident	2,200.00
Non-Occupational Fatal Accident	0
Funeral	20,980.00

4 JOURNALS & PUBLICITY

The region continued to publish journals on a six monthly basis. Many charities and organisations were sponsored during 2006:

- David March Testimonial – Wakefield Trinity Wildcats
- Columbian Tour
- The Wooden Spoon Charity
- 80th Anniversary of the General Strike & 70th Anniversary of the Spanish Civil War
- South Yorkshire Festival
- TUC Regional Project/Support Worker
- Children with Leukaemia
- Bosom Friends & Cancer Support Fashion Show
- Rothwell Town AFC
- National Assembly of Women
- UNO World Tour 2007
- Jon Nickolls – Tri Nations Championships
- White Rose Initiative
- Kevin Till 0 Tri Nations Championships
- St Basil Charity
- Heart Research UK
- Adil Qurban
- Circus Starr
- BARLA National Cup
- Real Appeal
- The Centenary Woods Campaign
- Medical Aid for Palestinians
- RTS Support Group
- Liaison Committee for Defence of Trade Unions
- Castleford Tigers
- Rotherham Hospice & Bluebell Wood
- Stephen Wilkinson - PDSA

5 LEGAL SERVICES

(a) Occupational accidents and diseases (including criminal injuries)

Applications for Legal Assistance	Legal Assistance Granted
878	878

Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Court	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
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804	185	1	617 £2,534,719.24	1 £24,512.00	£3,559,231.24
Cases outstanding at 31.12.2006			2,449		

(b) Industrial Tribunals (notified to Legal Department)

Claims supported by Union	152
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Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Rejected	Withdrawn	Lost in Tribunal	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
139	35	15	2	70 £222,719.22	17 £476,392.65	£699,048.87
Cases outstanding at 31.12.2006			164			

(c) Other Employment Law Cases

Supported by Union	Unsuccessful	Damages/ Compensation	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2006
-	-	-	-

(d) Social Security Cases

Supported by Union	Successful	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2006
57	18	57

Having a good package of legal services is an essential service for members and a valuable tool for recruitment and retention of membership. The regional legal department is responsible for overseeing the legal services provided through the region's solicitors, Whittles. Although the biggest requirement for legal assistance continues to be in the area of personal injury and disease members can access an initial free legal consultation on most legal issues. A criminal law advice line has recently been added to the service. This is particularly useful for members in professions that are vulnerable to complaints of wrongdoing. The free will service is also popular with members.

Most of the region's employment law work is conducted by the legal department. A professional and efficient system of employment tribunal casework management is in place which provides a first class successful service to members. Having a dedicated team responsible for tribunal cases frees time for regional organisers to concentrate on recruitment and retention goals.

'In-house' knowledge and practical experience of handling employment tribunal cases is utilised to provide organisers with regular employment law training courses as an integral part of the region's training agenda. Organisers are also kept abreast of new developments in employment law through

the use of regular bulletins and e-mailed briefings. The department runs a monthly introduction to GMB legal services and a basic employment rights course as part of the induction of new workplace representatives. Training is also provided to the regions' workplace representatives and volunteer accompanying representatives.

The legal department provides an employment advice and consultancy service and is extensively used as an immediate source of employment rights information and advice by officers, activists and members.

The regional legal department provides assistance to members in need of welfare benefits advice. Every year hundreds of GMB members are offered advice and assistance, for example with help filling in DLA application forms. The legal department provides representation at appeal tribunals.

6 REGIONAL RACE COMMITTEE/EQUAL RIGHTS

Coordinating activity on the above committees had been dormant in the early part of 2006 due to sickness. Having re-established activity in the late summer/autumn numbers attending the committees have increased.

The objective of the committees is to progress the aims of the union from National level guided by the National Race and Equality Committees respectively. National concerns identified at conference in October 2006 were the lack of activism in both areas. However, despite this, from our region there were 7 delegates at the National Race Conference (26th and 27th October 2006) and the Equal Rights Conference (14th and 15th November 2006). Both conferences were successful and have the added bonus of informing members of the national perspective on equalities issues and encouraging the sharing and networking of information and good practice, which is invaluable.

In Yorkshire and North Derbyshire region we have held our scheduled meetings and discussed a way forward in terms of increased activity. The December meeting was significant in that the Committees were combined and agreement was reached that this would continue to be a sound model for *alternate* committee meetings in the future. The December meeting also agreed that a regional newsletter would be produced as a joint exercise with input from both committees and other appropriate organisations and MP's. A timeline for completion of the format and any funding has yet to be agreed.

The threat of the BNP and communications around this is at the forefront of our minds and planned activity. Anti BNP campaigning and activity is part of an ongoing process involving the Officers across the Union and the TUC. Information is constantly disseminated throughout our organisations in respect of particular events, rallies and leaflet drops. Anyone requiring information on any ongoing activities can contact regional office for this information.

The Race/Equality Committee at the December meeting nominated Naheed Arshad Mather to take up the Regional Race Advisory Committees Women's Reserve Seat on Regional Council. We are hopeful that this is ratified and that Naheed is elected at the February Regional Executive Council.

7 YOUNG MEMBERS' REPORT

On taking over responsibility for young members in Yorkshire & North Derbyshire region in August 2006, a team of 14 GMB young members were sent that month to represent the Union at the Leeds Festival. The team volunteered their services to work behind the bars run by the Workers Beer Company and raised over £1,500 in the process. It is our intention to use such money along with funds raised later this year when the festival season gets underway -to support a number of

campaigns. Such activity will include the union's challenge against the BNP to give just one example. Our purpose is to strengthen the links between political campaigns and trade unionism. By strengthening such links it's hoped that we can attract more young people to our organisation both inside and outside the workplace.

In the region's **intouch** magazine published prior to Christmas 06 -a one page advert called for young members to contact myself and to get active. The ad encouraged all those under 27 to come forward and to play a role in the Young Members Committee and future political and recruitment campaigns. It also called for our existing members to ensure that trade unionism is kept alive in subsequent generations by taking GMB into schools, colleges and workplaces. Whilst only a small number have come forward to date, I feel we have made a positive first step to increase our activist base. Two of our leading activists Kath Owen and Lucinda Yeadon attended the National Young Members' Conference in November - the first held in a number of years, and both contributed to and led the debate on developing our under 27's membership. Earlier in the year Lucinda had been elected Vice Chair of the TUC National Young Members' Forum and attended Labour Party conference as the GMB Young Member delegate and both Lucinda and Kath attended the TUC Young Members' Conference as GMB delegates. With the support and commitment of two great activists, I am confident that we have a great foundation on which to build this vital section of the union.

In early December we embarked upon, what we hope will transpire to be a series of seminars to sixth form students on Business Studies 'A' level courses. Here we talked to students about the role of trade unions in the st Century with the intention of both informing their studies and raising the profile of our organisation in the region.

Regional meetings are planned for early February and initial discussions have secured support for working in tandem with NOT targets and in addition, campaigns around colleges to attract working students. It is also intended to re-establish contact with branches and stewards in order to involve all in our campaign to increase membership amongst the young in our workplaces. I am confident that significant progress will be conveyed in the next report.

8 TRAINING

(a) GMB Courses Basic Training					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Introduction to GMB (2 days)	9	72	40	112	224
GMB/TUC Induction (5 days)	8	n/a	n/a	99	495
Branch Officers (please specify subject)	n/a				

(b) On Site Courses (please specify subjects)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Accompanying Reps	1	7		7	7
Disciplinary Training	9	37	6	43	43

Grievance Training	7	7	20	27	27
Health & Safety Inspection	8	18	6	24	24
Statutory Dispute Procedures	5	19	12	31	31

(c) Health & Safety Courses (please specify subjects)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days

(d) Other Courses (please specify subjects / weekdays/ weekends)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
FTO Training					

Insolvency & Benefits	1	14	7	21	21
TUPE Training	1	14	7	21	21
Age Discrimination	1	14	7	21	21
Employment Law	1	14	7	21	21

(e) TUC (STUC & ICTU) Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days

9 HEALTH & SAFETY

The exercise of raising the profile of the health and safety resource in the region continues. Contacts on the regional health and safety database continue to receive, on a regular and sustained basis, information and updates by mail-shots and email.

Support and guidance is regularly provided to our activists and organisers. We are now receiving a steady flow of health and safety related telephone enquiries on a daily basis. The health and safety resource is receiving regular requests to attend workplaces, to conduct inspections, sit in on health and safety committee meetings, and provide further support in an advisory capacity, proving an effective means of highlighting and gaining recognition of workplace health and safety issues.

Throughout 2006, the regional health and safety officer delivered an additional element of training to our workplace representatives on GMB workplace inspections. From the beginning of January, this training will now take place bi-monthly, with a new risk assessment course filling the vacated space. In addition, tailor-made training in specific areas, or on specific topics, will be offered to representatives to aid them in representing their members' interests, safety and welfare at work more effectively.

Given that workplace health and safety has always been and remains one of the foremost concerns

amongst members, and is given as one of the main considerations by those who join, or remain members of a trade union, an ongoing commitment is made to be actively involved in recruitment campaigns and promotions. Assisted by the use of GMB published information tailored to the target workplace, the health and safety officer will support our organisers and workplace activists in the consolidation and retention of existing members, and recruitment of new members and securing recognition.

10 POLITICAL

The region is involved with several key political campaigns; at this present time firstly Leeds City Council. It is imperative that Labour lose no more ground to the Tory's and we are assisting with targeted mail shots in the Leeds area.

In conjunction with our national campaigns we are involved with Searchlight to fight the BNP in several areas in the region including Calderdale, Keighley, Kirklees, Morley, Castleford and Pontefract.

As I wrote in my political column in the *intouch* magazine it is important we support Labour MP's who fight for GMB principles and study carefully the way your MP votes on trade union issues, if you are not sure then give me a call on 01484 720 088 and I will answer your questions. Don't forget the GMB in our region wants a Labour Party in power to support any other party would be unthinkable.

Our job through branches, activists and members is to ask the difficult questions on where you MP stands on the issues that affect working people and make sure that the voice of GMB members is heard loud and clear.

You can make a difference. Votes of GMB members and the hard work at elections return Labour MP's to parliament.

THE PRESIDENT: Andy, I thank you for looking after the region on behalf of the union and the delegates. (*Applause*)

BRO. T. ROACHE (Regional Secretary, Yorkshire and North Derbyshire): I formally move the report.

THE PRESIDENT: Page 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 189, 190, 191 and 192. Do you agree to accept that report? (*The Report was adopted*)

Let me inform Congress that there will be no Standing Orders Report, you will be pleased to know.

LOCAL GIFT

The Congress local gift for the year is to be presented to the Bluebell Wood Children's Hospice in Doncaster. Congress and for new delegates, the union donates for a worthy cause where our members work a gift of £2,000. That is what we will be presenting to the Hospice by the region. I welcome Tim Roache to the Rostrum.

BRO. T. ROACHE (Regional Secretary, Yorkshire and North Derbyshire): Saying "Regional Secretary, Yorkshire and North Derbyshire Region" sounds pretty good.

(Cheers and applause) Thank you very much. I have been coming to Congress for many, many years and I have never had the opportunity to come to the rostrum. This is a very proud moment for me, indeed, and I am even more proud to come to the rostrum on such a lovely occasion.

Bluebell Wood Children's Hospice is for children who are terminally ill or with life-shortening conditions which provides respite and palliative care which, in some cases, can of course be very short but in other cases it can be up to 20 years. So it is about quality of life for children in their final stages of their lives.

The Hospice is being built and equipped as we speak, and it will be fully operational by the end of the year. The Hospice is being built from nothing, which means no government help or funding. Actually, that is not quite right. I misled you. They are actually receiving the principal sum of 3% of total cost. All the rest has been raised from trusts, grants and pledges. These come from all sorts of organisations across South Yorkshire and the GMB is, therefore, joining a very prestigious group of supporting professional outfits.

I spoke to the fund raising manager, Rebecca Williams, only this morning and I asked her what your gift of £2,000 will buy. She was so grateful and so anxious to pass on her thanks to you all and said it would really make a difference and, for example, it will either be a ball pool in the soft play area for the children or a hoist to move them from room to room. So I asked her to do both and pledged that my region will match your kind and generous gift and we can get them both and get on with things. *(Applause)*

My regional president and I will be going to the Hospice in three weeks time to make the presentation and they have given us an undertaking to let us look round. I also took the opportunity to mention GMB trade union membership, and she said that, of course, we can have open access and start to work with them. She said she would welcome us in. *(Applause)* So thank you very much for this kind donation, and I know you will agree that there can hardly be a more worthy cause. If you would like to make a pledge, as I will be doing, please come and see me and I will be delighted to do the rest.

I want to finish by taking this opportunity to thank so many of you in this room for your kindness and support. It is absolutely impossible to mention any of you individually, and that would be unfair, but there is one person who I absolutely must mention for his mentoring, coaching and training for the last nine years, as well as his unstinting help this week in quite trying circumstances for me in picking up the delegation on the Saturday night and from the Sunday. That is my previous regional secretary, Andy Worth. Thank you, Andy. *(Applause)*

I also want to thank the CEC for the faith that they have shown in me. I will not let you down. My region has had a fantastic week. Thank you to the delegates, officers and visitors. I am proud of all of you for your friendship, support and professionalism all week. There is work to do in the region and we are ready to get on with it. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, you see that I did not give Tim a cheque. Tim will receive that cheque from Head Office and then, locally, they will visit, as he said, the Hospice and present it there. That cheque is on its way, Tim.

While we are saying thanks, let me thank the Derby branch members who are here and the staff for a wonderful time that I had in Derby when I attended the Silk Mill March and May Day Rally. Thank you very much. I know you are sitting *there* for the hospitality and the friendship that you showed. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Colleagues, we now move back to agenda items 10 and 11 which were carried over from Wednesday afternoon, the first of which is the Manufacturing Section Report. I ask the officer, Keith Hazlewood, to move his report.

MANUFACTURING SECTION REPORT: ENGINEERING SECTION

ENGINEERING SECTION

Introduction

The Engineering Section is the biggest section of the manufacturing section. With a membership of approximately 65,000 members mainly paying Grade one membership contributions, which still means a significant income to the GMB.

We are in the process of moving to three sections of which the membership of the Engineering Section should not have any fears for the future. The consolidation of traditional industries will bring increased membership to the new section giving us industrial power in a well organised, fully serviced manufacturing section.

NATIONAL COMMITTEE

The Engineering Section National Committee has met since the last Congress where it has received and endorsed reports from the Officers of the Section and has debated and got involved in recruitment activities across the industries covered by the Section. The Engineering Section National Committee is as follows,

- David Falconer MBE, Section President GMB Scotland
- Roger Darcy MBE, Southern Region
- Ray Lowden, Liverpool Wales and Irish Region
- Tommy Robertson, Northern Region
- Derek Hocking, Midland and East Coast Region
- John Christie, GMB Scotland
- Peter Ferguson, Liverpool and North Wales Region
- Charlie James, Yorkshire Region
- Micky Laws, Southern Region
- Alastair McLean, London Region
- Keith Patience, London Region
- William O Williams BEM, South Western Region
- Vin Bloor, Birmingham and West Midlands Region

The National Committee consists of representatives from every region, one from the Thermal Insulation industry and one from the Offshore industry including one black member and an Equal Rights representative.

1. THE ENGINEERING INDUSTRY

As reported at previous Congress in general engineering we have the same sad story of cutbacks, pay freezes, pay cuts to save jobs and of course redundancies. This again is a sad story of UK manufacturing. We need to work with employers, Government, DTI and the trade unions to formulate a much needed UK manufacturing survival strategy. We, in the UK have to constantly contend with comments like it is more economical to import work or offshore work than manufacture in the UK, blaming the strength of the pound, and it is much easier to make people redundant in the UK than in other parts of Europe.

As with all other Engineering and Construction related industries there is a shortage of skills which desperately needs addressing by investing in training and the re-introduction of apprenticeships for all engineering related industries to survive, there is the age profile with people leaving the industry and not being replaced, and an issue which is very much on the increase, the use of non-UK labour, which, in some cases is being exploited by ruthless employers, paying these people less than the rate for the job therefore making them a cheap alternative to the indigenous workforce.

2. THE OFFSHORE INDUSTRY

In the Offshore industry I can confirm that we have had this long ongoing issue of the Working Time directive and the implementation offshore. We have met with Senior Government ministers and with employer's representatives who have all got various and different interpretations of the implementation of the Working Time Directive in the Offshore industry. We have also tried to pursue this through the TUC all to no avail.

We are currently, at the time of writing this report in negotiations for the 2007 pay claim, and part of that pay claim, if accepted, will go a long way to resolving the issue of the implementation of the Working Time Directive Offshore. As identified earlier, the negotiations are ongoing and hopefully I will be able to give you a full update in my verbal report at Congress.

Within the Offshore industry we are running a recruitment campaign with a leaflet that has been put together mainly for the Offshore industry. The campaign has mainly been run on inductions for new starters and at the heliports where the rig workers fly out from. We are watching the outcome of this campaign with interest.

3. SHIPBUILDING

Once again my report on the shipbuilding industry is a report of mixed fortunes, in the commercial shipbuilding industry we have only one yard which is Fergusons in Scotland which is having to fight for every order to keep in business and is finding it very difficult whilst competing for work against European competition, and in some cases competing against countries who are financially supported in the shipbuilding industry, and I do know at the time of writing this report that Fergusons is in desperate need of orders.

It is sad when you look at the UK commercial shipbuilding industry when three years ago there were two yards Appledore and Fergusons and now we have Fergusons desperately fighting for survival, all we have ever asked for in the commercial shipbuilding industry, as within the military shipbuilding industry, is a level playing field when competing for orders, which doesn't appear to be the case for UK shipbuilding.

In the UK Defence shipbuilding industry all indications are that the future is looking good. With the recent announcement of the Government's Defence Industrial Strategy which is long needed within the Defence industry especially in the shipbuilding industry. We are looking at the Defence Industrial strategy to stabilise the industry and the distribution of work, within the UK shipbuilding industry. We have currently the biggest order book with the MOD ever in the UK with the awarding

of the orders of two aircraft carriers under the UK Government's procurement policy for the build of ships for the Royal Navy.

We also have six Type 45 Destroyers which have been awarded to BAE Systems of which the second was launched in January of this year, with a further two yet possibly to be awarded, these Type 45 Destroyers will be built in modules at the yards on the Clyde in Scotland and Vosper Thornycroft of Portsmouth, which along with the Defence Industrial Strategy will provide stability to the UK shipbuilding industry and preserve the possibility of competition for future warship building programmes for Europe.

The awarding of the prime contractor to BAE Systems with Thales as the main contractor to build the two new aircraft carriers which I mentioned earlier for the Royal Navy which is good news, we hear different rumours as to whether there will be two or three of these aircraft carriers but at the time of writing this report I can confirm that the MOD is stipulating two. The aircraft carriers will be amongst the largest warships that the Royal Navy has ever had.

They will be built in the UK in modules at the two BAE Systems yards on the Clyde, Vosper Thornycroft in Portsmouth, DML, Rosyth, and we are hoping that work will be distributed to other yards within the UK.

These aircraft carriers will be built in modules at the various yards and then floated up to Rosyth to be assembled. When built these aircraft carriers will deliver a formal force and protection capability, creating some 2,000 jobs and sustaining a further 10,000 through the build and fittings of the systems of these two ships.

So the long term future of the UK military shipbuilding looks good. Along with aircraft carriers, Type 45 Destroyers and also Astute Submarines which are built at the BAE Systems yard in Barrow in Furness and we are awaiting clarification with reference to the MARS programme which is a programme of frontline support ships for the Royal Navy, the clarification we are waiting for as to whether these ships will be deemed as warlike in which case they will come under the UK Government's procurement programme and built in the UK.

Along with lessons learned in the past we are now looking at means of working together for the UK shipbuilding industry with all the UK shipyards working for each other to stop this decimation of the industry and with this in mind there has been the proposal of the formulation of Newco, which is an alliance of the major shipbuilders within the UK working together and for each other a much needed strategy for the UK shipbuilding industry.

Newco is mainly for the surface ship build, the industry is currently looking at the formulation of an alliance for the submarine build, Subco which will be a similar alliance to the surface ship builds. In the military shipbuilding industry we need to make sure we have the skills capability available to deliver these programmes on time and within budget, so, as said previously on every negotiating agenda we need to include the recruitment of apprentices.

4. MOD ANNUAL REPORT

On the positive side, as a result of the peace dividend in Northern Ireland the Government has decided to reduce the role of the armed forces in Northern Ireland and hand over a large number of duties to the new Northern Ireland police force. As a consequence there will be a run down of both military and civilian workforces in Northern Ireland.

The GMB, along with the other trade unions, have been negotiating with the MOD and Northern Ireland Office to achieve a satisfactory severance package that recognises the value of the work

undertaken by the civilian workforce during the troubles.

The MOD continues down the road of privatisation and outsourcing. We have worked with the other trade unions to resist these changes and, where this was not possible, to ensure that there were adequate transfer agreements to protect our members.

The review of MOD spending is still causing our members concern. It is still not clear whether new ship orders will be placed, whilst, in the meantime, to save money existing ships are being put into mothballs or sold off. This has a knock-on effect to the workloads at the Naval Dockyards of Devonport, Portsmouth and Rosyth. We have continued to raise with Government our concerns over this situation.

The GMB has also raised with Government their concern over the possible change of ownership at Devonport Dockyard regarding the Government's statement that the floatation of KBR, the parent company, compromised UK security and they would end the DML contract.

On pay this was a particularly difficult year. The previous 4 year deal had come to an end and the Treasury were leaning heavily on all Government departments not to pay more than 1.9%. We managed to secure a two year deal of 2.5% with a one year review and a change to the bonus scheme which, for the first time, provides every industrial employee with the opportunity to receive an annual bonus.

5. THERMAL INSULATION

At the time of writing this report I can confirm that we have just concluded a second ballot of the membership for the 2007 pay offer. This offer has been overwhelmingly rejected, so I am now in the process of setting up another meeting with the employers to re-open negotiations.

As I reported in my previous Congress report within the Thermal Insulation industry it came to the forefront through the 2006 pay negotiations that there were several long outstanding issues that needed addressing so what we decided to do was develop a working party from the trade union side and a working party from the employers side to sit down and hear these issues. I can now confirm that all the outstanding issues have been discussed and resolved. The employers have difficulty attracting new blood to the Thermal Insulation industry and they are working hard at trying to get apprentices which will be the future of the industry. There is quite a lot of work for the Thermal Insulation industry in the pipeline which will be required for the aircraft carriers, the Type 45s, Engineering Construction, and also for the Olympics so it's imperative that we have the skills capability to deliver this service with the UK workforce otherwise we will be inundated by non-UK labour which ruthless employers can exploit by paying less than the rate for the job and diluted terms and conditions is an issue that we need to be aware of and overcome.

On recruitment there is a potential within the industry and now is the time we need to capitalise on recruitment and building up the membership within the Thermal Insulation industry.

6. NAECI

At the time of writing this report I can confirm that we are now in the process of sitting down with the employers in an attempt to modify the National Agreement for the Engineering Construction Industry which came about at the request of the clients for the industry, who were questioning the validity of the National Agreement, saying that what we required now was an Agreement that was fit for purpose, these clients were threatening to withdraw support of the National Agreement which if this had happened it would have been complete anarchy across the industry, reverting back to the law of the jungle, and this industry would be in complete turmoil.

After meeting with the Employers Federation and the trade unions at National level, and also the

National shop stewards forum, it was agreed that we needed a National Agreement for the future of the industry albeit maybe needed updating. After twelve meetings a document has been put together as to the way forward. At the time of writing this report I can confirm that we have now formulated a pay claim in conjunction with the employer's proposals for the new working agreement, a National Agreement for the industry, one that the employers feel is fit for purpose.

The National Officers requested a meeting with the clients after three meetings with the employers to see if the clients were really supportive of the National Agreement and future discussions to go ahead, and at this meeting the clients of which nine major clients attended gave full support behind the NAECI providing it was an Agreement that was fit for purpose for the future of the industry.

A pay claim has now been submitted to the employers in conjunction with the employer's proposals for the 2007 pay claim, and I will give you an update in my verbal report to Congress.

7. MARCONI

Marconi was formed from the old GEC empire and it attempted to get the company on a sound and economic basis of which various attempts had already failed and a merger with a company called Jabil also became a failure. I can now confirm that Marconi has become part of Ericsson.

8. UK CAR MANUFACTURING

Thirty years ago a Labour Government would have faced a political and probable electoral disaster if one of the large UK car manufacturing plants had closed. How things have changed!

In the West Midlands we have seen the closure of MG Rover, Browns Lane -the Jaguar plant in Coventry, and the very profitable French owned Peugeot plant which produced the 206 model and employed 3,500 people, also based in Coventry.

Media speculation is about the possible sale of Land Rover at Solihull and Jaguar.

As a package the US market has got its problems. The US big three manufacturers, Daimler, GM's and Ford had their lowest ever market in the US of 52%. This loss was picked up by the Korean and Japanese car manufacturers.

As a result of this, the board of Ford have appointed Ken Leet who was previously a Goldman Sachs financial analyst, to do a strategic review of the whole of the Ford Motor Company. This will entail a fundamental review of all their brands, geographical locations and the parent company itself.

Worrying times within the UK car industry along with the supply chain industry which employs thousands of British Workers.

However: Ford in general should be congratulated, along with other car production companies such as Honda, Toyota, Nissan and BMW Mini.

The West Midlands has more jobs in car manufacturing than any other region in Britain but we are moving away, particularly in the West Midlands from low added value components and the metal bashing era, to using much more technically challenging, high spec systems that involve computer aided design and electronics. More pressures on our car component manufacturers, much more investment needs to be put into this industry. It is so important to keep research and development ahead of that in China, India and the rest of Europe.

The manufacture of cars and their components in this country is an industry of long significance and remains vital.

Finally: Government must be more proactive. We should be copying the French, Italians and the Germans, procurement can make a real difference. We need a level playing field, so Britain has the same rights as those in other EU countries.

Let's not forget the Warwick Agreement. Many experts comment on its failings although it's been slightly successful in some areas, in others it has let us down. A lot of good things have happened, Nissan in the North East £500 million investment on a new sports utility vehicle range. The plant is highly technically advanced. 75% of production is exported.

More than £380 million investment in upgrading and expanding the BMW Cowley production facilities at Swindon. BMW's commitment to workforce training and long term skill strategy is unique and they still have an apprenticeship scheme with well over 100 young people between 16-21 learning the skills required.

Examples have been set, the Government must set their example now. By firstly ensuring that we do not lose any more car plants.

Government must come out with a new vision for our future in the car industry and component sector. A vision that puts the UK component manufacturing at the forefront of Government policies.

9. THE STEEL INDUSTRY

Since the last Congress we have had some very interesting times within the Steel Industry especially within Corus. There has been fierce competition by CSN from Brazil and Tata Steel from India in a four month long bidding competition to acquire Corus.

The fierce competition between these two potential buyers created a lot of uncertainties through the industry. The main fear is that the competition forced both bidders to bid beyond their preferred offers, and the concern is that Tata will now try and recoup some of the money that they have put into the bid by cutting back on the investment in the UK and even more seriously job losses within the UK.

The steel unions will work with Tata Steel in an attempt to make them a successful entity within the UK and this will be to secure jobs and not job losses.

Corus Strip Products 2006 Pay Settlement

The Strip Products 2006 pay settlement resulted in a two year deal. Year one was a 3% increase in all elements of pay, year two a 3% increase and a consolidation of 0.7% from a lump sum bonus of all elements of pay.

Corus Long Products 2006 Pay Settlement

The Long Products 2006 pay settlement resulted in a 3% increase to all elements of pay for 2006 and for 2007 an increase of 3%, once again to all elements of pay.

We are still exploring the possibility of National negotiations for the future of Strip and Long Products, to sit down on a National basis to negotiate the pay and conditions across the Board with Corus, we don't know whether this will change with the new owner of Corus. But until such time we will still continue to explore the possibilities of National Bargaining.

10. THE AEROSPACE INDUSTRY

Since my last Congress report the Aerospace related industry is once again an industry of mixed fortunes. We have factories closing and work being transferred to other locations within the UK and outside the UK. In Airbus we have grave concerns since BAE Systems sold their 20% shares to EADS and the concerns we have are that various countries are making a play for work within

Airbus.

The UK flagship for the Airbus industry are the wings for the A380 which are manufactured at factories in Broughton and Filton. The Airbus factory at Broughton is waiting to hear if it has secured a contract to work on the A350 jet and they will be making the wings for the new long haul twin engined aircraft, the jet will have new lightweight, composite carbon wings etc. which requires new technology to build them, this technology is already in place in rival countries like Spain and Germany but not in Broughton so we have grave concerns with regards securing this order and the future of Broughton.

Bombardier

In Bombardier Belfast they have experienced a very difficult year and the more shocking news was the announcement of 645 redundancies, through prolonged discussions and negotiations with Bombardier and the trade unions an Agreement has been reached which has overcome the redundancy announcement without any serious implications to GMB members.

With the company announcing a deficit in the final salary pension scheme after negotiations the workforce has retained the final salary pension's scheme with an increase in contributions from 5% to 7.5%.

