

GMB – BRITAIN’S GENERAL UNION

PROCEEDINGS

at the

ANNUAL CONGRESS

The Brighton Centre, Brighton

on

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

SECOND DAY

Monday, 4th June 2007.

SECOND DAY'S PROCEEDINGS

MONDAY, 12TH JUNE 2007

MORNING SESSION

Congress assembled at 9.30 a.m.

THE PRESIDENT: Will Congress please come to order, that includes Regional Secretaries at the back talking. Colleagues, I remind you that the fire and safety precautions and evacuation procedures are in your wallet and when you see me running we will all go together.

I remind delegates that today's session, and tomorrow and Wednesday morning, is being transmitted on TV. That means your speech will be transmitted live over the internet so all those swear words you have put in, please take them out. Remember to state your name and region quite clearly. Please make sure your mobile phones are off. Where is Charlie from GMB Scotland? I heard yours going yesterday even though it was supposed to be silent. Is he in?

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, we have a Standing Order Committee Report No. 2 and I call on Gerry Ferguson to present it. Gerry.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 2

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 G. FERGUSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): Withdrawn Motions – the SOC has been informed that the following motions have been withdrawn.

Motion 139: Single Status – Attack on National Terms and Conditions, standing in the name of South Western Region withdrawn in favour of Motion 141.

Motion 170: The Replacement of Trident, standing in the name of Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region.

Motion 207: Criminal Offence, standing in the name of the Midland & East Coast Region has been withdrawn.

I will repeat, the following Motions have been withdrawn – Motion 139, 170 and 207.

Emergency Motions: The SOC has ruled that the following three additional Emergency Motions are in order for debate.

Emergency Motion 2 – Remploy, standing in the name of GMB Scotland.

Emergency Motion 3 – Hilton Hotels, Barclays Bank – Extra-Territorial Legislation Discrimination Against Cuban Customers, standing in the name of London Region, and I am not repeating that one.

Emergency Motion 4 – NHS, standing in the name of North Western Region.

Copies of the Emergency Motions will be distributed to delegates following the SOC Report No. 2.

Bucket collections: the SOC has agreed to authorise a request from London Region for a bucket collection for the Jimmy Knapp Cancer Fund. I recommend that this takes place at the close of the Monday morning session of Congress today.

The Grunwick Dispute. The SOC Committee has agreed to a request from the London Region to allow Chris Thomas access to Congress on Tuesday morning in order to film the presentation of the award to Mrs. Desai. Chris is working for Brent District Council in making a film to commemorate the Grunwick Dispute.

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

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Gerry. Any delegates wish to come and speak on the Standing Orders? (*No response*) No. Do you all accept? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Thank you, Gerry, very much indeed.

Congress, I just have a couple of announcements to make. One is to thank the regions for their social last night, which was absolutely fantastic. I am going to say thanks, first of all, to the North West & Irish Region, our first and last, last night; to London Region, my region; to Yorkshire; and Midland & East Coast; and of course the host was South Western Region, it was a brilliant night; and to Northern Region, where we went last night. You will be pleased your General Secretary became the cabaret; he was extremely good. (*Laughter*) He does remember, do not worry about that.

This morning, colleagues, as you know, we are going to deal with Colombia. We will have a short movie and the platform will go down so that we can watch it. Could I say that, and this is a note from the Colombian stall, if there is one thing you can do to support the brothers and sisters in Colombia it is to visit the Justice for Colombia stall. You can join as an individual member and make sure your branch is affiliated too. The GMB is 100% behind the campaign. They are selling some lovely little badges as a reminder. Please visit the stalls out there. Thank you.

I drew a raffle yesterday afternoon for the Thorne Credit Union. It was a whisky draw and if I had known that he would not be getting it. The winner was Kevin Flanagan. Kevin, well done. I hope you have picked up your prize.

A SPEAKER FROM THE FLOOR: Point of order: Recount!

THE PRESIDENT: You might have won it but it does not mean to say you are going to get the bottle!

Now, colleagues, we will watch the DVD and we are going to leave the platform.

DVD played to Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, that is the high price our brothers and sisters pay in other parts of the world, in particular in Colombia, for wanting just the right to belong to a trade union. I think it is an extremely sad reflection of our society today and it is time that countries like ours stopped funding the paramilitary; guns are bought with aid that we send. We have raised this with the Government on several occasions so please, please, go and support Justice for Colombia. Our guest is here. We say we stand with you, we stand shoulder to shoulder with you in your fight for justice for the Colombian brothers and sisters. Thank you, Congress. (*Applause*)

REGIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT: LONDON REGION (pages 109-117)

LONDON REGION

1 MEMBERSHIP & RECRUITMENT

Financial Membership	87,767
Section Financial Membership (by each Section):	
COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION	32,734
MANUFACTURING SECTION	9,534
PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION	45,497
Grade 1 members	57,236
Grade 2 members	22,348
Retired, Reduced Rate and others	8,183
Male Membership	43,532
Female Membership	44,235
Total number recruited 1.1.2006 - 31.12.2006	16,321
Increase/Decrease 1.1.2006 - 31.12.2006	+4,139
Membership on Check-off	54,526
Membership on Direct Debit	26,497

Over the last year the GMB London Region has striven to ensure that our levels of recruitment and organization activity has been strong. Our membership has risen by 4,138 members since January 2006. This we have achieved by focusing on four specific sectors Public Services (in particular schools), Aviation (with a particularly strong emphasis on both Airlines, Aircraft Handling Agents, and Aircraft Cleaning Companies), Security Companies (particularly G4S), and a new target of the NHS, where we have made particular strides in recruiting Medical Secretaries. In each of these sectors the region has achieved substantial membership growth.

Whilst the London Region has achieved substantial membership growth through organisation and recruitment during 2006 we have also continued to see a series of major closures. Manufacturing plants linked to the motor industry and shipbuilding have continued to close with a disastrous month in August seeing over 1000 GMB London Region members' jobs lost. It is only because of our Officers, Staff and Lay Activists magnificent recruitment efforts that we have been able to grow our region. This has been achieved by moving into the service sector and the public sector to compensate for losses in manufacturing employment which continues to collapse at an ever more rapid rate.

2 GENERAL ORGANISATION

Regional Senior Organisers	3
Membership Development Officers	3
Regional Organisers	17
Organising Officers	8
No. of Branches	129
New Branches	2
Branch Equality Officers	28
Branch Youth Officers	8

3 BENEFITS

Dispute	13,230.00
Total Disablement	NIL
Working Accident	3,796.30
Occupational Fatal Accident	1,066.00
Non-occupational Fatal Accident	
Funeral	12,572.00

4 JOURNALS & PUBLICITY

Press

The GMB London Region's Press Officer continues to spend part of her time on secondment to GMB National Office Communications Department.

Within the London Region the Press Office has assisted the GMB London Region in a large number of disputes and campaigns. The Press Office has been heavily involved in the Local Government Pensions Dispute. They have also assisted in the campaign to link state pensions to earnings; the campaign for recognition in ASDA; efforts made by the region to bring to the public's attention the behaviour of Ryanair. The Press Department has also played a major role in publicising the evil activities of the BNP in East London. They have also played a major part in highlighting the industrial relations problems at Wembley Stadium, Terminal 5, in British Gas, at CT Plus in Waltham Forest and in British Airways. The department have also publicised the union's successes in employment tribunals and in our vigorous campaign to cut the number of assaults on Security and Airline workers and the ever growing number of successful employment tribunals that we have won for our members.

Campaigns to support our members at Stansted Airport, in Cleanaway at Kings Lynn, in the Remploy Factories and in our ongoing demand for the renationalisation of the water and gas industry have also been supported by the Press Department.

Campaigns

The Press Department has assisted officers with the recognition campaign at The American Dry Cleaning Company and the health and safety, and recognition campaign at long time target Bakkavor (Katsouris) in Colindale. Two, long running, GMB London Region campaigns achieved success in 2006. Parliament decided on a total smoking ban for all indoor workplaces. The GMB has been campaigning for this since the GMB London Region Casinos Branch motion calling for a total ban became GMB policy at GMB Congress 2001. Michael Ainsley, GMB London Regional Organiser fronted the national campaign, presenting the case for a total workplace ban. The Government also decided on changes to the laws effecting sex workers which will allow workers to work together. This has been one of the GMB demands since the sex workers first joined GMB London Region in March 2002, because joint working improves their safety.

Candid

The number of editions of Candid has been raised from three to four a year. Each of the four editions is directly mailed to over 85,000 London Region members.

Candid is designed and printed by trade union friendly printer TUink. The introduction of two regular columns, the satirical 'Flying Dutchman' and a help column by GMB Branch Secretary, Sandra Vincent has added a new dimension to the magazine.

5 LEGAL SERVICES

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

Applications for Legal Assistance	Legal Assistance Granted
775	761

Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Court	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
726	147	0	£3,735,221.12	£388,965.52	£4,124,186.64
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2006			1,578		

(b) Employment Tribunals (notified to Legal Department)

Claims supported by Union	113
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Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Tribunal	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
68	36	2	21	9	£51,911.79
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2006			237		

(c) Other Employment Law Cases

Supported by Union	Unsuccessful	Damages/ Compensation	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2006
121	-	£740,852.54	522

(d) Social Security Cases

Supported by Union	Successful	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2006
17	7	10

The GMB London Region Legal Department has continued with innovations during 2006. Our members can now fill in both TU56 workplace accident forms and road traffic accident forms, on-line. We have also continued to work closely with the GMB London Region panel of Solicitors to ensure that our members are getting good value from all of the Solicitors that we employ.

6 EQUAL RIGHTS

The London Region Race and Equal Rights Committee have been involved in numerous dynamic and exciting campaigns in 2006, which will continue in 2007 but focus more on equality issues and positive action undertaken by employers and the monitoring process. We will highlight the issue of institutional discrimination and urge employers to examine their company selection criteria and procedures, and follow equal opportunities best practices as defined under sections 37 and 38 of the Race Relations Act 1976 (amended 2000). AS Union negotiators we are demanding that training and language courses are part of collective agreements to ensure fairness in the workplace policy.

Black History Month Celebration - 28th October 2006: At the end of October last year, the Committee organised a day to celebrate Black History Month - Celebrate & Educate - which was held at Barking College. Trade Unions and GMB Branches supported this event, including Securicor 1, Holborn, Solo and Hotel & Catering Branches. Financial support from SERTUC, GMB Regional Committee, PCS, Unison and Thompson's Solicitors made it a successful event. Speakers included the local Labour MP and Barking & Dagenham Councillors. Ed Blissett, GMB Regional Secretary, also spoke and the LMHR organisers provided music. 120 people attended this cultural event, which included workshops on Islamophobia.

GMB Young Members: On November 4th/5th, GMB National Office organised the first National Young Members' Conference. Paul Kenny, GMB General Secretary, addressed the conference. Other speakers included Debbie Coulter, Deputy GS, Joni MacDougall, International, and Martin Smith, National Organiser. The GMB London members held a forum on 2nd December 2006 and a general meeting is planned for 24th February 2007 - information has been circulated to Branches. Acting Secretary, Yue Ting Cheng, can be contacted via the following e-mail address- tigermountainbystrategy@googlemail.com

Regional Race and Equal Rights Conference - 18th November 2006: The conference was held at GMB London Regional Office and attended by 26 GMB delegates. Guest speakers included Charles Adje, LBHC, Vicki Morris, No Sweat Campaign, and Lee Billingham, Love Music Hate Racism. A CD on Wal-Mart and The Case for Solidarity No Sweat was shown and a good discussion followed. Milton McKenzie, Chair, did not seek re-election and Raj Gill was elected Chair and Wilhelmina Mitchell-Murray as Vice-Chair. The National Equal Rights reports were presented by Jackie Nield and the Race Conference report by Michael Husband.

Counter Demonstration against BNP on 8th December 2006: Over 400 people attended the counter-demo against the BNP at Dagenham Park. Many trade union banners were on display, including the GMB regional banner. Ed Blissett, Justin Bowden, Paul Campbell and other GMB Organisers were also present, as well as ULR Steve McKenzie. The Committee will work with other organisations to expose BNP "Solidarity – The Union for British Workers" as a racist front and will do our best to expose their anti-union aims.

Shout!: GMB London Shout! held its AGM in November and carried four motions covering issues as varied as anti-discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in goods, services and facilities (GSF), access to work, ongoing support for JFLAG and Broken Rainbow, and HIV/AIDS funding cuts. Our major campaign on GSF has been a great success and Shout! London is committed to ensuring full protection against discrimination for lesbian, gay and bisexual members, and extending this to trans people in the near future. Other work being progressed includes drafting course materials for GMB shop stewards and LGBT members alike, organising an event to celebrate LGBT History month, with a focus on Labour and lesbian and gay rights from Edward Carpenter to today, supporting RERAC, young member and anti-fascist work in the London region, and preparing for Pride season. Finally, Shout! London has continued to recruit and organise members into the GMB and into Shout! through our campaigns and attendance at Pride events. Further information is available on the GMB London Shout! webpage or you can telephone 020 7801 2780 (confidential advice line).

Unite Against Fascism/Love Music Hate Racism Stop the BNP National Conference: Date - 17th February 2007; Location - TUC Conference Centre, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS.

London International Women's Day Event - 8th March 2007: The Rugby Tavern - 7pm till 12pm. Speakers - Sharon Graham, TGWU, Mary Davis, TUC, Natalia Wardle, Polish Union Organisers, Deborah Watson, PCS Shop Steward, Claire Laycock, GMB, Sarah Byrne, NUT, and Filipina Unison. If interested, contact j.holgate@londonmet.ac.uk

Anti-Slavery Commemorative Event - 15th March 2007, 5.00-8.00 p.m.: To mark the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade - organised by GMB Race Committee and CONEL, to be held at the College of North East London, High Road, Tottenham. This is being supported by UCU. Aidan McQuade (Director Anti-Slavery International) will address the gathering; Co-Chairs - Raj Gill (GMB London Race Committee) and Tony Holding (CONEL TU Education).

Community Festivals: RISE - will be held in Clapham Common Park in July this year - Committee will investigate the cost of a stall in order that we can participate, recruit and encourage multi-culturalism and diversity.

Dagenham Town Show: We will support Dagenham Town Show on 14/15th July 2007 and support an assembly of trade unionists against the BNP to promote diversity.

Recruitment Prospects: Katsouris Fresh Foods - Park Royal, Ikea - Wembley, Hotels, Security and Construction companies employing large migrant workforce will continue to be recruitment targets in service sector.

The GMB Web Page: RERAC is working to establish a web page in order that we can communicate with a wider membership. A yearly calendar will be published outlining our activities for 2007.

7 YOUTH

The London Region young members have taken over the operation of their section themselves. Ex-young member Steve Forrest, now an Organising Officer, and London Region activist Yue Ting Cheng have developed an active group that is developing a strategy to get more young members active in the Union.

London Region sent a full delegation to the GMB National Young Members', workshop based, conference in London in November 2006. A meeting of London Region young members, following the conference, appointed a provisional co-ordinating committee. The next meeting focused on recruitment, with the group deciding on key initiatives for GMB young member recruitment. In the short to medium term, the aim is to grow in active membership and to make sure that members have something to get involved in. The group agreed that retention was important and more needs to be done to keep in touch, and make new members understand the role of the union in helping them to help themselves. The group also agreed that we need to make use of policies, which we are strong on such as the ending of the minimum wage youth rates, and also the living wage campaign. Members also mentioned the importance of publicising additional events, other meetings and recruitment days in future invites which will interest people. A survey to gather data and activate members has been done. A singular "group email list" via googlegmail groups has been set-up and is used as an internal communications network. To date it has provided a very simple and straightforward way to communicate and coordinate activities with a large group of people of which individuals can opt out or be added at their request. The group email list is:
GMB-London-Region-Youth@googlegroups.com

The group also plans to work closely together with other groups including the race and equalities committee and Shout!

The group is offering speakers to as many branch meetings as possible to make sure people know what the London Region young members are doing and to get as many representatives and members to attend future meetings. Already it has become an effective group, informing the members regarding meetings, various activities, and looking at ways to develop the group.

8 TRAINING

(a) GMB Courses Basic Training

	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Introduction to GMB (3 days)	18	154	61	215	645
GMB Induction (5 days)	7	39	19	58	290
Put in Writing (3 days)	10	74	23	97	194
Neg Skills (3 days)	6	46	65	130	279
Say Your Piece (3 days)	4	33	12	45	90
Stress, Bullying & Harassment(3 days)	1	14	2	16	48

(b) On Site Courses (please specify subjects)

	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Worker Safety Advisor Challenge Fund Project (HSE) 1 week day	2	22	5	27	54

(c) Health & Safety Courses (please specify subjects)

	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
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H&S (5 days)	10	68	25	80	400
Safety Inspections (2 days)	11	97	33	130	260

(d) Other Courses (please specify subjects/weekdays/weekends)

All on weekdays	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Vibration					
White Finger Briefing	1	11	1	12	12
City & Guilds 7307	1	7	3	10	100
ULR's	6	41	21	62	186
ULR Follow-on	2	12	8	20	60
Literacy L1	28	75	153	228	908
Literacy L2	5	4	29	33	165
Numeracy L1	16	43	89	133	524
Numeracy L2	4	14	5	19	85
ESOL	5	18	26	44	280
ESOL quals	1	3	4	7	70
ICT Learndirect		10	6	16	
Intro ICT	68	209	348	557	1671
ICT L1	3	11	9	20	190
ICT L2	1	1	5	6	50
ICT other (photography etc)	6	30	38	68	68
NVQ1		64	117	181	
NVQ2		160	54	214	
NVQ3		120	17	137	
E-learning		1	1	2	
FE courses	2	0	2	2	
116					
Dissemination events / networking	5			285	
Fishing Coaching L2	1	7	1	8	80
Art taster	1	6	12	18	18
Fishing Taster	2	10	10	20	20
IT / Literacy	10	4	96	100	1000
Intro to Internet	1	8	0	8	24
Powerpoint	1	8	0	8	24
7302					
Supporting Learners	1	0	5	5	50
Employment Rights for Migrant Workers (w/es)	3	10	32	42	126
Lit / Num with fishing	1	2	1	3	3

9 HEALTH & SAFETY

The Region continues in its commitment to health, safety and welfare as an organising, servicing and recruiting tool by investing in a dedicated Regional Health & Safety Officer post. This policy ensures

that prompt action and clear, concise information can be given to officers, branch secretaries, safety reps, activists and members.

The number of Safety Representatives in the Region has increased over the previous year and thereby increases the potential for health and safety victories at a local level. The information gained from training courses, particularly the emphasis on safety representative's rights, safety committees, the statutory right of involvement in risk assessments and workplace inspections gives the representatives the confidence and knowledge to challenge employers in all sectors where the GMB is present. This training is constantly evaluated to take into account changes in health and safety legislation.

Unfortunately, there remains genuine disappointment with the government's failure to place health, safety and welfare anywhere near the top of the political-social agenda, and this together with the failure to bring forward a comprehensive Safety Bill on corporate manslaughter, points towards business having a significant influence at top levels of Government. However the GMB London Region, with the positive encouragement and support of the Regional Secretary, will continue to lobby MP's for improvements through amendments to the current Corporate Manslaughter Bill. This is a top priority for the Region as tragically two members have died in 2006 after workplace accidents.

This coupled with the large reduction in staffing levels throughout the Health and Safety Executive, allied with a funding cut of at least 5% is placing a greater strain on overworked inspectors. This will result in less front-line inspectors, less workplace visits, less inspections, and less enforcement. It will be positive encouragement for employers to circumvent consultation on workplace health and safety hazard control procedures and policies which lead to genuine workplace improvements.

Bulletins are also produced on GMB orange boarded paper (both A4 and A3 sizes) covering such diverse subjects from asbestos and blood borne diseases, to issues around lone working and working in cold and hot temperatures. These have proved to be useful and popular with reps and can also be used on workplace noticeboards to raise issues around workplace safety. The bulletins can help generate confidence in individual members and their workplace representatives and ensure that the GMB is recognised for consultation and collective bargaining purposes.

In conclusion, health and safety workplace issues continue to provide a challenging role for the RHSO across the Region. Employers have widely varying levels of knowledge, good practice and experience in workplace safety, and often lack the will to make improvements. The results of poor safety standards are often frightening and deadly.

(Adopted)

THE PRESIDENT: Can I call Ed Blissett, London Regional Secretary, to move his report?

BRO. E. BLISSETT (Regional Secretary, London): Formally, learned President.

The Regional Secretary's Report: London Region (pages 109-117) was formally moved.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ed. Pages 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117. Agree those, colleagues? *(Agreed)* Thank you.

(The Regional Secretary's Report: London Region (pages 109-117) was adopted.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I feel really great to ask the General Secretary, Paul Kenny, to make his address to Congress. Paul.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT (pages 1-5 and pages 9-47) and ADDRESS TO CONGRESS

Dear Colleagues

Welcome to Brighton for the Congress of our campaigning, caring, organising Union.

A year ago, we gathered in Blackpool. We were faced with making difficult and far reaching decisions about the Union's future direction.

An independent, campaigning, united Union, re-establishing its core values of campaigning for Members and against injustice in society was the clear direction mapped out for us all.

We left Blackpool determined to win recognition rights at ASDA and bring back bargaining rights for our existing Members. Within a month we had ASDA Wal-Mart signing an agreement which gave the framework for recognition and collective bargaining across all ASDA distribution depots, the first time anywhere that ASDA Wal-Mart accepted and signed up to the right of their employees to have a trade union bargaining for them!!

This was a fundamental change in the company's attitude to unionisation and it took some 14 months to achieve.

From a cold winter's night in Harrogate when Harry Donaldson and I met Andy Bond and his HR team and explained the way the GMB now worked, to a warm middle of the night at the TUC building in London which produced the first Collective, Bargaining and Recognition document with ASDA Wal-Mart anywhere in the world.

Since then, two depots, Erith and Chepstow have won landslide ballots of their workforces to establish Collective Bargaining Rights. I hope we will be able to announce more at Congress. The Members, Shop Stewards and Officials who have kept the Union alive in ASDA deserve our thanks and praise. It has not been easy operating inside an Agreement whether in distribution or stores where everything you do is undermined and undervalued.

The task is not over however, in fact, you could say it has only really just begun.

The changes at ASDA bring new opportunities for recruitment, organisation and improving our support for Members and Shop Stewards. I don't try and kid myself or others, ASDA Wal-Mart is still a very hard, difficult employer to negotiate with but the reality is that we are at long last a serious player at the ASDA table, not a puppet organisation bereft of teeth or a determination to back the long term interests of our Members.

So, a lot has happened in a year but, much more is to come and some of it will be tough bargaining about the future of ASDA and how it is treating its employees.

On another front, our Members and Shop Stewards at Remploy have carried through the stern defence of factory based employment in the face of what looked at times, like a predetermined management plan to shove four thousand people onto the streets.

The campaign to save the factories led by the GMB has changed Government thinking and ensured, yet again, that it is very dangerous to underestimate working people and our Remploy Membership in particular.

The last year saw us do many things to progress our priorities and policies but not everything got done, either in whole or in part as I know our new Union would like it done.

The Justice for Cammell Laird Campaign has hit brick wall after brick wall in attempts to uncover Government documentation which might throw light on what really happened behind the scenes in 1984.

The Downing Street staff have given us advice in order to help with disclosure of information but, the files have not produced the smoking gun evidence we are looking for. Perhaps we were naive to think it would but every possible avenue is being considered to move this matter on.

On the training front, although we have invested heavily in Diversity Training for Officers and Staff, the National Training Co-ordination is still patchy and unacceptable. On one hand, we have organised national courses on pensions, organisation and various industry/employer issues.

The National Framework of key training is still to do. Regions have adapted to needs and joint regional training together with enhanced programmes have been available but standard uniformed training in workplace organisation and bargaining within specific industries and employers is still on the coming along list.

Full time officers Employment Law back up and support mechanisms are being piloted, the aim to give Officers and Members a better service.

The re-organisation of regional boundaries and the creation of the North West and Irish Region is already showing increased activity and full credit to the Branches, Activists, Officers and Staff of the new Region who have bonded so well and have pushed the new Region into growth.

The Public Services Section continues to grow and leads the fight on the equal pay front and on pensions.

So, as a Union we have kept to our financial targets, improved our recruitment and started the GMB@Work Policy delivery which is a cornerstone of our strategy for growth.

The GMB has been at the forefront in fighting against asset strippers and for jobs and better conditions for our Members - that's what we do!!

Enjoy your Conference and be proud of your Union because your Union is proud of you.

Yours fraternally

PAUL KENNY

General Secretary

GMB COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT REPORT

SUMMARY

All areas of responsibility within GMB Communications have been working towards promoting GMB as 'Expert in the World of Work'. Using the media, campaigns, publications and member magazines, newsletters and direct mailing the department aims to assisting GMB Officials with recruitment and retention of members by reporting the work of the Union.

The GMB Communications Department only gets involved when a GMB official thinks that media coverage, as a tool to progress a workplace or company dispute or industrial issue would be useful. Campaigns can be born overnight like the AA de-recognition dispute or can be the result of years of spadework at a workplace like the Bakkavor Katsouris campaign. Employers face a simple choice. They can do their business with GMB members in private when they recognise and work with the Union. Or if they don't GMB will do the business in public.

Tasked by GMB Congress 2005 & 6 to implement Recommendation 1 of the Congress 2005 GMB Special Report - A Framework for the Future we have also provided regions with emailing and texting messaging systems. We have also endeavoured to communicate weekly with everyone who has sign up to receive GMB newsletter by emailing the GMB Bulletin.

Round up of work in each communications area.

PRESS

635 GMB national and regional press releases were issued between May 2006 and the end of February 2007. They covered many issues and disputes including the following:-

GENERAL

GMB's response to migrant workers joining the British workforce
Specific Northern Ireland issues to assist with the launch of the new North West and Irish Region
Who earns what – rates of pay
Part time women workers
Retirement and age discrimination
Billy Bragg GMB sponsorship of Hope Not Hate tour

MANUFACTURING SECTION

Nuclear Industry sell off and renewal, water shortages and pricing, gas prices and supply, Co-operative Funeral Care, Terminal 5 construction, Nestles, and the new Wembley stadium construction and completion.

PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION

Excel Care Homes dispute, Hammersmith & Fulham Care Home Service privatisation

Home Helps Service, recycling, housing provision and rents, parking, schools, council tax, local authority spending on temporary and agency workers, dirty streets and education funding, local authority 2007 pay claim, NHS pay award.

COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION

Casino Industry, security Industry attacks.

CAMPAIGNS

The Department sometimes plans and executes full campaigns and other times assist GMB Regions and or Organisers with campaigns. Below is a list of some of the campaigns that have been worked on over the past year.

Public Services Section

Local Government Pensions

Pay

Assisting CDNA to build their profile

Pensions

28 days holiday as per Warwick Agreement

Commercial Services Section

AA, Bird's Eye and NCP – Private Equity

Various airport disputes

American Dry Cleaning Company

ASDA

BA pensions and pay

Bakkavor Katsouris

JJB

Manufacturing Section

Burberry

Corus

Remploy

Nestle

Via System tie up to new Liverpool Football Club owner.

PUBLISHING

Publications are produced for circulation to members and the public, recruitment and organisational and campaign material. Here is a full list of all publications produced since May 2006 including campaign material, magazines, newsletters, mailings and the web.

General Publications

GMB Christmas card

Regional Recruitment Forms

National Recruitment form – Polish translation

Free Legal Helpline & Legal Defence Scheme Leaflet

GMB Expert

Health and Safety Publications

Health & Safety for Cleaners, School Support Staff, Kitchen Staff, Care Home Staff and Warehouses
Organising Health & Safety
Health & Safety Multi Cultural Leaflet
Safety Reps Kits containing Report Form, Inspection Check List and Handbook

Publications for the National Organising Team

GMB@WORK Notice board Packs containing 6 A4 Posters, A3-A4 Blanks, A4 Briefing Note and Header & Footer.
School Resource Packs
Getting Organised – Union Stewards Handbook
Southern Electrical Membership forms
Security Workers Packs – A4 Folder, H&S for Security Workers, A4 Recruitment Leaflet
3x G4S Newsletters
3x Southern Cross Newsletters

Campaign Publications

AA Christmas card
AA Campaign Materials – Flyers & Leaflets
ASDA Campaign Materials – Flyers & Leaflets
7x Asda Newsletters
Burberry - Campaign Materials – Flyers & Leaflets
Bakkavour - Campaign Materials – Flyers & Leaflets
Bakkavour Newsletter – English, Tamil and Gujarati
DHL – National Newsletters
2x Southern Region DHL Newsletter
Hammersmith & Fulham Home Care Service post card
Hammersmith & Fulham Care Homes Newsletter

Magazines

Public Eye – Public Services Section magazine has been produced twice as a full issues and a Local Government Pension Special four page edition with ballot form. An affinity partnership deal with Liverpool & Victoria has provided funds to cover a lot of the cost that would otherwise have borne directly by the General Fund.

Two editions of GMB Official were directly mailed to all GMB Post Holders during the course of the year to keep them up to date on the work and progress of the Union. We have also delivered this to a growing number of GMB post holder via their email address as regions build up the number of email entries on the central GMB membership database to enable us to move over to electronic publishing and reduce postage costs.

Website

Following the success of the online joining facility, where more than 4,600 new members joined in the first nine months of operation, as part of Recommendation 1, the GMB Communications Sub Committee of the CEC asked the department to review and update the GMB National website to make best use of the latest available web based technology. The new website will be connected directly to the GMB central website and members will be able to amend their personal details via the internet. Enhanced use of the latest web technology will move the Union towards electronic print and reporting so saving expenditure on print and postage, time and the environmental impact by reducing the amount

of paper used, delivery mileages. We propose to put in a bid to the Union Modernisation Fund (UMF) to assist with the cost of the updating project.

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY REPORT

INTRODUCTION

For 2006 we elected to prioritise two campaigns - working on Colombia with Justice for Colombia and on the banana producing countries of Latin America with Banana Link. We concentrated our energies and activities in order to achieve tangible results. The aim was to increase our international solidarity work by increasing awareness of human rights violations, concentrated campaigning and providing material aid and political support.

COLOMBIA

Over 500 trade unionists have been killed since President Uribe came to power in 2002, with 80 trade unionists assassinated during 2006. To put this into perspective, the total number of trade unionists murdered worldwide in 2006 was around 95. It remains the most dangerous place in the world to be a trade unionist. The Colombian Army continues to work with paramilitary death squads with total impunity and the British Government continues to provide military aid.

- Our Computers for Colombia appeal was launched in December 2005 with the aim to equip as many trade union regions in Colombia with a computer to aid organisation and to also act as part of an early warning system in order to alert trade unionists when they were targeted and under threat. In total we raised £9,000 and the success of the campaign wasn't just that we raised this amount of money, but that we were able to demonstrate our solidarity in such a tangible fashion. The money was used to aid 6 different projects and was presented by June Minnery, CEC member on the European and International Committee, when she visited Colombia as part of a trade union delegation in August. A full report of the recipients and June's visit are available on our website or you can also obtain a hard copy directly from the International Solidarity Officer.

- In March 2006 we organised a tour of GMB's regions and structures. We were delighted to host Hernando Hernandez Tapasco, an indigenous leader and the Human Rights Officer for FENSUAGRO, the Colombian Agricultural Workers' Union. Hernando himself has been targeted by the Colombian death squads, and he has been imprisoned, falsely accused of 'rebellion'. He was therefore in a unique position to provide a first hand testimony of the persecution facing our Colombian brothers and sisters. We were able to attend a variety of meetings in five regions; public meetings, workplace meetings and meetings with local MPs. In addition, Hernando was also received warmly at our Section conferences and had meetings at the House of Commons, TUC and Amnesty International. This undoubtedly highlighted the cause of Colombian trade unionists to the GMB and the larger political arena.

- We have also been involved in campaigning to stop the British Government providing military aid to Colombia, aid that has no strings attached, much of which goes directly to Colombian military units notorious for violating human rights. We have met with Colombian delegations and made deputations to the Colombian embassy to protest against human rights abuses. A combination of campaigns saw Regional affiliations to JFC rise from three to a complete complement of all ten.

BANANA LINK

Furthering Congress (2005) motion 331 'Labour Standards in the American Banana Industry', we have continued to work with Banana Link on a variety of campaigns.

- **Dole International Campaign** was designed to get the world's biggest fruit company to respect trade union freedom, especially for banana, pineapple and flower plantations in Latin America. We distributed the publication "Behind the Smokescreen" which was launched in May 2006. In September, we participated in an email campaign in collaboration with LabourStart which received nearly 4000 responses.

- **SITRAP at Congress** – We were delighted to have as our guest Gilberth Bermudez Umana, General Secretary of SITRAP and Deputy Coordinator of COLSIBA address Congress. Gilberth made a passionate speech, outlining the working conditions faced by plantation workers and the importance of the relationship between GMB and SITRAP. He saluted the long and productive relationship with the London Region, which provided financial assistance for the Brian Weller training centre and have most recently provided funding to employ organisers who have strengthened education and legal defence work.

- **Delegation October 2006** - CEC member Cathy Murphy and London Region organiser Bert Schouwenbug took an active part in the Union to Union strategy meeting and helped define where the programme will go over the next few years. They also visited plantations in Nicaragua and Costa Rica. These visits are vital to members who are involved in repression and conflicts on a daily basis, giving them hope as well as, in some cases, practical support through extra SITRAP organising capacity.

- **Solidarity Actions** – These include actions against ACON which were in part responsible in prohibiting the mass sackings of plantation workers. Our interventions in the Noboa campaign in Ecuador resulted in the victory of Rafael Correa, who stated that his election triumph was in part due to "the millions of anonymous people that contributed towards this".

GMB played a role in the organisation of the Latin America Conference in December 2005. As the event was so popular, we decided to run a similar event in 2006 where over 300 delegates attended in order to hear contributions from trade unionists, academics and leading Latin American specialists. This provided a valuable opportunity to learn about and analyse developments in the region. The ambassadors of Cuba, Venezuela and Bolivia were also present.

CUBA

We have continued to actively support Cuba and the work of the Cuba Solidarity Campaign (CSC), working to raise awareness of the belligerent measures taken by the US to undermine the self-determination and economic position of Cuba, including the illegal and inhumane 45 year old US blockade. We have also contributed to other campaigns and initiatives:

- The International Solidarity Officer (ISO) is an elected member of the management committee
- We contributed to the planning of the successful CSC's European Trade union Solidarity Conference with Cuba in February 2006 attended by 250 delegates representing more than 70 trade unions from 20 countries.
- Campaigning and lobbying to maintain the EU common position on Cuba which favours constructive engagement and dialogue where the US lobbies aggressively for isolation.
- Miami Five Campaign – including the involvement of a deputation to the US embassy.

VENEZUELA

Congress Motion 262 on Venezuela provided us with a clear policy for our solidarity work with Venezuela. The highlight of the year was a visit by President Hugo Chavez to London at the invitation of Mayor Ken Livingstone. Chavez addressed a packed public rally at the Camden Centre and was met with a rapturous response. Chavez also attended packed meetings at City Hall, the House of Commons

and the TUC, where he took the opportunity to thank those in Britain who were in solidarity with the Bolivarian revolution. At the TUC meeting Brendan Barber presented Chavez with a gift of a glass vase which was organised by Richard Ascough, Regional Secretary of the Southern Region and made by our members in Dartington Glass. The ISO is the Vice Chair of the Venezuela Information Centre (VIC).

- The ISO was involved in events at the House of Commons to develop parliamentary work, leading to the formation of Labour Friends of Venezuela and other initiatives including EDM 1644 on Venezuela which was signed by 113 MPs.
- The ISO spoke and chaired various meetings on Venezuela and Latin America throughout the year and worked with various delegations, including trade unionists, parliamentarians, the Mayor of Caracas and the LGBT community in Venezuela. GMB were also represented at the Caracas concert in Trafalgar Square, the anti-racist RISE festival and the Carnival del Pueblo. A key event of the year was the landmark conference held at the City Hall in October which was attended by six Venezuelan speakers; H.E. Toro Hardy, Ambassador of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and other leading experts on Venezuela and Latin America.
- GMB were invited by the CNE (National Electoral Council) in Venezuela to be an observer in the Presidential elections. These Elections saw Chavez re-elected as president of Venezuela, receiving 63% of the vote (his opponent received 37%) - Chavez has a clear mandate to continue the social reforms for the benefit of the poor of Venezuela.
- VIC has now won the support of twelve trade unions, set up local groups and specialist sections for students and teachers. They work with women's, lesbian and gay and black organisations, plus MPs and academics to promote the progressive social gains taking place in Venezuela. VIC's success as a broad based organisation is due, in part, to the involvement of the trade union movement of which GMB has played a vital part.

MIDDLE EAST

- Motion 261 raised concerns over British involvement in armed conflicts, citing the atrocities committed in the illegal war in Iraq. The motion anticipated ongoing hostilities perpetrated by the US especially veiled threats towards the "rogue states". To this end, GMB has been involved with Crisis Action and was a signatory to the joint agency report 'Time to Talk', which urges the UK to do more in order to sustain efforts to find a diplomatic solution in Iran. On Iran, we have played an important role in mobilising support for 'The Vahed Bus Drivers' Union of Tehran, who have staged a year long strike and suffered the most horrific treatment. They have endured bomb attacks, arrests, detentions, beatings and continual harassment.
- On Iraq, we continue to work with the TUC Iraq Solidarity Committee which works in solidarity with the General Federation of Iraqi Workers (GFIW), the trade union movement in Iraqi Kurdistan and other trade union organisations in Iraq. The committee raises money for Iraqi trade unions and has been used to bring trade unionists to Britain and to the ICFTU World Congress. The money raised also supports training programmes and provides material aid. The Committee also provides political support.
- In March, the conference "Palestine Workers Challenging the Occupation" organised by PSC and sponsored by most of the affiliated unions welcomed a delegation of six trade unionists, including Shaher Sae'd, General Secretary of the Palestinian Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU), who outlined

the problems facing Palestinian workers as a result of the policies of the Government of Israel. The two main calls were to put a stop to the illegal wall and for a restoration of funding.

- Israel's invasion of southern Lebanon resulted in the death of 1,110 people in Lebanon, most of who were civilians, 156 Israelis died, including 116 soldiers. Due to the gravity of the situation, we called upon our GMB MPs to attend a Meeting at Portcullis House in July. This was organised jointly with the Political Committee. Husam Zomlot (Palestinian General Delegation) was in attendance along with Michael Laws from our Executive Committee. There followed a summer of actions, demos, vigils and protests against the continuing aggressions. GMB sent a donation to medical aid for Palestine.

- From August 2006, a group of charities, trade unions, faith and other campaign groups came together to form the 'Enough!' Coalition, which supports putting an end to Israeli occupation. This came out of a longing to see peace for both Israelis and Palestinians. This is the first broad-based alliance working towards a just peace in the Middle East and has come together now to mark 2007 as the 40th anniversary of the Israeli military occupation of the Gaza strip and the West Bank.

ZIMBABWE

Motion 273 called on the GMB to show solidarity with the people of Zimbabwe and campaign on their behalf. In September 2006, following peaceful protests over the economic and social crisis in their country, members of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) were arrested and GMB were immediately involved in actions to fight for their release. Trade unions are one of the only democratic institutions left in the country; this has made them the target for brutal repression. We have therefore been involved in the campaign to see an end to this repression and the campaign to maintain sanctions against the Mugabe government. Many of our branches have also raised funds for the purchase of sanitary products for women in Zimbabwe.

WESTERN SAHARA

In line with Motion 275, we worked to promote the case of the Saharawi, most particularly on the Fisheries Partnership Agreement. Unfortunately due to financial resources, we were unable to make it a priority area, however, we did all that we could by lobbying the government and the European Commission.

We continue to work with our comrades at the TUC and affiliated unions on a variety of platforms, including; working with the Department for International Development (DFID), where we have aired members concerns relating to poverty reduction and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals as outlined in Motions, 266, 267, 271 and Composite 35. We are also in the process of making a submission to DFID for Civil Society Challenge Funding to secure resources for a major project on Shipbreaking in India with the International Metal Workers Federation (IMF) and Amicus.

Throughout the year, we also engaged in a variety of emergency actions which involved writing letters of support to the unions, letters of protest to governments concerned and trying to enlist the support and action of the UK government. Campaigns can also involve participating in deputations to embassies (sometimes they allow us in to raise our concerns, other times we protest outside), these have included; the embassies of Zimbabwe, Colombia, Israel, Philippines, Iran, and the US (Cuba related). We have really good relations with the embassies of Venezuela, Cuba and South Africa.

We are currently affiliated to:

- Anti Slavery International
- ACTSA
- Banana Link

- Burma Campaign
- Cuba Solidarity Campaign
- Justice for Colombia
- No Sweat
- Palestine Solidarity Campaign
- Venezuela Information Centre
- War on Want

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with Joni.mcdougall@gmb.org (0208 971 4272) or visit our website for a more in depth coverage of each of the items covered here.

HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

INTRODUCTION

The department has had a busy year in attempting to prioritise the health and safety needs of the members, across all sectors, in conjunction with external demands from government, HSE and other external bodies. In an ideal world GMB would be able to set its' own health and safety agenda, and deal with issues accordingly, but with topics ranging from the introduction of a workplace ban on smoking, through Corporate Manslaughter and many different aspects of asbestos exposure and its' related problems this is obviously not possible. A strategic balancing act has to take place ensuring that nothing important gets omitted while the priorities of GMB members can be met. Reference to motions carried at last years Congress appear where relevant within the text.

WORKPLACE SMOKING BAN

2006 was the year in which the government finally decided that workers should not be subject to exposure to second hand smoke. The final vote in the House of Commons was decisive but this result was in doubt right up to the eve of the vote as it was not clear if there would be exemptions for certain premises. GMB using its' political contacts lobbied intensively up to this point.

There will be many in history who will claim merit for the change in legislation and while there were a number of worthy organisations campaigning on this it should be recognised that it was not until the trade unions, and in particular GMB turned this into a workplace issue that the "tipping point" occurred and the momentum for the legislation took place.

Following this decision and the subsequent introduction of legislation in Scotland the Department of Health issued a Consultation Document on the practical implications of such a ban in workplaces. Given the speed at which the concept was introduced in Scotland and its' almost universal acceptance, with only one individual prosecuted so far, questions were raised on the necessity of this. However there are a number of issues which needed clarification including residential homes, prisons, vehicles and the definition of an enclosed space. The department responded consistently on this by ensuring that this remained a workplace issue.

Late in year the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) issued a document on the introduction of cessation programmes within workplaces. The most glaring omission in this document was the complete lack of union or workforce consultation. This was emphatically pointed out to them. The introduction of this legislation will be difficult for those who are addicted to nicotine and GMB reps should continue to support those members who need help in coping with the changing circumstances (Motion 76).

CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS

Perhaps the most important document with regard to the future role of safety reps took place during the year. Titled "Improving Worker Involvement – Improving Health & Safety" it reiterated the message that involving the workforce and their representatives was beneficial to overall workplace safety and welfare but it also looked to see if this could be improved. The document could have been stronger and omitted important issues such as roving safety reps and the ability to stop work through issuing Provisional Improvement Notices (PINs) but at least gave an opportunity for reps to respond. This also gave the department the chance to do some "outreach" work and a roadshow visiting four of the regions to debate the proposals took place. These were very useful with the reps taking part in a thoughtful and passionate discussion. Plans are in hand to possibly follow this upon a regular basis, perhaps at the introduction of new legislation in the future. At the time of writing the results of the consultation are not yet known though previous consultations along similar lines have resulted in no real change taking place.

Consultation also took place at the beginning of the year on proposals to assimilate the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations. While there was much to be welcomed within these proposals there was a major sticking point which concerned GMB and the other trade unions. This was the proposal to de-licence the removal of textured coatings (sometimes called Artex) and thus potentially increasing the exposure to asbestos. In the face of such opposition the legislation was delayed, twice, and the chair of the Health and Safety Commission effectively forced this through against the wishes of the trade union commissioners, apparently the first time this has happened (Motion 72).