The orders that the unions and the company have been working on over a number of years are the 141 and the C series. It is anticipated that production will start on the 141 in early February, it has already been scheduled into Bombardier's programme for this year.

The C series aircraft has proved to be a challenge in that it has been difficult for Bombardier to find a launch partner due to the problems in the airline industry in America. The latest is that it would appear that this problem may have been overcome and it is hoped that an announcement to confirm this order will be made in the very near future.

Work is still ongoing on Nimrod and Boeing which hopefully will bring safety within the Aerospace industry along with the potential orders in Airbus and Bombardier if successful.

We are constantly lobbying the Government to save the Aerospace related industries, under the umbrella of the CSEU Aerospace Committee, and the lobbying will continue to go on in an attempt to save jobs in the Aerospace industry in the UK.

11. INTERNATIONAL AND EUROPEAN

It is imperative that we keep a presence Internationally and in Europe because in the main we are dealing with multi-National companies and more and more legislation is coming from Europe. In industries like ship breaking it is important that we have some International standards across the world when you hear about countries like India running their ships up the beach to strip them we need to work together and formulate ILO working standards.

In the last twelve months we have attended an IMF shipbuilding meeting which was held in Washington.

EMF

In the last year I attended an EMF shipbuilding committee meeting in Malta, it was agreed that EMF would collate information on all European shipyards to form a database.

I would like to once again thank Kathleen Walker-Shaw and Sarah Cole for all the hard work they have done at our Brussels office in keeping us updated with what is going on in Europe and beyond.

12. CONCLUSION

Once again colleagues when we met last year at our Congress in Blackpool we reflected over the continuing decline of the UK manufacturing industry, with companies still closing down, relocating and forming joint ventures. The closing down, relocating and the joint ventures have been at the expense of our member's jobs and I am sad to say that this trend has continued again over the last twelve months in the UK losing yet more manufacturing jobs.

In various industries we are experiencing the increased use of European and non-European union labour. Whilst we are all members of the European union we cannot and will not sit back and see our colleagues from other European countries be exploited by ruthless employers, paying our European colleagues any less favourable rates of pay or terms and conditions than the negotiated rate for the job, therefore eliminating our European colleagues from being a cheap option.

Within two of the major companies working offshore namely Amec and Cape Scaffolding we have negotiated an agreement which gives our European and non European union colleagues the benefit of the same terms and conditions of employment as UK workers as soon as they step foot on UK soil. These agreements have been honoured and we intend making similar agreements in other industries.

Over the last twelve months we have continued meetings with various employers with reference to pension arrangements and the introduction of age discrimination. With employers like BAE Systems, Bombardier, Rolls Royce, Corus and NAECI to name but a few industries, an issue that is causing ongoing concern for us and all our members.

Finally, on the issue of training and apprentices, once again we are constantly hearing of skill shortages and age profiles within the industry. This can only be addressed by reminding employers that apprentices are not a cost but an investment to the future of the industry. We also need to get employers on board with regards the qualifications required for people entering into apprenticeships. For some trades they are looking for far too highly qualified people to do certain jobs once again cutting down on employment prospects for a very large number of potential employees.

We need to ensure that on every negotiating agenda we raise the issue of apprentices in order to maintain a stable, well trained and effective workforce to secure the future of UK manufacturing and to be able to meet the demands, for contracts like the super aircraft carriers, the Offshore industry, the car industry, Thermal Insulation, the Aerospace industry, steel industry, the Engineering Construction industry, and the 2012 Olympics to name but a few.

The following is an update on the motions covered by the Engineering Section at the 2006 Congress,

RESPONSE TO CONGRESS MOTIONS 2006

Motion 150 - Shipbuilding

"This motion calls upon this Government to ensure that all war or warlike vessels be built in the UK; that no part of these ships be constructed elsewhere. This Government should support the skills of our indigenous workforce."

We have a commitment that all ships that are deemed warlike will be built in the UK yards, but with the work waiting to be progressed ie the aircraft carriers, possibly more Type 45 Destroyers and the MARS programme there could be a skills issue, but we have currently got a commitment regarding

UK build for these warlike vessels and we need to do all we can to keep that arrangement and also address the skills issue.

Motion 151 - Shiprecycling

"Was asking for Congress to note that there are many ships that will be decommissioned over the next few years. This needs to be done with due regard to the highest Health and Safety standards adhered to.

Calling on the Government to set up a state of the art ship recycling facility within the UK."

The GMB has written to the DTI quoting the contents of this motion, the DTI responded by saying this was a HSE issue, who were then written to, who replied vaguely by saying when such facility is in operation it would visit and make sure standards were met. Meanwhile the GMB has written to DEFRA who have put together a paper recommending ship recycling standards, we are still waiting for a response from DEFRA.

Emergency Motion 4: Swan Hunter Shipbuilders

This motion was asking for: "a Naval support vessel that was under construction at Swan Hunters not to be towed away by the MOD in order to be completed elsewhere leaving GMB members redundant.

Calling for this Government to ensure this work be finished on Tyneside and urge our members in other shipyards in the UK not to collaborate in this exercise."

Two days after Emergency Motion 4 was carried by Congress Keith Hazlewood, National Secretary, Tom Brennan, Regional Secretary, Micky Blanch, Yard Convenor for Swan Hunters and Nick Brown a local MP met with Paul Drayson MOD Procurement Minister and Des Brown, Secretary of State for Defence to try and get the Government to reverse it's decision to transfer this work to another yard.

After a lengthy discussion an Agreement was struck, and the Agreement was the MOD would approach Swan Hunters to ask them to vacate the yard, leave the vessel in the yard and bring a management team into Swans yard and complete the vessel with local labour.

This proposal was not taken up by Swan Hunter so the vessel was towed away for completion on the Clyde.

BRO. K. HAZLEWOOD (National Secretary): Congress, I move the Engineering Section Report to Congress contained in the General Secretary's Report, pages 82 – 91.

President and Congress, when submitting my written report there were still on-going negotiations and discussions in several industries, and I would now like to update Congress as to where we are today with those outstanding issues.

In the off-shore industry we had several meetings with regard to the 2007 pay claim. As previously reported, in the off-shore industry we have had a long-standing and on-going issue with reference to the Working Time Directive and the interpretation of it within the off-shore industry. The negotiations we are currently having could resolve this on-going issue, but if we do not come to a negotiated settlement on the Working Time Directive this matter will have to be resolved either by Government intervention or through the justice courts.

Next, colleagues, I want to deal with the thermal insulation industry. I can now confirm that the thermal insulation industry pay negotiations have been concluded, resulting in a 5.26% increase for a ten month deal, and 5.26% will flow through all other financial aspects of the agreement. Also we have negotiated an improvement of one day's extra bereavement leave.

In the engineering construction industry in the past 12 months there have been on-going negotiations with the Employers' Federation in an attempt to bring the Engineering Construction Agreement into the 21st century, and to get an agreement which is fit for purpose, to suit the industry, the stakeholders and the employees within the industry.

At a National Shop Stewards' Forum involving all the shop stewards from the industry of all three signatory unions involved in engineering construction, the offer on the table was rejected on the grounds of the workforce having to give up a mid-morning tea break. I can now confirm to Congress that we have had a consultative ballot across all of the industry which resulted in a resounding 99.9% rejection on the grounds of the mid-morning tea break being removed.

A meeting has taken place with the employers who have re-introduced the morning tea break as part of their offer. I can confirm, colleagues, that as late as Monday of this week that offer has been accepted by the workforce.

I come now to the steel industry. I would like to remind colleagues of the recent sale of Corus to Tartar Steel which is an Indian steel making company. There was fierce competition between Tartar Steel of India and CSM from Brazil. Through the bidding process both companies bid way beyond their original intention, which caused us problems with regard to what the impact would be on investment in the UK, job losses in the UK, future bargaining arrangements and pension arrangements.

I can now inform Congress that a meeting took place between the steel unions and Tartar at the very highest level and we raised our concerns to the chief executive of Tartar. Quite honestly, we found his comments very inconclusive and concerning. He told us that in the next few months decisions would be made on the Tartar plant in the Netherlands, the UK and in India. We raised the issue of our global framework agreement regarding future bargaining arrangements. Tartar's response was that they were not aware of any framework agreement. They need to set up these arrangements together, collectively, across the company. They went on to say that the EU was not in the Tartar process yet as they had only just recently acquired plants in EU countries. They would sit down with a clean sheet of paper at the appropriate time and come up with appropriate arrangements. Until such time as this process has taken place current practices will continue. Needless to say, colleagues, we will be

keeping a very close eye on what is happening and the future of steel making within the UK under Tartar Steel or any other name for that matter.

I welcome the very recent announcement on the re-opening of Rover at Longbridge, bringing much needed work back to Longbridge.

Finally, I would like to update Congress of an international initiative jointly ventured into by the International Metalworkers Federation, the GMB and the TUC. This initiative is on the issue of shipbreaking. For those of you who attended the Shipbreaking fringe meeting on Monday, at which Rob Johnston from the International Metalworkers Federation gave a presentation on the initiative, this is driven by IMF worldwide and GMB as part of the pilot for the UK and the European shipbreaking industry.

Also at that meeting was Mr. Rani, who gave you a feel for what is happening with regard to exploitation of employees in India. I also note that later on Mr. Rani will be showing a short video and giving a presentation to Congress, which I welcome and I know that you will welcome, too. Thank you for making our colleagues from the IMF and India welcome at our Congress.

President and Congress, that concludes my update of the Engineering Section Report. I move the Engineering Section Report to Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: I call pages 82, 83 -----

BRO. F. EEL (GMB Scotland): President, it is not often that national officers receive compliments, but I intend to compliment Keith Hazlewood and Frank Carrigan, who is our local officer, for the hard work they have done in our fight for the shipbuilding industry. Shipbuilding is alive and well and, indeed, flourishing.

On the Clyde we have the best order book in the past 25 years, and with a new aircraft carrier about to be ordered by the Royal Navy we are taking on one hundred apprentices this year and also for the next four years. This situation did not come about by accident, but by hard work by the shipbuilder and officers like Keith and Frank. Keep up the good work.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Pages 84? 85?

BRO. R. GUNN (North West & Irish): President and Congress, I want to speak to the MoD Annual Report. As stated in the report, one of the consequences of the Peace Dividend in Northern Ireland is the rundown of military and civilian staff. In civilian terms, that will mean 1,100 staff facing redundancy. That programme is already underway. During the course of last year, the five unions involved in the MoD concluded talks with the defence ministers which culminated in redundant staff receiving a financial recognition award of £14,000 plus £1,000 for training. These payments are additional to an already generous redundancy package.

On behalf of our GMB/MoD members, I wish to pass on their thanks to National Officer Sharon Holder, to our research officer, Charlie King, to our Regional

Secretary and to the North West & Irish Region for their support in very difficult times. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Bob. Pages 86? 87? 88? 89? 90?

BRO. P. PERRY (North West & Irish): President, the reason why I have brought this question up, even though it is not in the report, I think it is important to all engineers within the GMB Union. We attended a meeting with the Manchester ConFed six weeks ago with John Wall from Amicus, a trustee of the *35 Hour Week Campaign Fund*. Let me tell you that we were annoyed and frustrated at the discussions taking place on the utilisation of the £16 million that is in the fund. We have had no feedback from these meetings and many Amicus delegates are of the same notion.

To listen to the proposals put forward by the Amicus Executive Council are quite disturbing. This fund was established for one reason and one reason only, and that was to fight for a shorter working week. We have thousands of members who have contributed to this fund so we should have information but it was never forthcoming. That was the first mention that I have had about this matter in the past 18 months. We, with the number of members we have, should have a massive input into this campaign.

A resolution was passed at this Conference by Amicus and GMB delegates that the fund would remain and be used for one purpose only, namely, to establish a shorter working week. We would like information and feedback on the fund as to why we have not been informed before as to what exactly is going on.

THE PRESIDENT: Page 91?

BRO. J. TOOMEY (North West & Irish): Keith, I know you are Shanghai'd a bit with the legality that is going on regarding the £16 million, and I don't want that guttersnipe Simpson going down the sewer and double crossing the rats, which is what he is trying to do with that £16 million. He wants to put it on the hourly rate which, under the national agreement, when it was all right, but there is now no national agreement. The employers won't have it.

The stipulation from the 29 Manchester District CSCU, and Amicus members as well, is that the fund can only be used for the 35 hour week. It is a blessing in disguise that the GMB is able to stop that pilferer from getting at it.

I also want to ask you another question, Keith. Who lives in the flat on Walworth Road above the CFCU office and how much rent is paid? Thank you.

BRO. K. HAZLEWOOD (National Secretary): I am responding to questions on the Engineering Section Report.

First of all, Frannie from the Clyde, thank you very much for your kind words. Bob Gunn, likewise. Thank you very much for your kind words. The *35 Hour Week Fund*. Colleagues, at the CSCU Conference 2005 a motion was passed to use the *35 Hour Week Fund* for campaigning purposes for pensions, the shorter working week, etc. At this moment in time, colleagues, the trustees are currently in discussion with

lawyers to see how the *35 Hour Week Fund* can be accessed. At this moment in time we are awaiting guidance from the lawyers. So I cannot give you any definitive answers to the outcome of the motion that was passed.

You should have been kept up-dated through your CSCU District Committees. Colleagues, if this is not happening the district secretary should write to the CSCU General Secretary for an update on a regular basis.

Toomey, I have tried to answer your first question regarding the *35 Hour Week Fund* on the tenancy. The tenant at Walworth Road, who has been the tenant for the past 12 years, is a general secretary of an affiliated union to the CSCU. I cannot divulge the rent that he pays to you because that is a personal arrangement between him and the person who owned it prior to John Warr taking over. Colleagues, I hope that has gone a long way to answering your questions. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, John.

BRO. J. TOOMEY (North West & Irish): Keith, is it not Tony Woodley of the T&G? You have not answered that question.

BRO. K. HAZLEWOOD: Toomey, I don't think I did answer that question, but you have just answered it for me.

THE PRESIDENT: He just wanted confirmation, Keith.

BRO. K. HAZLEWOOD: Yes. (*Laughter and applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. There's never a dull moment.

We now move on to Industrial & Economic Policy: Engineering. I ask the movers of Motions 129, 130 and 131 to come to the front of the hall. I will then open the motions to debate and Ray Lowden will reply.

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: ENGINEERING

MOTION 129

DEFENCE INVESTMENT

Congress,

Investment in defence is at its lowest level since 1930. This lack of investment means that all facets of defence, especially those that involve our members, has seen a steady but inexorable decline with a corresponding drive down of GMB membership. Our members face hardship and uncertainty. The Naval Bases and Royal Dockyards have been particularly badly hit, together with the principle private companies that work alongside and with them. Let us not forget the lessons of History. This dangerous attitude has been played out by successive governments and has cost this country dear. It affects all of us who work in the defence industries and let us not forget that many of our Trade Union members and their families are in the front line, serving in or alongside our armed services. Many more have been, or are, ex-members of the regular armed or reserve forces. We therefore call upon this, and indeed any subsequent government, to radically increase defence spending.

(Carried)

BRO. M. LOCK (Southern): President and Congress, in peacetime “defence” is a dirty word. It is an expense we try to ignore and hope will go away until we suddenly need it. That is a fact proven 25 years ago this year with the campaign fought in the Falkland Islands. Successive governments have ignored it and have failed to grasp the nettle of investment until it was too late. Investment is now badly needed across all of the Armed Services. Investment in defence is at its lowest level since 1930. That lack of investment has placed our ability to defend ourselves at risk. A senior member of the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies has been quoted as saying: “The Royal Navy will dramatically decline as the result of under-investment. The Navy could possibly be left with just 12 frigates. This could undermine the dockyards and naval bases which depend on refitting and maintenance work.” For “the naval basis and dockyards” read Devonport, Portsmouth and Scotland.

There has been a steady but inexorable drive downwards of port staff and services, leaving our members working in defence and its infrastructure to face the consequences. With the Royal Navy with less ships than Japan or France, the naval bases have been particularly badly hit. This is commensurate with the private companies which work alongside and with them in the Royal dockyards.

Within my own workplace we have seen more than eight thousand jobs lost at the Devonport Dockyard and Naval Base alone. So there have been no benefits from the alleged end of the cold war for our members. What we have seen is dockyards, army bases and Royal Airforce bases, which once employed hundreds of skilled workers, many of whom were my members, closed or rundown. Those who were employed in those establishments have been dispersed to the four winds of the world or, in the vast majority of cases, made redundant, rarely making national headlines. For defence workers there has been no Government intervention, just areas redeveloped into theme pubs, wine bars, high priced housing and low paid jobs in service based industries.

Make no mistake, all of us who work in the defence industries either directly or indirectly, and that includes private companies in the naval basis, are facing the very real and constant threat of job loss, uncertainty, low morale, hardship and insecurity. Politicians should not forget that within the strength of the actual serving members of the Armed Forces and the reserves, of which I was one, are many who are trade union members or their families, many of them serving on the frontline or supporting our forces.

To illustrate a point recently, a 20 year old son – just 20! – of one of our stewards was awarded the Military Medal for bravery. Our members provide frontline logistic support. We do not wish to hear reports of Service staff being unnecessarily killed in action merely because a piece of kit was not available or had to be lent to someone else.

Our country requires, indeed, it demands, that its defence is properly maintained. In order to do this, there is a need to increase defence spending. Our Armed Forces and our membership working in defence deserve nothing less than absolute commitment to properly funded investment.

Madam President, I so move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Secunder?

(The motion was formally seconded)

MOTION 130

ROYAL NAVY DOWNSIZING

This Congress is greatly concerned at the Government's plans to further reduce the number of active ships and vessels of the Royal Navy and the Royal Fleet Auxilliary. We feel that this MOD cost cutting is having a detrimental effect on remaining UK shipyard orders and workload. A downsized Navy cannot effectively perform its role in national defence.

We call upon the GMB to campaign to maintain the size of the Royal Navy at an adequately funded level.

113 MANCHESTER BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. WILSON (North West & Irish Region): I move Motion 130 on Royal Navy Downsizing. The previous delegate has just made my point. I think we should recall that prior to the Falklands' War it was Thatcher's policy to cut down on Naval shipbuilding. We think it sent the wrong message to the wrong people which resulted in a bad conflict and many British soldiers and sailors died in the ships which were sunk, which were HMS Antelope, Sheffield and so forth. I think that issue could be laid at Mrs. Thatcher's door as well as that of the Argentine Junta.

How has the Royal Navy fared under Tony Blair? I do not think the Royal Navy has fared very well at all, really. We are left now with 44 surface ships and we have eight destroyers and 17 frigates on active service. Thirteen ships always seem to be out of service or are about to be sold off for scrap at a cheap rate. Yet, in this day and age, in 2007, the Royal Navy is being sent all over the place, to the Gulf, the South Atlantic, the South China Sea off North Korea, many of which are duties performed on behalf of the United Nations. As we know, there is only so much that the Navy can do and they are completely overstretched.

I am speaking personally now, but as to the incident off the coast of Iran, it was a sign of the Royal Navy being overstretched when those personnel were captured. There was not enough protection for them.

It is welcome news that the two new aircraft carrier orders will secure jobs in both Scottish and English yards. I think it will help the cause of the Navy in safeguarding the British interests. Military business is the lifeblood of much of our remaining shipbuilding industry, with 85% of MoD orders fulfilled in the UK. While the "B"

on the GMB sign stands for “Boilermakers”, we are only going to be satisfied when 100 per cent of future orders are placed at the disposal of British yards. We do agree that such work has to be cost-effective and we are not asking the Defence Procurement Ministry to subsidise unnecessary or wasteful capacity. We do urge the MoD to review its estimates in line with what the actual requirements and duties of the Royal Navy are across the world.

Please understand that having a larger naval fleet does not mean that we are in favour of making aggressive or warlike intentions. In fact, the opposite is the position. We want to recall all those years ago, before and during the war, all the ships which were built on the Tyne, Clyde and Mersey which were built by tradesmen from the boilermakers’ and shipwrights’ unions. Those ships were used to defeat Hitler’s navy and that led on the UK fulfilling the victory and ensuring social progress after 1945.

We do have an agenda to promote skills and jobs remaining in UK shipbuilding and we do appreciate that some Government money will ensure that on the carriers.

Really, the campaigning spirit of this motion is also to safeguard world peace by having a stronger Navy and the lives of all Royal Navy personnel who are serving at sea in these troubled times. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder?

(The Motion was formally seconded)

MOTION 131

SHIPBUILDING

Congress recognises that the maintenance of the UK’s shipbuilding capacity and skills is essential to the UK national interests; that successive mismanagements have reduced our capacity to unacceptable levels and that any further reduction in capacity could impact upon future national security.

Congress recognises that the future of MOD warship procurement in the UK could be seriously undermined unless urgent action is forthcoming; that in an increasing unstable world it is essential that the UK retains its essential MOD warship building capacity.

Congress calls on the Government to place all work on orders for warships and warlike vessels within the UK.

Congress therefore calls for urgent action to secure the UK’s warship building capacity.

SUNDERLAND 9 BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

BRO. W. HUGHES (Northern): President, I realise that we are running short of time so no gimmicks, no Tom foolery, but a straightforward delivery about a dying industry that I have felt passionate about for the past 53 years.

Congress, I move Motion 131 – Shipbuilding, or the lack of it. It is hard to believe that it is more than 20 years since I first spoke to Congress on the demise of shipbuilding. In 2007 I am still banging the drum. For 17 years we argued with the Tories. We live on an island, we are an island nation, it is our heritage, it is our birthright to manufacture and to sail the Seven Seas. We argued with the DTI. We knew that other countries were receiving hidden subsidies but the DTI, like an astray on a motorbike, they were not much good.

We asked for a level playing field so that we could compete with others for orders throughout the world. Our level playing field had more hurdles, more fences, than a Grand National course. Then Labour swept into power. Remember the night! Downing Street. “Things can only get better”. To be honest, things did get better, but when it comes to manufacturing and shipbuilding we find that they are still singing from the same Tory hymn sheet; lack of orders, the cost of steel, etc., etc., etc.

If we are to believe them, how come France, Germany, Italy and others still have shipyards doing very well. Colleagues, I am proud that I come from Sunderland, which is the biggest shipbuilding town in the world. In one year alone we produced half the world’s shipping. That is one year, one town and 50% of the world’s shipping.

Today, not a single yard remains. Tyneside is not a stone’s throw from our place. That famous shipbuilding yard, Swan Hunters, had to close its gates recently after 150 years of shipbuilding. Literally thousands of jobs and a generation of skills have been wasted. The damage to our economy has been enormous. Congress, we live in a crazy world. Prawns which are caught off the Scottish coast are flown to China to be peeled and sent back the next day to be sold on Tesco shelves. The powers to be tell us that the UK cannot compete with cheap labour and we cannot stop the flow of jobs going abroad. Maggie Thatcher told us many times, “There is no alternative”. But, Congress, we have to wake up. There is an alternative. Warships are not prawns, and the essential skills needed to build those ships which defend our nation cannot, should not must not even be talked about being put out to competitive tendering.

Congress, Britain needs those warships. It needs British shipyards and British workers to build those ships. To think of anything else would be a criminal act and an insult to the British worker.

Colleagues, I leave you with this last thought. Do we count the cost of money that we might save or do we count the cost of lives that could be lost in the defence of our country? I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Do we have a seconder?

(The Motion was formally seconded)

THE PRESIDENT: I open up the debate. Does anyone wish to contribute to the debate?

SIS. L. RYAN (North West & Irish): Congress, I am speaking to you as a mother. I have one child, a 19 year old son who is serving in the RAF. Last Friday I got a

phone call saying that he was going to be deployed to Afghanistan for his very first tour. Obviously, I am worried about his safety because he is going into conflict. I really do not think that living in 21st Century Britain, where we are prepared to spend up to £50 billion on hi-tech missiles, I should be worrying about the equipment he will be going in. I support Motion 129.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Lisa. Any help we can give you, we are there.

BRO. P. FENN (Midland & East Coast): I am speaking in support of Motion 129. I stand before you as a TA soldier of 30 years. I have been out and I have done Mr. Blair's war. I was there when my boots fell apart and when it was a lottery to get body armour. I suggest you support this motion.

We send our young men and women off to war. They don't ask any questions. They just go out and do our bidding. It is so easy with Trident to push a button, but it is not so easy when you are in a trench and the bullets are coming at you.

What is the future for our armed forces? I will tell you this. Our future is that our men and women, who are on the frontline, will have to fight for whatever cause they are sent to. The Air Force will be no more. That is planned to be handed to the Americans. God help us all! Please support this motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I call Ray Lowden.

BRO. R. LOWDEN (CEC, Manufacturing): I am speaking on behalf of the CEC. The CEC is asking you to support Motion 130 with the following brief qualification. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) Orders are a very important issue to both the MoD dockyard workers and shipbuilding workers in the private sector. The MoD orders will affect their futures for the next 20 years. The supply of work is becoming a concern with naval ships being mothballed in the dockyards and no announcements on future orders. There is also increasing concern for job security.

The GMB has raised the lack of announcements on future orders with the MoD Minister for Procurement who has agreed to meet GMB stewards from both the MoD dockyards and the private shipyards after Congress. We are currently awaiting the announcement for the commencement of the building of the two aircraft carriers, which is Britain's largest ever peacetime order.

This announcement is expected in the near future but we still do not know if the two additional Type 45 destroyers will be ordered. The GMB has also met the Minister and discussed the MARS Programme for orders for the firstline support vessels for the Royal Navy, stating that it is our view that these are battle vessels and that the MoD order should be placed with UK yards and co-ordinated with the carrier programme. We will continue to support the workers in both the MoD dockyards and the private shipbuilding yards and lobby the Government to ensure that the MoD places its orders in the UK. The CEC is asking you to accept this motion with the qualification. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ray. Does the Region accept the qualification. (Agreed) Thank you. I will put Motions 129, 130 and 131 to the vote. All those in favour, please show. Anyone against?

Motion 120 was carried.

Motion 130 was carried.

Motion 131 was carried.

MANUFACTURING SECTION REPORT: PROCESS SECTION

PROCESS SECTION

Overview

During the year, the section was organised by Rehana Azam National Officer, who is currently on maternity leave after having a baby boy. As a result Mick Rix National Office was asked to cover during her period of maternity leave.

The sector in question still suffers in part to the continued downturn in manufacturing, which has resulted in job losses and plant closures, creating further insecurity amongst our members.

Process Section National Committee

Due to the restructuring of the GMB, the majority of the Process Section will merge into the new Manufacturing Section, and therefore the Section National Committee has not met since March 2006.

Government Consultations

We continue to receive government consultations on the chemicals industry, further developing the work of this sector, whilst we have continued to work with the Chemicals Industry Association (CIA), on promoting the image of the industry.

Chemicals Industries Association

The majority of the companies are affiliated to the Chemicals Industries Association, which has an arbitration mechanism.

The GMB and the CIA continue to work together on the sector skills council (COGENT).

ASTRA ZENECA

Responsibility for this company was handed to the region prior to Rehana maternity leave, and the regional officer has been involved in pay negotiations. Following a final offer, which was accepted by the other unions, this offer was rejected by the GMB membership, which at the time of writing this report, is subject to a consultation ballot with the membership for industrial action.

However during this period, ASTRAZENECA have announced 3,000 redundancies worldwide as the company will start to lose its patents, resulting in the opening up of other companies being able to copy those drugs, resulting in cheaper overseas products coming into the market. This coupled with other UK based campaigns by organisations against the price that the NHS pays for drugs, is having a destabilising effect on the UK manufacturing base. Currently ASTRAZENECA have announced that the manufacturing site at Macclesfield as a result, will lose 750 jobs. At the time of writing this report the National Officer, along with the Regional Officer were preparing to

meet with the company to discuss the business case over the planned redundancies. The warning shot that needs to be heeded is that cheaper drugs purchases and the loss of patents will lead further to cheap foreign imports from either India or China, which will further have a devastating effect on the UK manufacturing base, which is renowned along with Sweden, Switzerland and the USA has the world leader. These are hi tech skilled manufacturing jobs, which could all be lost within the next five years, due in part to these new pressures of insecurity and market changes on the drive to reduce further costs within the NHS.

Paper and Corrugated sector

Confederation of Paper Industries (CPI)

The GMB along with other unions are joint signatories to the CPI national agreement. During the year a new national agreement has been negotiated that has brought substantial benefits to members rights across the sector for those companies that are signed up to the national agreement.

Discussions also took place on the pay award for 2007. After intense talks, the CPI finally increased their offer to £11.38 per week based on the national minimum rate for a "grade 4 worker", and stated that this offer was to be regarded as their full and final offer and that by making this offer the CPI had gone *beyond* its mandate. This offer equates to a 3.0 per cent increase on all earnings. All unions strongly recommended the deal.

Members and regions were informed of this matter, via circular and a consultation process in January 2007, and further in February 2007.

Corrugated Packaging Sector (CPA)

The final improved offer for the 2006 pay negotiations are as follows,

The Lieu Bonus for each grade is being increased by the same percentage as that represented by the cash increase on the basic rate for that grade.

The Minimum Earnings Level will be increased by £6.87 from £229.11 per week to £235.98 per week from 4th September, subject to the terms of the Minimum Earnings Agreement (Section B IV of the National Agreement).

The bonus levels will be applied as in past years, at average performance level or where no bonus schemes exist, as a payment in lieu form. This payment does not rank for overtime or shift premia. The weekly cash sum will be divided by 37.5 to give the hourly rate.

The increase in basic rates shown in paragraph 2.1 of the agreement will be applied at local level as cash increases to be added to local weekly rates. However, in order to mitigate the problem of a perceived unfairness in higher-paying plants where the percentage increase on local rates may be significantly lower than elsewhere, a fall back arrangement will apply.

The agreed Fallback is a 2.8% increase on local basic rates and in lieu bonus (where paid). If the relevant cash increase, when applied to a local basic rate, results in a percentage increase of less than the Fallback level, then an increase of 2.8% will be applied to the basic weekly rate instead of the cash increase i.e. the higher of the two rates will be applied.

WINCANTON AIR PRODUCTS PACKAGE GASES AND BULK

Wincanton Air Products is dealt with by the region. During the year, talks had broken down with the

company on both the pay negotiations and other matters concerning hours, sickness payments etc. During the course of events due to the company in part not dealing with matters correctly, a ballot for industrial action was organised in both companies. At the time of writing this report, and due in main to the solidarity of our members, the company had tabled new and improved final offers on pay, and have also put forward solutions to other matters, which were acceptable to the negotiating team, and a consultation exercise is now being held with the members.

HANSON CONCRETE

With effect from 1 April 2006, all basic rates on the above company were increased by 3%. However the minimum basic rate was lifted substantially to £5.75 per hour. This included the 3%.

It was also agreed that a substantial overhaul of the agreement would take place during 2006/07. This has taken place with the participation of 4 lay representatives. This new draft agreement is, at the time of writing this report, going back to the National Negotiating Committee for consideration.

HANSON AGGREGATES

With effect from 1 January 2007, all basic rates in Hanson Aggregates Quarries were increased by 4%. This increase resulted from the implementation of the RPI related second year of the two year pay deal. The conclusion of this two year settlement was drawn to the attention of Congress last year.

HANSON BUILDING PRODUCTS (HANSON BRICK)

Since last Congress due to internal group restructuring the former Hanson Brick Company has been redesigned and renamed as Hanson Building Products.

Pay bargaining has proved abnormally difficult as the employer has felt themselves to be in a strong position due to abnormally high levels of bricks in stock. This surplus arises from the government's strategy of pushing the house building industry to redevelop brown field sites. This leads to the construction of flats rather than houses. Thus the concrete block industry booms whilst the clay brick industry feels the draft. A house requires on average almost three times as many bricks as a flat.

Thus the company tabled a final offer of 3% with effect from 1 January 2007 with minor changes to other conditions of employment. As this report is being written this offer is out to ballot without recommendation. Congress will not be surprised that as the RPI increase for December 2006 was 4.4% the offer is unlikely to be well received.

However given the issue of stock levels identified above and the fact that two of the key GMB plants have had substantial periods of lay-off over the last 9 months I would be surprised if there was a real appetite for a fight amongst our members.

LAFARGE CEMENT

The relationship between the GMB and the French based multi-national Lafarge (formerly Blue Circle) continues to be positive and constructive. The GMB remains the largest union in the company and continues to lead on pay and conditions negotiation. Early this year a three year deal was settled as follows:

Year 1 an increase of 4.25% with effect from 1/2/07 on all basic pay and allowances.

Year 2 & 3 an increase of RPI + 0.25% with a ceiling of 4.5% and a floor of 2.5%

This gives the company and the union a period of stability and guaranteed settlements in time for

the anniversary date of 1 January each year.

This offer was accepted in a union consultative ballot by a margin of 2:1.

We will meet the company in the middle of the year to consider the impact of changes on their collective bargaining machines but the GMB will continue to play a lead role in Lafarge.

LAFARGE DRIVERS

The small number of directly employed drivers (around 130) covered by this agreement accepted after consultation a 2 year deal as follows:

- 4% with effect from 1/1/07
- RPI + 0.25% with effect from 1/1/08

The next negotiations will therefore be with effect from 1 January 2009. In the intervening period we will look jointly with the company at the possibility of a new attendance management system.

BUILDING BRICK NATIONAL JOINT COUNCIL

This agreement is industry wide and covers the majority of the smaller (and one or two of the larger) brick makers in the UK. We are at the time of writing just coming out of a two year pay and conditions deal which established a minimum hourly rate in the industry of £6.13. A new settlement is being sought with effect from May 2007 and our members are currently (February) being consulted on a claim. The hope is to have a deal in place in time for the anniversary date.

The brick industry is still characterised by low demand, large stocks and further consolidation and as a Union we have to be alert to these factors to sustain our place as the main union in this industry which currently employs around 6,000 people on about 112 sites.

CASTLE CEMENT

Responsibility for this agreement has recently been transferred from the North West Region (previously dealt with by Lancashire) back to National Office.

Since last Congress there has been one pay settlement, accepted after a consultative ballot by GMB members. The detail is:

- (i) **Basic Rates and Allowances**
Increased by 3% with effect from 1/1/07
- (ii) **Christmas Period Working** Improvements in the levels of pay for those required to work on Christmas Day, Boxing Day or New Years Day.

The point of greatest concern in the Company over the last 12 months however has been the future of the pension scheme and pressure from the company to increase employee contributions. At the time of writing this matter is still under discussion.

AGGREGATE INDUSTRIES (QUARRIES)

This agreement covers 19 quarries operated by AI running from North West England to the South West. The GMB is the largest union in the company.

The 2006 pay negotiations proved to be very difficult with the company eventually imposing a 3% increase in basic rates with effect from 1 April 2006. This followed:

- Divisions between ourselves and the T&G as to how to proceed
- Legitimate complaints from our members about poor internal communication
- A semi-detached approach from the employers as to serious pay differentials from quarry to quarry

In connection with the above appropriate remedial action has been taken and a new National Negotiating Committee controlled by GMB lay reps has been re-established to conduct the 2007 negotiations.

AGGREGATE INDUSTRIES – CONCRETE PRODUCTS

This is the concrete products division of Aggregate Industries and again the GMB is the largest union. The negotiations are dominated by two large sites, one of which, in Derbyshire, is GMB organised. The pay talks are very much in the hands of an NNC composed by lay members. The role of the National Officer is merely to assist and offer advice. Last year's settlement (with effect from 1 April) equated to 3%.

PRE-CAST CONCRETE NJC

This agreement, like that in building brick, covers a sector of the materials industry rather than a company. We are now in the second year of a two year pay deal with an RPI plus related increase due to trigger with effect from 1 April 2007. The precise percentage increase therefore is not known at the time of writing this report.

(Adopted)

BRO. M. RIX (National Officer): President and Congress, I move pages 91-95 of the General Secretary's Report.

Obviously, for many years manufacturing has been in continual decline and again, in the past 12 months, we have seen our members' plants and factories in this particular section being under particular scrutiny, creating insecurity of employment for our member. Indeed, we have had the terrible of issue of plant closures leading to complete redundancies for certain people in some areas of the country.

However, in trying to maintain both dignity and security rights for our members, it is of enormous pleasure to congratulate all the officers throughout the country who work for the GMB in providing that moral support to our members in their time of need. Too often we do not sing the praises of people who are providing that support, fighting those redundancies and closures that take place. I would like to thank those officers in the sections who have been working tremendously hard on these issues in the past 12 months.

Our work has not been without success. In the Confederation agreement within the paper industry, we concluded a new national agreement last year which received the benefit and support of moving up on rates, security rights and again we will be

moving through information and consultation rights in that industry throughout the year.

In the corrugated packaging industry, despite some plant closures which have taken place, we have met on numerous occasions with the employers in trying to look at a new framework that will cover the sector, and again these will also include the information, consultation and security of employment rights and the beefing up of other parts of the national agreement which will, hopefully, prove beneficial to our members who work within that sector.

The sector has not been without its industrial problems. In Canton Air Products, as a company, for many years we have faced problems in denying our members their rights in terms of certain agreements. I must commend our stewards in Wincanton who, through the threat of industrial action, have recently been concluding final settlements to agreements which, unfortunately, have been taking nearly 12 months to conclude. Hopefully, we will be able to get a proper settlement within the bulk sector on those agreements as well.

I have talked about the issue of information and consultation. There is a raft of issues taking place amongst other sectors in trying to introduce a national framework so that we can have proper rights on information and consultation. When you start to meet nationally, the move then is to try and go to the next agenda, and that is just not to have information and consultation rights but then to go for national bargaining so we can provide complete security for our members in those other industries.

One of the biggest problems that we are now facing, and it has been highlighted by some of the issues which have been taking place within the chemicals sector, and I refer especially to the pharmaceutical sector, is that many people will not have much sympathy with the pharmaceutical industry and the companies which operate in that industry. I, for one, would be included in my lack of sympathy for the way in which they have made huge profits over the years in terms of drug manufacturing and sales without putting very much back, in some respects, into the sector.

What we are now faced with and are starting to see, because of the way the market is changing, the way that companies are taking over each other and the way that some of these companies have failed to invest properly in terms of new pipeline products, especially with the campaign on the issues of cheap drugs, which is a campaign which I think is very worthy -- this is a problem that the sector is facing through the campaign for cheap drugs -- is by exporting jobs and manufacturing out of the UK and placing those manufacturing, research and development projects, which are essential to these industries, in India and China, and then re-exporting the drugs back into the UK at a cheaper price at the expense of workers who work in the UK.

This situation has caused a major discussion in the Manufacturing Section committee a few weeks ago. Micky Laws from our Southern Region came up with a great slogan: "Cheap drugs for need, not for greed". At first when he said that, I was not sure whether he was meaning that in the sense of either personal need or in the public good. But the real issue is that I think it is a campaign which is well worth fighting for. There are issues which are now facing our members of insecurity of employment within Astra Zenica because of these matters. I think it is an absolute scandal when

700 people this year can be threatened with redundancy in Astra Zenica especially when Astra Zenica last month spent £15.6 billion on acquiring a company that only makes £40 million a year. That company is proposing to make 700 people redundant within the Macclesfield site by outsourcing over the next three years and then to start bringing drugs into this country on a cheaper basis from India and China. So I think we should start looking at what is happening in a clearer way.

Many other things have happened within the sector but due to time constraints, President, I think it would just be sensible for me to finish my report now. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mick. I move pages 91, 92, 93, 94, and 95 of the General Secretary's Report. As no delegate wishes to speak to those pages, I ask Congress to accept them.

(The Manufacturing Section Report was adopted)

MANUFACTURING SECTION REPORT: CLOTHING & TEXTILE SECTION

CLOTHING & TEXTILES SECTION

Introduction

The industry continues to decline and manufacturers find it more profitable to move offshore into countries where health and safety and employment laws leave a lot to be desired. Some British manufacturers have no conscience regarding the communities that they operate in and the workers that have served these businesses for decades.

There is no better example than the current Burberry dispute. Burberry produces high quality and expensive raincoats and polo shirts and operates its own retail shops in Knightsbridge, New York and Paris and also supplies the Royal Family. Its workers are dedicated and skilled; the Board do not have to answer to the marketplace and profits have been at a decent and increasing level.

It therefore came as a shock and surprise to the GMB and its members when an announcement was made in the Autumn of 2006 that the Treorchy factory was to close with the loss of over 200 jobs. The reason for production to be moved offshore to China was to increase profits because of the low wages of Chinese textile workers.

There is no shortage of orders and no real pressure on the company because it is engaged in profit making products.

The workers led by our GMB Senior Officer, Mervyn Burnett and Regional Secretary, Allan Garley are campaigning to save their jobs. They are waging a tremendous campaign which we all need to support. It is not acceptable for greed to take over the moral responsibilities of Burberry's management.

I would like to thank all our Shop Stewards and Officers.

National Negotiations

The 2007 pay negotiations produced the following results: All earnings of all workers, including

learners, will be increased by 2.25%.

The General Minimum Time Rates and the Minimum Weekly Payment for all workers, including learners, covered by the BCIA/GMB Clothing and Textile Section National Agreement will be increased to those set out in the attached schedule. This agreement will last until 30th September 2007, following which a new anniversary date for the Agreement, October 1st will apply.

The union negotiators were able to achieve a major change within the agreement by bringing forward the anniversary date to the 1st October which will strengthen the union's negotiating position. At the moment the minimum wage is confusing the pay negotiations and the Employers seem to have been reluctant over the last few years to come forward with pay increases for the 1st January because of the minimum wage being set on the 1st October. In future this will enable the Trade Union Side to negotiate in September well before the minimum wage is paid and with the full knowledge of what the minimum wage is going to be.

The increase of 2.25% over a 9 month period is equal to 2.8% over a 12 month period and therefore the union negotiators recommend this offer on the basis that it is the best offer that can be achieved through negotiations for 2007.

General Minimum Time Rates All Sectors

18 years and over £535.00

Trainee under 18 years £456.70

Minimum weekly payment for all workers for 39 hours' attendance

18 years and over £208.65

Trainee under 18 years £178.11

(Adopted)

THE PRESIDENT: Can we now move to item no. 7, the Manufacturing Section Report: Clothing & Textile Section, pages 67-68 of the General Secretary's Report)

BRO. P. DAVIES (National Secretary): Congress and President, I move the Clothing & Textile Section Report, pages 67-68.

Firstly, I would like to thank the National Section Committee for all its hard work and support they have given during the past 12 months. Mary Hutchinson and Sheila Bearcroft have given sound advice during that time but, in particular, I would like to thank the president, Brenda Fraser, for her commitment to our members and to the sectional committee. Brenda has been a great source of knowledge and a great president during the past 12 months.

The 2007 pay negotiation increased rates by a measly 2.25% and a new anniversary date of 1st October 2007, which is very important to our members, is now under proper consideration. Arrangements are now being made to start this year's pay and conditions negotiations. We have in the section to move away from the pay increases that we have received during the past few years.

Whilst the industry continues to decline whilst it is moving around the world to exploit workers, there are some small signs that the world is now becoming too small a place for the international manufacturer. What were once known as low paid countries are now being classed by the employers as becoming too expensive to manufacture in. Good examples are Morocco and Bangladesh, which were once exploited by the capitalists but where pay rates have increased. As a result, production is now being moved from those countries. China now appears to be the worst country for pay and conditions. How long this situation will last is in the hands of the workers. Abuse and exploitation of workers in China cannot be allowed to continue.

One issue that captured the imagination of thousands of British people was the tremendous fight put up by the South Western Region to try and save the Burberry manufacturing plant at Treorchy. Burberry manufactures high quality garments. There was no problem with quality, profits or industrial relations. So why move offshore? The answer is as old as time itself – greed and the greed of the Burberry board of directors, who should be absolutely ashamed of themselves. We lost the fight to save our members’ jobs but our members won the admiration of the public. The union can hold its head up high.

Alan Garley, in particular, and Mervyn Burnett, who has been mentioned this week, fought like tigers to try to stop the closure. I hope that Congress recognises that fact. *(Applause)*

Congress, clothing and textile membership is as important as any other membership. All the industry needs is some decent legislation to stop UK manufacturing of essential garments, such as Army and Navy uniforms, from going offshore. Public procurement can and should be used to revitalise the industry and protect the membership we have and encourage people to join. I commend the Clothing & Textile report to Conference.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Phil. Page 67 and page 68, are there any questions? *(No response)* Do you accept that part of the report, colleagues?

(The Manufacturing Section Report: Clothing & Textiles Section was adopted)

MANUFACTURING SECTION REPORT: CFTA Section (Pages 68-82 of the General Secretary’s Report)

CONSTRUCTION FURNITURE TIMBER & ALLIED SECTION

Introduction

Now that the decision to move to a three section union has been implemented this will be the last report from the CFTA Section.

Since Congress last met the decline in manufacturing has continued even though on the 1st January 2006 the Public Procurement Directive became law. During the latter half of 2006 and the first quarter of 2007 the CFTA Section now part of the Manufacturing Section has worked closely with employers who are interested in the benefits of public procurement.

A major issue that concerned not only the GMB but the other trade unions as well is the decline of workplace organisation. The recent DTI consultation document – Workplace Representatives: a review of their facilities and facility time – shows clearly that there are over 350,000 workplace representatives, quite evenly split between union and non-union representatives. Union representatives are more active and perform a wider range of functions. Their numbers, though large, may be declining relative to the increased size of the workforce. However, an estimated 47 per cent of the employees work at workplaces with an on-site representative. Representation is much more marked in the public sector. Workplace representatives tend to be quite old. Women, though an increasing proportion of the total, are under-represented. There is evidence to suggest that union representation is thinning out. Union representatives are aged 46 on average and there is evidence that unions are finding it difficult to recruit new and younger members as representatives.

The decline in union membership is connected very clearly to the decline in workplace shop stewards and representatives. The fact that employers have now started to involve themselves in the development of non union representatives which is shown in the DTI report that half of the UK's workplace representatives are non union are developments that should concerned the trade unions.

Within the Manufacturing Section we will develop modern shop stewards and representative organizations. Linking up shop stewards, branch officials and full time officers is the only way that effective workplace organization can be achieved. We must tell the government that there needs to be one consolidated piece of legislation to allow workplace representatives to carry out their role in the workplace. There are at least 15 different sets of legislation covering the various categories of workplace representative. Some have existed for over 30 years, whilst a range of others have been introduced since the late 90s, often in response to EU regulation.

Recruitment alone will not increase membership, the retention and training of shop stewards and representatives must be the key to an increased membership. Quality and regular communications are also very important. Workplace representation must become more diverse and representative of the changing workforce. Shop stewards and representatives must be given a higher profile within our organization and over the next few years the Manufacturing Section will start to build that grass roots organization that will enable our members to be represented by fully trained and competent GMB representatives.

While manufacturing continues to move offshore there are significant signs that some manufacturing is coming back into the UK and even better news is contained within my report on construction.

Migrant workers continue to come to the UK looking for work for themselves and their families and this is no different from what we experienced in the 1950's and 1960's. Migrant workers will become an essential part of the UK economy. The key as always is that the GMB fights against the exploitation of migrant workers and that we welcome our brothers and sisters from Eastern Europe into the union. The work already carried out in the Midlands & East Coast Region, South Western Region and the Southern Region of the GMB must be congratulated.

The Manufacturing Section will work closely with the Building & Woodworking International (BWI) and the European Federation of Building & Wood Workers (EFBWW). Both organizations can and are opening up doors for the GMB to work with unions within Eastern Europe.

We have some excellent opportunities within the new Manufacturing Section to move forward. The GMB has members in all the major manufacturing industries and there is potential for thousands of

new members within these existing industries.

National Negotiations

FURNITURE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

The departure of the major part of Christie Tyler to Asia and Eastern Europe was completed by the early part of 2006 which caused the loss of over 2,500 well paid jobs. Despite the efforts of our own Don McGregor, CEC Member whose illness caused us some concerns together with major support from Labour MPs Madeline Moon and Huw Irranca-Davies we have been unable to stop the closures.

The GMB is still very concerned about the imports of upholstered furniture and our understanding is that almost 75% of all upholstered furniture coming in from overseas failed the UK flammability test and is unsafe. The problem is that the test on imported UK furniture amounts to less than 1% and only a small amount of upholstered furniture is removed from the marketplace.

Overseas demand for British furniture has increased by 10% as UK manufacturers learn to take advantage of growing foreign markets. In the year to October 2006 exports rose by around £80m to nearly £1bn bolstered by a jump in overseas demand for contract and office furniture and a steady growth in the domestic sector. Domestic furniture sales rose 110% in Croatia, 100% in Kuwait and 80% in Pakistan with overall sales up to £477m in 2006 from £447m in 2005. Other emerging markets include Russia which saw a 176% jump in demand for British imports and South Africa with a 300% rise in the contract sector. While import sales have a market share worth £3.16bn compared to £2.98bn in 2005 – an increase of around 5% or £150m – figures suggest a slowing of foreign furniture into Britain. This must be good for the UK manufacturers.

The British furniture manufacturers employ well over 100,000 people in manufacturing. The GMB has a membership of around 16,000 and T&G has around 4,000 members. The industry has a sales turnover of £6.4bn per year – the figures speak for themselves and resources are badly needed if we are to increase our 16% membership within the industry. The 2007 pay negotiations were disappointing and raised the question of the relevance of the NLA.

The pay rates for 2007 are as follows:

MINIMUM HOURLY RATES OF PAY

Journeymen/women	591.75 pph	
Packers	546.75 pph/Juveniles (16/17 year olds)	410.06 pph
Labourers/Porters	542.32 pph/Juveniles	406.74 pph

Note: Any of the above rates that are below the National Minimum Wage (NMW) effective from 1st October 2007 will be uplifted from that date to the NMW rate.

NORMAL WORKING WEEK: 39 hours - 10 minutes paid break. Polishers and others using hazardous material 5 minutes paid washing time at end of each shift

SHIFT WORK: Morning/afternoon/shifts = 50 pph/Night shift = 90 pph/30 minute break for meals

OVERTIME: Monday to Friday and Saturday - first 2 hours time and one third, second 2 hours time and two thirds, thereafter double time. At least 4 hours of overtime are to be available on a Saturday or if not payment is made at time and two thirds for the hours worked. Sundays - double time. Payment - personal rate of the individual worker

SHORT TIME WORKING: Journeyman/woman £342.12pph/Adult Packers £313.05 pph/Adult Labourers/Porters £290.80 pph

SICK PAY: Pay - SSP plus one third of appropriate time worker's rate. Waiting days - 3 working days, except where linked by two periods of sickness of four or more calendar days that are separated by not more than 14 calendar days, or, where industrial injuries are recorded in accident book at time of occurrence. Time limit - not to exceed 50 days in any 12-month period and no more than 2 such payments in consecutive periods unless the employee has returned to work.

HOLIDAYS: 22 annual in a full holiday year and in 2004, 8 public holidays. Payment calculated on basis of average hourly earnings in the 12-week period preceding holiday (excluding non-contractual overtime, short time working and waiting time).

TIME ALLOWANCES: Paternity leave - two day's leave at individual's appropriate minimum time worker's rate (Note should be taken of the choice employees have under Paternity Regulations to choose between the NLA ('contractual') entitlement or the statutory right to one/two weeks consecutive paternity leave - whichever they consider to be the most favourable to them.

Bereavement leave - three days on death of spouse, child, parent, brother, sister. Two days leave on death of a grandparent, mother/father-in-law, brother/sister-in-law, and son/daughter in-law. Paid at appropriate minimum time worker's rate. Cancer screening - after two years' service - up to 3 hours at appropriate minimum time worker's rate.

TOOL ALLOWANCE: Up to £300

TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT: Employer Notice - first 4 weeks not less than 2 hours; between 4 weeks and less than 2 years, one week; then one additional week of notice for every year of service up to a maximum of 12 weeks notice after 12 years service. Employee Notice - first 4 weeks not less than 2 hours; between 4 weeks and 12 years, thereafter 2 weeks. Retirement payment – paid at age 65 (or above if NRA is higher), 1½ days for each complete year of service, subject to maximum 37½ days.

DEATH BENEFIT: £12,000 - 19.5 hours and upward per week/£6,000 - under 19.5 hours per week

LONDON ASSOCIATION OF FUNERAL DIRECTORS

Relationships have remained good and the 2006 pay negotiations produced an above inflation increase. Membership is low but during 2006/2007 our membership increased slightly.

The following pay rates apply from 1st May 2006:

	Per Week	Attendance
Standard Rates & Supplement	39 Hours	Supplement
Funeral Assistant Grade A	273.49	10.00
Funeral Assistant Grade B	260.84	10.00
Funeral Assistant Grade C	230.11	10.00
Branch Manager	273.49	10.00
New Adult Recruit	222.51	10.00
Funeral Receptionist/Clerk Grade A	260.84	10.00
Funeral Receptionist/Clerk Grade B	249.62	10.00
Funeral Receptionist/Clerk Trainee (first 13 weeks)	222.51	10.00
Youths age 16	149.63	Nil
Youths age 17	179.74	Nil
Youths age 18	Full adult rate	Nil
Supplements		Per Week

Foremen supervising up to 9 workers			9.90
Foremen supervising 10-20 workers			11.83
Foremen supervising 21-30 workers			14.15
Foremen supervising over 30 workers			16.05
Resident Manager's Marital Partner			58.19
Branch Manager's Commission ...sales up to £40,000			2.5%
Branch Manager's Commission ...sales from £40,000 up to & including £60,000			2%
Branch Manager's Commission ...sales over £60,000			1.5%
Allowances			
Mileage		£0.40	Per mile
Clothing		£6.00	Per week
Journey work disturbance		£7.00	Per journey
First Aid		£3.00	Per week
Hourly and Overtime rates	Grade A	Grade B	Grade C
Normal Rate	£7.02	£6.69	£5.90
Time and Half	£10.53	£10.04	£8.85
Double Time	£14.04	£13.38	£11.80

CO-OPERATIVE FUNERALCARE

The very worst company that we have to deal with and this is no exaggeration. A few days before the Christmas break the company gave notice through the media of their intention to derecognise the GMB from the collective bargaining procedures.

There is no basis for the derecognition other than a very feeble excuse from the company wanting to deal with Usdaw and the T&G. The GMB has been and will continue to be at the forefront of the fight to secure decent pay and conditions for workers in the funeral industry.

Our members will have to decide what Co-operative services they use if the derecognition threat is carried out on the 19th March 2007. Will the Trade Union Movement continue to use Co-op banks, shops or travel agencies? Trade union members have supported the Co-operative Movement for well over a century on the basis of co-operation and unity. The current Funeralcare management has lost its integrity and is in danger of losing its trade union support.

The GMB will continue to campaign against derecognition by the Co-operative and will not join in sweetheart deals. Over the last 12 months our members in Funeralcare have been attacked by an anti union employer; stewards have been suspended for carrying out their normal trade union duties; warnings and dismissals are commonplace. The management rule by fear and intimidation. The GMB will not abandon its loyal members and we will continue to represent them whatever happens.

The following pay and conditions offer for 2007 is out to ballot:

BASIC INCREASE A 4% increase to all Job pay rates (not including allowances) with effect from the beginning of the Society's financial year – 14th January 2007 with the exception of those employees who are on protected or red-circled rates unless the 4% increase takes the rate for their role above their protected / red-circled rate. All casual pay rates will also be uplifted in accordance with the terms of this pay offer.

FUNERAL DIRECTORS A further increase of £250 per annum (pro rata if part time) for all Funeral Directors, Senior Funeral Directors and Principle Funeral Directors within the business

with effect from 14th January 2007 (with the exception of those employees who are on protected or red-circled rates unless the 4% increase takes the rate for their role above their protected / red-circled rate).

STANDBY RATES The harmonisation of standby rates across the Funeralcare business to create one rate only of £18 per standby occasion for those participating in standby with effect from 14th January 2007.

LONDON WEIGHTING An increase to Inner London Weighting from £1,700 per annum to £1,800 per annum (pro rata for part time employees) with effect from 14th January 2007 for those employees employed out of the units at Woolwich, Purley, Earlsfield, Manor Park, Hayes, Watford, Enfield and their associated branches.

LONDON WEIGHTING OUTER An increase to Outer London Weighting from £1,050 per annum to £1,110 per annum (pro rata for part time employees) with effect from 14th January 2007 for those employees employed out of the units at Gravesend, Southend and Welwyn Garden City and their associated branches.

WEEKEND WORKING The salary for all Funeral Directors and Funeral Service Operatives includes an element of overtime that has been consolidated into pay to form an all-inclusive salary. These salaries allow for working a fair share of additional hours both during the week and at weekends providing that working hours are always monitored and managed to within the maximum average of 45.5 hours per week over a seventeen-week reference period. There is also a commitment that these additional hours will be managed with a reasonable approach at all times. As additional recognition of weekend work, with effect from acceptance of this offer, Funeral Directors (including SFD's and PFD's) and Funeral Service Operatives will receive one standby payment (presently £18) per Saturday or Sunday when working on Funerals. This payment will not be made for church take ins, removals or other funeral work. Hours worked will still contribute to the working averages and those employees already being paid to be on standby on a Saturday or Sunday will still qualify for this payment providing they are attending for work on funerals. Part time Funeral Directors and Funeral Service Operatives will of course continue to be paid for any additional hours to their normal contract worked on a weekend at the appropriate rate and will still qualify for this weekend payment if working on funerals on either a Saturday or Sunday. Please note that this payment is per Saturday or Sunday and not per funeral

CREDIT CONTROL In order to support continual improvements to debt management within Funeralcare, a debt management allowance of £500 per annum (pro rata for part time employees) will be available to at least two employees per region to adopt additional duties on behalf of the region in relation to the element of debt management between the initial call to our clients after the funeral and when the debt is passed to our Credit Control Dept. Any necessary training will be offered to the employees adopting these additional duties which will be drawn up formally for recruitment purposes. The duties will be offered to employees in the region on a voluntary basis. Where more than two volunteers per region come forward, selection will be made by short interview. The allowance will be awarded immediately on recruitment to the role and the business will seek to provide clarity to all our Arrangers in relation to where their involvement ends during the initial follow up calls with clients.