However the strength of the opposition was so obvious that the HSE have been diligent in ensuring that the guidance contains references to the role of safety reps and the right of workers to remove themselves from any potential exposure to asbestos. In addition they are stepping up the programme for informing licensed contractors of their responsibilities and increasing the threat of not renewing licences for breaches in the regulations. While there does appear to be a real commitment from the Asbestos Licensing Group within HSE on this there is a real worry over resources and funding in this as in many other areas stretching into the medium, and longer term (Motion 70).

ASBESTOS

As previously mentioned the new Control of Asbestos regulations came into law. There was also much activity on the legal and compensation front. As premiered at last years Congress by the Prime Minister, the notorious Baker case consequences were overturned by the government in relation to claiming compensation from more than one employer. However the negative decision on the issue of Pleural Plaques has gone to appeal and is due to be heard later in this coming year. In addition the only palliative drug available to Mesothelioma sufferers, pemetrexed disodium commonly known as Alimta, had been available on a postcode lottery basis. Its' future provision was to be decided by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE). When it became apparent that the recommendation would be to withdraw it from NHS use completely there was a coordinated outcry which the department contributed towards, including writing to the Secretary of State in protest. Following this in December NICE was asked to look again at the provision of the drug and currently it is again available in selected areas. While it is true that the drug is not suitable for everyone GMB believes that it should be readily available to all those who request it provided the consequences have been explained to them.

It was in this light that the department took advice and responded to the Department of Health Consultation document on the delivery of clinical excellence in the treatment of Mesothelioma patients, which might normally be considered outside our remit.

The department also continued to attend the House of Commons Occupational Health sub-committee on Asbestos during the year and as part of the Workers Memorial Day celebration took part in a protest outside the Canadian embassy over their continued export of asbestos to the developing world , in conjunction with activists from London and Southern regions.

CORPORATE MANSLAUGHTER

As the last manifesto commitment from the first Labour term to be acted on the issue of corporate manslaughter has taken both a long and painful road through the legislative process. It should be remembered that the initial consultation took place in the summer of 2005 and at the time of writing this report it has still not cleared both houses and is still not on the statute books! Some of this is due to the complexity of the legal situation, some to the difficulty of achieving consensus from all parties concerned and some down to the opportunistic way some politicians insist in inserting their own individual issues into the proposed legislation.

There would appear that there will still be no provision under this act to bring individual prosecutions for directors though it should be easier to prosecute organisations, including within the public sector. There should be some form of public reparation through publicity and apology and a clearer definition on senior managers. These are all worthwhile gains but many members will still be puzzled that it remains easier to prosecute someone for stealing a wheelbarrow from a building site than someone whose negligent actions resulted in serious injury or death (Motion 74).

Even though it looks as though the final proposals will not meet all the demands from GMB and other trade unions it is clear that our influence, as shown by meetings with Home Office ministers and staff during this process, is still relevant under a Labour government.

PUBLICATIONS AND INFORMATION

As part of the organising and recruitment agenda the department has continued to produce materials which can be used in both specific and general campaigns. During the year new health and safety guidance for Warehouse Staff and also one on using health and safety as an organising tool within the workplace were published. In addition there was an overhaul and reprint for Cleaners, Kitchen Staff, School Support Staff and Security Workers. At the time of writing the report a Guide to Health and Safety within Multi Cultural Workplaces is with the printers. It is anticipated that this will prove useful in recruiting and organising within those sectors where newer workforces are being established. As well as a H&S checklist these all now carry a membership form.

There has also been the regular publication of electronic e mail bulletins covering the following topics.

1. Working at Heights
2. HSC consult on new proposals for asbestos
3. New Noise at Work Regs

4. Obstructive Sleep Apnoea
5. Guidance on skin care in the workplace
6. Improving Worker Involvement
7. Driver Competency in the Waste & Recycling Industry
8. Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
9. Consultation on Legislation to ban Smoking
10. Managing Workplace Transport Risk
11. Working outside in cold weather
12. Hand Arm Vibration

The intention is to continue to produce these bulletins at least once every month. They are very basic by their nature but will signpost where further information can be found. All of the above can be accessed on the GMB website.

The department also gave interviews to local and national media on a number of diverse issues ranging from the supply of sunscreen in the workplace to fatalities in the waste industry.

SUMMARY

The department continues to represent GMB across a number of sectors where GMB membership exists. These include Aviation, Local Authorities, Waste, Food Manufacturing and the Olympic Delivery Authority. This year there is to be a review of the role of HSE and HSC. GMB will be reiterating the importance of a tripartite approach where the presence of trade unions and the workers they represent are of vital importance if continued health and safety improvements are to be made.

Continued good work has gone on through the year by many activists and officers in areas such as violence against security workers through lobbying and political discussion. In addition the European office was active in developing European wide guidance on this (Motion 78). There is also a real fear that as part of the government squeeze on the civil service in general and the HSE in particular that this could have serious consequences for the enforcement of existing legislation and the reversal of the risk assessment based approach which has been increasing over the past few years. GMB will continue to lobby on these issues (Motion79).

The department followed closely the progress of the case taken against the UK government in allegedly not following the spirit of the law , in using the phrase “so far as is reasonably practicable” by the European Commission. Early in January 2007 the Advocate General to the court stated that he felt that the UK government was doing enough to comply with the law, and while this is at present only guidance it is unusual for this not to be followed by the court in its’ final decision (Motion 71).

Obviously the department cannot function in isolation and grateful thanks must go to the European Office, the National Political Officer, and all the policy, research and support staff without whose input it would be difficult to cover so many different aspects of health, safety and welfare. Issues around the health, safety and welfare agenda can often contribute much to the continuing need to address our collective response to the recruitment and organising debate and help protect GMB members locally and nationally.

LEGAL DEPARTMENT

PERSONNEL

Maria Ludkin joined Barry Smith in the Legal Department in November 2006. Sarah King is currently on a two-year secondment to the GMB European Office in Brussels.

ACTION ON CONGRESS MOTIONS

The Legal Department continues to provide day to day advice to Officers on redundancy issues, and has called on the Government to make improvements to the present redundancy payments scheme. The Department responded to the public consultation conducted by the DTI on the employer's duty to notify the Secretary of State when collective redundancies occur. We have argued that collective consultation should take place at an earlier stage than UK law currently allows for i.e. *before* the decision to make redundancies has been taken. This would bring the UK more into line with the practice in many European countries. We also argued that the scope of the consultation should amount to *negotiations*.

The Department has worked with the Political Department to argue for changes to the rules on the payment of protective awards for failure to consult in relation to companies in administration. We have raised particular concerns with the DTI over the reduction from 12 weeks to a maximum of 8 weeks that is paid by the Insolvency Department in these cases.

We have raised concerns over the absence of any real sanction against employers who fail to issue written particulars of employment with the DTI.

We have also raised continuing concerns with the DTI about employers in TUPE transfers who fail to pass on information to the new employer about their workforce, and the consequences this has for GMB members. We continue to argue for full pension protection in the event of a TUPE transfer. We continue to work with the Liberty Trade Union Network to campaign for the protection of civil liberties. We have raised the issue of first course of conduct warnings issued by the police with the Home Office.

SUPPORT FOR RECRUITMENT AND ORGANISATION

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

A significant proportion of the work of the Department relates to equal pay, and particularly in the public sector. We have supported the National Officers in the setting up of an Equal Pay Unit and other arrangements with GMB Regional Solicitors to enable GMB members to pursue equal pay claims, particularly in the NHS and in local authorities. We have continued to work with the National Officers and GMB solicitors generally on equal pay issues.

We aim to play our part in using the law to eradicate unequal pay.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Work life balance issues continued to figure prominently. GMB has consistently called for a single period of paid maternity leave available to all pregnant workers from day one. From April 2007 all women employees will be entitled to 52 weeks of maternity leave irrespective of length of service, and statutory maternity pay will be paid for 39 weeks. The DTI issued further public consultations as part of

the wider “Work and Families: choice and flexibility” consultation on measures to help parents and carers achieve a better work life balance.

In our response to the consultation on Additional Paternity leave and pay, though we welcomed the extension of fathers/partners’ rights to take time off work to care for their children, we expressed our disappointment that the new right is to be linked to the mother/partner’s entitlement. We would have preferred to see an improvement to the individual right to paternity leave.

In our response to the consultation on the draft Maternity and Adoption leave and pay Regulations, we argued that the proposed keeping in touch days should genuinely be a vehicle for women on maternity leave to be kept abreast of relevant workplace developments, thus maintaining the employment relationship, but should not become a means for employers to oblige women on maternity leave to carry out work. In our responses we also emphasised that for low paid workers, the ability to exercise genuine choice is curtailed by economic constraints. We called for improvements to statutory pay rates for leave takers so that all workers, not just the better off, can make use of the rights and existing rights to leave.

Together with the Research Department, we were responsible for producing the CEC Special Report: For Justice and Equality for Congress. The report focused on two specific areas of GMB’s equalities agenda: equal pay and race and diversity. On equal pay it set out a number of measures to support an equal pay lobbying, organising and bargaining strategy. The report also outlined the background to, the scope and objectives of the GMB Race and Diversity Project, which will shape our future equality and diversity strategy.

We are working with the TUC to seek improvements to the restrictive rules relating to industrial action and industrial action ballots. These rules are being used by employers to obstruct the democratic wishes of GMB members who may have voted in favour of taking action. We are particularly concerned about the use of agency workers during official disputes, and the failure by the Government to enforce the rules prohibiting the use of agency labour in official disputes, as highlighted in the recent dispute at JJB Sports in Wigan.

We have had an input into the preparation of, and we fully support, the present Trade Union Freedom Bill. The Bill follows on from Composite 1 carried unanimously at TUC Congress 2005. The 2005 Labour Party Conference also backed a resolution calling for freedom to take solidarity action. As part of our involvement, we argued that the Bill should include the repeal, without pre-conditions, of section 127 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 (this prevents GMB from being able to call upon members who work as custody officers, prisoner custody officers, and detention custody officers in private sector companies, to take industrial action). The TUC has agreed to include this demand in the Bill.

We responded to DTI public consultations on extending the jurisdiction of the statutory disputes procedures, and on the collective redundancy consultation provisions. In relation to the consultation on collective redundancies, we have particularly argued that consultation should take place *before* the employer has decided to make redundancies, and that there should be meaningful negotiations.

PUBLICATIONS AND INFORMATION PROVISION

Each year sees the introduction of a raft of employment-related legislation. We aim to keep abreast of the changes, and to disseminate this information in an accessible and user friendly format for Officers

and Regions, through the use of Law Briefings and more compact Law Notes. We aim to keep up to date with the changes and disseminate the information in an accessible and user friendly format among officers and the Regions, through the use of Law Briefings, Law Notes, and briefings/training sessions.

We supported the Food and Leisure, Process and Commercial Services Section Conferences providing presentations, with supporting documentation and a question and answer session, on forthcoming legislation likely to affect members within the sections.

We have worked with the Pensions Department to produce a comprehensive briefing on the Age Discrimination Regulations, which came into effect in October 2006. The briefing contains a detailed explanation of the Regulations and explains some of the practical problems that may arise. A training programme on these complex new rules was devised in tandem with the Pensions Department and has been rolled out to officers in the Regions. We are particularly concerned that some employers are seeking to use these new rules to weaken existing terms and conditions for members, under the pretext of complying with the new rules. We are monitoring the position closely.

We have produced Law Notes on a Discrimination Legislation Update, including Sex Discrimination, Civil Partnerships, Disability Discrimination, Race Discrimination, Age Discrimination, Parents/Work-Life Balance, and the Equality Bill. We have also covered new legislation including TUPE and the Commission for Racial Equality Code of Practice.

“GMB the Most Asked Questions” is updated annually, and is now in its 13th Edition, with further amendments planned at the time of writing this report. This consists of a series of one page answers to questions covering the breadth of employment rights issues, including Health and Safety, Contracts & Pay, Discipline & Dismissal, and Union rights. The aim is to provide a document which Regions can easily send or hand to members with common enquiries. This is posted on the GMB intranet, and an amended version (which excludes Region-specific benefits) is posted on the GMB website.

SUPPORT FOR RECOGNITION

The Department continues to provide support, advice and assistance to Officers in considering and preparing applications to the Central Arbitration Committee for awards for collective bargaining.

Barry Smith is available to act as devil's advocate prior to an application being made, and day to day advice on queries continues to be provided.

GMB continues to meet with considerable success across a wide range of companies, often where GMB members have stayed loyal through years of employer hostility. Although there has been a fall across unions as a whole in the number of CAC applications recently, GMB continues to make positive use of the legislation. This is both as a framework for voluntary agreements (the “shadow” effect of the legislation), and as a procedure for achieving recognition in the face of employer resistance. The Department provides a regular update on applications to the Central Executive Council.

The new rules on unfair practices during CAC recognition ballots have so far had little direct impact, with only one application being made to challenge the employer's conduct across all unions. The application, which was a GMB case, was not accepted by the CAC. We are monitoring these new rules closely.

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

SUPPORT FOR INDUSTRIAL ACTION

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

Despite some improvements to the rules relating to industrial action ballots that were introduced in October 2005, we believe that the present obligations are weighted far too heavily in favour of the employer. We fully support the demand for a Trade Union Freedom Bill.

Our Officers have continued to face challenges in relation to industrial action matters, and in particular in relation to the 7-day notices. We are concerned that some employers use these complex rules to frustrate the democratic wishes of GMB members struggling to improve their terms and conditions and to defend their jobs. We have assisted Officers in a wide-range of ballots and disputes across both the private and public sectors, and two particular ballots should be mentioned.

We supported the National Officers in the aggregate ballot in the distribution centres in ASDA in the summer of 2006. This dispute, which was over the establishment of national collective bargaining, resulted in an overwhelming majority in favour of action. The employers challenged the ballot and commenced proceedings against the union for an injunction. The dispute and the court action were subsequently settled.

We supported the National Officers in the local government pension scheme ballot in early 2006. This dispute raised a number of legal issues due to the technical point that that the dispute arose with the Secretary of State, rather than the employers as would normally be the case.

The ballot arrangements were as follows:

- There was one main aggregate ballot of GMB members
- There were a series of smaller individual ballots covering employers such as those with admitted body status

The ballots resulted in votes in favour of action, and GMB members participated together with the other unions in the day of action on 28 March 2006.

We continue to update our guidance on ballots to reflect changes in legislation and case law, and offer and run briefings to Regions on the procedures to be followed.

We continue to support the National Officer in efforts to secure the repeal of section 127 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994. In 2006 the Government repealed section 127 for prison officers in the public sector as their union had signed a collective agreement binding it not to call upon members to take industrial action. GMB will not agree to this.

As indicated above, we fully support the present Trade Union Freedom Bill, including the demands for the restoration of the ability for workers to take solidarity action, and for the repeal of the restrictive rules relating to the 7-day notices. We are pleased that the TUC has also agreed to the GMB demand to include the repeal of section 127 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 in the Bill.

STATUTORY DISCIPLINARY, DISMISSAL, AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

We continue to monitor the impact of these complex new rules, and are working with the TUC to secure relaxation of the rules in respect of grievances (particularly collective grievances). We are also concerned that the employer's lobby are seeking to water down their obligations towards GMB members in relation to disciplinary and dismissal matters. The Government is conducting a review in the spring of 2007 of the present procedures, and we are using this as an opportunity to put forward our arguments in this area.

NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE

We have called for the enforcement procedures to be strengthened, and for trade unions to be able to bring "class" or "representative" actions on behalf of workers.

OTHER EMPLOYMENT LAW

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

TRADE UNION LEGAL SERVICES

We made submissions to the Department of Constitutional Affairs arguing for an exemption for trade unions from the new rules that apply to claims management companies under the Compensation Act 2006. The DCA has agreed to the exemption, and unions are now required to comply with a new Code of Practice. We made submissions on the draft Code of Practice to the DCA. We will be monitoring the impact of the new rules and the new Code of Practice closely.

We contributed to the campaign to re-instate the right of members suffering from mesothelioma to recover compensation following the Court ruling in *Barker* in 2005. New rules have been introduced under the Compensation Act 2006 to reverse the court ruling, which include a fast-track for processing claims. There are also proposals for interim settlements, and a longer-term consultation. We will be monitoring the position closely.

The position regarding recovery of compensation for those suffering from pleural plaque remains unresolved, and we are lobbying Government on this issue.

Trade Union legal services remain under attack from the CBI and the Insurance Industry, including threats to raise the County Court Small Claims limit. We will play our part in seeking to defend union legal services from these attacks.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

Barry Smith was Secretary to the Recall Congress 2005 Standing Orders Committee, and to the Congress 2006 Standing Orders Committee. Barry is Secretary to the Congress 2007 Standing Orders Committee.

PENSIONS DEPARTMENT

1. ACTION ON CONGRESS MOTIONS

In line with the decisions of GMB Congress, the Pensions Department has continued the campaign for the restoration of the state pension earnings link, the abolition of means testing, compulsory employer contributions to workers' pensions and other issues of pension security and retirement dignity. Motions advocating GMB policy were successfully passed at both Labour and TUC Conferences where the Department supported the union's role through writing motions, speeches and participating in the compositing processes.

On the Local Government Pension Scheme, the Department has continued to work with the National Secretary (Public Services) in producing communications and participating in negotiations on the scheme's reforms. In addition, the Pensions Department has continued to implement the Public Sector Forum's agreement on pensions in both the NHS and Civil Service schemes to ensure good quality schemes are maintained throughout the public sector.

2. SUPPORT FOR RECRUITMENT & ORGANISING

The Department continues to raise the profile of the GMB on pension issues and provides documentation and information to aid the recruitment and organisation of members. This has involved attending seminars and conferences to increase the union's profile. We also continue to increase the production of press releases and articles for publication. The Department generates press releases not only for major policy developments, but also for individual pension schemes. In specific companies, for example Astra Zeneca, the Department works with companies to increase the profile and understanding of the union and the occupational pension scheme.

The Department has continued to support the member nominated trustee database. The database currently has over 150 members. The trustees receive regular mail-outs, which contain internal GMB documents and external material from the bodies such as the Pensions Ombudsman or the Pensions Regulator. In addition, to assist the trustees with new legislative requirements regarding trustees' knowledge and understanding, the Department has produced a number of guides which can be found on the GMB website.

The Department makes great use of the GMB website and during 2006 we revamped the pension page to increase its accessibility. In total over 100 documents including bulletins, briefings, press releases and consultation responses, were uploaded onto the pensions page: www.gmb.org.uk/pensions during the year. The quarterly Pensions Q&A is also circulated by many regions throughout the country.

3. CASEWORK

The Pensions Department managed a large casework load for the 10 GMB regions, which substantially expanded throughout 2006. The Department received over 150 new cases and nearly 200 email queries during the year, most queries are responded to within one week. The casework remit continues to expand with particular focus on supporting and defending defined benefit schemes, improving defined contribution schemes and managing individual ill health pension appeals. The discussion of changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme accounted for around 75% of the email queries that the Department received.

The Department manages pension cases on all pension schemes operated in the UK: occupational, state, personal and stakeholder schemes. The casework role directly supports regional officers as all cases must be referred to the Department through a regional official. The cases worked on within the Pensions Department are complex and frequently involve Internal Disputes Resolution Procedures, the Pensions Regulator, Pensions Ombudsman, Financial Ombudsman, and the Financial Services Authority. The Pensions Department still receives a small number of direct calls from members. We continue to exercise our judgement and try to be as flexible as possible in how we handle the individual queries.

4. POLICY/POLITICAL LOBBYING

The Department continues to be involved in progressing GMB's pensions' agenda through specific government departments. This involves working with civil servants and Ministers in the DWP, DTI, HMRC, DCLG and other departments as necessary. In particular the Department has been involved in developing legislation on information and consultation requirements, defined benefit scheme funding requirements, member nominated trustees, the Financial Assistance Scheme, defined contribution scheme regulation, the Pension Protection Fund, the National Pensions Saving Scheme and the new public sector pension schemes.

During 2006 the Department met with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and the Pensions Minister to secure progress on reform of the UK pensions system. This work has been reinforced through participation in a range of conferences organised by the Fabian Society, TUC and others; and events such as Age Concern's Citizens' Jury. The publication of the final report from the Pension Commission and two Pension White Papers meant that 2006 was a particularly busy year for the Department in terms of lobbying and publicising the union's agenda.

5. INDUSTRIAL SUPPORT

The Pensions Department continues to provide substantial industrial support in the private and public sectors at both a national and regional level.

In the private sector, a large number of final salary schemes across the country have experienced imposed benefit reductions, scheme closures and transfers. The new consultation requirements have ensured that the Department has expanded support for these negotiations/consultations. The number of schemes that have been closed to either new entrants or for future accrual has increased. The Department has continued to support members and officials fighting to defend existing pension rights and to maximise members' pension provision in the future. In the nuclear industry, for example, the Department is involved with the creation of an industry wide Combined Nuclear Pension Scheme. In other areas the Department is involved with establishing pension consultation committees, for example, at Wincanton.

The Department's work with members of the Turner and Newell scheme led to the continued campaign to improve the situation of members whose employer and pension scheme become insolvent. The Department continue to work with the DWP to improve the provisions of the Financial Assistance Scheme and Pension Protection Fund. In addition following the progress of a court case taken by ASW and UEF members against the government, six GMB regions have logged over 800 individual member cases in readiness for an opportunity to take further action on the part of members who have lost some or all of their pensions due to company insolvency.

In the public sector, the Department has been heavily involved with the introduction of new pension schemes in the LGPS, NHS and Civil Service. In the LGPS the Department has been involved in over 125 meetings in 2006 with Ministers, civil servants, employers and other unions. The Department has also produced numerous bulletins and briefings for members and officers; and submissions to government and other stakeholders over the course of the year. The industrial action by GMB members in March 2006 was also supported by the Department through the production of briefing material and press communications. In September, the Department, in conjunction with the National Secretary (Public Services), conducted a survey across all members covered by the LGPS of members' priorities for their pension provision. The responses were then used to affect the response to the government on the initial framework of the new LGPS.

Within the NHS, the Pensions Department sits on both the steering group and technical advisory group. The negotiations resulted in a full consultation exercise and formal response, which saw GMB members overwhelmingly support the jointly endorsed proposals for both existing staff and new joiners. The consultation exercise involved producing various bulletins, briefings and press releases, along with running seminars within the GMB Regions.

The GMB leads on behalf of the industrial MOD unions in the Civil Service negotiations. The Department has been involved with the recent publication of the consultation document proposing a new scheme for staff joining the civil service from Summer 2007.

6. COMMITTEES

The Department runs the joint GMB – T&G Local Government Pensions Committee which meets quarterly with representatives from all GMB and T&G regions. This year's annual conference was held in London and involved workshops, debates and speakers from the London Pension Fund Authority, Department for Communities and Local Government, Business Services Association and both unions.

The Department attended most of the GMB section conferences in 2006 and also now acts as the secretariat for the GMB Services Committee.

7. TRAINING

The Department continues to develop a national pensions training programme, which focuses on officers, trustees and activists. The programme supports officer training within GMB regions on the request of the Regional Secretary.

The advanced course that particularly focuses on trustees, although is open to other interested members ran in March 2006 and was well received by participants. Many considered the course not only aided their own knowledge and understanding, but also that it was a unique course that provided a trade union perspective.

The Pensions Department has built on the one day training course for activists and developed a two day course which goes into considerably more depth. This was piloted in Liverpool, North Wales and Irish region and has been subsequently run in Birmingham and West Midlands region. The course has also been approved in London and Southern regions with other regions taking interest. The course is designed to focus on shop stewards and branch secretaries, although other lay members are welcome to attend with regional approval. The course focuses on the state pension, occupational schemes and current political developments.

8. AGE DISCRIMINATION

The Pensions Department took the lead on the issue of Age Discrimination in 2006. New legislation was brought in by the DWP and DTI. The Department, in conjunction with colleagues from the Legal and Research Departments, submitted formal responses and produced briefing material for officers and members. The Department also made presentations to officers and lay representatives in half the union's Regions at their request. As a result of the Department's engagement, amendments were secured to the legislation including the an exemption from the legislation for pension enhancements in redundancy situations and a right for members to be accompanied when utilising their right to request continued working. In addition the Department manages the Age Discrimination page on the GMB website at www.gmb.org.uk/agediscrimination

POLITICAL DEPARTMENT

Introduction

The Political Department has had a constructive year, with activities happening throughout the Regions as well as at Westminster. Campaigns have included; the Local Elections, Pensions, Local Government and the NHS.

We have also used our access to politicians to raise concerns over employers such as Burberrys, ASDA, AA and Birdseye.

GMB has increased the number of meetings and our correspondence with Ministers and MPs, taking issues that affect our members to the heart of Government. This work has been co-ordinated through Iain McNicol the National Political Officer.

Westminster Office

The office in the House of Commons has proved a useful base to arrange lobbies and meetings with members and politicians. This has allowed the GMB to raise its game in terms of lobbying and day to day contact with; Ministers, MPs, special advisors, civil servants and researchers.

A number of lobbies have taken place over the last year on a wide range of issues. GMB members have been into the Commons to lobby their MPs on Local Government Pensions, NHS privatisation and Remploy.

GMB representatives have also spoke at a number of meetings organised in the House of Commons.

The Political Department has arranged a number of visits to the House of Commons for GMB members. For more details contact Iain McNicol at National Office.

Labour Party

The two GMB representatives on the NEC of the Labour Party - Mary Turner and Debbie Coulter - have played an integral role in holding the Labour Party and Prime Minister to account.

We have continued to intervene on policy discussions through the National Policy Forum, although there has been no policy decisions made this year, the NPF still offers the ability to hold ministers to account.

Labour Party Conference

GMB had a positive input into Labour Party Conference in September 2006. A number of GMB delegates spoke on a range of issues including manufacturing, trade union rights and pensions. The GMB motion on pensions was again carried with a number of our concerns being addressed in the Pensions White Paper. There are however a number of points within the White Paper that are not in line with GMB policy and we will continue to raise our objections.

The motion on Defend Council Housing was also passed and is an area the GMB have continued to work on. This year's conference took place in Manchester for the first time, which proved a good venue.

Parliamentary Panel / Selections

We are currently in the process of setting up the new GMB parliamentary panel. Regions have now nominated the individuals they wish to put forward for consideration.

The final interviews will take place by the CEC Political Committee over the next few months and a full list of GMB panel members will be ready for Congress. If you are a member of a Constituency Labour Party that is going through a selection process for a new parliamentary candidate please get in touch with the National Political Officer to get a list of those potential candidates supported by GMB.

Government

Over the last year regular meetings have been arranged with Government Ministers and Departments. These have ranged from meeting with Ministers and the General Secretary, National Officers, Regional Officers, Branch Officers and members.

Meetings over the last year.

Name	Government Department
Tony Blair	Prime Minister
Gordon Brown	Chancellor of the Exchequer
Ed Balls	Economic Secretary
John Healey	Financial Secretary
Jack Straw	Leader of House of Commons
Yvette Cooper	Communities and Local Government
Phil Woolas	Communities and Local Government
Richard Caborn	Culture, Media and Sport
Jim Knight	Education and Skills
Jim Murphy	Work and Pensions
James Purnell	Work and Pensions
Margaret Hodge	Trade and Industry
Ian McCartney	Trade and Industry
Tony McNulty	Home Office
Hazel Blears	Chair of the Labour Party
Ivan Lewis	Health
Gareth Thomas	International Development
Anne McGuire	Work and Pensions
Jim Fitzpatrick	Trade and Industry
Vernon Coaker	Home Office
Gerry Sutcliffe	Home Office
Tessa Jowell	Culture, Media and Sports
Alan Johnson	Education and Skills
David Milliband	Environment Food and Rural Affairs
Hillary Benn	International Development
John Hutton	Work and Pensions
Peter Hain	Northern Ireland and for Wales

Local Elections 2006

Following the adoption of direct funding and a national direct mail strategy we were very disappointed with the results at the 2006 local elections. There were however a number of national political factors which played badly for the Labour Party.

It was particularly disappointing to see the loss of so many Councillors across the country, as well as the loss of many Councils.

GMB members living within each target Local Authority received a number of letters from the GMB. The direct mail comprised of an initial letter and survey to canvass members concerns and opinions about local issues, this was followed by two further letters detailing the results of the survey and highlighting the benefits of returning a Labour Council. The direct mail was followed by telephone canvassing and supported by the production of a range of literature and leaflets.

We had a very positive and high response to the work we carried out, but unfortunately this was overtaken by the adverse national swing.

Regional Political Officers

The National Political Officer has visited all regions to meet with Regional Political Officers, the aim being to develop and improve greater communication and liaison with politicians at all levels; MPs, MEPs and Councillors.

Throughout the year we have also held a number of meetings with Regional Political Officers to exchange information and co-ordinate political work. This has further led to the sharing best practice and highlighting different regional approaches. Increased co-ordination and co-operation is delivering a greater coherent strategy throughout the GMB.

The Regional Political Officers are:

Name	Region
Richard Ascough	Southern
Pamela Drake	South Western
Justin Bowden	London
Martin Hird	Birmingham
Cheryl Pidgeon	Midlands and East Coast
Steve Jennings	Yorkshire and North Derby
Glyn Thornton	North West Region
Julie Elliott	Northern
Richard Leonard	Scotland

ASDA

We have used GMB MPs before in campaigns to highlight issues and raise concerns about employers; however with the ASDA dispute we stepped up a gear. ASDA had employed a PR Company to run an anti GMB campaign in the North East of England. The company broke the law in the bribes that they offered members to ditch the GMB.

This gave us the hook to go after ASDA and Portland, their PR Company. We started with an Early Day Motion attacking the company which received over 100 signatures. We then wrote to all MPs explaining our position and concerns asking them to write to Ministers and ASDA direct. ASDA responded to this affording us the opportunity to attack them again in further correspondence.

We used GMB MPs as well as senior politicians to meet with the company and get our message across. The pressure culminated in a number of meetings with ASDA arranged in the House of Commons.

The political front complimented the media and industrial strategy, pressurising ASDA on all fronts. The campaign was further boosted by a special report to Congress 2006 on "Where are they now".

This joined up GMB strategy delivered a positive way forward for our members within one of the largest and most powerful companies in the world.

Cash In Transit

The CVIT campaign was outlined in last years report and the campaign has continued. A number of our members who work in this sector have been attacked and injured whilst delivering and dropping off monies. We have been working jointly with the industry, in particular G4S, to try reducing these attacks.

The campaign has focused on getting Government to do more. Unfortunately we have not seen the progress we would have liked to. We have continued to have meetings with the Home Office Ministers and Civil Servants but actually getting them to do something positive is proving harder than expected.

GMB put up speakers for the fringe meetings arranged at political conferences this year. We will continue with this campaign due to the importance of it for our members. GMB want to see CVIT crime moved up the political and policing priority list.

EDM's

GMB has supported and proposed a number of EDM's encouraging our group of MPs to promote and sign them.

Issues we have been involved in promoting EDM's include; Private Equity, NCP recognition, international issues, drivers' safety, CVIT attacks and temporary agency workers.

BNP

Two motions on political issues were referred from Congress 2006. Mick Rix, National Officer presented these to the CEC Political Committee and the following recommendations from them were agreed:

- Support the initiative of BNP Free Zone for the GMB
- Creation of new organising member outreach materials, such as posters/ flyers/ template election leaflet/ reps & officers handbook, and promotional/ educational DVD.
- Supporting the AFF initiative and direct our regions and members to the various campaigns and activities taking place in this regards, and other agreed anti fascist activities with

- Searchlight/ TUC and other unions.
- Regular briefings to regions on our work programme for the next two years.

The BNP has made steady gains in elections in the last few years, culminating in 2006, with them being the leading opposition party in Barking and Dagenham. The BNP has 49 local councillors, and they predict this will rise to 100 in May 2007.

What has the GMB been doing to combat the rise of this fascist party?

1. We developed a plan in 2005 through the CEC to launch the GMB Target BNP campaign, which delivers quality organising training to officers, lay reps and activists. It links GMB workplaces with anti fascist groups, other trade unions/ local labour parties in promoting an agenda of Hope through the political process, rather than hatred via the BNP.
2. Approx 60 GMB officers/ activists have received training on anti fascist work, with courses being tailor made for the former Lancashire Region, Yorkshire Region, London Region and a course for Remploy and CFTA committee activists.
3. We have developed links with community and political organisations, namely Show Racism the Red card, Holocaust Educational Trust, Philosophy Football and When Saturday Comes (a football magazine), Searchlight, local anti fascist groups, local labour parties, MP's and councillors, the TUC and its regions.
4. In the last twelve months, we have developed and helped deliver, two Billy Bragg sponsored Hope Not Hate tours, starting in Wolverhampton in April 2006 on St George's day, this tour linked into community activity, and our workplace reps, with over 4,000 GMB stickers and literature handed out at the concerts themselves. The tours also promoted our members involvement in these tours working on anti fascist activity, from LG, Health, manufacturing, Logistics, to Rugby League players, Remploy campaigns, the Worlds Strongest man, and the five Glasgow Scottish Football club captains being present at a Media event and the Glasgow BBH2 event.
5. Various community based activities has been taking place by GMB activists in a variety of areas. Ranging from Barking and Dagenham, Hounslow (Brentford & Isleworth), Sandwell & Dudley, Morley in Leeds, to Halifax. 400,000 tabloid newspapers were delivered, along with a similar amount of supportive literature for St George's day in local labour party election campaigns. We have developed a website, www.targetbnp.unionweb.co.uk.

RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

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

The purpose and role of the Department

The research and policy team fulfils two main functions:

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

the European Union.

Members of the department work closely with colleagues at National Office, and are often involved in joint work with colleagues in the Pensions, Health and Safety and Legal Departments. They also work directly with colleagues at regional level, and represent the union across the policy-making spectrum. The department plays a major role in Congress preparation and support and in following through the policy decisions and will of Congress.

The department consists of one Senior Research and Policy Officer and 4 Research and Policy Officers. Each Research and Policy Officer supports one of the GMB Sections and also covers specialist policy areas. Each has contributed in the past year towards the union's objectives in the following way:

DOLORES O'DONOGHUE, SENIOR RESEARCH AND POLICY OFFICER

Dolores is responsible for co-ordination of the department's work. Her sectional responsibilities include provision of support on policy and bargaining issues to the Commercial Services Section. She also supports the CEC and General Secretary on policy matters and co-ordinates and follows through matters related to CEC Congress decisions with relevant colleagues and CEC sub committees.

In May 2006 Dolores took on responsibility for preparation of the Congress programme, preparing relevant papers and documents and the daily running order for the President at Congress. She provides advice and support to the President and General Secretary at GMB Congress and to the GMB delegation at TUC Congress. She also provides Executive support to the Senior Management Team.

Sectional Work:

In the Commercial Services Section the main thrust of her work in the past year has been related to two key membership areas; in DHL by assisting the National Officer on bargaining and organisation issues; pay claims, policy development and ballot preparation. In the Security Industry, Dolores provided policy advice and practical work on licensing issues, and assisted with developing the campaign centred upon the Charter for Security Workers at political, civil service and company levels. This involved meetings with Ministers and ministerial teams. Dolores has drafted briefing materials, GMB Security Bulletins, and responded to the DTI Consultation on Parking, proposing exemption for CVIT couriers from parking restrictions. She provides advice to the All Party Parliamentary Group on the Security Industry and is a member of the Security Industry Authority Research Forum.

She has attended and provided advice on motions, and made presentations to sectional industrial conferences. She directly negotiates with employers on policy matters, for instance making recommendations and providing expert advice and policy input into consultation exercises with GSL on the introduction of biometric technology.

Policy Work

Dolores provides briefing materials for the General Secretary and TUC Executive Committee members on TUC and other policy papers. She co-ordinates the GMB input into public consultations; the most significant being the DTI Consultation on increased holiday entitlement where the GMB was instrumental in influencing the DTI decision against allowing "opting out" of increased holiday entitlement. At time of writing she is working with her colleague Ida Clemo on the second phase of consultation whereby the GMB is pressing for full, not phased, implementation of increases in holiday

entitlement.

Dolores, assisted by Charles King, supported the GMB delegation at TUC Congress, providing advice on motions, statements and emergency motions, writing questions, speeches and speech notes and was instrumental in raising the GMB profile by liaising with the TUC Organisation Department to ensure GMB speakers were in every debate and prominent in the question and answer sessions to the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary.

GMB Policy

Dolores has responsibility for supporting the CEC and General Secretary in progressing the decisions and will of Congress through preparation of advice and information documents for the CEC and relevant sub-committees.

Dolores is a member of the Congress Working Party, from January to June much of her work is involved in the preparations for GMB Congress; she drafts the Congress Agenda, Programme, and advice documents for the CEC, works on composite motions, speeches, and policy briefing materials. Like many people at National Office, most of her role is in the background, but she can be seen at Congress supporting the Congress Platform and managing the Daily Running Order for the President.

GERRY CARR, RESEARCH AND POLICY OFFICER

Gerry Carr's main areas of responsibility are in the Public Services Section covering the NHS and MPO members in the Probation Service, The Rent Service and local government chief officers. His other industrial duties cover Remploy and towards the end of 2006 he acquired responsibility for supporting the CFTA sector. For much of the year, however, Gerry has been heavily involved in the Remploy campaign.

January kicked off with Gerry working closely with the National Secretary and supporting Southern region in building up the campaign to save the Crosfield disabled workshop which at the time was under threat of closure by the London Borough of Croydon. Despite a determined campaign, with widespread public support, the workshop was closed at the end of March leaving the vast majority of disabled workers on benefits.

Also in March, the Minister for Disabled People announced a strategic review of the future business options for Remploy causing widespread uncertainty amongst the workforce. That announcement triggered the on-going campaign to defend GMB members' jobs and prevent the closure of Remploy's network of manufacturing sites. Gerry's involvement has been to support the National Secretary, the Trade Union Consortium, and GMB senior stewards throughout in all aspects of the campaign. On the National Secretary's behalf Gerry led a delegation of senior stewards to meet with the Minister. He has produced campaign briefings and recruitment leaflets, helped set up a dedicated Remploy workers website (NB: new site www.gmbremployworkers.info/) and supplied campaign and other materials for that website. He also drafted parliamentary questions and a briefing for MPs.

Gerry has been actively involved in the Remploy Modernisation Review. He serves as a member of the negotiating sub-committee which enables him, together with colleagues, to analyse the various business presentations made by the company as well as identifying other matters that require closer scrutiny. Together with the National Secretary, Gerry is working with the leading accountancy firm, Grant Thornton, which has been engaged to work on behalf of the Trade Union Consortium and which

has been tasked with analysing the Remploy company structure and a key business stream. The aim is to help the unions develop positive business proposals in order to save the factory network and our members' jobs.

Gerry's public service work included pay negotiations for The Rent Service and drafting a section of the NHS pay claim which was submitted to the nurses and other health professionals pay review body. He attended meetings of the Workforce Issues Group considering the implications arising from the Health White Paper. Gerry produced the GMB response to the ambulance service configuration (England), produced a briefing on health service restructuring and towards the end of the year briefings for GMB members attending the 'NHS Together' parliamentary lobby. Contrary to expectations the Hay job evaluation and grading exercise for Probation Service senior managers continued with informal reviews being held throughout the year. Gerry also submitted the GMB responses to consultations by the General Social Care Council on the registration of social care workers (England) and the DWP's Welfare Green Paper.

IDA CLEMO, RESEARCH AND POLICY OFFICER

Sectional Work

Ida provides sectional support to the Food & Leisure and Process Sections. Over the past year she has supported the Sectional National Committee & Conferences and assisted in preparing the Conference Programme, advice on motions and drafts for speeches, the Conference Report and the actions document.

In both sections she has assisted the National and Regional Officers with bargaining and organisation issues; pay claims, briefings, profiles, policy development and ballot preparation. She worked closely with London Regional Officers on policy discussions with ministers at Defra on Sugar Reform and discussions with Tate & Lyle on the impact of these changes.

Organisation & Recruitment

Ida highlights recruitment areas to the National Officers for the sections she works to. She has been involved in REACH negotiations and made a presentation to the Process Section Conference. Across all sections she provides ad hoc profiles of companies for National and Regional Officers. She has been a policy advisor to the National Casino Steering Group and has written consultation papers and briefings for officers on the industry and the rights of our casino workers. She has also created a database of UK Casinos and GMB representation. She has also been involved in policy areas related to Migrant Workers. She has worked closely with a member of the Organising Team to produce a Drivers Recruitment Pack.

Campaigns - Asda Distribution

Ida played an important role in the preparation of material for Asda Distribution newsletters, political briefings and rebuttals. She was also instrumental in setting up a steward texting service which proved invaluable during the dispute and directly provided support for Stewards through the NSSF Group.

As a member of a GMB sub group together with the National Officer, Regional Officers and key stewards, Ida was involved in negotiating the agreements for Access to Recruitment with Asda and provided direct assistance to the negotiations for a model collective Bargaining agreement to be used at the ballots at Erith and Chepstow sites. She had a central role in organising and co-ordinating the

national ballot and worked with colleagues from the National Legal Department to provide evidence in response to Asda's injunction against the GMB.

Campaigns- DHL

Ida assisted the National Officer and Legal Department by co-ordinating the information required for the National ballot; preparing ballot lists and liaising with the NAU and other regional colleagues.

Bargaining Support

Ida produces pay claims, monthly key bargaining statistics and information, speech notes for National and Regional Officers and produced a comprehensive report for Food & Leisure and Process Sections to assist Regional Officers in Bargaining and Pay Claims.

Policy Work

Ida has been involved in preparing submissions to Government Consultations including:

- National Minimum Wage
- TUC response for the Low Pay Commission
- Guidance on Accommodation offset
- Gambling Commission- Statement of Principles on Licensing and Regulation (January 2006)
- DTI "SUCCESS AT WORK" -Increasing the holiday entitlement
- OFT proposal to refer the Grocery market to the Competition Commission (April 2006)
- DTI Review of Sunday Trading Law (April 2006)

Other policy work has included keeping Officers informed of changes to road transport legislation, preparing briefings on this area and advising on collective agreements.

Membership and information Systems

Ida advises Regions and National Office on Information Systems and was responsible for organising and negotiating the XpertHR and CreditSafe systems which are used by National Office and all Regions for bargaining support and financial information. She assisted the General Secretary by making a presentation on XpertHR to all Officers in December.

She also produces the monthly & quarterly reports for the CEC and National Organising Team on Membership and Recruitment and provides Regions with bargaining statistics to enable them to monitor their performance targets. Ida produces analysis of membership trends and responds to ad-hoc requests.

Conference and Congress Support

Ida is a member of the Congress Working party and works closely with Dolores O'Donoghue in the preparations for Congress, including coordinating composite motions, advice on motions, speech drafting and the Running Order for Congress itself and creating the master version of the Decisions of Congress Document.

CHARLES KING, RESEARCH AND POLICY OFFICER

Charlie provides support to National Officials across the three sections. His policy areas include work in Energy and Utilities and the Engineering sections including the MOD and Waste and Recycling. He

covers policy work on energy, environment, manufacturing, skills and transport.

GMB Section Work

Charlie keeps a watching brief across sections, on companies, mergers, takeovers, closures and new plants, government contracts and pay trends and settlements in the sectors. He writes pay claims, provides pay and bargaining advice, and undertakes work on pay systems including equality issues, shift systems and rosters.

Ship Recycling

Charlie worked with the Health and Safety Department and Northern Region on a GMB response to the Defra consultation on Ship Recycling and Breaking and has undertaken further work on this in conjunction with the EMF and IMF.

TUC, CSEU and Other Unions

Charlie has worked on a number of issues with the TUC and other unions on a range of issues which include: Skills Agenda, Manufacturing Task Group, submitting papers on Community Development Funds and the link between Energy policy and manufacturing jobs. He is a member of the TUC Learning and Skills Network, the Trade Unions for Sustainable Development Action Committee (TUSDAC), working on environment, transport and energy issues related to employment. He has been a member of the working group with TUC and manufacturers on energy price problems, the TUC Aviation and Transport Groups and the Olympic Transport strategy.

GMB Congress

Charlie has been a member of the Research Team attending Congress for many years and at Congress 2006 he again undertook a range of Congress work including: advice on motions, composite motions, writing speeches and speech notes. He also arranged a fringe meeting on the future and importance of aviation to the UK economy, and helped organise a stall in conjunction with Future Heathrow.