BTEC During 2007, improvements to the BTEC system will take place which will enable an increase in the pace of progression through the qualification for all relevant existing and new employees. In recognition of those employees whose progression through the qualification may have been delayed in 2006, this offer includes a guarantee from the date of acceptance that those employees who are still on the 80% pay rate with 6 months service or more will immediately move

to the 90% rate. Please note that those employees with less than 6 months service at the date of acceptance and new employees going forward will only progress from 80% to 90% pay rate in line with the relevant BTEC qualification levels as outlined in the Funeralcare Agreement.

HUB BONUS The commitment to the introduction of a transparent and self funded hub bonus system by the end of 2007 which would be based on hub performance and associated branches. It is likely that the terms of this self funded bonus would not be clear until at least the half year (by 1st July 2007) therefore making any payments eligible for 2007 based on a half year performance for the first year. The likely parameters for this bonus will be based on:

Increases in Profit
Increases in Market Share
Reduction of Debt
Reduction in Absenteeism

Bonus payments where eligible, would be paid in two stages. The first being in the pay before Christmas and the second being after the audited annual accounts are available for each hub.

ARRANGERS Finally, there is an agreed commitment to review the Funeralcare Agreement's salary for Funeral Arrangers as part of the 2008 pay negotiations and treat this as a matter of priority.

INSTITUTE OF BRITISH ORGAN BUILDERS (IBO)

The industrial relations remain in very good order and our very small but very skilled membership continues to work in an industry that exports a high percentage of its production to America, China and Asia. The 2007 pay and conditions are as follows:

Negotiations that took place on 21st November 2006 between GMB and the negotiating sub-committee of the IBO reached the following agreement on changes to wages and conditions from 1st January 2007, confirmed by both parties:

WAGE INCREASE: The Journeyman's minimum hourly rate will be increased to £6.70 (from the former £6.44) a rise of 4%. See below revised schedule of minimum hourly rates from 1st January 2007:

Group	Age	Hourly Rate		
		Year One	Year Two	Year Three
	16-17	£3.30	£3.90	£4.45
	18-21	£4.45	£5.35	*
	22 and over	£5.35	£6.15	*

IMPORTED SAWMILLING INDUSTRY

The industry remains fairly buoyant although there remains an ongoing problem of the supply of timber from the world forests. Climate change has now affected how the timber is taken out of the forest and winters are much later therefore the removal of timber is now made harder.

Our members, mainly wood machinists, enjoy much higher pay rates than those negotiated at national level. Nevertheless the national agreement remains important because it lays down working hours, holidays, sick pay and retirement payments. Membership remains low but there is some potential in the spin off industries such as garden furniture and fencing. The following increases took effect from the 1st January 2007:

An increase of 20p per hour for woodcutting machinists making a new national basic minimum rate of £6.24 per hour.

An increase of 15.5p per hour for labourers making a new national basic minimum rate of £5.32 per hour with the proviso of an agreed minimum earnings level of £5.50 per hour.

FINNFOREST

One of the more forward looking companies within the sawmilling industry. Industrial relations are good and we have a European Works Council with the Vice Chair being held by one of our members. The company employs a large number of employees in the UK and our membership stands at around 25% which is disappointing when you consider that the GMB is the only active union.

The 2007 pay offer introduced a move towards closing the gaps between the high pay and the lower pay bands and is probably the best pay award that our members have seen for some time. At the time of writing this report the following offer was out to ballot.

All pay bands will be increased by £720 effective from 1st April 2007.

Company Sick Pay Benefit Entitlement for employees with 2 or more years service will increase from 13 weeks full pay and 13 weeks half pay to 15 weeks full pay and 15 weeks half pay, this is applicable to new periods of sickness absence commencing after 1st April 2007.

Paternity Leave will increase from 5 days paid leave and 5 days leave with statutory paternity pay to 10 days paid leave, subject to completion of the self certificate for paternity pay, this is applicable to new periods of paternity leave commencing after 1st April 2007.

The company will advise of the situation regarding corporate work wear as soon as possible.

The company will carry out a review of the skills bands with an initial meeting to establish the scope of the review by the end of March.

The supplement for first aider's will be increased to £300 in 2007 and the company will look to review the number of first aider's in order to balance this inline with requirements.

Although the level of rates for other supplements paid by the company was not raised in the discussion, the company will increase team leader and training supplements by 4.1% from 1st April 2007.

If the ballot is accepted the new rates of pay from the 1st April 2007 will be:

NEW: 2007	Basic p.a.	Increase p.a.	2 Shift p.a.	Increase p.a.	3 Shift p.a.	Increase p.a.	4 Shift p.a.	Increase p.a.
			15%		25%		33%	
Band 1	£20,253	£720	£23,291		£25,316		£26,937	
Shift			£3,038	£108	£5,063	£180	£6,684.00	£238.00
Band 2	£18,490	£720	£21,264		£23,113		£24,592	
Shift			£2,774	£108	£4,623	£180	£6,102.00	£238.00

Band 3	£17,314	£720	£19,911		£21,643		£23,028	
Shift			£2,597	£108	£4,329	£180	£5,714.00	£238.00
Band 4	£15,552	£720	£17,885		£19,440		£20,685	
Shift			£2,333		£3,888		£5,133.00	£238.00

Finnforest remains the top company within the UK sawmilling industry GMB has an opportunity to increase its membership significantly.

FLAT GLASS

Many people within the Trade Union Movement fail to understand the complexities of national pay bargaining and the difficulties that the lead union negotiators have in drawing together a joint trade union claim. Consideration to the members of the GMB's aspirations must be set alongside that of other unions. Over the last few years the flat glass negotiations have been very difficult and time consuming.

The trade union team which includes 4/5 lay delegates has concentrated on increasing the basic pay rates both at national level and local level.

The industry now employs around 15,000-20,000 employees and the signature trade unions have around 4,000-5,000 members probably less than a third. We have national negotiations and national company negotiations so the potential for membership is available.

This year's pay offer was narrowly accepted and the new Green Book pay rates are:

An increase of 23 pence on the basic hourly rate across the board as follows: Specialist Advanced Craftsperson and Specialist Processor £6.70 Advanced Craftsperson and Multi-Skilled Processor £6.27 Craftsperson and Skilled Processor £5.98 General Operative and General Processor £5.70 All the above figures should be implemented as from 1 January 2007

PILKINGTON GLASS

The company continues to improve its profitability despite more UK job losses. The days are long gone when GMB could claim over 14,000 members in this one glass company. Industrial relations remain good even though redundancies are now commonplace.

Pilkington is one of the few companies that have a final salary pension scheme which has no deficit. Our membership is involved in a new Pensions Committee which was set up by our Pensions Department and we are thankful to Heidi Benzing, GMB Pensions Officer.

While Pilkington manufacturing employees have enjoyed decent pay and conditions, Pilkington downstream has been mainly left to the basic pay within the Green Book. The GMB is currently in discussions with the company over the status of the downstream members. These discussions have been ongoing and we hope to be able to conclude them in 2007.

SOLAGLAS

The parent company, St Gobain continues to support the UK operations is Solaglas despite continue losses. Industrial relations continue on a sound footing and our members are treated fairly. Solaglas continues to be one of the leaders in pay and conditions but some groups are fairing better than others. National negotiations take place in all three sectors of the company. Membership could be much higher and consolidation will produce more members. The following pay rates for 2006/2007 were agreed.

i Solaglass Contracting Division

Following a meeting with the company on Monday, 4th September 2006 GMB and Amicus have agreed the following:

An annual increase of 3.2% will be applied to all basic rates, regional allowances, travel time, shift work payments, week-end and unsocial hours supplement from the first pay week in July 2006.

The clause under section 3.2 Holidays, relating to absence immediately preceding or following a public holiday, will be reworded to apply only to those employees on the Company Attendance Procedure.

The annual holiday entitlement will be improved to 23 days annual holiday upon employment, 24 days after 1 year of service, 25 days after 2 years of service.

We have agreed to further extend the trial for Enhanced Company Sick Pay (payable from the first day of sickness absence) to 30th June 2007.

We will review the current appraisal process to reflect the current skill requirement across Contracting Division. The review will be carried out through a working party, to comprise Alan Herbert and Del Wilson as fabrication and union representatives, a glazier, myself and a business/operations manager.

In view of the low membership within this Division the Shop Stewards and Officers accepted that this was the best that could be achieved through negotiation and confirm that the increase will be backdated to the first full pay week in July.

ii Solaglass Windowcare Division

Annual increase of 3.2% to be applied to basic rates, regional allowances, travel time, shift work payments, weekend unsocial hours supplements; excluding call-out rates, standby rates, first aid payments and subsistence allowance for those covered by both the Solaglas Windowcare Labour Agreement and SRG Moving Forward Agreement, with effect from the first pay week in July 2006.

We have agreed that where an engineer is required by the business to work alongside a small works engineer, doing the same work, for a minimum period of one week, he will be paid in accordance with the terms and conditions applicable to Small Works Engineers.

The standby payment for employees providing call-out coverage on a call-out rota will be increased from £36.09 to £45 per week for those employed under both agreements.

Annual service related holiday entitlement will be improved for the Windowcare Labour Agreement only to 20 days upon commencement, 23 days after 3 years of service, 24 days after 4 years of service, 25 days after 5 years of service.

All age related pay scales for trainees will be deleted and we will propose an alternative.

We will delete the clause in the SRG Agreement under Section 4.7 Emergency Replacement Glazing Call Out which reads "Where there are sufficient volunteers to man a Call Out Rota, then employees aged over 50 will not be forced to undertake Call Out duty, unless exempting them would lead to the use of subcontractors." This will be replaced with a clause that will base any decision to remove employees from the Call Out rota upon recognised medical conditions and capability.

For the Project and Maintenance Engineers we will identify separate arrangements, including a Skills & Performance Review, grading and pay structure.
The agreed, revised disciplinary and grievance procedures will be incorporated in both agreements.

iii Solaglass MSN

The manufacturing division of Solaglas holds most potential in terms of membership. The following sites are part of the national MSN agreement and have potential for recruitment. A consolidation exercise is urgently needed

Canterbury	Liverpool	Motherwell MSN
Kingston	Bristol RDC	Portsmouth MSN
Hull	Kilmarnock	North East RDC
Aberdeen	Dudley	Manchester
Cardiff	Peterborough	Coventry DGU
Edinburgh	Plymouth	Hayes

The following offer was accepted: An increase in all basic rates by 25 pence per hour.

All fixed allowances to be increased by 3% except where the allowance concerned is specified as not being subject to an increase by a pre-existing local agreement. Hence it will not apply to red ringed payments such as those at Coventry DGU, but would apply to all other payments such as shift pay, first aid allowance, call out allowances etc.

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

While most interest is focused on the Olympic Games and our new football arena at Wembley the GMB has been just as interested in what is going on within the industry as a whole.

The industry remains a sanctuary for tax dodgers and despite the efforts of the Government and the Inland Revenue most construction companies still prefer self employment to PAYE. One exception to this is Laing O'Rourke who now has over 8,000 employees on PAYE.

The TUC hold a seat on the Olympic Delivery Authority and we have been in discussions along with our sister trade unions: UCATT, Amicus and T&G. After several meetings at the highest level I am doubtful if the unions can achieve an agreement on direct employment. To leave the building of the Olympics to the greedy sub contractors who encourage self employment and bogus employment will be introducing the law of the jungle into the largest construction site in the UK. Without direct employment accidents and fatalities will take place; the Government at best will receive only 18% tax from individuals with very little national insurance contributions from the employee and employer.

Without a proper enforceable agreement with the unions the construction of the Games and the million square foot of retail facilities will fall behind and there will be a mad rush in 2011 to try to finish the Games. Pay rates will rise and accidents will go through the roof and it is only by a joint agreement with the trade unions that this can be avoided. The only agreement that will hold water will be between the ODA and the trade unions.

The industry continues to kill and injure our young people and avoidable accidents occur every day of every week. Cranes falling, scaffolding collapsing and falls from height account for over 60 fatalities per year. Young men and women so badly injured that their whole lives are wrecked. Trade union organised health and safety representatives are the only answer. Roving safety reps, well trained will dramatically reduce the carnage taking place on our construction sites. The

GMB does not accept that a single construction worker should be killed or badly injured and zero tolerance on accidents is the only acceptable level.

The following three year pay agreement was reached for 2006, 2007 and 2008.

With effect from 26th June 2006 the following rates of pay, allowances and additional payments will apply:

ENTITLEMENT TO BASIC AND ADDITIONAL RATES OF PAY

Classification	Basic Pay (pence per hour)	Weekly Rates based on 39 hours £
General Operative	(701)	273.39
Skill Rate 4	(755)	294.45
3	(800)	312.00
2	(855)	333.45
1	(888)	346.32
Craft Rate	(932)	363.48

These rates are agreed and promulgated on the basis that any increase shall not be reduced by any adjustment in existing contractual bonus schemes.

APPRENTICE RATES

Stage	Basic Pay (pence per hour)	Weekly Rates based on 39 hours £
Year 1	(388)	151.32
Year 2	(501)	195.39
Year 3 w/o NVQ2	(586)	228.54
Year 3 with NVQ2	(745)	290.55
Year 3 with NVQ3	(932)	363.48
Completion with NVQ2	(932)	363.48

With effect from 26th June 2007 the following rates of pay, allowances and additional payments will apply:

ENTITLEMENT TO BASIC AND ADDITIONAL RATES OF PAY

Classification	Basic Pay (pence per hour)	Weekly Rates based on 39 hours £
General Operative	(731)	285.09
Skill Rate 4	(787)	306.93
3	(835)	325.65
2	(892)	347.88
1	(927)	361.53
Craft Rate	(972)	379.08

These rates are agreed and promulgated on the basis that any increase shall not be reduced by any adjustment in existing contractual bonus schemes.

APPRENTICE RATES

Stage	Basic Pay (pence per hour)	Weekly Rates based on 39 hours £
Year 1	(405)	157.95
Year 2	(523)	203.97
Year 3 w/o NVQ2	(611)	238.29
Year 3 with NVQ2	(778)	303.42

Year 3 with NVQ3	(972)	379.08
Completion with NVQ2	(972)	379.08

With effect from 26th June 2008 the following rates of pay, allowances and additional payments will apply:

ENTITLEMENT TO BASIC AND ADDITIONAL RATES OF PAY

Classification	Basic Pay (pence per hour)	Weekly Rates based on 39 hours £
General Operative	(775)	302.25
Skill Rate 4	(835)	325.65
3	(885)	345.15
2	(946)	368.94
1	(982)	382.98
Craft Rate	(1030)	401.70

These rates are agreed and promulgated on the basis that any increase shall not be reduced by any adjustment in existing contractual bonus schemes.

APPRENTICE RATES

Stage	Basic Pay (pence per hour)	Weekly Rates based on 39 hours £
Year 1	(429)	167.31
Year 2	(554)	216.06
Year 3 w/o NVQ2	(648)	252.72
Year 3 with NVQ2	(824)	321.36
Year 3 with NVQ3	(1030)	401.70
Completion with NVQ2	(1030)	401.70

REMPLOY

At the time of writing this report the campaign is now reaching critical stage. Remploy workers have done themselves proud and demonstrations have taken place in Manchester, Liverpool, Cardiff, Sheffield, Wigan, Stirling, Plymouth, London and Newcastle. Petitions have been presented to the Prime Minister and who could forget the demonstration outside Arsenal Football Club and the tremendous support shown by the Arsenal supporters.

We have met with MPs and at one particular meeting in the House of Commons on a cold January night well over 35 MPs turned out. We have also met with Anne McGuire MP, Minister for the Disabled; held a demonstration in John Hutton's constituency of Barrow & Furness; set up a Remploy/GMB website, produce newsletters which are distributed regularly; arranged fringe meetings at the 2006 Labour Party Conference and the TUC Conference; sent 10,000 postcards to John Hutton and met with the Mayor of London. The stewards have collected donations themselves to fund these activities and the campaign is going according to plan. All the other trade unions: Amicus, Community, T&G have worked hard alongside the GMB.

Whilst all this activity has been going on the unions' General Secretaries, Consortium National Officers, Les Woodward, Tony Gledhill and I have worked hard to put pressure on the Government to adopt the trade unions' alternative strategy. Tony Gledhill, GMB Senior Staff Rep in Leeds has worked particularly hard to produce the alternative strategy.

In May 2006 PricewaterhouseCoopers produced a report which gave four options, none of which were acceptable to the trade unions. The PWC report did not go into the expected detail that was needed to change Remploy. Government Ministers seemed to have distanced themselves from the report even though they had commissioned it. Government Ministers have continued to be influenced by some parts of the Disability Movement and the DWP's desire to cut funds to Remploy. The government is determined to force disabled people into employment regardless of choice.

The trade unions come from a very clear prospectus that is sustainable employment for disabled people and real choice of employment for disabled people and are in favour of diversity within the workforce. People with mental health problems should be given support to enable them to work. All disabled people should be given help to find sustainable employment and Remploy factories are a very important factor in this. Remploy factories are places of work producing high quality products such as textiles, furniture, printing and electronics. Remploy was first to establish the ethical e-cycling of white goods.

The trade unions' alternative business plan has been circulated and is on the website at: www.gmbremployworkers.info and bound copies will be available at GMB Congress.

The company has continued to increase the numbers of managers nearly all of whom are non disabled whilst at the same time dismissing disabled people. The Board of Remploy and the Remploy senior managers group continue to mismanage the company. The Board and senior managers continue to act as if they are not to blame and have no responsibility to make the company work. Remploy has become a retreat for middle aged white male managers who have brought very little to the table other than a greedy appetite for doing nothing.

The company will continue to suffer and disabled people will not have secure and sustainable employment until there are radical changes to the senior management structure. At the time of writing this report discussions that will lead to negotiations are taking place at the highest level.

i Pay & Conditions

The Trade Union Consortium submitted its claim in September 2006. However the company has been instructed by the government not to negotiate with the unions on the basis that Remploy should be treated in terms of pay the same as the public sector which is another nonsense. Remploy derived 65% of its income from sales and this sort of government interference is totally unacceptable. This Labour Government is acting in some ways like a Tory Government and we expect more. Discussions are ongoing but our members should have received a pay increase in January 2007.

PUBLIC PROCUREMENT MANUFACTURING FORUM

Our thanks must again be registered for the work that Kathleen Walker Shaw has done on our behalf. There is no doubt if the new directive is used then UK manufacturing will benefit and in particular supported employment factories such as Remploy will benefit. Below is an example of the size of public procurement. Local Authorities: There are 443 local authorities in England and Wales with a further 32 councils in Scotland. This comprises a mix of County Councils, Metropolitan District Councils, English Unitary Authorities, London Authorities, Shire District Councils, Welsh Unitary Authorities and Unitary Councils in Scotland. It is estimated that there are currently 2.5m employed by local authorities.

Fire Brigades and Police Forces: There are 59 Regional Fire Brigades and 52 Police Forces consisting of both civilian staff and officers. There are approximately 126,000 officers and 53,000 civilian support staff nationally within the Police Force.

If you include the MOD this makes the possibility of a rejuvenated UK manufacturing industry a reality. The textile industry will benefit if they are to supply all the nurses, police forces, fire brigades and armed forces uniforms.

The furniture industry will be given a 50% boost to sales if local authorities and government open up the public procurement directive. Remploy in particular can benefit from public procurement sales. The government's manufacturing forum recognises this and has developed a public procurement sub committee. A great deal of the manufacturing forum's work has centred around skills and training but the UK still lags behind some of its world competitors in terms of training and the skill agenda. Some very good ideas have been put forward by the TUC on behalf of its affiliates.

One of my concerns as a member of the manufacturing forum has been the slow progress to introduce ideas into the workplace. The size of the forum is also a concern even though the forum works through sub committees. There is no doubt that the government's manufacturing is a good idea and well intended but has it become a talking shop.

INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATIONS

BWI and EFBWW

There has been an increased activity with both internationals and we have now met the General Secretaries of both organisations. We were able to help in a number of industrial disputes through the world.

The BWI Conference in October 2006 brought together a large number of Eastern European and Western trade unions and we were able to make an important contribution regarding the increasing numbers of migrant workers coming to the UK.

The BWI is campaigning for fair treatment of all workers and is currently helping the GMB to set up a meeting with Polish and Rumanian trade unions.

I would like to thank our Brussels office for helping the section set up meetings with the BWI and EFBWW.

I would also like to thank all our Shop Stewards and Officers, and staff at National Office who have helped with the running and servicing of the Section.

(Adopted)

BRO. P. DAVIES (National Secretary): I move the CEFTA Section of the Manufacturing Section Report, pages 68-82.

President, there are two areas that I want to report on to Congress. Both are about bad employers and both have the involvement of the Government and Labour MPs.

First, I want to report on the disgraceful actions of the Co-operate Funeral Care decision on 19th March 2007 to derecognise the GMB and only deal with USDAW. Our shop stewards have been dismissed, disciplined and abused. Our members face a hostile and unfair management on a daily basis. Eighty-six years of recognition have

been thrown out because the GMB would not roll over and be a sweetheart union like USDAW. The USDAW National Officer played a disgraceful role in the derecognition.

We now understand that the Co-op is starting to dismiss disabled staff members and reducing some of our disabled members' wages by up to £5,000. We are going to pursue that issue publicly and legally. The campaign to regain recognition will start the moment this Congress finishes. We would ask delegates to write to your local MPs, to the trade councils and to the Co-op itself to protest. We are not going to allow the Co-operative Movement to derecognise the GMB, not under any circumstances. (*Applause*)

The second part of my report, and I make no apologies for it, is about Remploy. After 30 years of national negotiations I thought I was beyond being shocked. I thought I had seen all the excesses of management, but this present board of Remploy directors is the worst board of directors that I have ever seen. You all know and understand the needs of disabled people but, unfortunately, the Remploy board has no idea what sustainable and proper work means to disabled people.

The Government's role in the running of Remploy is unacceptable and deplorable. In March 2006 the Government commissioned PriceWaterhousecoopers to conduct a full review of Remploy at a cost of £800,000. Eight hundred thousand pounds! How many jobs is that? A report was received in May 2006 and subsequently set aside. Following that, the Minister, Anne McGuire, instructed the board of directors to enter into negotiations with the trade unions. "Come back when you have reached an agreement", she said to us. In the meantime, the Secretary of State appointed a new chairman, Ian Russell, who had previously failed at Scottish Power and was dismissed with a reported golden handshake of £8 million. That is another failed executive on the board of Remploy. That is just what we needed.

The company informed the trade unions that they had promised the Government that for the same funding of £111 million per year they would provide jobs for 20,000 people in open employment, but to do that they would need to close factory sites. Where are these 20,000 jobs to be found? Cleaning in hotels, filling shelves in supermarkets? How long will the jobs last? Three months, six months, a year? What will the pay be? We all know the answers to these questions. Disabled people in open employment are more likely to be low paid, in temporary or part-time work and more likely to be the first to be dismissed. The Government's idea that all disabled people will eventually find work in open employment is a nonsense. Look at the reductions in access to work and how poorly funded that is.

Congress, we want the best jobs for our disabled members with trade union rights, not the bosses' choice but our members' choice.

Conference, if everything was okay in the world of work and all the people in the UK were treated equally and fairly, we would not need Remploy factory sites and we wouldn't all need trade unions, but we all know that this is a nonsense. It should be integrated and supported employment. Both can live side by side and be a strategy for employing disabled people.

Let me make it clear that we are not going to be drawn into an argument over placing disabled people into open employment. That argument is for the Job Centres. We have already alerted PCS. Let me be clear. Our dispute is about resources needed to run the factories, not to run integrated workplaces.

The debate on supported employment goes further than Remploy. There are over a hundred local authority workshops providing mixed support for disabled people. The local authority workshops are also under threat and our members are under threat. We understand that the Government will shortly be consulting on the future of these workshops.

Let me say this for the record. The GMB recognised the importance of these local authority workshops. The work that is done in the local community is second to none. When those workplaces close, they not only affect the workers but they have a devastating effect on the families of the disabled. I will give Congress a factual example of the closure of a local authority factory. Last year Croydon Council decided that their local factory, Crossfield, which employs 80 disabled people was to close, despite the trade unions' attempt to stop the closure and despite such companies coming forward to support the workshop with new products. The people who advocate complete integration won the day. Croydon Council closed that factory and at least 72 of those disabled people are still out of work. So far it has cost well over a million pounds in support, and no one is working. What an absolute disgrace? However, the political fallout of this closure is that Croydon Council is no longer a Labour council. After the closure the Labour Group lost 11 seats to the Tories and Liberals. If that is not a sign that the general public are against the wholesale closure of factories, then nothing else is. Gordon Brown needs to take note of that fact.

The Remploy board of directors declared war on disabled workers in Remploy on 22nd May 2007. The full Trade Union Consortium was asked to attend a meeting which started at 9.30, but it was not until 2 minutes to 12 that the company disclosed all of this. Imagine being a shop steward sat at that meeting and being told that your factory is to be closed down. At 12 noon in every factory that was on the closure list – 43 in all – a CD was played with the chief executive's opening remarks: "Your factory is to close". Two thousand, three hundred disabled workers and more than seven hundred non-disabled workers were informed by video that they were no longer required. Factories from Aberdeen to Redruth in Cornwall are earmarked for closure. What an absolute disgrace! The Government new and the Minister, Anne McGuire, endorsed the decisions later at a meeting of MPs. What an absolute disgrace! We saw a GMB supported Minister jointly with the chief executive of Remploy putting our members on the scrapheap.

Congress, we can no longer except Hutton and McGuire to be supported by the GMB. (*Applause*) Sometimes we have to make difficult and principled decisions because our members expect us to do so. I will be writing to the CEC to ask them to put this item onto the agenda.

In the same week that three thousand redundancies were declared, the company advertised for 51 new senior management positions. Only the week before another 46 senior management jobs were advertised. What a disgrace! How can the Government allow these directors to do this? Aneurin Bevan, the Minister for

Health, brought forward a Bill in 1946 providing the employment for disabled people in factory sites. Bevan said: "Our men and women returning from the last war will never suffer the degradation of those past generations. Our disabled people will be treated equally and that is why Remploy factories are to be built, to provide sustainable high quality jobs. Never again will we throw disabled people onto the scrapheap of unemployment.

Brothers and sisters, our members are proud of their products. They are proud to be able to go out to work. Bevan started work at 13 in a south Wales colliery. He created hope and dignity for millions of working people. He used his power for the good of the working class. Gordon Brown, we ask you to do the same. Sack the Remploy directors; stop the closures and let's have a real debate on employment for disabled people. These are our manufacturing sites, not the board of Remploy, not the Government's but the people of this country. We will fight just as hard to keep these factories alive as Bevan did bring them into existence. No redundancies; no closures; sack the Board.

Congress, I move my report in the name of every disabled person who wants decent employment. *(Cheers and applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Would any delegates who want to speak to this report please come to the front of the hall. I will call the pages. Pages 68-82.

BRO. P. BRANNAN (GMB Scotland): Congress, I am a Remploy shop steward. I have just one question, Phil. As you are aware, we now six months beyond the anniversary date for the pay rise. Do you know if the Government has given Remploy permission actually to put an offer to us?

While I am at the rostrum, colleagues, I have to take this opportunity to thank Paul Kenny for his support of the Remploy workers, for giving Phil Davies, our National Secretary, the time and resources to put into this fight and, mostly, to Phil Davies, not because he is here as it will probably embarrass him, you have been bloody immense. Thank you. *(Cheers and applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Pages 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80?
Page 80.

SIS. J. SMITH (London): President and Congress, congratulations Phil on your presentation on Remploy, but let me comment on your last paragraph: "The Government will ensure that there are guaranteed jobs." Phil, I know you will defend, but please ensure that you take it back from Congress. Our members already have jobs. They want to keep in the environment that they know and also where they are recognised for their disability. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Pages 81 and 82? Colleagues, while Phil is coming to the rostrum to answer the question, let me give a personal thanks to Phil and the Remploy team. We in Brent experienced a factory closing, although it was not a Remploy factory, but the issues were exactly the same. Phil and his team turned up. The members involved were not from our union, but we embarrassed another union to

make sure that they were to support their members and stop that factory closing. Thank you, Phil, very much indeed.

BRO. P. DAVIES (National Secretary): Thank you, Mary, and thanks, Phil, for your kind words. In answer to your question about the pay, we are six months beyond the anniversary date. For the first time ever, we are now being referred to as a 'public sector body', so we have not even started negotiations and we are in June. This matter should have been settled in January. It is an absolute disgrace and the Minister, again, has backed the company in holding off the negotiations. I am pleased to say that we now have dates to start the negotiations. We will be having a meeting not too long into the future to decide on next year's pay deal.

With regard to the guarantee of jobs, you are right. Our members already have jobs and we are not going to do any deals in dark rooms to sell out our members' futures. It is not a single factory closure that we will be fighting on. Our members do have jobs and the Government need to remember that. So there won't be any deals as far as I am concerned. We are fighting for everybody's job in Remploy.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Phil. *(Applause)* Does Congress agree to accept the Report?