TUC Congress

Charlie is also a long-standing team member at TUC Congress and in 2006 he provided advice on motions, statements and emergency motions, writing questions, speeches and speech notes and an emergency motion. He also attended a meeting on energy prices and jobs with the Secretary of State for Industry and assisted with a fringe meeting on Climate Change.

Labour Party Conference

Charlie attended and undertook a range of Labour Party conference work including providing advice on motions, writing speeches and speech notes. He spoke at a fringe meeting on Climate Change and Employment and drafted the GMB emergency motion on food manufacturing.

CSEU Biannual Conference

Charlie also supports the GMB delegation to the CSEU conference by advising on and writing motions, composite motions, speeches and speech notes.

Consultations and Policy

Charlie responds to consultation documents on his policy areas, from Government, European Union, Regulators, GLA, and Scottish Executive. These include Ship Recycling, Energy Review, Renewable and Nuclear Energy Reviews and Renewables Obligation Scotland, microgeneration, clean coal and carbon capture, the London Freight Plan, Aviation policy, new runways and terminals at Heathrow and Stansted.

He has represented the GMB with senior stewards in meetings with HSE and Energy and Utility Skills on gas safety. He worked with stewards and regional officers on the London Freight Plan and again with stewards and regional officers on issues related to Thames Water and job losses.

In the skills and training policy area he has worked on the New Modern Gas Apprenticeship in Scotland, National training standards, Foundation degrees and apprenticeships in the water industry, the waste and recycling sector and the renewable energy sector and on funding of Sector Skills Councils with other trade unions and Department for Education and Skills.

European issues

Charlie also provides information and assistance to officers and stewards on European Works Councils and Europe Companies (SE) and works with international and European federations on a number of issues including European Works Councils, the European Companies Directive, and merger and takeover issues.

EAMON O'HEARN LARGE, RESEARCH AND POLICY OFFICER

Eamon joined the Research department in March 2006, and his responsibilities are shared between the Research Department and the National Organising Team.

Eamon has provided research and bargaining support to the Construction, Furniture, Timber and Allied (CFTA) Section, including the development of industry-wide pay claims.

He has attended the CFTA Section Committee meetings to report on matters affecting the Section, including sourcing and supplying information, briefings and documents to Committee members and conducting specific company research and monitoring as requested by the CFTA National Secretary.

Eamon also provides Research and Bargaining support for the Higher and Further Education sectors, including the mapping and analysis of the Higher Education sector workforce.

Since Autumn 2006 Eamon has been providing Research and Bargaining support to the Public Services Section, with a particular focus on GMB work in the Schools area.

Policy Area

Eamon has conducted research and responded to requests concerning issues arising in the CFTA, such as the Age Discrimination legislation and also provides Policy support into the Higher and Further Education sectors.

Monitoring

Another area of Eamon's work has involved monitoring the Olympic Games, including the development and maintenance of a Games brief representing all the potential GMB interests.

This has included researching and responding as directed/required to specific issues arising from the Olympic Games, including attending meetings related to the Games.

Eamon continues to keep up to date with knowledge of pay trends, mergers/acquisitions and any sector/industrial developments.

Organising and Recruitment

Eamon has conducted specific research into company structures and accounts for CTFA Section, mapped and analysed the Higher Education workforce in preparation for a potential national project and researched the potential organising opportunities for the GMB in the Olympic Games.

National Organising Team/Department

He has conducted mapping exercises of the industries where there are current National Organising Projects, including an analysis of current/future industry issues and conducting specific research into the companies that are the subject of current National Organising Projects.

He also provides membership analysis and reports on the progress of National Organising Projects for the National Organising Team as well as conducting forward research and analysis into industries, companies and issues that can be used to support future National Organising Projects.

Eamon regularly responds to requests from members of the National Organising Team in relation to the National/Regional Projects in their region, including company and industry research. He has drafted a new GMB Stewards Handbook and Branch Development/Organising Plan for Branches and Workplaces.

GMB Congress

Eamon was involved for the first time in work for GMB Congress in 2006 when he assisted in the compositing of motions, and drafting speeches. He was a member of the Research team at Congress and assisted in recording proceedings and providing general support.

REPORT ON MOTIONS AND CEC SPECIAL REPORTS AND STATEMENTS CARRIED BY THE 2006 CONGRESS

The CEC reviewed all motions and reports/statements carried by the 2006 Congress and decided what action to take to implement the will of Congress. In each case the appropriate action fell into one or more of the following categories:

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

REPORTS AND STATEMENTS CARRIED/APPROVED

General Secretary's Report	GS
Annual Accounts and Auditors Report	GS, National Office Finance Dept.
CEC Special Report: Progress Update A Framework for the Future of the GMB: Moving Forward	CEC, CEC Task Group, GS and Senior Management Team, National Organising Team, Regions, CEC Recruitment & Organisation, Finance, Communications and Training Committees, Legal Dept and HR Department.
CEC Special Report: GMB @ Work	CEC, CEC Recruitment & Organisation Committee, GS and Senior Management Team, National Organising Team, Regions, Training Committee, IT Steering Group, NAU, Communications Dept, all GMB employees and branches
CEC Special Report: For Justice and Equality	CEC, GS, DGS and Senior Management Team, National Officials, CEC Training Committee, Race Task Group, UMF Project Team, all GMB employees and branches
CEC Special Report: The Sections of the Union	CEC, GS, DGS. CEC Task Group, Recruitment and Organisation Committee,

	Section Committees, National Officials, all GMB employees and branches
CEC Statement on Pensions	GS, CEC Political Committee, TUC, Labour Party
CEC Statement to Congress on Proposed Merger	GS, CEC Task Group

MOTIONS CARRIED BY CONGRESS	
(† Carried subject to a CEC Qualification)	
CEC Motion Validating Decisions of Recall Congress 2005	
CECM377	GS
Union Organisation: Congress	
† Motion 5 Freedom of Speech In the GMB	CEC GS
Union Organisation: General	
† Motion 18 GMB Offices And Disability	GS SMT
Union Organisation: Recruitment & Organisation	
† Motion 26 GMB Membership Database Motion 28 Membership Services	GS SMT IT Steering Group Regional Secretaries
Union Organisation: Representation & Accountability	
Motion 33 Standards In The GMB RA365 Rule 37 Branches	GS SMT CEC Task Group

Union Organisation: Finances & Contributions	
† Motion 40 Branch Allocation Motion 44 GMB Influence RA361 Rule 30 Audit RA362 Rule 30 Audit RA371 Rule 49A Retired Life Members CECRA379 Contributions And Benefits CECRA380 Contributions And Benefits CECRA381 Contributions And Benefits CECRA382 Contributions And Benefits	SMT Finance Committee Finance Committee Finance Committee Finance Committee Finance Committee Finance Committee Finance Committee Finance Committee
Union Organisation: Union Benefits	
Motion 49 Members Benefits	Finance Committee

Motion 54 Union Benefits † Motion 56 Free Insurance CECRA378 Legal Assistance	Finance Committee Finance Committee Finance Committee, GS/Legal Dept
Union Organisation: Education & Training Comp 4 GMB Approach To Training For Representatives Motion 60 Training For Representatives Motion 61 Education Motion 64 Migrant Workers	CEC Training Committee, SMT SMT CEC Training Committee, SMT CEC Training Committee, SMT
Employment Policy: Equal Opportunities † Motion 66 Charter For Women † Comp 5 Equal Pay Motion 69 Supported Employment Manufacturing Sites	DGS SMT, DGS CEC, Political Committee, Phil Davies
Employment Policy: Health & Safety At Work Motion 70 Health & Safety Inspectors Motion 72 Government Proposed Changes to Asbestos Regulations Motion 74 Corporate Manslaughter Bill † Motion 76 Passive smoking Motion 78 Violence At Work Motion 79 Lone Working	GS/H&S GS/H&S GS/H&S GS/H&S GS/H&S GS/H&S
Employment Policy: Pensions & Retirement Comp 6 Pension Security Comp 7 Reduction of Pension Benefits Comp 8 Compulsion Motion 92 Pensions In The Private Sector † Comp 9 Pension Reform	CEC GS/Pensions Political Comm CEC GS/Pensions TUC CEC GS/Pensions Political Comm GS/Pensions Political Committee GS/Pensions Political Comm TUC
¹ Note: RA371- CEC Stance was OPPOSE	
Comp 10 Retirement Age Comp 11 State Pensions Earnings Link Motion 107 Women's Pensions † Motion 108 Transferable Pension Funds	GS/Pensions Regions Political Comm GS Political Committee GS/Pensions DGS Political Comm GS/Pensions

<p>Employment Policy: Rights At Work</p> <p>† Comp 12 Anti Trade Union Laws Motion 111 GMB Consultancy Comp 13 Employment Rights Motion 118 UK Redundancy Legislation² Motion 119 Redundancy Act † Motion 120 Redundancy Payments Comp 14 Companies in Administration Comp 15 Statutory Holiday Entitlement † Motion 125 National Minimum Wage † Motion 126 Statutory Maternity Pay Comp 16 Agency Workers Motion 129 Company Sick Pay † Motion 130 Bullying in the Workplace † Motion 131 Contract of Employment & TUPE Motion 132 Transfer of Undertaking Protection of Employment † Motion 133 Two Tier Workforce † Motion 134 End of The ‘Two Tier’ Workforce in the Private Sector Comp 17 Rights of Foreign Workers</p>	<p>GS/Legal Dept Political Comm TUC CEC Political Committee Govt Political Committee Govt Political Committee GS/Research CECGS/Legal/Research Govt GS/Legal/Research Govt GS/Legal/Research Govt Political Committee GS/Research Political Comm GS/Research Govt DGS GS/Research Govt DGS GS/Research TUC National Officials National Officials Political Committee GS/Legal Govt GS/Legal/Pensions DGS National Official (CS) National Officials (all) TUC</p>
<p>Industrial & Economic Policy: Commercial Services</p> <p>Motion 138 Health & Safety Motion 139 Safety Concerns for Check-In Agents at London Airports</p>	<p>National Official (CS) GS/H&S National Official (CS) GS/H&S</p>
<p>Industrial & Economic Policy: CFTA</p> <p>Comp 18 Remploy † Motion 142 Fair Play for Remploy Coventry</p>	<p>Nat Official (CFTA) Political Comm Govt National Official (CFTA)</p>
<p>Industrial & Economic Policy: Engineering</p> <p>Motion 150 Shipbuilding Motion 151 Ship Recycling EM4 Swan Hunter Shipbuilders</p>	<p>National Official (ENG) Govt National Official (ENG) Govt Nat Official (ENG) Political Comm</p>

² Note: Motion 118- CEC Stance was SEEK WITHDRAWAL

<p>Industrial & Economic Policy: Energy & Utilities</p>	
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EM3 Compulsory Water Meters † Comp 19 Balanced Energy Policy Motion 147 Power Industry Comp 20 Energy Prices	National Official (E&U) Govt National Official (E&U) Govt National Official (E&U) Govt National Official (E&U) Govt
Industrial & Economic Policy : Food & Leisure	
EM6 Asda Wal-Mart Trade Dispute Motion 152 Retail Giants Comp 21 GMB's Fight against ASDA WAL-MART Motion 157 Migrant Workers Motion 158 How Is My Driving	Nat Official (F&L) Political Committee Nat Official (F&L) Political Committee National Official (F&L) DGS National Official (F&L) TUC National Officials (All)
Industrial & Economic Policy : Public Services	
EM2 Redundancies In The NHS † EM5 Health † Motion 159 Public Services Section Review Motion 160 Public Sector Job Evaluation Exercise Motion 162 Local Govt Salary Allowances Motion 163 Residential Workers – Sleep In Duties Motion 164 Tied Accommodation † Comp 22 Public Sector Pensions: Local Govt † Comp 23 Local Govt Pension Schemes Motion 169 School Support Staff Motion 170 School Support Staff Motion 171 Local Authority Control of Education Motion 172 Teaching Supply Agencies to be abolished Motion 173 Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus Motion 174 Investments by Private Investment Trusts Motion 175 Staffing Levels In Residential and Nursing Homes	National Official (PS NHS) National Official (PS NHS) National Official (PS LG) National Official (PS LG) National Official (PS LG) National Official (PS Social Care) National Official (PS LG) National Official (PS LG) Pensions National Official (PS LG) Pensions National Official (PS LG) National Official (PS LG) National Official (PS LG) National Official (PS NHS) Communications National Officials (PS + CS) National Official (PS Social Care)
Industrial & Economic Policy: Manufacturing	
† Comp 24 Manufacturing Policy Comp 25 Public Procurement	National Officials (CFTA Eng E&U) Nat Officials (PS) Political Comm Govt
Industrial & Economic Policy: The Economy	
Motion 183 Britain for Sale Motion 184 Off-Shoring	Nat Official (CS) Political Commi TUC Nat Official (P Davies) GS IS Officer Research

<p>Industrial & Economic Policy: The Environment</p> <p>† Comp 26 Climate Change † Motion 189 Incineration of Waste</p>	<p>National Official (E&U) GS/Research GS/H&S/ Research</p>
<p>Political: Labour Party</p> <p>Motion 190 Strengthening the Link between the GMB and the Labour Party Comp 27 Warwick Agreement † Motion 193 Labour Party Conference Voting † Comp 28 Funding of Labour MP's and Candidates Motion 203 Candidates Standing For Election to Labour Party 'Must' Be Members of A Trade Union</p>	<p>Political Committee Political Committee/ GS/Research Political Committee</p> <p>Political Committee/Regional Secs</p> <p>Political Committee</p>
<p>Political: Democracy & Constitutional Reform</p> <p>Motion 205 Constitutional Reform † Motion 206 Parliamentary Salaries – Pensions – Expenses and Financial Support upon losing their Constituency Seat following an Election</p>	<p>Political Committee</p> <p>Political Committee</p>
<p>Political: European Union</p> <p>Comp 30 EU Services Directive Motion 212 European Commission</p>	<p>GS/European Officer GS/European Officer</p>
<p>Social Policy: Criminal Justice</p> <p>Motion 213 Decriminalisation of Prostitution † Motion 214 First Course of Conduct Warnings Issued by the Police</p>	<p>Nat Official (F&L) GS/Research Govt</p> <p>GS/Research/Legal Govt</p>
<p>Social Policy: Education Comp 31 Education Comp 32 Apprenticeships Motion 224 Adult Education Charges</p>	<p>Nat Official (PS) Political Committee Govt Nat Officials (E&U CFTA ENG) GS/Research DGS + GS/Research</p>
<p>Social Policy: General</p> <p>† Motion 225 Civil Liberties Motion 226 One Law For Both Rich and Poor Motion 227 Child Support Agency † Motion 229 Statutory Public Holidays † Motion 230 Over-Priced Holidays Motion 233 Gay Asylum Seekers</p>	<p>GS/Legal DGS GS/Research GS/Research TUC GS/Research Political Committee Govt</p>

<p>International</p> <p>† Motion 261 UK Involvement In Conflicts Abroad</p> <p>Motion 262 Venezuela</p> <p>Motion 263 Torture</p> <p>Motion 266 Third World Countries – Mounting Debt</p> <p>† Motion 267 Corporate Responsibility</p> <p>† Comp 35 Corporate Accountability</p> <p>Motion 271 A Global Alliance Against Forced Labour</p> <p>Motion 272 AIDS - Free Drugs</p> <p>Motion 273 Zimbabwe</p> <p>† Motion 275 Moroccan Invasion of Western Sahara</p> <p>† Motion 276 Middle East</p>	<p>IS Officer</p>
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REPORT ON MOTIONS REFERRED TO THE CEC BY THE 2006 CONGRESS

<p>Union Organisation: Congress</p> <p>Motion 2 Congress Standing Orders</p>	<p>The CEC and the Task Group are recommending that Congress is asked to endorse Motions that the CEC determine are already in line with existing policy without the need for speakers, so as to free-up time for Section Conferences. The CEC and the Task Group are also consulting with the Standing Orders Committee to consider further options. This includes considering whether the Standing Orders Committee could provide training for Regional Delegations, so as to assist with explaining the procedures to Delegates.</p>
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<p>Union Organisation: General</p> <p>Motion 14 Opportunities In Employment within the Union</p> <p>Motion 15 Full Time Diversity Officer</p>	<p>The recommendations of the CEC Task Group have been implemented and the entry point for Officers of "Organising Officer" gives greater flexibility.</p> <p>This is being dealt with by the Equalities Review which will report back to Congress 2007.</p>
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<p>Motion 16 Sickness Monitoring</p>	<p>The Senior Management Team has established a specialist HR Department which is reviewing employment policies. A Capability policy to support management in the effective management of sick leave is currently under consultation.</p>
<p>Motion 20 Rule Book Clarity</p>	<p>The Rule Book Working Group established by the CEC is including this motion in its review.</p>

<p>Union Organisation: Recruitment & Organisation Motion 24 Branch Facilities</p>	<p>A review is underway which is being progressed by the Senior Management Team and the CEC Recruitment and Organisation Committee.</p>
<p>Motion 25 Olympics 2012</p>	<p>The London and Southern Regions are charting the development and progress of work on the Olympic sites. Phil Davies and Mick Rix have been directly involved in negotiations to maximise union activity and create direct labour. The GMB supported Barry Camfield for the Trade Union Seat on the Olympic Development Authority to ensure trade union presence in job development is maintained.</p>

<p>Union Organisation: Representation & Accountability Comp 3 Equality and Self Organisation</p> <p>Rule 18 Qualifications for Office and Definition of Officers</p>	<p>This is being dealt with by the Equalities Review which will report back to Congress 2007.</p> <p>The CEC and the Task Group has reviewed recommendation 15 of the CEC Special Report "A Framework for the Future of the GMB" carried by Congress 2005. The CEC is recommending that, as agreed by Congress 2005, the current system whereby only members of Regional Councils are eligible to stand for election to the CEC should be maintained.</p>
<p>Union Organisation: Finances & Contributions</p>	

<p>Motion 46 Promotional Rate £1</p>	<p>The Finance Committee has looked into this proposal and agreed that this would be divisive, disruptive and inappropriate.</p>
<p>Union Organisation: Union Benefits Motion 55 Strike Pay</p>	<p>The motion sought a separate fund in Regions for disputes. The Finance Committee recognised the need to be flexible with payments during disputes, and agreed that ways of funding this development should be considered. A levy on contributions was not viable, but contributions from branches may be the way forward.</p>
<p>Union Organisation: Education & Training Motion 65 Branch Information</p>	<p>The IT Steering Group has asked the IT department at the National Administration Unit to look at the options and to prepare a report for consideration by the Senior Management Team. If access is granted training of branch secretaries will be undertaken. Regions have training programmes in place for training of branch officials on the day to day branch finance and administration.</p>
<p>Employment Policy: Health & Safety at Work Motion 71 Health and Safety at Work Act Motion 77 Members Jobs Go up in Smoke</p>	<p>The Advocate General in the European Court has recently ruled in favour of UK government continuing to use the term “so far as reasonably practical” with regards to interpreting H&S legislation. A full workplace ban is due to come into UK by July 1st this year. GMB will continue to monitor the effects this has on jobs and members welfare.</p>
<p>Employment Policy: Pensions & Retirement Motion 106 Pensions and the Poverty Level</p>	<p>The Pensions Dept. researched the likely effects of the motion’s proposal and concluded that the motion itself, as drafted, could not directly be implemented. The intent of the motion however, continues to be inline with the union’s ongoing campaigning objectives.</p>

<p>Employment Policy: Rights at Work Motion 111 GMB Consultancy Motion 136 Volunteer Workers are Workers Motion 137 Carers are Workers Too</p>	<p>The Recruitment & Organisation Committee considered the motion's proposal. The Committee agreed that whilst it is unfair that non-union members benefit from collectively negotiated settlements, the proposals are not viable. Instead, the focus should be on recruiting non-union members in organised workplaces. The Legal Department and the Political Department have raised the issues contained in the motion with the DTI, and they are considering our representations. The Legal Department and the Political Department have raised the issues contained in the motion with the DTI, and they are considering our representations.</p>
<p>Industrial & Economic Policy: The Economy Motion 186 China Tax Rebates</p>	<p>The European and International Committee has examined the motion and sought the advice of the National Officials. We have consequently decided to maximize the limited influence we have on the Chinese Government by developing a strategy alongside the TUC general council of critical, constructive dialogue with the Chinese state and trade union movement.</p>
<p>Industrial & Economic Policy: Public Services Motion 162 Local Govt Salary Allowances</p>	<p>The GMB November 2006 national local government pay conference considered a number of motions about the whole range of allowances. It was decided to concentrate on the sleeping in allowance and night shift allowance, seeking substantial improvements in both. These items were included in the 2007 local government pay claim which was formally submitted in January 2007.</p>
<p>Political: Racism and Fascism Composite Motion 29 Covering Motions 207 Unite against Fascism 208 Unite against Fascism</p>	<p>The CEC Political committee have agreed a two year programme on the GMB anti fascist work, and further education courses for officers and reps on organising against the BNP, and a GMB campaign – BNP Free Zone centred around the successful theme of Hope be established, in consultation with Regions with back up materials including a handbook, leaflets and posters for workplaces and reps</p>
<p>Social Policy: General Support Agency</p>	<p>The White Paper - 'A new system of child maintenance' was published in December 2006 setting out Government proposals to establish the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission. The Child Support Agency will continue to operate</p>

	until late 2008. The GMB will be responding to the consultation in line with Congress policy.
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APPOINTMENT AND ELECTION OF OFFICIALS

1 JANUARY 2006 – 31 DECEMBER 2006

ELECTION OF GENERAL SECRETARY & TREASURER

Paul Kenny

APPOINTMENT OF NATIONAL OFFICER

Mick Rix

APPOINTMENT OF NATIONAL ORGANISING OFFICER

Martin Smith

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS

Southern Region

Kevin Brandstatter
Mark Wilkinson

APPOINTMENT OF SENIOR ORGANISERS

Birmingham & West Midlands Region
Midland & East Coast Region
Southern Region

Pauline Hinks
Cheryl Pidgeon
Stuart Fagan
Jeff Goswell

ELECTION OF ORGANISERS

Birmingham & West Midlands Region

David Day
Russell Farrington
Pauline Hinks

Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region

Pauline Buchanan
Steve Carr
John Dawson
Bob Gregson
Marie Saunderson
Mark Stevens

London Region

Colin Greer
Mick Vivian

Midland & East Coast

Sian McClarence
Colin Todd
Ken Vincent

Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

Douglas Cooper
Rachel Dix
Debbie Johnson
Joan Keane
Kerry May
Geoff Pitts

APPOINTMENT OF ORGANISING OFFICERS

Midland & East Coast

Les Dobbs
Andy Fletcher

Southern Region

Stuart Chandler
Kevin Mason

GOLD BADGE AND YOUTH AWARDS 2006

MEN'S GOLD BADGE

The GMB Men's Gold Badge recipient in 2006 was Brian Adams, Birmingham & West Midlands Region (Brian was nominated for the TUC Organisation Award 2006)

WOMEN'S GOLD BADGE

The GMB Women's Gold Badge recipient in 2006 was Elizabeth Blackman, Midland & East Coast Region (Elizabeth was nominated for the TUC Women's Award 2006)

AWARD FOR YOUTH

The GMB Youth Award recipient in 2006 was Russell Fraser, London Region (Russell was nominated for the TUC Youth Award 2007)

(Adopted)

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: I hope after seeing that film about Colombia that people think very hard about coming to me and complaining about the cost of organising in the UK.