(Manufacturing Section Report: CFTA Section was adopted)

THE PRESIDENT: At this point I ask the movers of Composites 11, 12 and 13 to come forward.

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: MANUFACTURING

COMPOSITE MOTION 11

(Covering Motions 127 and 128)

127 – Remploy (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region)

128 – Stop the Betrayal Save Remploy (GMB Scotland)

SAVE REMPLOY

Congress is asked to support the GMB members in the ongoing campaign fight at Remploy. We are not just fighting for the short term future but the long term, where the public procurement and contracts need to be bid for in Remploy. It needs to be put at the top of the TU agenda that the factories should remain as manufacturing establishments and not turned into call centres, training centres or warehouses.

What is happening at the moment is a worrying time for the GMB and members will not allow any factory to be closed. If you remember the miners strike, the Remploy disabled workers will fight even harder to save their jobs. Any union sponsored MP should be named and shamed.

What future is there for any future disabled people in joining Remploy? These matters need addressing as a matter of urgency. We need support from the Labour Government put there by the working people.

We all call on congress to support the sacking of the Remploy board. Remploy cannot move forward as long as the current Board of Directors are running the company into the gutter.

Congress condemns this Labour Government's betrayal of disabled workers in Remploy and

- calls for a guarantee from the Labour party and Government that there will be a National Network of factories providing meaningful employment for at least 5,000 disabled employees and training and support for other disabled persons within and outwith the factory network.
- further calls on this and future Governments to use the European Public Procurement Act to return to Remploy work that was lost in 1996 when Michael Portillo removed the Priority Supply Scheme and cost Remploy £20 million a year in MOD work alone.

(Carried)

BRO. J. STRIBLEY (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, the situation on Remploy is still ongoing. We ask the Congress to support GMB members and fight the campaign. The situation is absolutely deplorable. We are seeing disabled people being attacked by a Labour Government and the Remploy management. We are not just fighting for the short-term but this is the result of years of being attacked and we want a long-term future. We do not want a short-term commitment. We need secured work, public procurement, with contracts to be bid for. Remploy management has only secured two contracts, and the reason behind that is because they cannot be arsed to go and get contracts in because it means they will have to do some work.

I went with my local councillor to the people who were getting the casinos in place and they agreed to put Remploy on the approved suppliers' list but Remploy management did not follow it through. Remploy is being prevented in moving forward with the current board. Ministers are making wrong decisions regarding people's lives. We do not want to see Remploy factories turned into call centres, training centres or warehouses. We have acquired real skills in the factories and need recognising as such since we do work for MoD, Jaguar, Rover, universities, hotels and NHS Medical Care.

What Gordon Brown offered the other day was an absolute joke. We do not need it. We need 30% of money dedicated to these shops put back into factories. The GMB should not even be discussing this subject. Open a shop at the cost of a factory! Our members do an honest day's work. They do not want handouts or benefits. We say "No factory closures". *(Applause)* We need to send a clear message from this Congress and the Yorkshire Region and, most importantly, the Remploy workers. What is happening at the moment is a worrying time for the GMB and its members. We will not allow any factory to be closed. If you remember the miners' strike, the Remploy workers will fight even harder. Any union MP should be named and shamed and top of the blacklist should be Anne MaGuire. We need to stop their funding immediately.

We call on the Congress to support the sacking of the Remploy board. We cannot move forward with the current board. The directors are running this company into the ground and into the gutter. They are full of negativity. Sack the board. They are useless. I wouldn't put my trust in them to run a burger bar in Brighton tonight. They are thoughtless. They have no ambition. They use disabled people to benefit

their own ends. They have received MBEs for it. They board are running the company into mass closure. We are seeing a conspiracy to fail. What is the future of disabled people joining Remploy? We need the support of the Labour Government which was voted into power by working people. On the one hand, the Government wants to see disabled people back into work. On the other hand, they want to close, eventually, 83 Remploy sites.

We want no factory closures and sack the board. *(Cheers amidst a standing ovation)*
Don't support any MP who won't support disabled people. I have got a message for you, Bob Warner. Come and have a go if you think you're hard enough. I move. *(Applause, whistles and table thumping)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, James, and also thanks for that lovely dance we had last night. How about that. I call GMB Scotland to second.

BRO. P. BRANNAN (GMB Scotland): I second Composite 11. President and Congress, Anne McGuire has betrayed every MP worker, union member, non-union member, disabled and non-disabled. It was her who brought in PriceWaterhousecooper, a company not renowned for re-forming companies and keeping people in employment. And we have had two calls today to remove GMB funding from her. It is not all bad news. Anne, I have 30 pieces of silver. I understand that that is the going rate for Judases. Here you are, Anne. You know where I work. Come and get it. I'll keep it for you. *(Applause)*

Gordon Brown, on this platform, said that disabled people are guaranteed jobs. Not only do we have jobs, but let me tell you what he did not tell you. In May 2006 a man by the name of Strathy, who works at the Department of Works & Pensions, gave evidence to the Public Accounts Committee, admitted that when a disabled person leaves Remploy and goes into open employment it is called "a progression". So the 2,300 people who are going to be asked to leave Remploy are going to 'progress'. He admitted that within six months 50% of those people are no longer in employment. He then went on to add insult to injury by saying that six months for some people can be as long as that particular job is suited for them.

Well, I have been in Remploy for 30 years and I have ten years to go. I believe that is how long that job could be suited for anybody, for their working life. People may want to move on or stay, but that is their choice. Let me give you an example. Brian Davies, at the back of the hall in a wheelchair, has a disability that I will not even try to pronounce. Brian and his wife have suffered over 250 broken bones. Brian has two teenage boys – actually, they are in their early teens – who have exactly the same disability. Where does Brian go, where do his boys go if they don't go to Remploy? With the best will in the world, the Tesco's and the Asda's of this world will not employ them. They may employ them for a short time to tick a box, but there is no long-term work unless it is truly supported. We support the Remploy factories. We support the workers. We will not be bullied, we will not be bribed and we will not be beaten! Thank you. *(A standing ovation)*

COMPOSITE MOTION 12

(Covering Motions 133 and 134)

133 – Manufacturing – (Northern Region)

134 – Public Procurement – (South Western Region)

MANUFACTURING AND PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

Congress calls upon the CEC to continue with its pressure on Government to act upon their Warwick commitment regarding Public Procurement, promoting a procurement strategy to support and safeguard UK jobs and skills as confined within the EU rules to ensure that our manufacturing industry can compete fairly with the rest of the EU, but ensure that encouragement is given whereby public procurement contracts are granted to UK firms who manufacture and use UK workers.

Congress recognises that manufacturing output and employment are essential to the economic prosperity of the UK and notes with concern the loss of UK manufacturing employment as British and multi-national employers move production abroad to exploit low wage economies.

The GMB demands action from the Government to ensure that improved social and environmental standards are enforced globally and that every possible means is used to secure manufacturing sector output and employment including additional funding to improve skills and innovation, ensuring that Public Procurement Budgets are used to support UK manufacturing.

Congress therefore calls for a major campaign to halt the decline of the UK manufacturing sector, to ensure that the Government stops wringing its hands and whining about the inevitability of “globalisation” and recognises that “low wage economies” means exploited workers – including child labour, low social costs, no health and safety or welfare and exploitation of the environment.

(Carried)

BRO. J. JONES (Northern): President, during the past 10 years the UK has witnessed a massive decline in the manufacturing sector. Employment output has slumped to an all time low. During the same period, colleagues, the response from the Government has been to neglect the problem. A view has developed that the decline is inevitable. Globalisation and the development of super low-cost economies means that the UK cannot compete. But, colleagues, the decline is not inevitable unless, of course, the UK Government and the European Union is intent to continue to turn a blind eye to the human suffering and exploitation of the planet which occurs in the so-called low cost economies.

President, China is rapidly developing into the world’s largest economy. Manufacturing goods can be picked up in the UK cheaper than the firms can purchase the raw materials for the goods.

Colleagues, last year more than 20,000 miners in China were killed in mining accidents. That is the tip of the iceberg in human suffering. That is nothing compared with the damage done to the planet.

Congress, the UK and the EC must act. Exploitation and environmental damage cannot be ignored. Cheap goods have a price that is too high to pay. I urge Congress to support Composite 12. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. South Western to second.

(The motion was formally seconded)

Colleagues, in relation to the earlier debate on the sponsoring of MPs, I remind Congress that in 2005 the CEC transferred that responsibility back to the regions under the Constituency Plan. So it is down to the regions to make the decisions who they sponsor and not the CEC. Thank you. Let us be quite clear on that. That is for a regional decision to be made and not for the CEC.

I call the mover of Composite 13.

COMPOSITE 13

(Covering Motions 135 and 136)

135 – Transfer of Manufacturing Jobs, the Impact on the Environment (Midland & East Coast Region)

136 – Manufacturing (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region)

TRANSFER OF MANUFACTURING JOBS AND THE IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Congress requests that the Labour Government supports manufacturing, condemns the rush to destroy Britain's manufacturing base by greedy and ruthless companies and does not reward the likes of James Dyson with knighthoods.

Manufacturing is being decimated in this country; not only is the loss of skills and employment an important issue which we rightly continue to campaign on, many new factories are built in China and the Far Eastern block without any thought on environmental issues. We already see that China's growth has resulted in massive pollution of their own country and wholesale poisoning of the atmosphere, not only for their own people but the world.

Congress instructs the CEC to identify, name and shame these companies that carry out this practice, building these issues into our campaign.

(Carried)

SIS. E. BLACKMAN (Midland & East Coast): President and Congress, in 2004 the Director of the CBI, speaking in New Delhi, said: "Britain is in favour of outsourcing". I find that very puzzling because a report also published in 2004 by the EEF engineering organisation on Britain claims that calling Britain an "advanced industrial country" is misleading in the sense that we are now, in reality, an advanced de-industrialised country. Their findings show that mass production in Britain is over. Today British industry is reduced to making specialist products for markets where there is less competition from low wage countries. The impact of this development on some sectors of the UK economy has been devastating. The service industry is now 80% of the economy, and while Britain does have a surplus of investments abroad and in services, which hide to some extent the industrial position, it is hard for bosses to hide regular news of large scale redundancies.

The same thing that happened to manufacturing could happen in the service sector unless the Government and unions take immediate action to properly manage technological change. It has been estimated that two thousand UK jobs were at risk in call centres, computer support and legal services.

Colleagues, today the new workshop is China and it is being followed by other developing countries with its supply of cheap labour and access to capital. Technically, it is correct to say that unemployment in Britain is at the lowest level for 30 years. However, the other vital side of this issue is the quality of jobs that people have. Yes, Gordon, you were right. From 2001 to 2005 about 1.5 million jobs were created, but 1 million were lost, but the quality of the new jobs regarding lengths of contract, pay and conditions have massively worsened. Low pay is endemic with large proportions of families unable to survive on a single wage. Women now make up half the workforce but are concentrated, particularly, in the low paid sectors and earn on average 82% of men's wages. Women perform 60% of public sector jobs.

One consequence of the overall decline in proper jobs with long-term contracts has been the rise in the number of job agencies who hire out temporary labour, driving down wages and conditions. Workers are also facing the consequences of increased out-sourcing of their jobs.

In conclusion, Congress, outsourcing not only affects the jobs but it affects the environment. We talk about global warming but man-made climate change due to pollution strictly inhibits rain over hills and semi-arid areas, a phenomenon with dire consequences for water resources in the Middle East and many other parts of the world.

A study by a Chinese/Israeli research team highlighted the threat to vital water resources in polluted areas of the world where hilly area rainfall makes a significant contribution to the region's water supply. This is happening in the south-western USA, central and northern China and the Middle East. The importance of that is underlined not by the high temperatures due to global warming but rather the lack of water that makes the region into an unliveable desert. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: I call Yorkshire & North Derbyshire to second.

BRO. B. GOLDING (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I am seconding Composite 13. We have seen hundreds of jobs lost in the last 12 months at Nestlè, British Sugar, Norwich Union and McKechnys. The vast majority of these goods have gone overseas with no thought to the social impact that this causes. McKechnys manufactured parts for Dyson hoovers. This manufacturing was moved to Malaysia with 50% of the workforce losing their jobs. James Dyson is now Sir James Dyson, a reward for services to business.

I believe that the Labour Government should not reward businessmen for destroying British jobs. It has been announced that the York Remploy factory is to close. Enough is enough. We have lost enough jobs in York. My branch and the York General branch have committed £1,000 to the Remploy Fighting Fund. Other branches should do so. So support the composite and support Remploy workers.

MOTION 137

CONSULTATION

Congress calls upon the CEC to continue to campaign that this Government give the British worker a level playing field with regards to employment that is enjoyed by many of our EU colleagues. That

companies are not given carte blanche to cease manufacturing operations in the UK and transfer work off shore to countries where terms and conditions are considerably inferior just purely to satisfy the greed of shareholders. This Government's laissez faire approach is not satisfactory and they should fully adopt a policy whereby it is made difficult for these companies, particularly those who have been given incentives to manufacture in the UK, to withdraw employment at a stroke. Our workers deserve the same respect as afforded our EU colleagues.

MID GLAMORGAN C&T BRANCH
South Western Region

(Carried)

SIS. A. LEADER (South Western): I move Motion 137. President and Congress, I will come straight to the point. We must ensure that this Government, our Government, gives the British worker a level playing field with regards to employment; gives them comparable protection that is enjoyed by many of our EU colleagues; that companies are not given carte blanche operations in the UK and transfer work offshore to countries where terms and conditions are considerably inferior purely to satisfy the greed of shareholders.

Congress, we have some sad evidence of this situation in Wales – Burberry, Cooper Standard and many, many more. The list is growing longer every week. This Government's laissez faire approach is not satisfactory. They should fully adopt a policy whereby it is made difficult for these companies, particularly those which have been given incentives and grant to manufacture in the UK, to withdraw employment at a stroke.

Our workers and GMB members deserve the same respect as is afforded to our EU colleagues. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: Seconder?

(The motion was formally seconded)

Colleagues, does anyone have a burning desire to come in on this debate? *(No response)* In that case, I call Paul Wheatley on Composite 13.

BRO. P. WHEATLEY (CEC, Manufacturing): I am speaking on behalf of the CEC. The CEC is supporting Composite 13 with the qualification that I am about to give.

The motions on manufacturing reiterate existing GMB policy and, of course, we are supporting them. The GMB is one of the trade union members of the Manufacturing Forum consisting of the DTI, the CBI, large employers, academics, the TUC and trade unions. Through this forum we have pressed the Government to offer more support for the manufacturing sector which still employs nearly four million people. However, the issue of public recognition and reward of individuals outside the union Movement is not one that the GMB has any influence over. The CEC is recommending that you support Composite 13 with that qualification.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Does the mover accept the qualification. Yes. Thank you very much. I now move to the vote on Composites 11, 12 and 13 and Motion 137. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against?

Composite Motion 11 was carried.

Composite Motion 12 was carried.

Composite Motion 13 was carried.

Motion 137 was carried.

THE PRESIDENT: We now move to item 10. I ask the movers of Motions 208, 210, 211, 212, 213, Composite 21 and Motion 216 to come forward.

MOTION 208

EDUCATION

This Congress re-iterates its commitment to comprehensive state education and believes that government ministers should demonstrate their own personal commitment to the state education service.

ISLINGTON APEX BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. V. WEST (London): I move Motion 208 on Education. Education remains one of the most important issues of our time. Despite the investment in schools during the past 10 years and despite some of the improvements we have seen in terms and conditions for our members working in the sector, there remains deep distrust in the education system. The Government appears hell bent on increasing the number of academies, selling off our schools to fundamentalists, the City and big business, or telling us that investment in school buildings can only be achieved by PFI, by selling off our members' jobs to companies whose only interest in the service is how much profit they can get out of it. On top of this, the mantra of parental choice is trotted out as a coherent Government policy. Whilst middle class parents, including Government Ministers, know how to exercise that choice by getting their children into religious schools the other side of the city, or a selective grammar school outside of borough or, even worse, opting out of the State system altogether to enter the private sector, other parents do not have that choice. They cannot afford to move house to get into a better catchment area, they cannot afford private tuition to get their son or daughter through the 11 plus, and they cannot afford the fees of the private sector.

If Government ministers show so much mistrust in the system, what message is that sending out to other parents? Our message is clear. Every school a good school; every school a school of choice that parents want to choose; good local schools for every child in every community. Even Cameron, if not the rest of his party, has tried to recognise that selective education is not the way forward. However, I am not sure that I will ever trust or be convinced by a policy developed by a ragbag of old Etonians.

We believe in comprehensive State education. We believe in high quality local schools. We believe that Government ministers should be sending out the same message. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Vaughan. Motion 210.

MOTION 210

PERSONAL FINANCE

Congress notes with concern the growing level of personal debt and the hardship this brings to families, students in and after full-time education and workers throughout this country.

In order to combat the current lack of financial awareness, and promote responsible and controlled borrowing, I propose that financial education be provided in schools for all students. Also, a short finance course should be included in all GMB workplace learning schemes.

HOUNSLOW BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. LINDSAY (London): President and Congress, my motion concerns the growing level of personal debt and hardship it brings to families and students in and after full-time education throughout this country. My motion addresses one of the biggest problems facing people today – personal debt, which has reached astronomical proportions and brought with it family breakdown and in some cases suicide. The figures speak for themselves. Personal debt has now reached £1.3 trillion, making us one of the most indebted countries in the world. One of the most chilling statistics is that 17,000 had their homes repossessed in 2006. Government figures indicate that this year alone 30,000 people have become insolvent and in 2006 100,000 insolvencies were declared and credit card spending reached £120 billion.

These figures are mind-boggling. The ordinary person with large debts is left with two choices: bankruptcy or individual voluntary payment arrangements. Many of you will have seen adverts on television saying “Roll up your debts into one easy payment”. Payment is never easy, Congress.

The bankruptcy option leads to a zero credit rating, which means no credit cards, no way of obtaining a mortgage and, in some cases, difficulty in obtaining certain types of work and accommodation. IVAs are sometimes a worse option because a very long payment period is the only way it can work but also it has most of the penalties of bankruptcy and poverty. If one looks at the large financial and loan companies which have pursued a policy of irresponsible lending allowing people to borrow six or seven times their annual salaries, many of the plans offered to customers who have not sought financial advice need to be very carefully examined because of the frequent difficulties and conditions which come with these plans.

When interest rates creep up slowly, people take time to realise that even a few percentage points can dramatically increase mortgage payments. This is when the words written in your mortgage statement “Your house and property may be at risk if you fail to make your mortgage instalments” means that you will lose your house. In

many cases of debt it is the woman who is left to look after the family on her own and is most likely to fall into the hands of loan sharks because she is unable to borrow money from ordinary lenders at reasonable rates. Without knowledge, she is left to struggle with both children and finance.

I strongly suggest that many of the problems associated with debt could be alleviated by better education and I hope that by passing this motion all GMB members can be given access to good information. Therefore, I ask you to support the motion that financial education be provided in schools for all students and that a short finance course should be included in all GMB workplace learning schemes.

(The motion was formally seconded)

MOTION 211

ACADEMIES

We are now experiencing the second wave of academy status – the government is not happy with selling our children's education to the lowest happy clappy bidder at secondary stage, but are now promoting and giving huge amounts of money as incentives to have what they call a 'through education' scheme. This means that the 'happy clappy' brigade are able to have our children from the age of 4 right the way through to 18 years of age – we have to show this up for what it is, a direct attack upon our education system – we cannot let this go without challenging this. Congress we ask you to support

BRISTOL PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH
South Western Region

(Carried)

BRO. J. MARDON (South Western): I move Motion 211 – Academies.

Congress, we are now experiencing the second wave of academy schools. The Government is keen to try out projects where our children will be part of a through education scheme. Children as young as four years of age will be on the same campus as 18 year olds. This project is going to be foisted on parents at a school within the South Western Region. A local education authority had already sold off one of its largest secondary schools to a religious organisation to specialise in arts and culture, delivering education to children between 11 – 18 years of age.

The LEA would no longer have direct control over the National Curriculum. That would be set by a governing board comprising predominantly those in the external organisation. Following the selling off of one of our secondary schools, the next Government initiative for the council was an inclusive campus, taking infant and junior school children from a neighbouring school, which had just been refurbished costing £1 million. By coincidence, this school is located on prime building land.

At a public meeting questions were asked about the potential of the younger pupils being bullied or feeling intimidated by older pupils. The response was that they would segregate the pupils. One way they would do that is by erecting fencing to keep them apart. Why keep them apart when they already had a separate building up the road? That is the building which cost £1 million and is located on prime building land.

Thankfully, parents, local residents and trade unions were united in opposition and eventually managed to stop the scheme going ahead. Congress, the Government is not just happy with selling off children's education to the lowest bidder at the secondary stage, but they are now giving huge amounts of money as incentives to have what they call a "through education" scheme. We must continue to fight this mass sell-off of our schools. Please support this motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder?

(The motion was formally seconded)

MOTION 212

ADULT LEARNING AND FUNDING

Congress believes that a skilled workforce is essential for the UK to compete in the world economic order and supports initiatives to enable individuals to obtain those skills.

Congress notes that first full level 2 provision is free, but is deeply concerned that provision for under level 2 is not free. Conference, those under level 2 are the most vulnerable and in need people in the land.

Congress calls upon the CEC to lobby the Government to ensure that adult learning is free and available to all who are not yet at first full level to give them equal access to learning.

16 BLACKBURN BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

SIS. L. HOLMES (North West & Irish): I move Motion 212 – Adult Learning and Funding.

President and Congress, 25 years ago I was employed as a school cleaner. I had no training or qualifications. The GMB along with Lancashire County Council formed a partnership for a project called *Transform*. *Transform* proved to be the making of my career. *Transform* was to provide training for all cleaners and site supervisors, NVQs in cleaning and support services, a City & Guilds qualification, the first qualification I ever got. The Government's agenda is providing us with barriers to learning. Provision for training is funded via the LSE or Train to Gain. If this is your first Level 2, training is provided free. Excellent. That clearly meets the Government's agenda to raise skill levels. This would ensure that we are economically competitive in Europe and that individuals have the skills they need to sustain employment.

Now, this is where there is a 'but'. For anyone below Level 2 – that is anyone just starting their training – provision is not free. So learners who are not ready or able to work to a first full Level 2 and need more help to achieve receive no help, funding or training.

These are the learners who suffer most. We need to encourage, not discourage. The Government needs to provide the same level of financial support for everyone. Providers of adult and community learning are being encouraged to provide a new

first step curriculum, especially designed to give people the skills and confidence to work for a full Level 2 but, again, no funding. This is a two-tier funding stream that disadvantages the most disadvantaged. Please support this motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder?

(The motion was formally seconded)

MOTION 213

SKILLS AND LIFELONG LEARNING

Congress welcomes the publication of the Leitch Review of Skills and supports the view that a radical step change is necessary for the UK in Skills and Lifelong Learning if the UK is to remain competitive in the Global Economy of the 21st Century.

Congress is concerned that Leitch has not taken the positive step of recommending the introduction of Statutory Entitlement to workplace training and that he has opted to recommend instead a statutory element by 2010 only if employers are seen to be delaying the process.

Congress is concerned that too many employers do not invest in skills and training, with the majority of the workforce of 2020 already in today's workplace skills training will be vital in meeting the challenges and employment opportunities of the 21st Century.

Congress therefore calls for GMB to campaign for:

The introduction of a Statutory Entitlement to workplace training for all employees

Widening the scope of the Collective Bargaining Agenda to include a provision for training

The establishment of a workplace numeracy and literacy fund

The continuation and expansion of the Union Learning Fund.

SRC GENERAL BRANCH
GMB Scotland

(Carried)

SIS. J. JEFFREY (GMB Scotland): I move Motion 213 – Skills and Lifelong Learning.

President and Congress, in a rapidly changing global economy skills and lifelong learning will be the foundation of a competitive UK economy. How often do we hear the employers of today make the statement “Our employees are our most valuable asset”? However, when they are challenged on training those same valuable assets, we see a different story emerging. Many employers see skills and lifelong learning as a cost on the balance sheet, whereas this is in truth an investment in their company's future. People are an appreciating asset. The bulk of investing in skills and lifelong learning by employers goes to management and not our members. Employers need to face the challenges of the 21st century and the global economy. The only way to do this is by investing in developing the skills and providing the on-going opportunities of lifelong learning.

Investing in skills and lifelong learning is the only way that UK employers can meet the challenges of the global economy, not through under-investing in people and driving down wages to an economy based on low wages and low skills. This would be a recipe for disaster and take the UK into a spiralling race to the bottom.

Congress, this motion is calling for a campaign on four key areas: the introduction of a Statutory Entitlement to workplace training for all employees; widening the scope of the collective bargaining agenda to include a provision for skills training; the establishment of a workplace numeracy and literacy fund and the continuation and expansion of the Union Learning Fund. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: A seconder?

(The motion was formally seconded)

COMPOSITE MOTION 21

214 – Apprenticeships – (London Region)

215 – Skills Shortage – (Southern Region)

APPRENTICESHIPS AND SKILLS SHORTAGES

The GMB must keep up the pressure on addressing the skills shortage.

Congress calls on the Government, employers and Trade Unions to re-introduce traditional apprenticeships with quotas put on industries so as to meet the current and future skills shortage.

(Carried)

BRO. S ELLIS (London): I move Composite 21. President, I put this motion before Congress in the hope that it will be supported. It has been recognised by both the GMB and the Government that there is a need to increase funding for apprentices. However, this does not address the problems of employers' reluctance to take on new apprentices and the high dropout rates due to low wages.

We, as a union, should be asking the Government to put more pressure on employers to take on apprentices and for the Government to address the problem of low wages in apprenticeships. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Seconder?

(The motion was formally seconded)

MOTION 216

OPEN UNIVERSITY

Congress believes that anomalies in funding the Open University should be reviewed.

YORKSHIRE COAL STAFFS BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

SIS. P. ROSS (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, visitors and guests, I keep two cards in my purse of which I am very proud. I have an orange one, which you are all familiar with, and one which says on the top "Open University Students' Association". I do not know whether it takes a certain type of person, or a nutter, really to put themselves two hours of studying after work every evening. Certainly it takes a lot of commitment, particularly when a tutor marked assignment is due, and even more so come October. Why October? Because October is exams.

Why do we put ourselves through this, standing in a group outside a draughty hall, shaking with fear, convinced that your brain no longer functions, shut into a room for three hours, scribbling away like a mad thing, that is when you can think of things to write, and after the exam we all rush off to log onto the internet for the Open University equivalent of a student common room for a first class conference. "How was it for you? Wasn't that the exam from hell? Why didn't they ask the questions on the topics I revised?" And, "How many empty desks?" You see, the Open University gets funding from the Government for science courses -- it is about £1,200 for each student -- but only if you take the exam. I believe the criterion is that you have to turn up and not leave for 15 minutes. So we ask: How many empty desks where you work? Leading up to the exams we often get anxious emails from tutors trying to reassure us and trying to persuade us to take our exams so that the OU does not lose that important funding.

Last year as we discussed what the exam had been like we found there was a new twist on it. One of the tutors told us that she discovered that where a student is taking more than one course, if they take the exam for one course or withdraw or don't take the exam for another, the OU loses the funding for all of that student's courses. Losing funding for the course you did not take the exam for we can understand, but to lose the funding for all the courses seems a little unfair. This puts a lot of pressure on students. Some might need to withdraw from a course because of family circumstances or events beyond their control, and then they will feel even more guilty because they know that the OU is losing funding because of them.

Loss of funding means that less courses might be on offer in the future or fees will have to rise to cover course costs. Don't kid yourselves that OU students are mainly housewives or pensioners doing something to fill their spare time. During the six years that I have been a student I have noticed even more younger people taking degrees who are not prepared to burden themselves with student loan debts for attending conventional universities or people trying to improve their career changes such as teaching assistants getting degrees and becoming teachers.

My next exam is on 10th October and I shall be there at half-past 2, standing outside the Community Hall in Priory Street in York full of trepidation. Will I remember all that stuff about thermo hyaline circulation for I am studying oceanography this year. I shall be there and certainly for at least the first 15 minutes, even if my mind does go blank and, like a friend of mine, who picked up the exam paper and thought "What's all this about? I don't remember learning any of this. None of this means anything to me". So for the sake of all of our members who are OU students, and there are some

because I have met some, to make sure that the OU is able to offer a wide range of courses at a price they can afford, please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder?

(The motion was formally seconded)

THE PRESIDENT: Has any delegate got a burning desire to come in the debate?

SIS. L. BROOK (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): President and Congress, I am in support of Motion 211 but I feel that it is important for colleagues to understand that when GMB members transfer to academies they are refused negotiating rights. In effect, the academies refuse to recognise the GMB. It is important that our fellow members who find themselves in this isolated position are reminded of our continuing support of them so that they can continue to work in a protected environment, albeit in an academy. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I now call Allan Garley.