Welcome, delegates, visitors, and those watching via the GMB website. Hello. I would like to say a special hello – I hope you can see me – to Amicus and T&G, and Unite. Hello. I would like to say hello to Derek and Tony and wish them all the best. They keep going on about being the biggest union and the size of the union. Well, as Tommy Brennan knows, it is not your size that counts it is what you do with it! *(Applause)*

Two years ago we met in Newcastle to forge a new united strong union, a union without fear, a union with an understanding of our real purpose. In truth, the story had begun some months before. Congress in Newcastle was our public launch of GMB 2005. I come to you today proud and honoured as the General Secretary to report that the union has produced a surplus for the third year in a row. Not since the 1970s has this been achieved. The surpluses are modest but they are true. In addition, our union has grown

in real membership, in paying membership, for each of the last two years. That is not something we have done without mergers since the 1970s either. This is not life on Mars, this is life in the GMB, real life doing for our members in the workplace what the forefathers and sisters of this union promised we would do.

As for the year so far, well, we grew by 2,300 last month and the membership has gone up in six out of the last eight months; steady but sure. As we sit here GMB membership, real membership, not graveyard members, is higher than 12 months ago and that was during a period, by the way, when we actually removed 9,000 people from our lists that frankly had not paid for a very, very long time. So, as we sit here we have replaced those 9,000 and we have grown by another 1,600 over the 12 months; in real terms an increase of more than 10,000.

Obviously, this cannot be true! It cannot be true, can it? The GMB cannot survive without a merger, can it? The GMB is bankrupt. The CEC, you, Congress, you do not know what you are doing, you are bonkers. That is what some people would have you believe, that you do not know what you are doing. To all those who predicted our demise I offer this crumb of comfort, really, this word of advice: go and get stuffed! (*Applause*) You go and choke on your defeatist, failed, academic out-of-date claptrap. The can't dos and the won't dos, "unions are dying", they peddle, well, you die if you want to, and maybe the quicker the better, but the GMB is alive, it is well, it is kicking, and it is winning.

The North West and Irish Region – and I put this in this morning to make up for the gaff of last night, I apologise – not even a year old, not even a year old but it is growing, and a fantastic job was done while merging the two regions and the regional committees, with Paul McCarthy, and I want to just mention especially John McDonnell and Douglas Henry, two respective presidents of those regions who have worked so hard together over the last 12 months to forge the new growing vibrant region. Well done, you are a credit to the union. (*Applause*)

How did you turn it round? I am going to give a bit of praise. I praise the CEC for vision and for courage and you, Congress, for bravery, and thank you for your loyalty, and the regions for the commitment and passion that they have shown. The senior management team and the employees are going with a lot of new ideas and freedoms, even if at times they looked a little strange. I know at Congress it is fair game, it always should be, to knock the CEC occasionally, in fact it is a little bit of traditional Congress sport, but you reflect for a moment on their record in office. They have turned deficit to surplus. They have turned membership loss to membership gain. They have had the courage to investigate and overhaul our internal election procedures, the courage to recommend rule changes to stop abuse and corrupt use of our election procedures in our union. They have had the vision to restructure industrially the three sections, the courage to reorganise to nine regions, to have the vision to see that the GMB@Work, a campaigning workplace organising union was the way forward, the setting up of a national organising team and national targets, the CEC and you, Congress, demanding

that the GMB stands for things: that we stand for campaigning and not complaining; that we stand for fight and not flight; and that we stand to organise and not organ grind.

In two years we have put in place new CEC structures and reforms, new financial accountability, new safeguards to protect the members' financial trust, new HR structure for your employees, new agreements on disciplinaries, grievances, and capability, new guidance rules for all managers, the largest training exercise ever carried out in the union for all employees on equality and diversity, new industrial structures to service the three sections nationally, and the introduction of online joining. Do you remember that it could not be done? Well, it has been done. Five thousand plus people were joining online in the first year and, guess what, another myth, 25% of them are under 25. You know that myth that young people do not want to join trade unions, they are not interested? Well, give them access and they will join. Do you not think they are exploited in the workplace, do you not think they are abused by employers and bullied? Of course they are and they want a union that will stand and fight for them, and they are showing that by joining in ever-increasing numbers. And the movement between the regions of officers and staff is the best regional cooperation for at least 20 years. But, as Mary our President, a great President, says, "A lot done; now get on with the rest of it."

In 2005 we said what we were going to do. AA and Asda - we said we would start with the As. In Asda 12 months ago at Blackpool, at our Congress, I stood up and said to Andy Bond, publicly, "We are going to take you on, we are not kidding, we are not bluffing, we are not making half-hearted speeches, we are going to take you on," and within four weeks of that Congress we signed an enabling agreement with Asda that would recognise for the first time anywhere in the world the right of Asda employees – the right of Asda employees – to have a trade union collectively bargain for them; not earth-shattering by our standards but certainly mind-changing for Wal-Mart.

We were on the verge of a national strike and I make no apologies for saying that we would have prosecuted that with every inch and every pound this union could have mustered. We now have members in all of the distribution sites, as Jude Brimble said, a nationwide shop stewards committee which did not exist 12 months ago. We won the first two additional collective bargaining agreements at Erith and Chepstow and we have Skelmersdale coming next, and there may be Washington, and Bedford. The Bedford site in the London region did not have any members 12 months ago; 200 approaching now and growing. Do not tell me people do not want to join a union. Do not tell me that. I am not interested in hearing it.

We have Wakefield, Lutterworth, and all of the other sites, and there is a fantastic feeling of enthusiasm when you see those stewards in a national committee from around the Asda distribution network joining up and actually facing up to the company on issues like pick rates and health and safety. It is a fantastic empowering thing that the union has done. That will lead now into the stores where we always knew we were going – we always knew we were going there. I pay public tribute to the Asda retail stewards who, frankly, kept the flag of trade unionism flying in the most difficult circumstances one can imagine, and I say to Congress, put your hands together and thank those stewards for

keeping the union alive. (*Applause*) It is going to be tough, of course. They are making attacks on the long-term staff, the terms and conditions, but there is 140,000 people working for Asda and that makes 140,000 people ready and looking for a trade union. Will it be easy? Of course it is not easy. Lena Sharp said yesterday, “Welcome to the world of the ASDA shop stewards.”

I never promised anybody it was going to be easy, I just said we are going to have to put effort in, but we are winning. At a bad push we will recruit 2,000/3,000 Asda people this year; that is at a bad push. If we move up a gear, we can get to 5,000 or 8,000, and if we start to do what we say and we know we can do, then we can get 10,000-plus. Two or 3,000 is progress but it is not enough to rebuild our workplace organisation in the stores fast enough.

There was a question yesterday from a delegate, I think from Birmingham, about the 75 members - it may have been Birmingham or Scotland, I am sorry – to get a shop steward. I am going to answer it for you. The number of GMB members required to have a shop steward in Asda or anywhere else is one: *one*. (*Applause*) If the day ever comes that we start allowing employers to tell us again about who will be our shop stewards, or how many they have to have, will be the day that I fit into a size 10! (*Laughter*)

I want to tell you a little story about the General Secretary of another union, who will remain nameless because we need to keep a state of comradeship in the Movement, but the union’s name sounds a bit like Jackdaw or Buzz-saw, anyway you work it out! This General Secretary told their conference a few weeks ago how they had recruited X number of members and how the General Secretary of the GMB would love to be able to say the same. Well, actually, no, I would not really. I would not, not if it means having sweet arse-kissing relationships with employers (*Applause*) who sign up the members for you and the union is frightened to upset them or defend the members. You can stick that sort of arrangement. Company unions, you have ‘em. The GMB ain’t never gonna be a company union again!

We went to Newcastle and we said we are going to give it to the AA for what they have done to our union and our members. We were derecognised in the AA and we said we are going to fight. I want to pay a public tribute to Paul Maloney and the colleagues in the Southern Region for the fantastic campaign that they have had to front up and organise against the AA. One of the by-products of that campaign is not only that hundreds and hundreds of members have come back to the GMB as we knew they would, they were lied to and exploited, but it has led to a whole public debate about private equity.

The Financial Times, not exactly always the doyen of the Trades Union Movement, did a fantastic, a really fantastic, job on exposing what private equity was doing in our economy. Three days, I think, they carried the front page. That was because of the campaign the GMB had forced into the media. Of course, there was Damon Buffini, Permira, part of the private equity group that actually bought the AA. You will

remember – in fact there has been a picture up here during the week although it is probably not there at the moment – the famous camel. In fact, we were thinking of putting up a special obituaries list for the camel because it has passed away. Our condolences go to all of its family and Damon Buffini, who is not an unreasonable man, and I am not going to use this platform to make a personal attack on a money-grabbing git (*laughter*) but because of the campaign that the GMB led and the fantastic job that has been done in Southern and other regions, organising the GMB again from the ground up, we had an historic meeting with Mr. Buffini and his colleagues, a very courteous, very good meeting. It was not as it was reported in the press. We did not throw chairs at each other; it just was not true. We had an historic meeting in Old Holborn and out of that meeting it was agreed that the GMB would produce our membership details to an independent party, in this case the TUC as suggested by Mr. Buffini. Then Mr. Buffini will recommend to the board that the GMB is re-recognised at the AA.

So, from nowhere, from complete and utter wipe-out and betrayal, from the attack on the union and its members, we have not only dragged the members back, we fought a campaign that has brought private equity into the open and brought the employer to the point of saying, “OK, we will re-recognise you. Please shut up.” I think we are not home yet but we will keep fighting until we are.

On private equity itself, most of the country had never heard of it until the GMB campaign, how they buy companies, buy them out, sell assets, land, and buildings, lease back sites, and sack employees. They sometimes buy companies just to close them. Ask the Midlands & East Coast Region about Bird’s Eye. They bought that company and three months later announced its closure with redundancies of hundreds of workers. Now, who would buy a company in order to shut it down? What is the logic, do you think, behind that? It is because they wanted to sell off the product to whoever they could sell it to, capitalise the land, and the workers and the community were of no consequence.

We have published today, “Private Equity’s Broken Pension Promises”. This is an indictment of the private equity’s involvement in companies which has then led to failures and to pension funds being put into administration. We have discovered 96 of them. These people operate in a world of secrecy the like of which you have never seen. We found 96 of which only a quarter have we been able to establish how much money was involved. In this instance, out of that quarter of those 96 nearly £2bn of pension liabilities has been shoved by this lot on to the taxpayer or on to the other pension schemes through the Pension Protection Fund.

So, if you ask me what I think of them, I say this. There is evidence in this book of private equity buying companies with a pension scheme, with liabilities that they must have known when they bought, putting them into receivership, dumping the pension liabilities and the pensioners on to the public purse, and then buying the same company back less than 24 hours later and re-starting the business. I do not know where you come from but that seems to me like robbery, that seems to me like thievery, and that seems to

me like cheating people out of their pensions. It seems like discharging your liabilities on to the rest of the taxpayers for the pursuit of your own personal greed.

I say this, if the Government does not do something about it, if the Exchequer does not stop it, then we must presume certain things, that is, that the Government think more about the money-grabbing private equity bosses than they do about the pension schemes of ordinary working people. (*Applause*) The GMB go to the Treasury Select Committee on 20th June, we are going to make that presentation with evidence we have put in, plus *that*, and we will await the outcome.

In Newcastle we said we were a campaigning union and we were starting with the As and now we have moved on to the Bs; and I did remember saying there is a hell of a lot of Bs in this world. (*Laughter*) London Region has taken on a company called Bakkavor that employs 2,500 people, and to Marks & Spencer and Tesco provides chilled products and other things. The company has a pretty poor record, with lists of GMB members injured, fingers sliced, bad injuries, health and safety problems, and food hygiene concerns that our stewards and members flagged up to us.

So the union did the right thing, it approached the parent company and said, “We have really serious problems here. We really believe you need to do something about this factory. There are serious public health concerns and there are serious health and safety issues.” Basically, the company wrote back to us and said, “We are not interested in talking to the GMB about these issues, in fact we think you are trying to intimidate us.” So we wrote to them and I just want to read you a small quote. We wrote to Mr. Stephen Collier, the Group HR & Business Improvement Director, in November 2006. I finished my letter, and there were a lot of juicy bits in it, by saying, “The union has attempted to bring its concerns to the parent company only to be frankly insulted and shut out. It therefore leaves the union either with a choice of turning a blind eye to what we believe are serious matters that the company should address or to bring such matters into the appropriate public arenas.”

Bakkavor were recently the subject of a BBC whistle-blowing programme which picked up via their inside reporters all of the issues that we had been flagging up. Bakkavor, you may remember, also recently had to recall a whole swathe of products from Tesco and Marks & Spencer because of potential salmonella. They are now subject, we understand, to scrutiny by the Guardian newspaper and that Tesco alone have been in doing in-depth inspections of the company’s premises.

So, we say to companies like Bakkavor, or the AA or anybody else, the union has only two ways of doing business, we either do it inside or we will do it outside, but we will do our business. (*Applause*) I will say this, in the way we told ASDA last year to wise up, get into discussion, get a proper union agreement and start to act like a modern-day employer, I say this to Bakkavor: you need to get that site at Wembley sorted out and you need to pick up the phone at the fastest and earliest opportunity to Ed Blissett in the London Region, and get your act together. If you do not, you will be putting at risk the jobs on that site, not the GMB. You will be putting at risk the reputation of your

company, not the GMB. What the GMB will not do is to stand by quietly, silently, and see its members injured at work, or the public put at risk, in order that the company can carry on making profits or can dodge its responsibilities to its employees or to the public. We will not do it.

While we are on the Bs I have to mention Burberrys, a massive campaign for us this year, “treachery in Treorchy” I think someone said to me the other day, jobs shipped to China, high value, great product, just to make additional profits. That work which was done by highly-skilled people in Wales, Burberrys who trade on the “made in Wales” label, or “made in the UK”, that work is very likely – we are still following it, do not worry, message to you at Burberrys – may even be transported to China to be done by unregulated or even child labour.

So, the company that was making £50 profit on a polo shirt when it was made in Wales will ship it round to the other side of the world to be made, perhaps, even by child labour so they can make an extra fiver. It is a scandal. When people tell me that globalisation is a good thing, I would say, “Give me an example. I can give you a string of examples of abuse, of exploitation, of destroying our planet and our environment, at the prospect of making a few extra dollars, or yen, or pounds.”

Publicity on the Burberry campaign wall to wall - fantastic. Political support - without a doubt. The Labour Party in Wales, the MP, and the Assembly members were fantastic - 10 out of 10. Mervyn Burnett, the South Western Region organiser, he led the campaign tirelessly. He was a credit to the union and the members and even managed to arrange pickets at Burberry stores in Paris, New York, Chicago, and London. I did the one in London with them. I will tell you, it was a bit confusing, really, for some of the American tourists. They thought we were all waiting for the Burberry sales because we were all outside waiting at the doors!

The factory shut, so did we lose? When you fight you never lose. You never lose; you always keep your self-respect when you fight. It is only when you walk away with your tail between your legs that your self-respect goes with it. The members were pleased we fought. The compensation we received was a hell of a lot more than when Burberry started out on this venture. The community gained a million-and-a-half pounds for an investment for the future of that community. The profile of the union in Wales grew and we are still working, actually, on a new potential manufacturing base using work from Burberrys that we secured as part of the arrangement from Harrods and others. Fighting and campaigning brought a sense of pride to us all.

What about the biggest B of the lot, at the moment, the board at Remploy? A national ballot for strike action now seems inevitable and I say this to our brothers and sisters in Remploy, when it comes to the bundle the GMB will not be found wanting. (*Applause*) Hiding behind a rag-tag bobtail old bit of rubbish about trying to get more disabled people into mainstream employment - if you want to do that, if you really want to do that, then you would clean up some of the attacks on ordinary working people in the workplace now. Do you know what they are suggesting in order to help people at

Remploy - sack them, give them a new opportunity, and the new opportunity is, "Stay at home for the rest of your life on full pay." Not only is that a scandal in terms of a solution but can someone explain to me how giving a group of workers who are actually making a positive contribution to our economy and our society by being at work, how does that actually help them to integrate into our society by sending them home for the rest of their life? Can someone explain that one to me because it has gone past me at the moment?

We thought we had solved the Remploy situation because we were promised there would be no redundancies. This is where you must always be wary of the people who speak with forked tongues. They are not always journalists, either. The reality of life is that no redundancies in this case means, "We won't sack you unless you want to take a package and come back in a different contract, or we send you home in splendid isolation and keep paying you." How any politician could actually suggest that that is a better way forward for our members and for the people who work in Remploy is beyond me, and they should be ashamed of themselves. (*Applause*) The Chief Executive and the board of Remploy, I tell you this, you are not fit to catch measles let alone run a company.

So, you have our unqualified support. We know it is going to be tough and we know that we are going to have to have a fight, but I will tell you something, of all of the groups of workers, and I have worked with a lot over the years, I have never been more proud to stand alongside our Remploy membership and our Remploy activists. They are a credit to the union. (*Applause*) My advice to the Government from our Congress, and it is not an aggressive but a really honest piece of advice: Listen to us. Please listen to us. On public sector pay 2% is just not good enough. Health service morale needs rebuilding. Affordable housing, perhaps if we had not ignored conference policy year after year on affordable housing we would not quite have the crisis we have now. Private equity, just wake up and do what you know you should do. On global exploitation, stop telling us how good it is for us and see what it is doing to the planet and to the people of the planet. Listen or lose.

I want you to win and I want you to listen and if you listen I think you can win. If you do not listen, I think you will lose and you condemn all of us to the Tories. Let me make it clear where I stand. The Tories spell economic disaster and social division for this country. If they cannot even agree whether they should open a grammar school or not, what chance have they got of looking after the NHS? (*Applause*) Gordon Brown is a politician of substance, he is tough, make no mistake about that, a different style, and maybe it is what we are ready for: less spin, more substance. I think he has instincts in him for a fairer society, I genuinely believe that. I say to Gordon, please follow your instincts, not the spin doctors of the CBI.

So, a good year, a busy week ahead, please work hard, play as comrades, the GMB@Work is in place, we are not going to give in, and we are not going to go away. We are not going to take any notice of anybody who says it cannot be done and it is too hard. I tell you this, it is a good job that Bill Heley in Midlands and East Coast Region – give me a wave, I know you are here, I have seen you - it is a good job he did not say,

“Oh, it can’t be done.” When he started the organising in Southern Cross and pushed it through the region to a national project, which now sees us with more than 6,000 members in that company, is it not a good job that he did not say, “It can’t be done.”

Those of you somewhere out there who cannot even be bothered to read the policies made by this Congress, the snipers and the non-committed, and those who refuse to help us rebuild, you will find the GMB a very cold and unwelcome place in the time ahead. (*Applause*) Why should our shop stewards and our branch secretaries work all the hours God sends for the union and the members when others think they can ride on the bus without the same commitment and purpose in order to serve the members’ interests? I am not going to have double-standards. If it is good enough for our stewards and our branch secretaries, and our branch officials, to put all hours and commitment in to keep the union afloat, then that is the role model for everybody else who is connected or makes a living out of this organisation. (*Applause*)

I do not kid myself and nor should you, some people still try to ignore Congress and the CEC and think they can get away with it: I will tell you, there is no place to hide, there is no place to dodge, it is 100% commitment from everybody, and then you will really see growth. If people do not want to work, OK, that is fine, move over because there are plenty of others who would love the opportunity.

I promise you this. Passion - of course. Commitment - 100%. Hard work - I do not think it is, not really, if you believe in what the union stands for. Campaign - of course we will without fear. Fight – always. Win – as often as we bloody well can.

Mary, Congress, I commend the work of the union over the last 12 months and the General Secretary’s Report to you, and I thank Congress and the senior management team, and the Central Executive, for your commitment, your passion, your vision, and the thing I treasure most, your trust. Thank you very much. (*Standing ovation*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. What a proud day it was for us when you were elected our General Secretary. Congress, Paul Kenny, would you now please move your report pages 1-5 and 9-47?

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Debbie, are you going to second it?

SIS. D. COULTER (Deputy General Secretary): Formally.

The General Secretary’s Report (pages 1-5 and pages 9-47) was formally moved and seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Pages 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Pages 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40,

41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47. Anyone got a full house? (*Laughter*) You agree to accept the General Secretary's Report? (*Agreed*) I wish you had said that before I started counting!

(The General Secretary's Report (pages 1-5 and pages 9-47) was adopted.)

COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION REPORT: COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION (pages 51-54) and (pages 66-67)

COMMERCIAL SERVICES

Introduction

Since last year's Congress one of the main areas of work for this Section has been in the Security Industry. We remain the largest Union in the sector. However I have also had an input into the civil aviation industry and the Criminal Justice Sector.

CASH AND VALUABLES IN TRANSIT

The GMB continues to lead a very high profile campaign over attacks on our members who are working in the CVIT industry. The General Secretary and I have been involved in meeting Home Office ministers in order to put pressure on the Government on this issue. The recent high profile problems that have beset the Home Office including changes in ministers have not assisted our cause. However it seems that in many areas our pressure has paid off with the Police taking a more proactive approach and sharing best practice across the country. There are a series of meetings now planned across Government departments to take our campaign forward.