While Allan is coming to the rostrum, colleagues, I am going to call next Mr. Rani, the Secretary of the Mumbai Port Trust, Dock and General Employees Union. You will see a short film first and then he will address Congress. This is the point I want to make to Congress. We have already eaten into the lunch hour and I am very grateful for that. We can have a shorter lunch break and still come back at 2 o'clock. The best estimate that we can work out when you would finish this afternoon is 3.30. Is that all right with Congress? (*Agreed*)

BRO. A. GARLEY (CEC, Manufacturing): I am speaking on behalf of the CEC. The CEC is supporting Motions 212, 213 and Composite 21 with the following qualifications that I am about to give. On Motion 212 the CEC supports training for all NVQ and SVQ Level 2. The qualification is that the CEC also believes that free training up to NVQ and SVQ Level 3 is also very important, particularly for those existing semi-skilled workers at NVQ Level 2 who are losing their jobs in the manufacturing sector.

It is very important that these workers are able to upskill in order to obtain skilled employment in other sectors of the economy.

In relation to Motion 213 the CEC supports the motion and believes that it is essential that this is linked to the role of workplace Union Learning representatives. The Labour Government has provided the union Movement with statutory powers to appoint Union Learning reps and it is essential that we take advantage of this and appoint as many of them as we can to assist in learning at the workplace.

On Composite 21 the last Tory Government's attacks on traditional apprenticeships is one of the low reasons for the low skills in the workforce and the skills shortage in many areas of the economy today. The GMB is very supportive of apprenticeships and so is the Labour Government which has invested heavily in apprenticeships since 1997. Last year there were over a quarter-of-a-million apprenticeships in the UK and the Government intend to double this figure by the year 2010.

However, the qualification is that the problem is wider than the motion suggests. Firstly, neither the public nor employers seem to realise that apprenticeships should be part of today's modern world. Secondly, far too many apprentices do not complete the training and in fact some courses have more than a 50% drop out rate. There is a need for a fully funded adult or mature apprenticeship to attract both older workers and help to retain those workers who are losing their jobs in traditional manufacturing industry.

The CEC, therefore, Congress, is asking you to support Motions 212, 213 and Composite 21 with those qualifications. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Allan. Do the movers of the motions and composite accept the qualifications. I will now put them to the vote. Motion 208, 210, 211, 212, 213, Composite 21 and Motion 216. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against?

Motion 208 was carried.

Motion 210 was carried.

Motion 211 was carried.

Motion 212 was carried.

Motion 213 was carried.

Composite 21 was carried.

Motion 216 was carried.

ADDRESS BY MR. SHIRI V. V. RANE:

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, as I just told you it is our pleasure and our delight to ask Mr. Rane, Secretary to Mumbai Port Trust Dock, Dock and General Employees Union. Mr. Rane is also the General Secretary of Alang Ship Recycling and General Workers Association. Mr. Rane and his union have been instrumental in unionising ship-breakers in Mumbai. Colleagues, we will see a short film first but it is my pleasure to welcome him to the Congress. Thank you. (*Applause*)

(Video shown to Congress)

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Rane, would you please address Congress. Thank you very much.

MR. SHIRI V. V. RANE: Honourable President, Honourable General Secretary, sisters and brothers, on behalf of thousands of ship-breaking workers in India I would like to thank the GMB for giving me the opportunity to take part in this important

Congress. I would like to thank you, and especially Paul Kenny, from the bottom of my heart for the hospitality and friendship that you have shown me since my arrival.

For workers across the world joining a union offers them hope: hope that they will be treated with dignity and respect; hope that they can return home safely at the end of the day; but most of all hope that they will have a voice in the workplace. This is what I have come to speak to you about, how the International Trade Union Movement and the GMB are helping to pull these workers out of the gutter of humanity.

The ship-breaking workers of India had no voice, the threat of death or injury at work was very real with workers regularly killed or injured, but for the workers the choice is simple – exploitation is better than starvation. Ship-breaking is one of the most hazardous occupations with old ships made of hazardous substances which include asbestos, heavy and toxic metals and compressed gas, and also waste.

An average ship contains between 100 to 600 tonnes of asbestos and workers remove it with no or little protection. Even today the protection provided amounts to little more than a pair of goggles and rubber gloves. As asbestos removal is light work, children sit and cut it to be recycled.

The ship-breaking industry is highly labour intensive and competitiveness mainly depends on the supply of cheap labour, with the industry providing re-rolling steel and melting scrap vital for India's growing economy. In India alone 65,000 workers are employed in the industry in Mumbai and Alang/Sosiyo, but other Asian countries like Bangladesh, Pakistan, China, have also seen growing industries.

The ship-breaking workers are employed through contractors and subcontractors. They are employed on a casual basis. They are migrants coming from different states in India and speak different languages. The cultural backgrounds and customs are varying. They are away from their families. They have no bargaining power. The employers and contractors take full advantage of socially and economically backwardness of these ship-breaking workers. Antisocial elements such as mafias also rule over them.

The ship-breaking workers are paid wages at a very low rate ranging from Rs. 30/- to Rs. 250/- per day, i.e. half a pound to three pounds for the day, depending upon the nature of the work and the skill involved. The rates of wages are far less than the rates of living wages.

They are deprived of all social security measures, including provident fund, pension, medical treatment, leave, insurance, housing, education and training. The ship-breaking workers are not compensated for the injuries sustained to them. The absence of job security and the possibility of dismissal overnight are at the core of the vulnerability of the ship-breaking workers. In short, human rights in respect of these ship-breaking workers are being violated at every stage of their life.

In addition to the challenges posed by employers, local mafias and corruption in local government add to the problems. Four years ago my union, the Mumbai Port Trust

Dock and General Employees' Union, started an organising project under the leadership of Dr. Shanti Pattel, a trade union leader, in Mumbai to help these workers.

With the help and support of the International Metalworkers Federation today I can proudly tell you we have unions in both Mumbai and Alang but this has not been an easy task. For example, in Mumbai when we began the project one of our organisers, a ship-breaking worker, was dragged out of his house and beaten by the local mafia. His wife was sexually assaulted.

In Alang, whilst trying to register the union the local government official would visit the workplace and ask workers in front of the employers if they wanted to be a member of the union. A positive answer would quickly mean dismissal. But despite these challenges the union is growing and starting to make a real difference.

In Mumbai the union suggested providing clean drinking water for the workers and their families. The employers and mafias laughed at this suggestion. In India the weather can get very hot, sometimes 40-42 degrees and workers had no way to get a drink in an 8-10 or even 12-hour day. Weeks later when the first tank of clean water arrived the reaction was very different, with the mafia trying to charge for using it but my union has been strong enough to stop this and now all the workers have access to this vital resource.

By doing things like this we have been able to give the ship-breaking workers confidence to join the union. We have also given them identity cards with their blood group on and arranged a St. John Ambulance Brigade service. Before, in the event of an accident first-aid meant rubbing sand on the wound or putting it into the sea.

I began by talking about giving ship-breaking workers a voice and I want to thank our union, the GMB, for helping to do that. International solidarity can work. On my last visit in October I visited a shipbuilding yard in Scotland and met with the local GMB union and saw what it is possible to achieve with a strong union.

I also met with Hillary Benn, Secretary of State for International Development, and as soon as I returned to India the ship-breaking employers rang for the first time asking to meet with our union.

The media coverage of our visit and the fact that we could meet with a senior government minister sent a strong message to anyone who wants to oppress the ship-breaking workers: we do not stand alone and we have a powerful voice, and we can make a difference.

The GMB, IMF, and my union, have received funding to develop a future project so that we can carry on building the union capacity needed to overcome the many problems faced by ship-breaking workers.

In the future, I hope to see a ship-breaking industry that respects workers' rights in every country and one in which workers are not killed on a daily basis.

For me there is only one way in which we can achieve this, and that is to have strong democratic trade unions that fight for their members' rights.

Before I end I must share my experience about this Congress. To be very sincere with myself I shall say that in India we are an Indian trade union in a democratic way but the difference between your union and our trade union is our trade unionists are after the attention of the politicians, and here the politicians are after the attention of trade unionists. (*Applause*) It is only because you stand on your own feet. Keep it up. My best wishes to you on behalf of the labour Movement of India. Thanks to Keith, Johnny, and Rob Johnston, thank you again. (*Standing ovation*)

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Rane, on behalf of the GMB and this Congress I would like to present to you two gifts made by our members - (*Presentation amid applause*) – and also a set of glasses. Thank you very much. We wish you every success in solidarity. Thank you. Thank you, Congress. (*Applause*)

Congress, we now move to close. Can I say a special thank you and would you be ready to be back at Congress at 2 o'clock, please? Thank you.

Lunch break.

AFTERNOON SESSION

Congress reassembled at 2.00 p.m.

THE PRESIDENT: Will Congress come to order? I have a couple of announcements to make.

Could I please thank the delegates, the Retired Members raffle raised the sum of £1,045.25. Thank you.

The Birmingham & West Midlands Region would like to thank all delegates, visitors, national Officers, that have bought Justice for Colombia bracelets, also the Regional Secretaries that have purchased batches for their regions or made a donation, your generosity has raised this week £2,129, all of which will go to the Justice for Colombia campaign. Well done. (*Applause*)

Colleagues, we are going to start on the afternoon business and I will not, because of the time, be calling in speakers after the movers have done their bit. I would like to see most of them moved, although formally seconded, and if that is agreed by yourselves – is that agreed? (*Agreed*) Thank you.

I have also had a lovely message from the Remploy members who have asked me to thank Congress on their behalf for your support to them. They know you will not fail them. I said, “You be assured of that.” OK.

Can I ask the movers – let us see who is back and who is not – of 284, 285, 286, 287, and 292, Foreign Policy and Guantanamo, London Region.

INTERNATIONAL

MOTION 284

FOREIGN POLICY

This Congress condemns the continued war on terror which in Iraq alone has caused the deaths of at least 650,000 people and will have cost the UK £6 billion by the end of 2007. This is equivalent to the building of 50 new hospitals. As well as the futile war in Afghanistan the war on terror has now extended to Somalia and threats are also being made to carry out strikes on Iran. In addition there has been a considerable rise in attacks against Muslims as part of a climate of Islamophobia.

As a Union we should be more proactive by speaking out on 'Stop the War' platforms and raising the awareness amongst members of their power to influence in this area.

LONDON CENTRAL GENERAL BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. BYRNE (London): President, Congress, on Monday Peter Mandelson gave the impression that regardless of whether or not Iraq actually had weapons of mass destruction we were right to actively join the war because we should be supporting our ally, the United States of America. What nonsense, colleagues. When the most powerful nation on the planet is run by a bampot like George W. Bush we should seriously question supporting anything he gets himself involved in. Do we support the United States' position in Cuba? No, of course we do not. Do we support the United States' position in respect of various countries in Latin America? No, we do not but we could do ourselves a favour by ceasing to provide armaments to the worst of them, particularly Colombia.

So why, colleagues, do some of the senior Labour politicians and ex-politicians still believe we are right to support Bush in his military escapades in Iraq and Afghanistan? It is time for them to admit that they were wrong and to do something about it before Labour loses the next election. It is time for the Labour leadership to try to win back my membership and that of the other 200,000 people that Jon Cruddas referred to on Monday.

Congress, this motion asks you to approve that as a union we should be more proactive by speaking out on Stop the War platforms and raising awareness amongst our members of their power to influence developments in this area. I believe that is exactly what we should do but the CEC in supporting this motion with a qualification seeks to reserve its position regarding the Stop the War campaign, a protest in coalition which this union has previously agreed to validate. Hence I call upon the CEC to clearly explain the reasoning behind this qualification. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Danny. Motion 285.

MOTION 285

GUANTANAMO BAY DETAINEES

This Congress asks all GMB sponsored MP's to raise in the House the continued incarceration of the detainees at Guantanamo Bay. It urges them to campaign for the immediate closure of the camp and release of all detainees therein.

SOUTHEND BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. T. WALL (London): At present the detainees at Guantanamo Bay are still being held though many have yet to be charged with any kind of crime. How can an individual be incarcerated under these conditions in many cases the individuals concerned still have not been given access to legal help of any kind. The United States are holding these individuals under the guise they could be a terror threat. The United States is now clutching at straws with regards to Guantanamo Bay and the continued internment of all these so-called terrorists. It is now time for these individuals either to be charged with some offence or if not then they should be immediately released. The United States have gained no friends since the establishment of Guantanamo Bay and now is the time to rid this world of the suspect retention camp which continues only at the whim of the US government. Let's shut this place at once and hope that Congress fully supports this motion. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Trevor. Formally seconded? Thank you.

Motion 285 was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 286, Private Military Security, Birmingham & West Midlands.

MOTION 286

PRIVATE MILITARY SECURITY COMPANIES

Congress recognises that the British Government today is making increasing use of mercenaries in conflict zones while failing to introduce legislation to tackle their human rights abuses. There are now as many as 48,000 mercenaries in Iraq, compared to 7,200 British soldiers and income for the global private military and security industry reached \$100bn in 2004.

In a recent report *Corporate Mercenaries, by War on Want*, it is revealed that there have been no prosecutions despite hundreds of accounts of personnel from private military and security firms committing abuses in Iraq. In one example, a website run by a former employee of the UK-based Aegis Defence Services showed security guards randomly shooting automatic rifles at civilian cars.

The occupation of Iraq has allowed British mercenaries to reap huge profits. But the Government has failed to enact laws to punish their human rights abuses, including firing on Iraqi civilians. This conference calls upon our Government to introduce tough legislation as a matter of urgency to ban the use of mercenaries in these conflict situations.

British company Aegis has seen its turnover sky-rocket from £554,000 in 2003 to £62m last year – three quarters through work in Iraq, including its role coordinating all private military and security firms operating in the country. Aegis is led by Lieutenant-Colonel Tim Spicer. The same man who broke a UN arms embargo on Sierra Leone with his former company Sandline International, and who was jailed in Papua New Guinea for earlier activities. Aegis's non-executive directors include ex-UK defence minister Nicholas Soames, as well as Lord Inge, former Chief of defence staff and Roger Wheeler, earlier professional head of the British army as chief of the general staff.

ArmorGroup, which trebled its turnover from \$71m in 2001 to \$233.2m last year, typifies the private military sector in hiring former Government Officials and officers to wield political influence. Sir Malcolm Rifkind, the former UK Defence and Foreign Secretary, is a non-executive director of ArmorGroup. In 2005 the Foreign Office and the Department for International Development awarded the firm armed

security contracts in the Afghan capital Kabul, as well as in the Iraqi cities Baghdad and Basra, together with control of the Iraqi police-monitoring programme.

This conference believes that these companies must be made accountable for their actions around the world and therefore calls upon the CEC –

1. To lobby the UK Government to introduce legislation as a matter of urgency to regulate PMSC's.
2. To lobby our union-sponsored MP's.
3. To build partnerships with other campaigning organisations such as War on Want.

W50 - WELLINGTON BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

BRO. C. MURRAY (Birmingham & West Midlands): I know you have all read the motion. So, now you have read the book, let's talk about it. These companies are run by people who are no friends of the Trades Union Movement. To name just two good socialists, Nick – I have forgotten his name – Ah, Nick Soames and Sir Malcolm Rifkind. They are run to make vast profits. The individuals who work for them are not controlled by law, unlike our armed forces. They have been known to commit all types of abuse without fear of action against them. Did you know that two members of one of these companies were involved in the Abu Grade Prison scandal and have never been brought to account; even though the American soldiers were brought, these people were not. By being beyond the reach of the law these companies are antagonising locals and acting as a recruitment agent for insurgent bodies, putting our military at and others at risk. These people are mercenaries, not security workers.

With our belief as an organisation in social justice, why should these companies be beyond the reach of law? If you need any further reading I would suggest you get a copy of the War on Want publication, Corporate Mercenaries. It really is good reading and it will give you all the information you want. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Motion 287, London Region to move.

MOTION 287

SUPPORT OF VENEZUELAN WORKERS

This Congress supports the marvellous struggle of the Venezuelan working class to create a socialist society which can act as a bulwark to US imperialism in Latin America. We pledge our support to their struggle and in solidarity demonstrate this by affiliating to the Venezuelan Information Centre and Hands Off Venezuela campaigns.

LONDON CENTRAL GENERAL BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. H. SMITH (London): President, Congress, under Decree 4248 the Minister of Labour in Venezuela states that private companies with commercial contracts with the Bolivarian State must comply with the labour law. Trade union representation has been an accepted right of the Venezuelan workers until certain unethical and imperialistic companies undermined the legal and constitutional rights of these workers. Suprofrad trade union is legally registered. Its representation have called

for determined solidarity from the pharmaceutical workers at RACE to challenge non recognition of their trade union rights and RACE's refusal to negotiate collective wages or respond to the demands of the workforce.

Our comrades are now under threat of illegal redundancies and their contracts not renewed when seen to be affiliated to Suprofrad. These acts contravene international human rights of freedom, of self-determination at work. The internationalists watch as Europe's commercial interest infiltrate Venezuelan infrastructure and found to be in breach of Bolivarian laws. The recent RCT TV closure highlights threats to media representation of Venezuelan indigenous people's view in favour of those of the shareholders' interests. I move that GMB continues to support aims of Venezuelan campaign.

I will also counter-inform on the information regarding the RCT TV issue. RCT was founded by an anti-Chavez campaign group to overthrow Hugo Chavez. The licence was revoked under those constitutional laws of the Venezuelan constitution. I hope that clarifies that.

I move that GMB affiliates itself to the Venezuelan Information Centre which has invited international coordinator of the Bolivarian workforce trade union, Jacobo Torres, to campaign London on 23rd June. Go to listen and be inspired. Like Torres GMB denounces the insidious threats to democracy and the illegal betrayal of trade unionism in Venezuela. I move. Thank you.

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

Motion 287 was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 292, Female Genital Mutilation, London Region to move.

MOTION 292

FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), sometimes incorrectly called female circumcision, is defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as 'the partial or complete removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural or any other non-therapeutic reason'.

It involves major surgery to the vulva, including removal of the clitoris and inner labia, and stitching to reduce the opening of the vagina to a tiny aperture. The short term health implications include severe pain, shock, blood loss, infection, urine retention, the inability to lose menstrual blood; the long term include extensive damage to the reproductive system, incontinence of faeces and urine, complications in pregnancy and childbirth, chronic pain and severe psychological damage.

The WHO estimates that at least 140 million girls and women have been subject to FGM, and despite legislation brought into effect in 2003, it is estimated that 6,500 girls face the risk of this mutilation every year in the UK.

This Congress condemns this barbaric and inhumane practice and calls on the GMB Women's Committee to raise our concerns with the TUC General Council and through them the UK Government and raise this issue with all of the TUC's International Affiliates

(Carried)

SIS. C. HOLLAND (London): Congress, female genitalia mutilation, FGM, is the partial or complete removal of external genitalia. It is not female circumcision. This is a custom normally practised in Muslim countries. It is debatable whether this is a practice based on religious beliefs. Some commentators believe this custom is allowed to flourish because of the importance given to virginity in an intact hymen. What is not in dispute is the short and long-term health problems experienced by young women and girls as young as 4 years old. These problems include urine retention, shock, infection, damage to the reproductive system, and now the potential spread of HIV/AIDS as a result of the re-use of unsterilised equipment. This practice is not allowed in Britain but rough estimates suggest that approximately 6,500 such operations occur in the UK. I am proud to live in a country which celebrates and respects other people's cultures but there must be a limit. This motion calls Congress to do all it can to bring to an end this barbaric and inhuman practice. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Can I call George Emmerson on Motions 284 and 287. Thank you. I am glad you are keeping me awake. Yes, George.

Motion 292 was formally seconded.

BRO. G. EMMERSON (CEC, Manufacturing): The CEC supports 284 and 287 with qualifications. The CEC supports Motion 284 with a qualification. Congress has demands against the illegal war in Iraq and we are aware of the current bellicose threats especially in relation to Iran. We are completely opposed to any military action that does not have the backing of the UN and the GMB will take action on platforms deemed appropriate by the CEC in order to state our opposition wherever we see an injustice.

We support Motion 287 in support of the Venezuelan workers with the qualification. Whilst the thrust of the motion is in line with current GMB policy, we believe that the best way to demonstrate our solidarity is by continuing to work with the Venezuelan Information Centre who have generated the widest support possible in defence of the Venezuelan national sovereignty.

Therefore, Congress, we are seeking support of Motions 284 and 287 with the qualifications I have made. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, George. Does London Region accept the qualification? *(Agreed)* Thank you. Can I put 284, 285, 286, 287, and 292 to the vote, please? All those in favour please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

(Motion 284 was carried.)

(Motion 285 was carried.)

(Motion 286 was carried.)

(Motion 287 was carried.)

(Motion 292 was carried.)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I will not do it without your support, where the CEC is totally supporting and there is no qualification, could I ask if you would formally move and then formally second? Is that agreed? (*Agreed*) Thank you.

Emergency Motion 3, to be moved by the London Region, Hilton Hotels and Barclay's Bank. Dick?

EMERGENCY MOTION 3

HILTON HOTELS, BARCLAYS BANK - EXTRA-TERRITORIAL LEGISLATION DISCRIMINATION AGAINST CUBAN CUSTOMERS

In the last three months, Hilton Hotels and Barclays Bank have stated their intention and/or taken action to withdraw services from Cuban customers. In both instances, the companies have cited the pressures of US blockade legislation as the reason behind their actions.

The Cuban Solidarity Campaign is calling for:

1. The UK government to make urgent and robust representations to the relevant US authorities to cease the application of such illegal trade measures
2. Sustained pressure on Hilton Hotels and Barclays Bank until they unambiguously state in writing that they have
 - (a) reversed the previous stated ban on Cuban nationals
 - (b) confirmed that they will accept Cuban accounts, bookings and delegations
3. The UK government to invoke existing antidote legislation (as statuted in the 1996 UK Protection of Trading Interests law). This legislation is designed to counteract the effects of the US Helms-Burton Act. It penalises companies which comply with US extra-territorial legislation over and above UK laws.

We call on the Union at national level to urge the Trade Union Congress to

1. raise these issues at the next Foreign and Commonwealth Office-Trades Union Congress meeting
2. write to the government via the Department of Trade & Industry and Foreign and Commonwealth Office
3. write to the two companies involved asking for written statements that they will
 - (a) allow Cuban delegations to stay in their hotels
 - (b) not discriminate against Cuban nationals and Cuban organisations

GMB NORTH LONDON BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. R. POLE (London): Congress, this Emergency Motion follows as a result of our May branch meeting being addressed by Rob Miller from the Cuba Solidarity Campaign, who updated the branch on the insidious policy being used by Hilton Hotels withdrawing services from Cuban customers as reported in the Guardian 2007. For those who may be unaware of this, it results from an Oslo hotel owned by Hilton refusing to accept a Cuban trade delegation because of the US blockade on Cuba, Hilton being owned by an American company. The US has applied a blockade against Cuba for 47 years and the Helms-Burton Act of 1996 made investing in Cuba by foreign companies liable to prosecution in the US. Incidentally, this blockade has been condemned by the UN General Assembly in 2006 by 183 countries to 4.

So an American law says that an American company cannot accept Cuban custom as it is in breach of this legislation ignoring other countries, such as Great Britain, which, one, does not operate such a blockade and, two, has legislation, the 1976 Race Relations Act, which specifies such measures are contrary to UK anti-discrimination laws which state that nobody should be withheld goods or services on race or nationality. Essentially, this is the US trying to force its own widely despised legislation on to other countries, despite their own sovereignty and ignoring their own legislation.

This becomes worse and what makes this an emergency is that recently Barclays Bank have told the two London branches of two Cuban organisations, Havana International Bank and Cubanacan, a state-owned travel organisation, to take their longstanding accounts elsewhere despite these accounts being healthy. I have been forced to be reminded by London Region members that this is the same Barclays Bank we campaigned against so vigorously years ago for their appalling links with apartheid in South Africa.

This, not surprisingly, is causing widespread contempt within our Movement and a number of early day motions are being circulated. GMB has a proud record of Cuban solidarity and I would ask you all, despite any personal views you may have, to recognise these actions as illegal as well as immoral. The US blockade has supported untold misery and suffering to the Cuban people yet they have consistently fought heroically against this. It is time to end the interference in Cuba's affairs by the US and it is time to stop the US trying to influence foreign governments to interfere with Cuba's affairs because their own illegal actions are being restricted.

Passing this resolution will be international solidarity in action and I remind Congress of Mr. Rane's inspiring speech before lunch on the importance of this solidarity. I move and seek your support, comrades.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dick. Formally seconded? Thank you very much.

Emergency Motion 3 was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Can I put Emergency Motion 3 to the vote? All those in favour please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

(Emergency Motion 3 was carried.)

THE PRESIDENT: I will now move to Social Policy: Transport, London Region to move. Motions 248 and 249 do need a qualification. Thank you.

SOCIAL POLICY: TRANSPORT

MOTION 248

STANSTED EXPANSION

Congress supports the Stansted expansion plans.

STANSTED AIRPORT BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. PARMENTER (London): President, Congress, the British Airport Authority submitted a planning application in April 200 to allow the existing single runway airport, the London Stansted, to grow beyond the passenger and air transport movement. The proposed development would be within the existing airport boundary and no construction projects were requested beyond those already given permission for.

Stansted is currently serving 23 million passengers a year and based on present growth we believe this could reach 25 million by early 2008. Uttlesford District Council's development control committee voted to refuse permission in November 2006 on the following grounds: noise, lack of quality of life assessment, air quality, road and rail access, and climate change. But the expansion called Stansted Generation 1 is in line with specific and up to date national planning policy.

The Government recognises that there are large economic benefits to be gained from increasing air transport capacity at Stansted, particularly in the creation of jobs. In 2003 Stansted related employment totalled approximately 15,000 jobs. Forecasters show that the expansion would generate direct and indirect employment of 24,000 jobs by 2015.

The expansion would add to the region's locational competitiveness attracting more companies to the South East of England and creating more jobs. Economic forecasts in a recent study of economic contribution of work of UK aviation demonstrated that there is a great economic benefit from airport growth, including when you cost the climate changes taken into account, and for trade it will allow Stansted to increase cargo volume to 600,000 tonnes a year, and tourism forecasts show that an extra 750,000 foreign visitors will visit the South East and London if the expansion is granted permission.

Stansted is already the region's biggest single employer and many workers and their families want growth. Colleagues, the expansion of Stansted Airport will improve the poor working conditions and the poor facilities our members currently experience. Congress, please support the Stansted expansion. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Formally seconded? Thank you.

Motion 248 was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 249?

MOTION 249

RAIL CLOSURES AND FARE PRICING

Congress expresses its opposition to any proposed rail closures of small branch lines on supposed "economic" grounds and repeats its demands for the return of the rail network to public ownership in line with the decision taken by the Labour Party Conference in 2004.

Congress is also concerned in respect of the above inflation fare prices made in January which leave "turn up and go" passengers being faced with the most expensive fares in Europe and believes this can only have a detrimental effect on the environment with rail travel becoming the preserve of the wealthy and others being forced onto less environmentally friendly methods of travel.

NORTH WEST LONDON BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. R. POLE (London): At the outset can I advise that our branch is comprised primarily of members who work for the railway unions so we have a vested interest in this. The motion was prompted by newspaper reports earlier in the year that occur with a degree of frequency saying that the Government are looking at Beeching style closures on smaller rail branch lines on economic grounds. This short-sightedness not only goes against the commonsense view of having a fully integrated publicly owned transport system but it would leave people in small isolated communities with often no viable transport system other than car or taxi as often bus services are non-existent, or difficult for people with small children, heavy shopping, etc. This of course would then result in more congestion, more pollution, more dangerous roads.

Surely, Congress, the way forward would be to better promote these rail services and reduce the cost of using them, which leads to the second part of the resolution, the above-inflation fare rises announced in January. The UK now has the most expensive turn up and go fares in Europe. You imagine you have to make a lengthy journey at short notice, a family crisis, bereavement or illness. At peak time London to the north journey on a Monday would set you back a minimum of a couple of hundred pounds. No wonder people are looking at anti-union low cost pollution creating airlines or travelling by car multiplying the problems referred to earlier.

The Labour Party Conference has overwhelmingly supported resolutions to take the rail system back into public ownership to be run as a public service not as a profit-making gold mine for fat cats and cowboy speculators, but shamefully Labour has not yet acted upon this.

Such a move would have massive public support but the Government refuse to budge on this on spurious costs grounds. Congress, it might upset the Richard Bransons of this world but re-nationalisation without compensation does not strike our branch as cost-prohibitive and Labour has a big enough majority to do this. We need to put

more pressure on the Government to carry out its own party policy and passing this today would help in this respect.

One last point on fares, South West Trains has recently announced a 20% rise on some fares and one train operating company is looking at removing seats and toilets from trains to cram more commuters in. What a way to run a railway. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dick. Formally seconded?

Motion 249 was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, 256 has been fully supported, British Waterways, by the CEC, is Southern Region prepared to formally move and second? *(Agreed)* Thank you very much.

MOTION 256

BRITISH WATERWAYS

Congress fully supports British Waterways in its present form (our last remaining nationalised industry). It has built up the canal system over the years, from a low ebb, with the help of the voluntary sector, while working with local and national organisations, to the credit of all. We see the canal system as a national asset similar to a national park but with much wider usage and appeal, an integral part of our environment, to be enjoyed by all.