In October we held a very successful conference with 70 delegates from all the major companies in the sector including: G4S, Securitas, Brinks and Security Plus. The feedback from the shop stewards was extremely positive and it was a real boost to our campaign.

At the time of writing we are nearing a conclusion to negotiations with G4S over a welfare scheme for our members who are attacked at work. If these discussions are successful then it is anticipated that the welfare scheme will be rolled out across the industry.

G4S CVIT

We are continuing to bed in the new agreement signed off in October 2005 covering the G4S CVIT membership. This deal will see our members move to a £10 per hour rate and this has set the standard for the whole cash in transit industry. We have been involved in detailed negotiations over a new Memorandum of Agreement and Recognition Agreement. These are designed to build upon our strong organisation base and these negotiations are nearing conclusion at the time of writing this report. The lay reps from the G4S CVIT NNC have led in these discussions.

i. Recruitment

Our recruitment in G4S CVIT continues to go well. The Recruitment is overseen and monitored by the National Organisation Team which ensures that we have consistently high levels of recruitment at induction courses.

SECURITAS CVIT

The membership settled on 3.5% increase on basic pay and allowances and 1 extra day's holiday, with a commitment to moving towards a new £10 per hour rate. At the time of writing this report the negotiations over a £10 per hour rate have stalled not least due to signification changes at Securitas. Securitas CIT was also put up for sale last year, ultimately the business was not sold, although it effectively remains on the market. Securitas CIT is currently going through a rebranding and will now be called LOOMIS. It is anticipated that forthcoming pay negotiations will be difficult for the reasons outlined above.

G4S GUARDING

At both national and regional level we have been working on the bargaining structures which underpin the new recognition agreement signed off last year. The involvement of the NOT team has seen a significant increase in the recruitment of new members in G4S guarding we currently about 5500 members, but there is still considerable scope for growth. I have also been involved in discussions over improving our structures in the nationally managed accounts.

i. Patrol & Response

Members settled at 3.2% with a minimum wage of £7 per hour.

ii. Prime/Trillium Contract

The members agreed to a pay rises between 3% and 4.2% with a higher rates for some smaller groups of employees. One third of the employees on the contract, the lowest paid, received the 4.2% increase.

SECURITAS GUARDING

We are now taking a more consistent approach to recruitment across guarding inductions. Our negotiations over a collective bargaining structure which follows on from the signing of the new recognition agreement have been subject to a delay because of the major reorganisation in the business. At the time of writing we have now made some progress over the collective bargaining structures which will be essential in improving union density and giving our members an effective voice.

INDUSTRY LICENSING

We have continued to interact with the SIA over licensing. At the time licensing went live we successfully lobbied the SIA to ensure that individual guards were not prosecuted if through no fault of their own they had not received a licence. We continue to argue that the SIA should be taking a robust approach to the enforcement of licensing by focusing on Company Directors who fail to comply with the legislation.

At the time of writing we are due to meet with the new Head of the SIA and one of the key items on the agenda will be the increase of license fees. Licence fees were increased without any consultation with the GMB despite us being a key stakeholder. I have made representations to the SIA and the Government on this issue.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SECTOR.

In line with Congress policy the union has continued to lobby for the repeal of Section 127 the 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act, which hampers our ability to take industrial action.

GSL

Our members in Inter Prison Transport settled on 3.5% increase on

basic rates. Our members in Court Services settled on 2.9%.

We have recently established a new forum for our members working in the prison sector of GSL, this should improve communication and allow us to better develop our bargaining agenda.

CIVIL AVIATION

Trade conditions in the civil aviation industry continue to be difficult not least because of the growth of low cost airlines. I have been particularly involved in Servisair who have undergone a change in their ownership and company structures they are in the middle of a two year deal from 1 July 2006 the second year of a two year deal gave our members an increase based on inflation as measured by the Retail Price Index (RPI) plus 0.5%. These rates will run through to 1 May 2007.

In Aviance we have settled on a two year pay deal backdated to 1st July 2006, Year 1 will provide an increase of 3.6% on all elements of pay. Year 2 (1st July 2007 to 30th June 2008) will provide an increase of the RPI (published in June 2007) plus 0.5%, with the RPI underpinned at 3.0%, thereby giving a guaranteed increase of 3.5% on all elements of pay.

ACTION TAKEN ON MOTIONS TO CONGRESS 2006

Motion 138

The GMB has been at the forefront of the campaign over attacks on our members working in the CVIT industry. We have worked closely with individual companies and the BSIA in making representations to Government over the attacks issue. We have had meetings with Home Office Ministers and as a result a working party has been set up to look at trying to address the issue across government departments.

- We have held a Parliamentary lobby over the issue of attacks and we have supported a number of questions and motions that have been tabled in the House of Commons.
- We jointly held a fringe meeting with G4S at the Labour Party Conference. Representations have been made to the Police in high attack areas and this has resulted in a number of successful initiatives being taken.
- We held a very successful shop stewards Conference in October with representatives from all the major players across the industry.
- In the Guarding sector we have argued that the security industry as a whole needs to be included as part of the Government's Respect at Work agenda.

DHL

The early part of 2006, was spent fighting the breakaway organisation the UDW. We managed at several depots to win round those members that defected, and to bring in as a result new democracies for the lay structure, along with an organising agenda based around a campaign Delivery in the workplace matters.

In DHL Express (UK) Ltd due to the companies precarious state financially, we managed without a dispute to bring a pay rise of three payments over thirteen months, with the bottom rate increase of 11% and a top rate increase equivalent to 20%. Also major changes to conditions were negotiated with a new collective bargaining agreement, disciplinary procedures (winning rights for probationary employees), and new Individual grievance procedure, along with a Security of employment agreement based around non compulsory redundancy.

During the year we fought off the spectre of casualistaion by going entering in to dispute, which as a

result of the campaign we ran, saved 1600 jobs. Eventually due to the agreement reached our members did not need to take strike action.

New training is being brought on for our reps, on the organising model, and the new procedures, which should open up new opportunities for recruitment.

In DHL Freight, a pay rise of 4.25% has been agreed, and it is established that a future pay rises, weighting and allowances will increase with base rate increases automatically.

The company plan a complete reorganisation, which we are involved at every stage, and recognition is to be granted for DHL Freight International, which further opens up opportunities for recruitment in DHL International (red), with the potential for around 6k members. Recruitment has already been taken place in DHL International, with members now based in London, Leeds, West Midlands, North East, and Southern.

I would like to thank all the stewards and Officers who fought the breakaway, and organised the depots and members, which not only saw off the breakaway, but produced the negotiating results and membership resolve to win major benefits and security of employment for our members.

PRISON SERVICE

The GMB plays a role in the Prison Service Joint Industrial Council (PSJIC) which negotiates for around 3,000 miscellaneous grade employees in the publicly run prison service in England and Wales.

The history of collective bargaining in this group is not a happy one. It is characterised by inter-union rivalry, employers negotiations detached from the operational reality of the service and low morale amongst the employees concerned. The 2006 pay round was absolutely typical. The increase was due to be effective from mid year. The employer brought the implementation date forward (always welcome) but the "negotiations" were effectively ended in December because the PSJIC TU negotiations ran into treasury imposed buffers. An offer of 1.6% (in reality 2.2% because of the change of date) was imposed by the employer; this is not the first time that the settlement has been:

- Months late
- Imposed by the employer
- Derisory by nature A GMB Delegate Conference was held in Manchester in December last year and Delegates were given the opportunity not only to identify the shape of the 2007 claim but to give their views as to a strategy to break the log jam given our industrial weakness. Our thoughts on this are being channelled to the other unions and progress will be reported back to the members by briefings and by their "Nick News" newsletter.

Job Evaluation

HMPS is currently carrying out a large scale job evaluation exercise allegedly due for implementation next year (2008). Of course like any cost issues in the public sector if this falls foul of the Treasury's wishes at the critical time then funding will be an issue.

The GMB has punched way above our weight on this issue thanks to efforts of our colleague Mick Hubbard from Productivity Services who has done a great deal to keep the job evaluation exercise on track to operate fairly.

THOMPSONS SOLICITORS

The GMB has continued to represent Thompsons Solicitors employees for the last year. Pay and conditions negotiations for 2006 produced an above average increase of 4% on all basic salaries with effect from 1 October 2006. A similar increase was applied to the Practice Childcare Allowance. During the course of the year other issues resolved included:

- The practice termination of the Long Service Award (a consequence of the Age Discrimination Regulations)
- The practice withdrawal of their proposals to change (cut) pension contributions following intensive discussion (see below)
- Maternity Leave Provisions
- Flexible Working

Since last Congress the NNC has been reinvigorated and now meets the practice on a regular, scheduled basis.

Pension Issue

Thompson pension arrangements have for a number of years provided for enhanced employer contributions to match enhanced employee contributions for employees over 45. Under the governments botched first draft of the Age Discrimination Regulations this would have had to change and the practice advised us accordingly. Needless to say this potential change caused considerable anxiety amongst our members. The Governments subsequent about turn on this issue – anticipated by some excellent advice I received from National Office Pensions Department was subsequently reflected in a welcome reversion to the status quo by the Practice. *(Adopted)*

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, it gives me great pleasure now to ask Gary Smith to move the Commercial Services Section Report and just to tell Congress that Gary has been selected as the National Secretary of the Commercial Services Section. Welcome, Gary. Congratulations. *(Applause)*

BRO. G. SMITH (National Secretary, Commercial Services Section): Thank you, Congress, President, we have heard a great deal over the past couple of days about the progress we have been making as a trade union.

Can I start my report by commenting on the terrific work that has gone on at DHL. Two years ago the union was fighting a scab breakaway and de-recognition. A year ago we were on the brink of a national dispute and I am delighted that we can now celebrate a new comprehensive recognition agreement between the GMB and the company. Great credit goes to Mick Rix and all the officers who have been involved, and particularly to those shop stewards who have worked so hard through the past difficult times.

In terms of aviation, colleagues, we continue to have a very good position on a number of the airports and amongst a number of the companies in the industry. It is not an easy environment in which to work at the moment. Mainly the businesses that we deal with have contracted over the past period and the growth in low cost and the downward

pressure on prices in the industry will mean it will be a challenging sector for us to operate in going forward.

I am delighted to tell Congress that in the security industry we continue to go from strength to strength. In static guarding we were recognised with national agreements and within G4S and Securitas we now attend all the inductions. I have to say a big, “Well done” to the National Organising Team and Bob Crosby from our own CEC. If you look at the G4S inductions, some months ago we were on about 60% sign-up of those employees and after their input we are now hitting about 90% of G4S employees at inductions now joining the union.

Congress, static guarding is a very challenging environment in which to organise and I make no bones about it, there is much work still to be done to improve union density and to put in place the strong, effective, shop steward structures that we require going forward. But I give you an absolute commitment that in the coming year we will redouble our efforts to ensure that we are giving our members a strong voice at work in the static guarding sector.

Can I also pledge to you, Congress, that in the next period we will be working very hard to ensure that the licensing requirements that we have in static guarding are not watered down as we move forward into the Olympics. There will be no siren voices around the Olympics who will want to deliver security on the cheap and we will vigorously oppose that.

Last year I gave a commitment to Congress and to the section committees that we would be engaged with the wider stakeholders around the security industry. Over the past 12 months we have done a lot of political work and we have been heavily engaged with the Security Industry Association, who regulate the security industry. We have had heated exchanges about increases in licence fees which have impacted upon many of our low paid members but I have to say that we have had some positive experience because the SIA continues to commit to taking enforcement and legal action not against individual security officers but against companies and company directors who fail to comply with the law.

Congress, we have made representations to government over the appalling section 127 which limits our ability to take effective industrial action in the criminal justice sector. It is not going to be an easy fight, Congress, let me tell you. The Security Industry are keen actually to extend the coverage of section 127, but I give you this commitment again that we will continue in our campaign to have this piece of legislation repealed and I am very pleased to tell you that it was our union that had the repeal of section 127 written into the Trade Union Freedom Bill. The Government has given us a commitment that in the criminal justice sector they want to build a new relationship with the GMB and they do want to engage in the issues of concern to our members, like staffing levels in the prisons run by the private sector.

Last year, Congress, we were mandated to develop and support the campaign that we have been running in the cash and valuables sector. We have had a huge amount of attacks upon our members who work in that sector. In the Autumn of last year we convened the first industrial conference bringing shop stewards together from across the industry and it was a terrific event. We have had positive support from the Transport Minister, who has issued new guidance now to local authorities over the parking of cash-in-transit vehicles.

In the last few weeks the Home Office following pressure from the GMB has hosted a conference specifically to look at the high level of attacks. Our shop stewards, senior police officers, representatives from local government, and the banking industry, came together to launch a charter on the attacks issue. I will be following that up in the next few weeks with a round-table meeting with the Minister to talk about how we are going to develop the campaign. Make no bones about it, colleagues, the attacks campaign started in the West Midlands would not be where it was without the input of the GMB.

As I bring my remarks to a conclusion, colleagues, one of the key elements of our attacks campaign was about the development of a compensation scheme for our members working in the industry who were injured in the course of their duties. I am delighted to tell you that in the next few weeks we anticipate we will be launching a trust fund with a major employer in the sector, G4S, which will compensate and support our members if they are tragically injured in attacks at their work. We anticipate we will roll that out across the industry over the next year. It is terrific news for our membership there.

In bringing my remarks to a close, could I thank all the officers and staff who have supported the section over the past period and I want to pay a particularly big thank you to our shop stewards and activists who do a terrific job in supporting the section. I move, President.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Gary. Can I now move to pages 51, 52, 53, 54. Are there any questions? *(No response)* No. Agree to accept that part of the report? *(Agreed)* Can I now move to pages 66 and 67. Any questions? *(No response)* Agree to accept that report? *(Agreed)* Thank you and thank you very much, Gary.

(Commercial Services Section Report: Commercial Services Section (pages 51-54) and (pages 66-67) was adopted.)

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now move to Industrial & Economic Policy: Commercial Services, calling resolution 108, Automobile Association, to be moved by the Southern Region. Then I will be calling 109, Women in Security, to be moved by the Southern Region, 110, Compensation Scheme, mover London Region, 111, "O" Licences, North West & Irish Region, and 112, Maritime & Ports Policy, Southern Region. Colleagues, will you please come to the front, and the seconders.

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: COMMERCIAL SERVICES

MOTION 108

AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION

Conference condemns the action of the AA Management in their anti-Trade Union approach, and supports the return of the AA to a motoring organisation for the benefit of the motoring public.

AA SECTION X31 BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. S. THOMPSON (Southern): Congress condemns the action of the AA management in their anti-trade union approach and support the return of the AA as a motoring organisation for the benefits of the motoring public.

The AA was used and known by the general public as a good company, and recognised. If a patrol was sent out to you to do a breakdown or a member of the public asked a patrol a question, then he was known to be honest and trustworthy. He was not there to rip you off or tow you to a garage and receive a £10 bonus for doing so.

The patrol force is working at two-thirds of its original staffing levels due to private equity, morale is low, and staff feel that they have been bullied to hit targets that they say they cannot achieve. They have now stopped night-time patrols service to the public and to the members of the AA it has reduced.

Management introduced a scab union to drive down contracts and reduce staff within the AA. The first to go were the sick and the disabled workers. All this has done is lower morale and individuals work more hours for less money. Most accept the last job of shift - it is not "most accept", it is part of the contracts now, they have to accept the last job of the shift before they sign off duty. They work in all weathers, all times of the day, and long hours for less money. No wonder the service to the motoring public has dropped from one to three within the Which? report.

We need staff to realise that they have been conned by management, they have been conned into believing that the way forward was to join a scab union and that this was a better way to go forward than being an AA GMB member.

I urge you all to support this motion and bring back the AA to the GMB and the general public. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder.

BRO. R. DONALD (Southern): I was on patrol for 27 years. Private equity took over the AA and within days of taking over the AA they started sacking people, they were kicking people out the doors left, right and centre. They closed down parts of the AA that we had just got, they sold everything off we possibly had, and then two-and-a-half years ago it became my turn. With the help of the GMB we took it all to press. After 27

years they tried to accuse us of being bad performers, and everything else they could put at us; it was all because we were not bringing enough money into the business. If you were not bringing in the money, then you were not any good to that company any more. The actual looking after the members became second. Cash was the main thing. If you could not fill up that bucket with money, then basically you were not doing your job and you were out the door. I would like you all to support. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, this Congress salutes members like that, proud to be a member and proud to work for the union. Thank you very much, colleague, well done. I know it was difficult for you. (*Applause*) Motion 109, Women in Security, Southern Region.

MOTION 109

WOMEN IN SECURITY

We call on Congress to support a campaign to increase the number of women within the Security Industry given the future security needs the Industry will need support to increase the number of women employed. As the major union in the Industry we call for the GMB to ensure this remains the case.

SECURITY G36 BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. B. BEAVEN (Southern): As your perception of the security industry is that it will be completely male dominated and 95% of our members and the employers in the security industry are men, it will probably come as some surprise to you to know that the major companies with which we have recognition agreements are actually planning by 2012 to have 25 to 30% of their employees as women.

For this change to actually happen there needs to be a change in perception about people that are actually employed inside security. Gone are the days of two people on a pushbike standing outside a gate. It is now very complicated and actually ranges from guarding, CVIT (cash and valuables in transit) through to private investigators and next year we will probably cover key holders as well.

For the GMB actually to take this opportunity we are working very closely with people like Gary Smith to develop the recognition agreements so that we no longer just recruit people that are coming in but we are involved in the recruitment of people that are joining the firms as well. So, we are actually trying to get women to accept the fact that there are jobs that for them inside security.

Congress needs to be aware of this change and the change in the licensing which means that next year the SIA licences could also apply to people holding keys in places like councils, schools; anybody that holds a key could be the holder of a security licence. We need to start working towards actually representing those people. I so move.

THE PRESIDENT: Seconder.

SIS. A. PRICE (Southern) in seconding Motion 109 said: President, Congress, I do not presently work in the security industry, however with the changes to the SIA licences proposed over the coming years I could well be doing so in the future. It is proposed for the licence to apply to all internal security, which could include councils, and this will cover anyone who is a key holder, as my colleague said, such as caretakers through to cleaners.

This presents a huge opportunity for organisation and recruitment within our existing workplaces and to increase the density of female membership in this area. However, the demands of licensing will also require a skills change for part of the workforce as it requires a written test in English. The GMB is already the security union and this will give us an opportunity for even more growth. I urge you to support this motion. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Can I ask for the mover of 110?

MOTION 110

COMPENSATION SCHEME – SECURITY INDUSTRY

This branch urges Congress to do all within their powers, working alongside the CIVT (cash in transit business) employer's organisation and Government, to ensure that there is in place, a system of universally agreed payment/compensation in respect of any member of staff, within the CIVT business, sustaining an injury and being unable to return to employment, as a result of an attack whilst at work.

We wish for a measure to be put in place that fully compensates those unable to work, or suffering any incapacity, as a result of an attack that ensures protection of actual earnings throughout their period of incapacity. We suggest that a similar model to that which operates within the construction industry, in that a levy is charged against all employers and a central system of compensation, with a set tariff in respect of injury as a result of an assault during an attack, is put in place.

SECURICOR 1 BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. M. HUSBANDS (London): President, Congress, every worker has the right to expect to be safe from accident, injury, bullying, physical and verbal abuse, and the threat of attack and actual attack while at work. That, colleagues, is the very ethos of the GMB and it should be the ethos of every employer. However, we know that the threat of attack affects many workers in several industries. We frequently hear of attacks on railway and other transport workers, every paper, local or national, will carry reports of assault on hospital staff, local government and civil service front desk staff, who run the risk of verbal abuse, and worse, every day they deal with the general public. These types of

attack are an affront and have no place in a civilised society. They are also in the main without motive.

However, there are workers, many of whom are our members, who are subject to attacks and indeed if the statistics are true are likely to be attacked every time they clock on, and these attacks are with motive. I refer Congress to our colleagues in the cash-in-transit industry. That motive is robbery. The very nature of the service that they provide means that they are a target for the most violent criminals who show no regard for life or limb.

In 2006 over 1,000 cash-in-transit workers were the subject of attack. London Region's Candid magazine reported that this year attacks were occurring at an even higher rate and that attacks by firearms and other weapons such as machetes are frequently used. Our members have been beaten, pistol whipped, had bones broken and limbs nearly cut off, and been shot. In one incident a guard was shot even after he had given the robbers the money. Even when no injury occurs the post traumatic stress must be severe.

But, Congress, although cash-in-transit workers are likely types of workers to suffer serious injury and death because of the job they do, there is no national agreement scheme to compensate them for injury, or worse, and being unable to return to work after an attack. This is not acceptable. The construction industry was famous for the number of deaths and loss of time injuries it had. Trade union representation and pressure improved that industry's safety record and it has also brought about an introduction of a nationally agreed compensation scheme for those unfortunate enough to lose wages through accident. There should be nothing less in the cash-in-transit industry. The British Security Industry Association has done much to clean up its act in recent years. The GMB should force them to go that one step further. Congress, I move.

THE PRESIDENT: A seconder?

BRO. M. FOSTER (London): Congress, GMB members do not get up in the morning with the expectation that they will return home injured or even disabled. Unfortunately, in the security industry, and in particular the cash-in-transit side, this is often the case. Simply all this motion calls for is a compensatory scheme to be set up by both the employers' organisation and the Government to financially support our members who are injured in their line of work. I second.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. That packet looks very good! (*Laughter*) 112?

BRO. K. FLANAGAN (North West & Irish): 111.

THE PRESIDENT: All right, Kevin, just making sure you were awake.

BRO. K. FLANAGAN: Just testing me again, eh? She wants part of that whisky, doesn't she, eh? That's what it is.

MOTION 111

'O' LICENSES

Congress calls upon GMB to organise a campaign to tighten up on the operation of 'O' licences which are being used by bus operators to develop 'taxi style' services to the detriment of the hackney carriage and private hire trade.

Unlike drivers who are required to operate under local authority control through the licencing procedures, drivers of 'O' licence vehicles are not required to undergo CRB checks or to undertake the knowledge test which is a requirement for private hire and hackney carriage drivers. The members believe that this is a serious weakness in the security for passengers and overall safety and standards that customers should expect.