Congress calls upon HM Government to fully support British Waterways by ensuring it is properly and securely funded, to enable it to continue its sterling work and plan for the future.

HEATHERWOOD AND WINDSOR PARK H25 BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

Motion 256 was formally moved and seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: 257, 2012 Olympics, Southern Region to move.

BRO. A. HUTCHINGS (Southern): I would formally move but....

THE PRESIDENT: No, colleagues, I am not asking you to do that because there is a qualification needed.

BRO. A. HUTCHINGS: I know. I realise that.

MOTION 257

2012 OLYMPICS

Congress welcomes the Olympic Committee's decision to award the Games to the City of London. It will bring much needed investment and jobs and we call on the Government to ensure that adequate funding is made available to ensure that local taxpayers will not pick up the bill.

Congress further calls for investment in those regional event areas outside of the capital, such as the

National Sailing Centre in Portland, Dorset – an area that requires an up-to-date road and transport before the year 2012.

WEYMOUTH W27 BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. A. HUTCHINGS (Southern): Good afternoon, President, Congress, the awarding of the 2012 Olympics to London was marvellous news. It will put the country firmly in the spotlight. It will bring a lot of visitors to this country with much extra income being spent.

In 2012 the sailing events will be held at the National Sailing Centre at Portland. The events will be held in this beautiful part of the Jurassic Coast. This area has suffered from lack of investment in relation to transport links. The new bypass should be built in the Weymouth area before 2012, the plans are being passed but there is an awful lot of opposition to it. It is a pity the Olympic people never came to Weymouth because they would have got stuck in all the traffic jams coming to Weymouth; they would not have got there. They never came.

The railway system needs to be improved. Simply, if nothing is done before 2012 visitors will arrive to find traffic jams or could be stuck on over-crowded trains. At present the train system can only take certain lengths of trains. If you come to Bournemouth and Poole you come on the 442 – sorry, I am a train fanatic – sorry, 444 trains to Poole, then you can only take five carriages to Weymouth, the track will not take it. During the weeks of the Olympics this area will have a great influx of visitors and this will bring a cost to the local taxpayers, extra police, extra council workers, extra park-and-ride schemes.

The county and borough councillors which each year have to make savage budget cuts will find themselves with extra costs to endure. The council I was on had to take a million pound of cuts this year. Without any extra central government funding all these costs will fall on local residents. I know visitors will enjoy visiting Weymouth and Portland in 2012. I urge you to come, it is a lovely part of the area. I am sure the sun will shine for the entire time; it always does in Weymouth and Portland. Equally, many other areas will stage events away from London. I do hope that they receive adequate government funding to the local councils and county councils, and unitary authorities involved. The 2012 Olympic Games will have a lasting legacy for this country so I sincerely hope the legacy will not be a bill for local taxpayers for many years to come. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Thank you, Richard. I am glad someone is awake.

Motion 257 was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: I call Mick Rix on Motions 248, 249 and 257.

BRO. M. RIX (National Officer): Privileged to be speaking on behalf of the CEC. The CEC is supporting Motions 248, 249, and 257, with qualifications.

First on Motion 248, the GMB has a large membership at Stansted Airport and recognises the boost this gives to the local economy in this part of the country. The GMB has supported expansion of Stansted. However, we also accept that this expansion cannot be without investment in environmental improvements, such as better ground handling, sustainable buildings, and improved access by public transport, especially by rail.

On Motion 249, the GMB has been concerned over the record-breaking price increases that the private train operating companies have applied to turn up and go fares. The cost of a standard ticket is often beyond the reach of many people, especially low incomes, leading to social exclusion. We are also concerned about the pressure being applied to government by the train operating companies to remove the protection and price-capping from Saver tickets and replace them with more expensive and more restrictive types of tickets. The GMB will continue to oppose this.

The qualification on Motion 249 is that the GMB is against the closure of railway branch lines but has supported in certain circumstances to their conversion to light rail and tram schemes which have often brought new life and increased usage to smaller branch lines and have integrated local public transport.

On Motion 257, the GMB supports the 2012 Olympics. However, it is only right that those areas that benefit most, such as London, should also make a contribution from council tax on the Mayor's precept. However, this must be fair and balanced against the Government's contribution.

Therefore, the CEC is recommending support for Motions 248, 249, and 257 with these qualifications.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mick. Do the movers accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Can I now put 248, 249, 256 and 257 to the vote? All those in favour please show? Anyone against? They are carried.

(Motion 248 was carried.)

(Motion 249 was carried.)

(Motion 256 was carried.)

(Motion 257 was carried.)

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, that is the end of this morning's business so you will not be returning at 2 o'clock! Thank you. Can I now move to Motion 268, this afternoon's business, Industrial Deafness is being fully supported by the CEC. Does Northern Region move and second? (*Agreed*) Thank you very much indeed.

MOTION 268

INDUSTRIAL DEAFNESS

Congress recognises that the current regulations on disability benefit require that an individual must have a loss of at least 50 decibels in each ear to qualify for disablement benefit.

Congress believes it is unreasonable that any level of deafness suffered as a consequence of exposure to noise at work should attract a percentage of benefit on a sliding scale of compensation.

STOCKTON 3 BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

Motion 268 was formally moved and seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, Composite 30 is also being supported but because it is a composite I am asking you, are you prepared to formally move it or do you wish to.... OK, the mover. Can I ask the mover? Formally? Thank you. Seconded? Yes, thank you.

COMPOSITE MOTION 30

(Covers Motions 269, 270, and 271)

269 – Winter Fuel Allowance – Disabled – (London Region)

270 – Winter Fuel Allowance – Couples – (London Region)

271 – Winter Fuel Allowance – Entitlement – (London Region)

WINTER FUEL ALLOWANCE

Congress seeks the CEC to use its powers by asking the government to include persons who are on Disability Living Allowance and children under 5 years to be eligible for the winter fuel allowance as under the old scheme.

Congress calls on the CEC to ask/request the government to provide all persons of eligible age, with a winter fuel allowance of the same amount for each person and not split as it is now for couples.

Congress agrees when a person becomes 60 they should be entitled to the winter fuel allowance regardless as to date of the birthday and says one receives free prescriptions; eye tests etc when one becomes 60 and winter fuel allowance should be eligible in the same manner and not have to wait another year if birthday falls after the cut off.

(Carried)

Composite Motion 30 was formally moved and seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 272, is also fully supported, North West & Irish Region will you formally move and second? Agreed? *(Agreed)* Thank you very much.

MOTION 272

BENEFIT THEFT

Congress deplores the concerted attack by this New Labour Government on GMB working class members. This is being run via a multi-media campaign.

The Department of Work & Pensions is focusing on 'benefit theft' through adverts on public transport, bus shelters, etc. and a television onslaught. This covers anything from undeclared work, monies left from a dying relative, a partner setting up home with another, to moving of households.

Congress recognises some of the above can be considered as fraud. However, if benefit fraud is theft, so is tax evasion. Congress recognizes the former is committed by the weakest and most vulnerable, whilst the latter is committed by the rich and powerful.

Congress says the figures don't add up. The DWP figures for benefit fraud are £900million lost in 2005. However, leaked treasury papers reveal Government estimates for losses annually due to tax evasion are a staggering £97 – £150 billion. This is an appalling 8 – 12% of GDP.

Congress condemns amounts allocated to the recoupment campaigns. For 'benefit theft', £7.3million plus any local authority monies. For tax evasion, the first campaign in 2006, £1.5million.

Congress therefore calls upon the General Secretary to use his offices to force Government to fight the war on the real aggressors. This is the City of London, the leafy suburbs of Kensington and company boardrooms, etc. They should be the targets of the hoardings and television adverts containing all the veiled threats.

182 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

Motion 272 was formally moved and seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Can I ask for Composite 31, Post Office Closures and, colleagues, I am going to take this one, the reason being, as you know, it is a very big issue at the moment. Can I just ask the mover, would they come and move it, the North West?

COMPOSITE MOTION 31

(Covering Motions 273, 274, 275, and 276)

273 – Closure of Post Offices/Banks in Rural Areas/City Centres – (North West & Irish Region)

274 – Post Offices – (London Region)

275 – Post Office Card Accounts – (North West & Irish Region)

276 – Post Offices – (South Western Region)

POST OFFICE CLOSURES

Congress calls upon the CEC to call on this Government to make sure that Pensioners and other people on benefit are able to collect their benefits from Post Offices within their locality. This is vital to the community to retain links and to remove this facility will cause considerable distress and inconvenience to the old and the young of our communities.

With the forecast of more closures of the above named facilities, which will have a serious effect on young families and old age pensioners who use them on a regular basis, we believe a national campaign should be put in progress to stop this happening, as clients who are on benefits should have an option on how they are paid, instead of being forced into opening bank accounts.

At the same time as post offices are closing, a lot of rural banks are closing or reducing opening hours, which means a lot of the public who are working or are on benefits, will unfortunately have to start traveling excess distances to use these facilities for drawing their pensions, benefits and for general use.

Most of these areas already have problems with transport, or the lack of it. It is also time-consuming, expensive and money is being spent which people can ill afford.

This Congress condemns the Government's decision to end support for the Post Office Card Account from 2010. These accounts provide basic banking facilities for those on low incomes who often have difficulty in getting traditional bank accounts. They are also considered a key factor in sustaining local Post Offices in deprived urban areas. We call on the Government to reverse this decision and to look at other ways of supporting Post Offices to enable them to continue to fulfil their vital social role.

Congress says the Post Office closures causes hardship to everyone and not everyone has on-Line facilities or means of transport.

Congress asks the CEC to look into the withdrawing of services that were available at Post Offices which are an essential service to the community, especially the elderly and infirm. Congress resolves that the withdrawing the ability to purchase TV stamps, TV licences, Road Fund Tax (now encouraged to buy on line) and electricity pre-payments from post offices etc is causing unnecessary worry to the customers and making the small post office unviable especially with the withdrawing of the pension card account.

(Carried)

BRO. P. PERRY (North West & Irish): First it was pension books, then it was Post Office cards, now it is the Post Offices, so where does it all end? With the forecast of more closures of the above-named facilities which will have a serious effect on old-aged pensioners and young families who use them on a regular basis, we believe that a national campaign should be put in progress to stop this happening as clients who are on benefits should have an option on how they are paid instead of being forced into opening a bank account when Post Offices are more convenient for their use.

At the same time as Post offices are closing a lot of rural banks are also closing or reducing opening hours which means a lot of the public who are working or on benefits will unfortunately have to start travelling excessive distances to use these facilities for drawing out pensions, benefits, and for general use.

We also read about banks who say that who has less than £1,000 a month going into an account there will be a service charge which will also put extra pressure on pensioners and people who are on social benefit. Many of these people already have problems with money without the added expense of travelling, which, when available, is very expensive. I ask Congress to support this motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Formally seconded? *(Agreed)*

Composite Motion 31 was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Royal Mail Postage, 277. I was watching you panicking down there looking for your notes!

MOTION 277

ROYAL MAIL POSTAGE

Congress asks the CEC to use its powers to return the postage system whereby one would pay the postage by weight alone.

Congress says the current system causes much confusion by the differential issues relating to the said postage i.e. weight, size and thickness.

EAST DEREHAM BRANCH
London Region

(Referred)

BRO. J. RICHMOND (London): President, Congress, this motion is simply asking the CEC to use its powers and influence to return the postage system to a situation where we would only pay for the postage alone. This would be a much simpler system than the current system which only causes confusion by the different changes currently in operation in relation to the postage size, weight, size, and thickness. Congress, I hope you will support this motion. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Is that formally seconded? *(Agreed)*
Thank you.

Motion 277 was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, because Composite 31, I know London formally seconded it but there was priority in debate to South Western Region. Does South Western Region wish to come in the debate? *(Declined)* No. Thank you. Can I now call Brian Jackson on Motion 277.

BRO. B. JACKSON (CEC, Public Services): President, colleagues, Motion 277 calls for a return to postage prices being based purely on weight. As you know, Royal Mail altered the way we pay for our post in August last year. We used to buy stamps based on the weight of letters and packages. This changed and now the size of envelopes and thickness along with the weight determine how much we have to pay. Without doubt this has caused substantial confusion for many. Standard First Class envelopes cost 32p but a large envelope 44p.

Royal Mail claims that two-thirds of business mail may be cheaper and the new system is designed to reflect the cost of sorting the post. We are not convinced but given that the new system was introduced less than a year ago and the significant resources put behind its introduction, many of the problems may be resolved as people become familiar with it, therefore it is too soon to call for its abolition but we should keep it under review.

Congress, I call for Motion 277 to be referred to give the CEC an opportunity to examine the system when it has been in operation for a year.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Does London Region accept reference? *(Agreed)*
You do. Congress accept reference? *(Agreed)* Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now put Motion 272, Composite 31, and 277 to the vote?
All those in favour please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

(Motion 272 was carried.)
(Composite Motion 31 was carried.)
(Motion 277 was referred.)

THE PRESIDENT: Sorry, did I miss 268? All those in favour of 268 please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

(Motion 268 was carried.)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I know Brian has just come up. Where are you, Brian? Brian has just come up to speak on behalf of the CEC and I think it is only right that Congress wishes him and his partner good luck. I understand that Brian is getting married in a few weeks' time, him and Valerie. Good luck, Brian. *(Applause)* And I am the bridesmaid!

Colleagues, can I now move to Composite 32 and I ask the North West & Irish Region if they wish to move. *(Confirmed)* Yes, OK. Because it is a composite does Southern Region wish to speak in the debate? *(Declined)* No. Thank you. Will the mover of 280, Free TV Licences, please come down, and then I will be calling Gordon Gibbs.

COMPOSITE 32

(Covering Motions 278 and 279)

278 – Pensioners Charter – (North West & Irish Region)

279 – Free Bus Travel – (Southern Region)

PENSIONERS CHARTER – FREE BUS TRAVEL

Congress welcomes the various schemes given to our over 60s population since 1997 when Labour came to power. However one scheme, though welcomed, has caused confusion and great frustration to many of our members, namely the free bus pass for the over 60s and disabled residents. As the scheme is funded by Government to Local Government, many local Councils differ in the scheme offered.

We urge our present Government to comply with the points made in the Pensioners Charter, one of which is for free nationwide travel for all pensioners on public and local transport and parity with other EU countries, such as Ireland, with free travel on buses, trains and ferries, with no restrictions! This must surely be affordable from a country that spends £52 billion on an illegal war.

We note that once again Gordon Brown has moved the goalposts on the proposed free bus travel for pensioners in England, causing more chaos and unrest. Ideally our Government should have repealed the wicked de-regulation brought in by Thatcher in 1986, when they took power in 1997, since when public transport has not existed and is now being run by money grabbing privateers.

Congress calls on Central Government to both fund and administer the scheme at National level so that all qualified residents enjoy the same scheme nationwide.

(Carried)

BRO. P. DELAHUNTY (North West & Irish): Chair, this is about the progress on the charter in relation to two aspects, which is, one, travel, and consistency in applying free travel across the nation; secondly, it is on the fuel allowance. I will concentrate on the travel situation.

If you live in the North of Ireland you can travel to the South of Ireland free. If you live in the South of Ireland you can travel to North of Ireland free. If you live in Scotland you can travel round Scotland free. If you live in Wales you can travel round Wales free. If you live in England you are restricted.

Now, I can understand bringing a system in piecemeal if you are a poor country but being the fourth or fifth richest country in the world we should allow consistency to all pensioners in our nation.

The second one – and I am trying to be brief, Chair ----

THE PRESIDENT: It is all right.

BRO. P. DELAHUNTY: The second one is about winter fuel allowance. It is not by coincidence that I work in the gas industry and what happens is that the industry works on long weather forecasts and trends. Now, it was a prediction this year that we were going to have a mild winter, and indeed we did because it was one of the warmest winters that we have had since records began.

Now, isn't it ironic that the gas industry put the prices up by 30% when the pensioners get the winter fuel allowance? Indeed, more pensioners will pay a bill higher even with that money than they would have normally paid, but then again the Chancellor gets his corporate tax out of that, so it is a vicious money go-round at the expense of the pensioners. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Motion 280, North West.

MOTION 280

FREE TV LICENCES

Congress calls upon the GMB to lobby for free TV licences for all retired pensioners aged 65 or over and for reduced licence fees for students undertaking full-time study course at Universities or Colleges of Study. We believe that the Government should introduce a 50% reduction in the licensing fee for students who are being supported by a grant or who are funding their own educational course.

MANCHESTER CENTRAL D41 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

BRO. K. FLANAGAN (North West & Irish): I will try and be short and sweet like a roasted maggot! I believe you are probably supporting with qualification on this?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, we are.

BRO. K. FLANAGAN: So I will cut it short. What I wanted to do is just to underline the fact that we believe fervently that pensioners, and I think the age probably should be 60 for women, really, should get the right to free TV licences. You will pay over £6,000/£7,000 to the BBC for your licence fee over an average lifetime. We think that is sufficient over that number of years and therefore there should be free licences. The one that colleagues have asked me to speak on also was just to draw your attention to the predicament where many students have actually been targeted over recent years for TV licences. Actually, as you know, it is often not the students who have to pay, they feel under threat by this, but it is Mum and Dad, and Mum and Dad are already paying for a TV licence at home, so in a sense you could almost argue you are being doubly taxed for this.

A student residence of 200 places, for instance, can raise something like £26,000 to £30,000 for the Government, that is in just one student resident block of 200 places. We think that is exorbitant, really, and that is why we are asking for a minimum, a discounted TV licence fee for those on grants. Many students are already leaving with £6,000/£7,000 debt per year, if they are lucky. We think it is a disgrace that we should tax them further for something that they only enjoy for probably 30 weeks a year and, as you know, most students are out so in fact they get minimal benefit but they are being forced now, with letters, to buy TV licences. We think that something needs urgently to be done with that. Thank you for your support. Congress, I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kevin. Formally seconded? (*Agreed*) Thank you.

Motion 280 was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, when I do call you to the platform and because we are formally seconding, I am not asking anyone to really cut the speeches down that they have done, because these are very important issues. OK? Gordon?

BRO. G. GIBBS (CEC): The CEC is asking Congress to support Motion 280 with a qualification and for the benefit of our region - I won't be speaking posh! Motion 280 calls for free TV licences for retired pensioners and fulltime students. The yearly cost of a colour TV licence is £135.50 and a black and white licence costs £45.50. For those on low incomes, particularly the elderly and students, the TV licence is a financial burden. Currently, those only over 75 years of age are entitled to a free TV licence even though there are many pensioners relying on means-tested benefits.

The TV licence certainly represents a costly burden to pensioners, many of whom can barely afford it. It has been longstanding GMB policy that all pensioners should be exempt from the TV licence. In addition, providing the licences for fulltime students would undoubtedly ease the financial burden, especially for those from poorer backgrounds.

However, the motion is not clear on who should be entitled to a free licence and it should be considered discriminatory. Women currently have a state pension age of 60 and the wording of the motion would exclude them from being eligible. In addition, the motion states that pensioners have to be retired for a free TV licence. Many pensioners continue working full or part-time after reaching their state pension age.

Again, the motion would exclude them. Finally, it would be very difficult administratively to differentiate between retired and non-retired pensioners.

Congress, the CEC is supporting the motion but with the qualifications on state pension age, that there is no differential between pensioners who choose to work and those who do not.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gordon. Does the region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Can I now put Composite 32 and Motion 280 to the vote? All those in favour please show? Those against? That is carried.

(Composite Motion 32 was carried.)
(Motion 280 was carried.)

THE PRESIDENT: Can I ask the mover from London Region on Composite 33, Legal Aid Reforms, please move the resolution.

COMPOSITE MOTION 33

(Covering Motions 281 and 282)

281 – Legal Aid Reforms – (London Region)

282 – Legal Aid Reforms – (London Region)

LEGAL AID REFORMS

This Congress opposes any proposals to increase the current small claims limits and the resultant consequences in terms of non-recovery of legal costs and believes that any move to do so would have serious implications in terms of access to justice and professional legal advice, particularly for the most vulnerable members of society. This Congress therefore resolves to actively campaign against any such proposals.

This Congress resolves to campaign against the proposed market-based reforms in legal aid and calls for an end to the freeze in the legal aid budget and supports the Law Society's 'What Price Justice' campaign.

(Carried)

BRO. C. WHITMORE (London): I will speak only on the qualification. The CEC qualification to this composite relates to the original proposal to increase the small claims limit from £1,000 to £5,000 as demanded by the bloodsuckers of the insurance industry. I am pleased to report that after campaigning from many organisations, including, and I never thought I would give them credit at a GMB rostrum, the Law Society, that element of the consultation has been dropped. So, the CEC qualification is not needed and nor am I here. I move.

Composite Motion 33 was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Sorry, Richard, you have been made redundant! It is that tie you are wearing, Richard; sorry. Congress, all those in favour of 33 please show? Those against? That is carried. London did formally second. All right.

(Composite Motion 33 was carried.)

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now move to the next agenda, that is Social Policy: Housing. Colleagues, Motion 228, Council Housing, is fully supported by the CEC. Does Southern Region formally move? *(Agreed)* And second? *(Agreed)* Thank you.

SOCIAL POLICY: HOUSING

MOTION 228

COUNCIL HOUSING

This Congress calls for investment into Council housing fully funded by Central Government. Any Council whose residents reject after a ballot to move to a Housing Association should continue to receive funding to keep the housing stock under municipal ownership and in good condition.

WEYMOUTH W27 BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

Motion 228 was formally moved and seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 229, Northern Region, Social Housing, that is fully supported. Do you agree to formally move and second? *(Agreed)* Thank you.

MOTION 229

SOCIAL HOUSING

Congress recognises that despite the Government's declared intention of empowering tenants, that empowerment does not extend to choosing their local authority as their future landlord.

Repeatedly in independent surveys tenants have demonstrated their satisfaction with local authority housing only to be informed that their wishes will not be allowed.

Congress calls on the Government to respect the wishes of tenants where they choose to remain local authority tenants and to provide a level playing field for local authority housing.

EASINGTON DISTRICT BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

Motion 229 was formally moved and seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 231, Affordable Housing, Northern Region, that is fully supported. Do you agree? *(Agreed)* Thank you.

MOTION 231

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Congress recognises that The World Health Organisation cites that the provision of safe, decent and affordable housing is one of the essential prerequisites for improving standards of public health and reducing preventable premature mortality.

Congress therefore calls on the Government to provide the capital resources to Local Authorities and other social landlords to fund a substantial national programme to build affordable homes for rent.

CONSETT 2 BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

Motion 231 was formally moved and seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 232, Council Tax Banding, London Region, it is fully supported. Do you agree to formally move and second? *(Agreed)* Yes. Thank you.

MOTION 232

COUNCIL TAX BANDING

Congress demands that the CEC lobby the Government to retain the right of appeal in relation to Council Tax Banding.

ESSEX PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

Motion 232 was formally moved and seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 233, Land Tax, London Region, that is fully supported by the CEC. Do you agree to formally move and second? Your region has said yes. Look, let's not.... Ed, come on. Go and move. You have a burning desire, go on! Go on. All right, then. *(Cheers/Applause)* Hurry up. Go on, quickly. *(Comments from the floor)* Carry on.

MOTION 233

LAND TAX

Congress calls upon the GMB to investigate the possibility of a land tax, upon which a building stands, to take the place of council tax or local tax as a means of paying for local services and ensuring house prices are affordable.

CAMBRIDGE 2 BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. K. ROBERTS (London): President, Congress, land tax is – *(Laughter/Applause)* – Very good! Land tax is not a new idea, this is about taxing the value of the land. This would make house-buyers factor in an annual tax on the value of their land when calculating what they are prepared to pay. This would lower prices and discourage speculation. This would also hit the rich who spend most of their time in London but avoid paying Income Tax, what I mean by this is, someone on the bottom 20% of the income spectrum pays about £250,000 in taxes in their lifetime. A person at the top of the 20% spectrum pays about £1.2m in taxes but will own properties and basically with the rises of value of properties they would actually wipe

out their tax liability in two or three years. They could not get away from a land tax on a big house somewhere like in Mayfair. This also should focus property developers from buying sites and then waiting for the right time actually to sell them off. For example, the 13 hectare site of Battersea Power Station, bought in 1982 for £10m, and then sold 11 years later in 1993 for £400m. I think a yearly tax would make the owners focus their mind and actually do something better with this and do the site sooner. This should take place of the council tax and means of paying for local services ensuring house prices are affordable. This is why I call upon Congress to investigate the possibility of a land tax. I move.

Motion 233 was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. (*Cheers/Applause*) Thank you, Kevin. 228, 229, 231, 232, and 233, all those in favour please show? Anyone against? That is carried. Thank you.

Colleagues, will the movers of 250, 251 and 253, please come to the front. Thank you.

SOCIAL POLICY: TRANSPORT

MOTION 250

ROAD PRICING

Congress calls for the GMB to campaign against the proposals to further penalise road users.

It was stated that one of the reasons that the road pricing proposal was to raise money for possible road building and improvements to existing road.

It should be noted, all the money currently collected by the DVLA for road fund licences, only twenty-three to twenty-four percent is actually spent on road building and improvements!

The Government's proposal to introduce road pricing will mean you having to purchase a tracking device for your car and paying a monthly bill to use it.

The tracking device will cost about £200 and in a recent study by the BBC, the lowest monthly bill was £28 for a rural florist and £194 for a delivery driver.

A non-working mum who used the car to take the kids to school paid £86 in one month.

On top of this massive increase in tax, you will be tracked. Somebody will know where you are at all times. They will also know how fast you have been going, so even if you accidentally creep over a speed limit you can expect an NIP with your monthly bill.

NORTH LANARKSHIRE PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH
GMB Scotland

(Referred)

SIS. L. MILLER (GMB Scotland): Last November Downing Street set up its petition facility on the web convinced it would be a public relations success by showing that the Government is prepared to listen to people power. Then they floated the

suggestion that it would be a good idea to introduce road pricing. Bad mistake. Nearly two million people signed the petition against road pricing, with at least one senior government minister declaring, “Whoever came up with this idea must be a prat.” “Unless motorists and families can see the benefits of bringing in a national road pricing system, then it simply will not happen,” not my words, these are the words of the government ministers.

The Government had made a complete dog’s dinner of its policy. Now it is proposing a poll tax on wheels that will hit the poorest harder. Ministers are concentrating too much on the big idea and not enough on the practical small boring details, such as flexible working, staggered school opening, improved traffic signals, etc. Having spent years spending as little money as possible on roads and deliberately creating congestion by means of road narrowing, bus lanes, closing off side roads, traffic light timings which can increase congestion, the Government have now announced that they intend to charge drivers for the privilege of sitting in traffic jams. You will be charged to drive on roads you have already paid for many times through your road tax and fuel tax. Road use charging is another stealth tax. The intention is to use technology to automatically take the charge direct from your bank account. When you use the argument that road pricing will hit those on the lowest income worst, the answer comes back that 50% of those on low incomes do not have a car. OK, so let’s price the 50% that do out of owning and running a car; some logic that.

Before they even considered this massive complex and hugely expensive road pricing system, we should offer a comprehensive network of free school buses, a better standard of railways, and encourage commercial vehicle movement outside peak journey times. Road pricing is a highly expensive way of modifying transport choices. Its cost needs to be recovered before any benefit from taxation. Adding additional red tape to an already complex scheme is wasteful and unnecessary. British motorists are amongst the highest taxed in the world. We currently pay up to three times more for fuel than other developed countries. The problem with British transport systems will not be solved by piling more tax on motorists. I move.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Formally seconded? (*Agreed*) Thank you.

Motion 250 was formally seconded.

BRO. R. REEVES (Southern) speaking in opposition to Motion 250 said: President, Congress, this motion is flawed. It assumes the figures quoted will come about yet they are only someone’s guess at what might happen. It is too soon to make a judgement. No one likes paying taxes. If we want to drive, we have two choices, either we are stuck in an enormous permanent traffic jam if nothing is done, or we support a sophisticated and sensitive scheme which is the promise of road pricing. Please oppose this motion.

Can I ask the Chair that this motion be voted on separately? Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Motion 251?

DVLA PAY AS YOU GO

MOTION 251

DVLA PAY AS YOU GO

Congress is aware of local councils' attempts to introduce road charging in the UK.

We therefore call on our CEC to lobby Parliament and our supported MP's to bring about the laws enacted years ago by this Labour Government that allows this to happen.

ACCRINGTON 1 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

(The Motion was formally moved and formally seconded)

MOTION 253

SPEED CAMERAS

Congress instructs the CEC to review any policies it may have on the need and use of speed cameras on the highway.

In doing so it should have the view that any alternative should be only for the promotion of a safer environment and not a stealth tax.

R35 – ROCESTER JCB BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

BRO. G. RICHARDSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): I move Motion 253.

President and Congress, the Department for Transport is following a road policy they no longer believe in because they would rather save face than save lives. Drivers should drive carefully and safely, and in some cases speed cameras are essential for calming traffic. However, we all know that in many cases local councils use speed cameras as nothing more but a system of revenue. If the cameras were situated at accident blackspots then we would be the first to applaud them, but they are not. They are sometimes sneaky, despicable and bloody annoying, and their use should be reviewed and in some cases scrapped.

New statistics reveal that only 5% of road accidents are attributable to speed, yet more than 5% of road accidents are attributed to speed cameras themselves, with speeding after the camera speedlines and slowing up sharply in order to fall into the limit when approaching the camera sign. Speed cameras distract drivers.

Everybody wants to see road deaths and accidents reduced as far as humanly possibly but do not be tricked into thinking that speed is the main culprit. Police patrols have reduced, or even stopped, because the cameras are doing their work, whereas more diligent work could spot poor and incompetent drivers instead of cameras doing their job. Other calming methods have been pooh-pooh'd, such as flashing speed indicators or signs for differing weather conditions. Why? Because they do not bring in any revenue.

Paul Smith the founder of the Safe Speed Campaign is of the opinion that the Department for Transport is institutionally unable to understand the process of safe driving, which cannot be measured in miles per hour. What is needed is an all round safe approach. Speed cameras are not the only answer. Use them where they are useful and scrap the rest now.

From Stafford to Pankridge, a distance of four miles, on a perfect straight road, there are 17 speed cameras. What the hell is that about?

So, Congress, let us instruct the CEC to review any policies it may have on the need and use of speed cameras on the highway. The DfT does not want bad publicity and I do not think the local councils are capable of making the decision on their own. The alternatives must be safety conscious, not cash conscious. We do not need this stealth tax. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gordon. Is the motion formally seconded?
(The Motion was formally seconded)

MOTION 254

ROAD SURVEY

Congress supports all efforts to reduce the death toll on British roads. This includes longer prison sentences for causing death by dangerous driving. The minimum ban for failing a drink-drive alcohol test should be increased from one year to 18 months.

DUNGENESS ELECTRICITY D27 BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

THE PRESIDENT: Southern Region, are you prepared to move and second?

(The Motion was formally moved and seconded)

MOTION 255

ROAD SURVEY

Congress calls upon the Government to introduce measures to prevent drivers who have to drive as part of the employment driving while unfit through lack of sleep.

DUNGENESS ELECTRICITY D27 BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

THE PRESIDENT: Southern Region, this motion is fully supported. Are you prepared to formally move and second?

(The Motion was formally moved and seconded)

MOTION 258

WINTER MAINTENANCE

Congress calls upon the CEC to lobby Government for the application and use of sirens on winter maintenance vehicles in snowy conditions only. This would help prevent our road systems snarling up and coming to a standstill, as what use is a gritter or snowplough stuck in a queue of traffic. By not being able to quickly clear the carriageway, lives are being put at risk especially if fire engines, ambulances or police cars can't get through.

C80 - DUDLEY BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Referred)

BRO. S. HORTON (Birmingham & West Midlands): I move Motion 258. Congress, picture this scenario. It has been snowing since dinner time and there is a covering of snow outside. You decide to leave work early so that you can get home before the conditions get any worse. You pull out of the car park and straight into a queue of traffic whose drivers have the same idea as you, leaving work early, parents going home to collect their children from school and even shoppers on their way back from the shops. When you get home you realise that a 30 minute journey has taken you nearly three-and-a-half hours to complete. In the Borough of Dudley this scenario has happened twice in the past three years.

Now put yourself in my shoes. I was stuck in the same queue of traffic, unable to move because no one would let you through to do your job. Add to that the verbal abuse received from the public and local radio stations, it can get very frustrating knowing exactly where the hold-ups are but not being able to do anything until you get there, and when you do get there the traffic is flowing again in a matter of minutes once you have done your job. We already have orange flashing beacons, but to complement this a two-tier siren would be useful to aid in moving the traffic over so that we can get through to do our job.

Another reason for campaigning for sirens is that three years ago a law was brought in that every authority in the country has a legal obligation to remove ice and snow off the carriageways. If there was a fatal accident on an untreated road and it was deemed that ice and snow were to blame, not only does the authority get prosecuted but the manager who is responsible for winter maintenance does as well. As our winter maintenance manager is a GMB member, we feel we ought to be campaigning for sirens on his behalf as well as the snow plough and gritter drivers.

The CEC's Special Report to Congress in 2007, the Corporate Manslaughter and Homicide Bill, quite rightly wants to bring to book senior managers and directors for bad practices, but in the above instance a manager and a GMB member who works tirelessly to keep snow and ice off our carriageways could be prosecuted for something he has very little control over – the weather. Please support this motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Colleagues, before I call Sheila Bearcroft the CEC is asking for reference. Does anyone wish to speak against this motion? *(No response)* I understand – I was not in the room at that moment – that somebody opposed. Does

the mover wish to have the right to reply on Motion 250, Road Pricing, before I call Sheila. GMB Scotland, do you wish to have the right of reply? (*The right of reply was declined*) In that case, I call Sheila Bearcroft.

SIS. S. BEARCROFT (CEC, Manufacturing): The CEC is supporting Motions 251 and 253 with qualifications. However, the CEC is asking the movers of Motion 250, Road Pricing, GMB Scotland, and the mover of Motion 258, Winter Maintenance, Birmingham & West Midlands Region, to accept referral.

First, the qualifications. On Motion 251 GMB accepts that there has to be a mixture of encouragement and enforcement to reduce congestion in town centres. We have supported schemes such as the London Congestion Charging. The qualification is that provided adequate provision is made for essential workers who have to use their vehicles or drive in two centres along with improved transport.

On Motion 253 GMB does not support the introduction of roadside cameras as a mechanism of revenue raising. However, it is statistically proven that speed cameras have a role in saving lives, reducing injuries and preventing accidents.

Now I come to Motions 250 and 258, which the CEC is asking for referral. Firstly, Motion 250, Road Pricing. The GMB has accepted that road tax is part of the general taxation to raise money for public services, including expenditure on roads. We have genuine concerns over the proposed introduction of car tracking and nationwide road pricing on the grounds of costs and civil liberties. However, it is clear that, both on the grounds of congestion and climate change, vehicle use cannot be allowed to expand without some restrictions. To date the GMB has favoured congestion charging in cities with improved public transport, provided adequate provision is made for essential workers who have to use their vehicles or drive in towns and cities.

We would ask that this motion is referred until the Government has published its proposals and the CEC has an opportunity to examine them to reach a clear position.

Secondly, Motion 258, Winter Maintenance. Advice from ROSPA and other organisations indicate that fitting sirens to snow ploughs could result in drivers trying suddenly to avoid action at times when roads are in a dangerous condition. This could lead to more accidents. We ask the mover to refer, to give the CEC an opportunity to investigate whether there are any alternative measures that could be introduced.

Therefore, the CEC is asking the movers of Motions 250, Road Pricing, GMB Scotland, to accept referral. It is recommending support for Motions 251 and 253 with qualifications and it is asking the mover of Motion 258, Winter Maintenance, Birmingham & West Midlands Region, to accept referral. Thank you, Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sheila. Does GMB Scotland accept reference? (*GMB Scotland accepted reference*) Does Congress agree? (*Agreed*)

Motion 251 was referred.

In that case, I put Motions 251, 253, 254, 255 to the vote. All those in favour?
Anyone against?

Motion 251 was carried.

Motion 253 was carried.

Motion 254 was carried.

Motion 255 was carried.

THE PRESIDENT: Does the mover of Motion 258, Birmingham & West Midlands, accept reference on the Winter Maintenance motion? (*Accepted*) Does Congress agree?

Motion 258 was referred.

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, let me thank you for what you have done this afternoon. We have come through the agenda and we have now come to Any Other Congress Business. I have just two items. One of them is that we have had three children in the hall this week. The Robinson children, who have just gone out, have been wonderful all week. One child is called Mark, who is a Geordie lad, who has been here with his mum, has just gone out. So will his dad say that I said hello. He is in the hall as a delegate.

Where is Ella Silk. Will you stand up, Ella, please. Will you slowly make your way to me, Ella. (*Applause*) This is the first time that she has been this side of the border. Congress, Ella Silk, who is taking early retirement in the Northern Region, has worked for the GMB for 20 years and has been a PA to four regional secretaries, poor girl. Ella is thoroughly professional, loyal, diligent and dedicated to the job and to the GMB. As you can see, she has always got a smile, but she is shaking here.

Ella, you are held in the highest regard by all of your work colleagues, activists and particularly Congress delegates who know that she has always been there to help with problems, no matter how difficult. From me, the Congress and the CEC, good luck in your retirement. (*Applause*)

Closing Procedure of Congress

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, we are now coming to the closing procedures of Congress. I call on Cathy Murphy, CEC, GMB Scotland, to give the omnibus vote of thanks. Cathy.

SIS. C. MURPHY (CEC, Commercial Services): I move the Vote of Thanks on behalf of the CEC.

President and Congress, I am truly honoured to be moving this Vote of Thanks and I am grateful to have been invited to do so. It is wonderful to be able to make this Vote of Thanks on the back of such a great year for the GMB. I, personally, think the reason for this success is our General Secretary, Paul Kenny. Your speech on

Monday was, indeed, inspirational and really showed a fearless quality. We only got as far as A and B, but I would have loved to have heard the full alphabet.

The most important thing this Congress and union picked up from you is that every region feel that they can trust you implicitly. This situation has been totally unheard of in the history of the GMB. However, I had my doubts on Monday morning prior to your speech. A regional secretary, mentioning no names, Harry – I can give his name because he is not here any more – was allegedly seen behind the stage trying to strangle you with your own tie and that you looked somewhat distressed. But a GMB source has said that there was no truth in this allegation and that the regional secretary concerned was merely helping you to fix the knot in your tie.

THE PRESIDENT: With a knife in his hand. (*Laughter*)

SIS. MURPHY: I have been assured that this has no bearing on the rumour that a further reconstruction of eight regions is imminent.

On Monday Harriet Harman made much of her potential dream team of Gordon Brown and herself. However, we already have the best dream team of Paul and Debbie Coulter. Debbie has been fundamental in overseeing the growth of the GMB in the past year. Your work is outstanding but, in particular, I would like to pay tribute to your input into the Equality Section.

Turning now to Mary. She is a President like no other. It is absolutely amazing that during the past year you have battled ill-health but your commitment and determination has ensured that you have managed Congress in your usual unique and enthusiastic style.

I would just like to say a few words about my personal relationship with you. You have always been very supportive of me at national but especially at sectional level. In fact, for the first five years I thought you were a member of the Food & Leisure Section. Colleagues, I have to say that she has given me support regardless of her own personal circumstances. Mary, I class you as an excellent friend.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

SIS. MURPHY: Now I come to Malcolm. You are a true friend and your commitment to this union is legendary. Some delegates may have thought that you were a bit quick with the lights, but I put that down to the cheap watch that GMB Scotland bought you for Christmas. (*Laughter*)

I want to mention Andy Worth and the Framework for the Future of the GMB report. Andy committed to putting the Rule Book into plain English. I hope and trust that there will be similar versions in plain Scottish and Welsh. Andy, if you need any help with the translations, I will do the Scots and Sheila Bearcroft will do the Welsh.

Turning now to Congress business, Congress was honoured and inspired by the heroine of Grunwicks, Mrs. Desai, on Tuesday morning. We saw courage personified. I feel that the main themes of this week have been trust and

inclusiveness. We have come together in a new bond, determined to continue to grow, deliver for members and be the very best.

On the matter of trust, it is significant that our colleagues in Remploy and Cammell Laird, along with the family of Daniel Dennis, have complete faith in the GMB to deliver for them. With their strong and powerful leadership, and with this new found determination, I know we will deliver.

Gordon Brown came and saw. He may not have conquered but he certainly did not promise the world, but there were definite glimpses of positive movement. We wait with baited breath for a return on our investments. It is about time.

Let me now turn to the Deputy Leadership hustings. The candidates tried to impress, some more than others, to be truthful. But it was Peter Hain who convinced us that he was the best man for the job. Let's go back to trust, though. He can trust us. I hope we can trust him. I think we can.

I don't know about you, colleagues, but one of my favourite events of the week was Mark Thomas. Civil liberties are a very serious matter, especially when cake is involved. But Mark managed to deal with the seriousness of the issues in the best way possible. Thanks Mark, you did us proud.

Delegates, your contributions were outstanding, both by first-timers and experienced delegates. GMB has always insisted that Congress is always a delegates' affair and you have certainly not let the GMB down. But, colleagues, Congress does not happen all on its own. There is an army of people both inside and outside of this hall without whom there would be no Congress and they, surely, deserve to be thanked. *(Applause)*

Firstly, let us thank the management and staff of the Brighton Centre for keeping this venue in good order for us. We must not forget those cheerful "Good mornings" from the Congress stewards. They are Hughie Bruce, Rob McKenna, Dave Hills, Gordon Toole, Declan MacIntyre, Mick Malloy, Lee Sheppard and Richard Warner. *(Applause)*

Now I come to the people who control Congress, the Standing Orders Committee, chaired by Gerry Ferguson. We may not always agree with them but they are an essential evil, who are locked away in the dungeon. Thank you all. *(Applause)*

Other people who are never seen but who do a tremendous job behind the scenes are the National Office staff. They man the back offices and work tirelessly throughout. Then there is the Exhibition Hall organised by National Officer, Robert Badlan. As well as providing a pleasant escape from the Congress Hall, exhibitors provide a lot of income and sponsorship for this union. Of course, if you are like me in the morning, what would you do without the Liverpool Victoria refreshments?

I would also like to thank the Bank of Scotland Union Mastercard, Browell Smith & Co Solicitors, Pellacraft, Thompsons and Whittles Solicitors.

We have people who are seen but never heard, but do a fantastic job. They are our shorthand writers, Michael Thear and Phyllis Hilder and signers Nigel Clever and his team. *(Applause)*

I also refer to someone who has had a very lonely week with little to do is General Member Auditor, Jim Clark.

Now I refer to the people who have been virtually redundant for the past couple of years, the Tellers. The Tellers have finally been used. They have had a long wait and stay in Congress every minute of every day waiting just in case.

Then, Congress, there is Rose Conroy and her communication team of Charlotte Gregory and Laura Coles. A new innovation this year has been the broadcasting of Congress on the web. Rosie and her team were responsible for organising this new development. *(Applause)* Rosie reports a very good number of hits, at least 700, so thank you.

Colleagues, I have been attending Congress for at least ten years but, to be truthful, I cannot remember exactly as I am getting a bit older. A Congress without Steve Pryle is not a Congress. He has done us proud this year once again. *(Applause)* Steve is responsible for press and campaigning, making sure that Congress is seen in an excellent light. We have had more press coverage this year than in any other.

Congress, once again, the undoubted stars of this week have been you. Under the fearless and inspirational leadership of Paul Kenny, we are taking the fight to the shop floor and campaigning against the pariahs of this country – Asda, the private equity firms, AA and now Remploy. Now watch us take on the House of Lords in respect of corporate manslaughter and the Government to give compensation to our brothers at Cammell Laird.

Colleagues, this is all down to you, and I thank you and congratulate you. President, I am so proud to move this Vote of Thanks. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Cath, I am proud to be your friend.

I call the General Secretary, Paul Kenny.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: I am sorry. I was talking to myself. I thought it was a UNISON conference. *(Laughter and applause)*

Thanks, Cath. For about an hour I have been dreading that you might have come to the rostrum with a red hat, a big ostrich feather and I did not want to be stripping off in public.

It has been quite a week. We have had a fantastic week with fantastic people. There are wonderful people in the GMB. You have heard me say it before but look at the wonderful things that we do.

During the week we have done the P's. We have done procedures, politics, policies and people. About Congress people, Mrs. Desai showed fantastic dignity. She is the

person who led a struggle at a time when, perhaps, it was not always popular to be an active trade unionist, and an Asian active trade unionists. She bonded people together and understood that unity of purpose is how you fight employers, not the division of racism. I want to pay tribute again to Mrs. Desai. She was a fantastic recipient of the Union's Gold Badge. *(Applause)*

I must mention Albert, who brought a tear to our eyes, and Edna and Lucinda, who received our awards. Weren't they fantastic. We must remember Joe Bacta from ASDA, who gave us a report from the Young Members' Section. Just on ASDA, let me give you an idea of the commitment involved. We have had quite a lot of visitors this week, including a couple of officers from the London Region. Ed gave them a couple of days holiday. They came to see Congress. I don't know if Colin and Mick are still in the hall. Yesterday they went off with colleagues from the Southern Region and started recruiting in the Asda stores in Brighton. So even when they are on holiday you cannot get it out of their blood. So well done. *(Applause)*

Mark Thomas. What a fantastic way to get the message across. I hope it lightened the proceedings. It was something different, but the subject is very serious. Politics with humour is a very powerful weapon.

We heard about Cammell Laird and the politics involved. We welcomed Eddie, Frannie, Chris, George and Sammy. We want you to know that we are with you.

For me an incredible moment in the week was when John Toomey told me how I must deal with animal cruelty, particularly with people who are parading dancing bears. I promise you, John, if I see one in Chiswick High Street, I shall kick the fellow in the knackers exactly as you instructed me to do. *(Laughter and applause)*

Remploy is an inspiration. Phil, you made a fantastic and wonderful speech.

I think you would have to be a piece of stone if you were not moved by Anthea and Peter Dennis and the story that they told us about their 17 year old son, Daniel. You could hear a pin drop, literally. You could feel the emotion. Seriously speaking, there were not many of us in this room who did not have a big lump in their throats or a tear in their eye. If we want to do something about that memory, that haunting and inspiring speech, then let's redouble our efforts to go out and make the workplaces where we are and where other people are safer so that we do not lose more Daniels. Let's be inspired by their loss. They showed fantastic courage. They are wonderful people. I am really proud that they came. To come and watch pictures of their son, as they did, was a difficult and wonderful thing. They did it because they want people to go out and stop other people losing their kids and their loved ones. It was a fantastic piece of Congress.

Procedures. Next year we will have a new type of Congress. The 2008 Congress will be a completely new structure of industrial, policymaking, governance and a new involvement with the three sections. This week we move to an all lay member CEC. We have separated out policymaking from management and day-to-day running of the union. It has been a hundred years. I do not think that that is a bad achievement, actually. I think we made a big stride forward. The Task Group has done tremendous work and Congress has embraced it.

Politics. We have had a few of them this week, I can tell you. We have heard from Peter Mandelson, the EEC Commissioners. We have heard from Peter Hain, the Secretary of State for Wales and Northern Ireland; Alan Johnson, the Secretary of State for Education & Skills; John Cruddas, the MP for Dagenham – I am not going to leave John out even though he is not a member of the Cabinet, well, not yet, anyway – Hillary Benn, the Secretary of State for International Development; Hazel Blears, the Chair of the Labour Party; Harriet Harman, the Solicitor-General, and Gordon Brown, the Chancellor and Prime Minister elect. I have to say that you put them under more scrutiny this week than they are put under scrutiny by the Tories at Westminster. I think that is a fantastic advantage and a big move forward for our union, that politicians have to come and be subject to the scrutiny of questioning by our members at Congress.

We are almost old hands at it now, but it has only been happening for two years. Last year was the first occasion we moved to a system of questioning. Last year was the first year we moved to that system. We managed last year to get the Prime Minister to come and get Q & As, and this year we had all of those Secretaries of State and the new Prime Minister. I, like you, was left a bit empty by some of the answers but I, like you, am pleased to have the opportunity of having a Labour Prime Minister come to a GMB Congress and be subjected to questions, and long may that happen. *(Applause)*

I always say about campaigning that we have to fight and think of new ways. We must always pick up an opportunity and think outside of the box. When we were doing the Q & As, I paid tribute to young Brian from Remploy. Do you remember his last question, when he said to Gordon Brown: “Gordon, I’ve got a job. I don’t want a job”. Brian was thinking outside of the box, because he is not even a bloody delegate to the Congress. *(Applause)* Fair play, though.

We have made great policy this week. We have a huge and vast agenda facing us. We made good policy progress on equality, diversity, housing, healthcare, minimum wage, holidays, respect, rights at work, discrimination, equal pay, skills and training and protection for our members from assaults when they go to work. That is actually the GMB@WORK. That agenda, when you put all those resolutions and policy together, is what our people want us to do. That is the reality of a trade union and as a policymaking body. It is the GMB@WORK. I have got news for people. Don’t throw your badges away because the GMB@WORK is this year, it’s going to be next year and it’s going to be every year. We are not changing our logos like a soap brand any more. The theme of our Congress will be GMB@WORK because that is what we do. We are at work both inside the union and we are at the workplace. It is not a gimmick, it is not a brand. It is actually what we do.

I can give you a couple of examples. Watch the *Money Programme* as Mary mentioned which is on tomorrow night. I think you will be very interested in what they are going to do on the AA and private equity. It is a programme which would never have been made without your commitment actually to fight private equity and the abuse at the AA. Watch it and see. I do not want to let you into too many secrets, but you are going to be fairly shocked about what these people have got away

with in terms of robbing the British taxpayer, at the same time as exploiting people and sacking thousands of workers.

While we are on it, it is not often that I ask you to stand up and applaud someone for losing their job. You will recall that I talked about Kasorus Bakavar. You have all had the Congress Agenda all week and there are four pictures on the front. The third one is of a guy called Adam. Just above his head, if you look on your agendas, you can just make out that where he works is Bakavar. That is Adam from Bakavar. I have the sad duty to announce to you that after we publicised what was happening—remember, the company refused to meet the union, it refused to take the union seriously and it refused to deal with health, safety and public hygiene abuse, and I read out the letter that I had written to the company a few months ago – what happened? Low and behold, people made a TV programme called *Secret Footage*. They have been prosecuted and they have all sorts of inspection problems. We have been picketing their main clients – Tescos and Marks & Spencer – and it is my sad duty to announce to you that the managing director of Bakavar, Jimmy Mark, lost his job this week. (*Applause and cheers*)

They tell us we are not for restructuring. Well, there is one that we did not mind restructuring. The guy who is stepping in for a short time is a man called, as I understand it, Mr. Costa. Let me tell you something, Mr. Costa. If I was you, I would make that phone call before it costs you your job and all. (*Applause*) That company has been very badly damaged because it forget the rule that we will never forget. We do the business for our members almost always inside because that is where you do the business, but if we cannot do the business inside, then we will do the business outside. But we will do the business. That is the choice that Mr. Mark had. He thought he could brush you aside.

Well, Road Chef is looking for people in Winchester because they are situated on the motorway and they have just taken the staff transport away. The reaction of our Southern Region colleagues, our members and stewards from Road Chef is to say: “In that case, we will go on strike”. Guess what, just before I came to the rostrum – it has ruined my speech – a ‘phone call came from Road Chef saying “Hang on a sec, we want to talk to you about it”.

Now, they have reinstated the transport. Richard Ascough has already been sorting out alternative transport for our members. I have said to Richard and to the officers that if we put on a bus to help our members get in while we sort this out, then I want it to be clear that only GMB members can ride on that bus. (*Applause*) That is what we always say, isn’t it. ‘You can’t get on the bus if you don’t pay the fare’. So good luck to the Southern Region and our members in Road Chef. They have put the bus back on miraculously and we will get negotiations going. But Road Chef needs to get the same message from us as everybody else. If you think you are going to treat our people like that, you are looking at the wrong outfit. You go and try it on the T&G. You go and try it on USDAW. Maybe they will suffer for it but the GMB doesn’t do that. We will stand and fight.

We have had policy and politics but most of all we have had people. I want to thank, like Cath, the staff who actually make this happen. They are working tirelessly for months before all of this. They are in panic almost behind the scenes, which is not

actually the most romantic place to work. There are some really fantastic people who work on your behalf week in and week out to make the event happen. I do not know where they have all disappeared to. They do not like to stand up and be seen, but if you would stand please, Anita Reilley, John McCargo, Steve Short, Helen and Barbara Casher, Laura, Kevin Panton. Kevin Panton has worked for the union for 40 years. You would think he would know better. Kevin Sweeney, Charlie King, Heidi Benzine, Phil McAvoy, Barry Smith from Standing Orders, Maria Ludkin and Robert Badlan, who was mentioned. *(Applause)*

Stand up, Robert. Robert has been mugging – securing, I should say – sponsorship from various people and he has arranged many of the things you have seen this week. All of the social events organised by the President were all sponsored. Robert sorted that out, the teas, coffees and the free gifts. He did that to make sure that you would have a better week. For a variety of reasons, Robert is going to leave the GMB. I am very sad about that. I have grown a good and strong personal relationship with Robert over quite a long period of time. I want to thank him publicly from the rostrum and I would like you to thank him for everything he has done for the GMB and before that the Tailor & Garment Workers Union. You have been an absolute stalwart for the union and I thank you publicly. *(Applause)*

I have a few more people to mention. There is the platform, the fabulous platform. Ida and Dolores. Let me tell you about these two. These two have been working weekends, nights and every time you can imagine to get through all the resolutions, to get the paperwork done, get the feedback done and help people with speeches. They have been working in their own homes, all unpaid. In fact, Dolores should have been off sick and instead of being off sick she refused to go home. I had to force her, quite literally, to go home. She insisted on coming in because she wanted desperately to make sure that Congress worked properly. A little over 12 months ago, when I first said to Dolores “I think this is a great job that you could do on the platform”, her first reaction was that she ran into the Ladies and put a bag over her head. What has happened with her shows that if you give people an opportunity, the backup and support they can excel. It is what we tell employers to do all the time; give people opportunities.

I cannot speak highly enough about these two. The passion and commitment they have given to the union has been immense. They are absolutely fantastic, I kid you not. They are vastly under paid, and I will probably have to pay for that remark at some time in the future, but they have been fantastic servants to the union and they are going to be. Their work for Congress starts when they go back into work at 7.30 tomorrow morning. *(Laughter)* Thank you very much Ida and Dolores. *(Applause)*

I want to thank my grandchildren for tuning to the GMB website. They are able to watch the Congress proceedings. I always brought my kids up to understand what the union was about. Now the grandkids can get me on the phone and say, “I saw you, Mary and other people”. So to Megan, Halley and Alex – I am not sure about our youngest grandchild, Jake, because he is only six weeks only – let me say this. Megan was on a demonstration when we were marching for recognition at Noons Foods in the London Region. She was on that march when she was not more than six weeks old with a banner stuck in her pram. So I am looking round for a dispute

which I can baptise Jake into pretty soon, so if you give me an invite I will get him there. Don't worry.

Debbie, it has been another good year. We have worked well together. It has been a battle to pull together and get a direction on equality and I echo entirely what Cath said. I think we have got the real framework into shape to us becoming a real powerhouse in the union Movement in driving that equality and diversity agenda. That is very much down to Debbie's tireless work by going round the regions and trying to get a structure. She has talked to colleagues at the national level. I think you are on the verge of a fantastic breakthrough which will lead the trade union Movement. It will not follow in the wake. So thank you very much, Debbie. You have been fantastic. *(Applause)*

Malcolm is just great. I don't know what to say about Malcolm. I told a joke last year – I am getting the red light – about him going to the bar and asking for four pints of lager, two gin and tonics and a lemonade. The barman said “Do you want a tray?” to which he said, “Don't you think I've got enough to carry?” *(Laughter)* It still works. He does so much for the union. He is a real credit.

I have a bit of bad news. I was with him in Mansfield when we went to Les White's funeral. He heard that he had received a bit of a caning in the local elections and Malcolm lost his seat. It was of no consequence to him because it was a personal position. All he was interested in doing was trying to comfort other people about the loss of Les White. I make no apologies for again mentioning Les. I mentioned him the other night. He loved Congress. He loved the process of the union. I miss him and I know there are a lot of people in the Midland & East Coast Region who miss him. If you are up *there*, Les, thanks a lot for all your contributions to the union and we will try and keep your traditions going.

Finally, Mary. I know, but not many of you do know, of the troubles and difficulties that Mary and her family have been through in the past year. She has faced series, serious circumstances that would drain the strongest of us. I know what many of you don't know and that is that Mary herself, throughout this Congress, day in and day out, has been in discomfort and in pain, but Mary always puts the union first. She always has done and always will do.

Mary, the greatest compliment that I think I can ever pay to you is that you are an inspiration to working men and women across this country and across this Movement. We are proud of you beyond belief. *(A standing ovation)*

THE PRESIDENT: Paul, can I say thank you. I have now succumbed to the tears, which I usually do, but I am proud to be your President. I have always been proud. I am proud that I was a GMWU member and that I am a GMB member through and through, and so is my colleague here who I work with as a team. Thank you, Malcolm. Let me tell you that I could not do this Congress without your co-operation. This is your Congress. Hopefully, I have always tried to make you see that. We are only here operating but you make the decisions and we carry them out. I am proud to be here and I am proud of you. Let me say that I am proud of my region and my officers. Thank you all very much indeed. *(Applause)*

CLOSING CEREMONY

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, we are now coming to the closing ceremony which is in two parts. In a couple of minutes Suzanna Clark will lead us in singing the “Red Flag”. You have to say that it was the GMB who got the Red Flag back in the Labour Party at the end of Conference. (*Applause*)

First, we will see a slide show of some highlights of Congress. The music this year is *The Great Leap Forward*. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I ask Susanna Clark to lead in singing the “Red Flag”.

(Susanna Clark sang the “Red Flag”)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, another year over and a better and a better year to come. Congress, I wish all the delegates and their families, all the visitors and their friends, a safe and pleasant journey home. That you very much. I now close Congress.