Congress calls upon the GMB to campaign that those who are operating similar services to hackney carriage drivers or that would have a detriment on private hire services, should be required to meet the same regulations and standards that are required of the licenced trade. Bus operators should not be allowed to develop services which are in competition with hackney carriage drivers or the private hire services without also requiring to meet the same standards. This issue is placing the livelihoods of hackney carriage and private hire drivers in jeopardy and also runs the danger of bringing the trade into disrepute. The use of the term 'taxi' should only be allowed on vehicles which have met the full standards required by the Licencing Authorities. We call upon the GMB to bring this to the attention of the Government and Licencing Authorities to ensure that a more rigorous policing of 'O' licence operation is adopted and that new standards are introduced which remove the existing loopholes.

MANCHESTER CENTRAL D41 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

BRO. K. FLANAGAN (North West & Irish): Good morning, Congress. Still sober. Haven't drunk the whisky yet!

Moving Motion 111 on "O" licences – Congress, "O" licences is a term that is used for bus-like operators who actually run taxi style operations. We believe that the legislation governing "O" licences should actually be tightened up and secured in order to protect the interests not only of the trade, the hackney carriage and the private hire trade, but also the general public.

As you know, many drivers invest a great deal in their taxis and actually invest a great deal of time and effort into the taxi provision that we have in this country. Sadly, over recent years small bus operators have actually stepped into this market by running taxi style buses or taxi style operations from several airports, railway stations, and other venues.

What may surprise people is that they operate under the "O" licence, they do not have to submit themselves to the same standards of scrutiny that are required under the local authority licensing system for the private hire and hackney trade.

It goes further than that, we raised these concerns with the Traffic Commissioners 18 months and two years ago. We have been campaigning about this for a long time, that they should be brought into line with the same standards that are required of the private hire and the hackney carriage trade. I am pleased to say that Terry Flanagan, a namesake but no relation, from the Professional Drivers Branch, told me they are supporting this also.

It is important because we want to see that passengers who get into those vehicles are fully protected by the laws and fully protected in legislation. We said to the Traffic Commissioners there are major loopholes and concerns when actually you have bus operators operating with taxi style services. Sadly, since we drew this motion up by my branch we have actually already seen the consequences of that.

In this day and age it is somewhat surprising that drivers of these vehicles do not under the law have to submit themselves to the Criminal Records Bureau checks. They do not have to submit themselves to the same licensing scrutiny required for the local authority licensing system.

Sadly, in Manchester one of the "O" licence operators operating out of Manchester Airport, one of their drivers was refused a licence twice for good reason by the City Council, twice, but they could walk across the road and get in an "O" licence vehicle and operate a taxi style service. It is with deep regret I report that a young lady was raped. That is not acceptable in this age. It is not acceptable in terms of public safety. It is not acceptable when people think they are entering a vehicle that has actually already been regulated by the local authority.

It is time that the Traffic Commissioners and legislation caught up with the standards that we require that our members meet in the private and hackney carriage trade. We want the legislation tightened up, we want the Commissioners to get off their backsides and start dealing with this. Shears already says to us from the Traffic Commissioners, it requires law. Well, if it requires law, then get off your backside and get the law changed because it is not good enough. Congress, I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kevin. Secunder.

BRO. P. PERRY (North West & Irish): President, Congress, "O" licence operators should not be allowed to operate without following the same procedures the hackney carriage and private drivers have to do. There is no CRB check on them or child protection checks carried out on them. These procedures are of the utmost importance to any driver operating in this industry as passengers welfare is the most important factor, and children's protection. We ask Congress to support this motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Can I have the mover of 112, please, Southern Region?

MOTION 112

MARITIME & PORTS POLICY - THE GMB

Congress recognises, that in a world of sustainable development and serious environmental concerns, that there is an economic need, currently European policy, to shift the transport of goods from road to rail and Sea.

Congress recognises, that we in the UK, live in grid-lock Britain as regards road transport and the economic and environmental damage is excessive.

Congress recognises that there must be a clearly defined and strategic development policy for Ports and Maritime Affairs.

Congress believes that new port development and upgrades and improvement to existing facilities should be supported by infrastructure development from government, which is the norm in most European countries, but not so in the UK.

Congress is unhappy with the normal Labour Government approach, based on free market led principles, which take no account of the national economy and regional development.

Congress recognises that ports and maritime business is essential for the economic 'well-being' of the nation and further recognises the forceful regenerative effect, within a locality/region, of ports development.

Congress recognises the national need of modern, efficient container terminals, feeder terminals and Ferry facilities, adequately supported by transport infrastructure, to ensure freight can move quickly, efficiently and on a sustainable basis.

Congress urges the GMB leadership to lobby and campaign for a national ports policy and address the issues contained within this motion.

Congress further requests the leadership, in a world of sustainable development and 'Motorways of the Seas' policy, that Ports and Maritime is a growth sector and the GMB should be equipped, as a priority, to increase its membership and service in these vital and expanding areas of the economy.

DOVER FERRIES X23 BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. P. GOODACRE (Southern): Congress recognises the Government's lack of a clearly defined strategic development policy for ports and maritime affairs and is concerned by the economic and environmental consequences.

The current congestion witnessed on our road networks will get worse with the projected increase in the movement of goods. For example, in 2003 the percentage of world GDP traded was 15%, by 2011 this will have doubled to 30%, by 2025 container traffic will rise by 177% and the traffic carried by Ro-Ro ferries will increase by 133%. To an open trading nation like the UK these figures represent a particular challenge and a coherent policy is required capable of meeting it. Failure to do so will have detrimental effects on both the economy and the environment.

There is a clear need to shift the movement of goods from road to rail and sea. Part of the national policy must include the construction of efficient container terminals such as the Thames Gateway project. A high percentage of goods handled at this terminal will be delivered within a 25-mile radius of a terminal reducing the volume of traffic carried on our roads. This project will also have regenerative effects on the area creating upwards of 15,000 jobs. This is a model that must be replicated on other sites in the country.

Needless to say investment in ports and container terminals must be matched by public spending in supporting infrastructure. This currently is not the case. For example, the private companies involved in the construction of the Thames Gateway project are having to pay for the improvements to Junction 30 of the M25. This is a junction that also serves the Lakeside shopping development. This characteristic reliance on the private sector will inevitably lead to under-investment in this important area and will be to the detriment of the national economy.

This Government's characteristic *laissez faire* approach is incapable of meeting the challenges ahead and taking the opportunities presented by the increase in trade. Congress wishes to see this situation rectified and requests that the GMB initiates a campaign for a national ports and maritime policy. Furthermore, it is recognised that logistics based on ports and maritime is a growth area of the economy and wishes to see the GMB equip itself for and prioritise recruitment and organisation in this vital and growing area of the economy. I move.

Motion 110 was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone in Congress want to come in on the debate on any of the resolutions which have just been moved? (*No response*) In that case, I will call Bob Crosby on Motion 110.

BRO. B. CROSBY (CEC, London): I am speaking on behalf of the CEC and supporting Motion 110 with a qualification.

This motion urges Congress to do all within its powers to ensure that there is a comprehensive compensation system for our members in cash-in-transit who are unable to work as a result of attacks. These attacks are increasing and becoming more and more violent. Our members are suffering from shootings, stabbings and vicious beatings, yet they are just doing their job. Their job is an essential one, a public service which keeps the cash in the bank machines, shop tills and in our pockets.

The GMB has been at the forefront of the campaign to combat cash in delivery crime and recently the Home Office, the Security Industry Authority, the British Bankers' Association and the British Security Industry Association joined forces with the GMB to sign a Crime Reduction Charter. That is good news, but what about the people who are injured or disabled when they are attacked at work? They face a period of sick pay at best and a life of poverty at worst.

This motion calls for a compensation scheme to compensate those unable to work or suffering any incapacity as a result of an attack. However, it calls for a scheme similar to that which operates in the construction industry based on a levy and a central system of compensation.

We have recently agreed in principle a compensation scheme with G4S, which is funded and structured differently to the Construction Industry Scheme and which has the capacity to roll out across the industry.

Therefore, the qualification is that we would wish to have the flexibility also to look at other options for schemes across the industry.

Congress, I ask you to support Motion 110 with that qualification.

THE PRESIDENT: Does the London Region accept the qualification?

BRO. E. BLISSETT (London): Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. I now move to the vote on Motions 108, 109, 110, 111 and 112.

Motion 108 was carried.

Motion 109 was carried.

Motion 110 was carried with qualification.

Motion 111 was carried.

Motion 112 was carried.

EMPLOYMENT POLICY

PENSIONS & RETIREMENT

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I ask the movers of Employment Policy: Pensions & Retirement. I will be calling Motions 63, 64, 66 and 67

MOTION 63

PENSIONABLE AGE

This conference calls upon the CEC to campaign against the Governments plans to increase the pensionable age to 68 years.

Britain has the fourth richest economy in the world and can with a fairer level of taxation applied to the richest sections of society keep the retirement age at 60 and 65 years.

This conference supports those who wish to work beyond 65 years without discrimination providing it is of their choice.

MILTON KEYNES CITY BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. J. HION (London): I move Motion 63. As trade unionists we must resist Government plans to impose on the people of this country their intentions to push up the age of retirement into the seventies. When you think about it, it is an outrage that in this day and age where one worker, because of technology, can do the work of six or more, and then to argue the case that the nation cannot afford to pay its people a decent pension because not enough money is available is a disgrace and a lie.

Just think about what you have read in the national press. The chairman and directors of large companies are being paid millions of pounds in bonuses. To pay that sort of money you would not say that the company was actually broke. For example, former BP boss, Lord Browne, on his retirement, would have received £20 million in shares, a £1.5 million loyalty bonus and a £20 million pension pot.

The attack on the retirement age is taking place across the EU. French working people are in struggle to resist. At the same time, workers in Germany are resisting. What is required is for the Government to move a large portion of the wealth that the minority hold in Britain from the top to the bottom. That is what is needed to maintain a retirement age of 60 and 65.

Promises have been made that in return for rises in the age of retirement we shall have a decent State pension. Do you believe this or trust any government to do that? I do not.

What I believe will happen is that the older worker will be unable to find a job and instead of being on a State pension, as they should be, they will be living on a low level of income and on employment benefit. Sisters and Brothers, do not let them get away with this. I move.

BRO. A. GUEDES (London): I second Motion 63 – Pensionable Age.

President, Congress and colleagues, has anybody questioning the Government why they plan to increase the pensionable age to 68 years? Is it because people are living longer and are healthier? Is it because that some research has probably shown that people over 60 are keen to keep their jobs for a longer time, or is it keep unemployment rates within manageable figures? I believe that the State pension scheme has given signals to its weakness during the past decade, and increasing the pensionable age is nothing else but a

strategy to increase the contributions and postpone the problem for a few more years at the expense of people who have already contributed to the scheme during their lifetime.

By the way, why should the pensionable age be compulsory? Please support this motion.

PENSIONS

MOTION 64

PENSIONS

Congress calls upon the government to increase pensions to the poorest pensioners, without increasing the pension paid to all pensioners above inflation or wage rises, whichever is the greater. The aim should be to increase the weekly minimum to £200 per week.

DUNGENESS ELECTRICITY D27 BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. A. CIRKET (Southern): President, this motion follows on quite nicely from the previous one. Some organisations when they are searching for votes put out the view that offering all people of retirement age or in receipt of a pension an increase is the best way to distribute the funds which are available. Our branch does not believe that. What we would like to do is to assist or help those people at the bottom, to try and move them up to a level where they can afford to live quite comfortably.

As you can see, this motion suggests that £200 a week should be a starting point. Whether it is is a debatable point. However, it is a reasonable place to start. Unlike other people who make suggestions on pensions because they are looking for votes, I suggest that we support this motion because it is right. Thank you.

The motion was formally seconded.

A NEW AND FAIRER PENSION SCHEME

MOTION 66

A NEW AND FAIRER PENSION SCHEME

Most of the European Social Systems have developed their Pension Schemes based on the presupposed image that future generations would be in greater number than the present one at the time.

Basically, and on average, each couple would have three and more children, meaning that there would be at least two or three people deducting National Insurance Contributions for each beneficiary – the Distributive Scheme. Unfortunately, the demography did not evolve that way and the Distributive

Scheme is condemned to bankruptcy. The UK Pension Scheme is not an exception and this is an issue that concerns everybody.

By principle, if a worker pays contributions into a Pension Scheme during 40 years of a life time's work, she/he expects a decent retirement pension that permits a wealthy enjoyment of her / his retirement. The actual systems do not meet that criterion.

Trade Unions are the representatives of most of the Pension Scheme contributors – the workers. Therefore, Trade Unions should be called upon to design, develop and manage the Pension Schemes in order to make the necessary adjustments that would permit the Pension Scheme to meet the goals for what is was created in the first instance, protecting the rights and interests of their members and future members.

GMB, Britain's General Union should press the Labour Party to take the necessary steps to make possible a new Pension Scheme Development Partnership to assure the future of the Pension Scheme and prevent its rupture.

LOWESTOFT BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. A. GUEDES (London): I move Motion 66 – A New and Fairer Pension Scheme.

President, Congress and colleagues, during the past century governments have supported the State pension scheme which is based on the distribution of collective contributions over a life's working time and counting on the increase of population believing that each couple would bring up three or more children who would be actively working adults by the time of their parents' retirement and, therefore, contributing to their pension.

Unfortunately, demography did not evolve according to the government's expectations and other factors, such as inflation, were not foreseen by the scheme's developers at the scheme's early stages, thereby putting the State pension scheme into jeopardy and condemning them to bankruptcy.

The UK's occupational pension scheme is not an exception. Due to this congenital error, the State scheme failed to fulfil the pensioners' expectations of a deserved and carefree retirement and decent pension pay that allowed them a wealthy enjoyment of their retirement.

Trade unions are the natural representatives of pension scheme contributors – the workers. It seems that their role has been discoloured in the past when concerning how to develop and manage State pension schemes. It is necessary that trade unions be actively involved in all affairs which concern the future of their members and a new and fair State pension scheme is one of the major issues affecting everybody. This issue needs to be properly addressed before it is too late.

GMB, as one of the biggest trade unions in the UK, should press the Labour Party and the Government to take the necessary steps to make possible a new State pension scheme that

amends the mistakes of the past and guarantees the future sustainability of the system, preventing its rupture and, simultaneously, permitting the completion of the pensioners' expectations. I move.

The motion was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, after I call Motion 70, after that debate and when Sheila Bearcroft has replied, I have to warn the movers of resolutions on the European report. I shall be going straight to that before lunch. Just to get you alarmed, that is what I shall be doing.

PENSIONS

MOTION 67

67. PENSIONS

Congress deplores the treatment of the workers who are relying on full compensation from the Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS). Government should honour any promises already made.

R35 – ROCESTER JCB BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

BRO. G. RICHARDSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): I move Motion 67.

President and Congress, the Financial Assistance Scheme, or FAS as many of us know it, is the scheme that does not properly reimburse the losses to many of our members in pension schemes due to companies going bust or winding-up.

Congress, even this Labour Government is evading its true responsibilities in rejecting the verdicts of four official inquiries. For a Labour Government to spurn the very people the Party was set up for is shameful. Until Robert Maxwell came along workers assumed that their money was put into occupational pensions and was safe. That belief waivered when the crooked publisher plundered £450 million from its companies before disappearing over the side of his yacht.

To reassure us all a law was passed which Labour, on coming to power, insisted made pension schemes safe, but it was not so. As the Pensioner Regulator pointed out, far from strengthening the new arrangement the Government cut the protection available. We all know the disaster which has followed where more than 125,000 people, whose firms have folded, have lost which, for most, meant their life savings.

Congress, only in response to a public outcry has this Government set up a £2 billion fund. That sounds a lot but over sixty years it works out at £33 million a year. That is not even chicken feed. But even this is nothing to what has happened since.

Last year the Parliamentary Ombudsman investigated Labour's assurance over occupational pensions. It was a damning report which concluded that it was guilty of providing inaccurate, incomplete, unclear and inconsistent information. Congress, guess what? This Government totally rejected the findings. For the very first time ever the Government rejected what the Ombudsman's report said.

Then the Public Accounts Committee decided that the Government had misled the victims, a decision which was rejected as well.

The European Court of Justice found that pension law had been breached and, finally, the High Court, agreeing with the verdict of all others, demanded a re-think, and guess what? That, too, was rejected. Why do we have these laws if the Government does not abide by them? Congress, one in forty who have already retired is receiving nothing at all.

In the March Budget the fund was increased to £8 billion. That sum still sounds a lot but it is over sixty years.

Lastly, the Government has the opportunity to do the right thing with a recent cross-party proposal to launch a Pensions Lifeboat Fund to fully compensate the wind-up victims affected to the level enjoyed by the schemes in the Pension Protection Fund. Yet again, this was rejected with the help of many Labour MPs who voted against it.

Congress, Labour should be ashamed of this mean spirited treatment of decent people, and this Congress urges the GMB to lobby the Government until justice is finally won for all those affected people. I move.

The motion was formally seconded.

PENSIONS

PENSIONS

This debate on pensions will be on-going for evermore until such time that employers are made responsible for the conditions on which they employ people. Employees in the country used to have continuity of employment, either in full-time or part-time work, but unfortunately this does not exist anymore. Contracts of employment now mainly consist of three or six months' duration on N.M.R. or less. Employees cannot afford to contribute to private pension schemes or, as in a lot of cases, employers do not have a facility for them to pay contributions into a pension scheme. This short period of employment makes it a waste of an employee's money to pay into a pension scheme.

The other problems are employment agencies, who hire our labour on a day to day basis to companies and have no responsibility to these employees with regard to sick pay, holiday pay or pension entitlement. So it is time the Government in power should take a closer look at agencies and made them more responsible for the employees on their books.

MANCHESTER No 1, 243 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

BRO. P. PERRY (North West & Irish): I move Motion 68.

This debate on pensions will be on-going for ever more until such time as that the employers and the Government are made more responsible for the process in which pension schemes are carried out and that money paid into them are not utilised for subsidising other things.

Employees in this country used to have continuity of employment either in full-time or part-time work. Unfortunately, this situation does not apply any more or exists any more. Contracts of employment now mainly consist of three or six months' duration on the MTR (the minimum time rate) or less. Employees cannot afford to contribute to private pension schemes as in many cases employers do not have the facility to take contributions to their pension scheme.

Another problem is employment agencies who hire out labour on a day-to-day basis to companies and have no responsibility to these employees with regard to sick pay, holiday pay or pension entitlements. So it is time that the government in power should take a closer look at these agencies and make them more responsible as employers. I move.

SIS. A. MURPHY (North West & Irish): I second Motion 68 on Pensions.

President and Congress, pensioners in this country are treated the worst in Europe. They are badly treated by both the country and the companies they work for. The GMB must urge this present Government to start treating pensioners in Great Britain much better. Wouldn't it be a feather in Gordon Brown's cap if he were to make our pensioners' situation the envy of Europe instead of the way things are at present? It would not take a lot of effort or even money, but it would take many pensioners out of poverty and give them a better life are working long and hard to make Britain the prosperous country it is at present for some. Thank you.

MOTION 69

PENSION CHANGES FOR FORMER FTA's

This congress notes the positive changes to the pension's legislation to date. However, Congress believes that more needs to be done to achieve changes for staff who were fixed term appointees (FTA's) who become permanent members of staff.

Currently pension schemes across the country are being amended to allow FTA's to be treated as permanent members of staff for the purposes of the scheme. However, we are in the situation where a significant minority of our membership who started work for their employer as a fixed term or casual (and were excluded from their employers schemes) and then became permanent, could now have several years of reckonable service excluded from their pensions calculations.

In view of this, Congress instructs the CEC to lobby Government for a change in legislation to allow for retrospective change similar to that granted for part time workers some years ago.

GMB@PCS BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. B. SHAW (London): I move Motion 69. Congress, we have had many a battle with this Government and many employers over pensions and won, ensuring that our members' pensions are protected. However, we need to engage in many more battles. This is just one. I believe that a decent employer pension as well as a State pension and, yes, index linked are basic human rights.

This motion calls for the GMB to campaign with the Government to change pensions law to ensure that fixed term appointees have the legal right for all their employment to count towards their pension, a right already won for part-time workers. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague.

BRO. V. WEST (London): I second Motion 69. Some years ago part-time workers, mainly women, gained the same pension rights as full-time workers. Now it is time to turn our attention to fixed term appointees. Whilst pension schemes are starting to amend their rules to allow fixed term and casual staff to join the occupational schemes, many of those staff are still losing out because they cannot use the service built to date and count it towards their pensionable pay. If retrospection can be applied to part-time staff, then it is the turn now to apply it to casual staff as well. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, Motions 63, 64, 66, 67, 68 and 69 are all being supported by the CEC.

(Motion 63 was carried)

(Motion 64 was carried)

(Motion 66 was carried)

(Motion 67 was carried)

(Motion 68 was carried)

(Motion 69 was carried)

MOTION 70

NHS PENSIONS ADVICE

Given the changes to the NHS Pensions Scheme and other pensions changes and the legislative

restrictions upon the giving of advice, we ask that a National Advice Scheme is provided to GMB members.

THAMES VALLEY R12 BRANCH
Southern Region

(Referred)

BRO. B. BEAVEN (Southern): I move Motion 70 – NHS Pensions Advice.

For those of you in the NHS Pension Scheme you know that shortly proposed changes to your scheme will take place. We are asking, basically, for an Advice Scheme to be set up so that branch secretaries and activists within the NHS are not put in the invidious position of trying to give advice on pensions. I so move.

(The motion was formally seconded)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does the Region agree to referral?

BRO. R. ASCOUGH (Regional Secretary): Yes.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does Congress agree to referral?

(Motion 70 was referred)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Congress, we are going to have a slight change in the order now. We are going to move to the European Report. So I will ask Kathleen Walker Shaw to address Congress.

EUROPEAN REPORT

EUROPEAN OFFICE

1. INTRODUCTION

Having relocated to new premises in the area of the EU Institutions at the end of June 2006, the GMB European Office continues to develop the GMB's campaigning activities at European and International level to protect and promote the rights and interests of GMB members and their families, and work in solidarity with our trade union colleagues across Europe and the world to promote better labour rights, conditions and pay.

2. PERSONNEL

The European Office was pleased to welcome Sarah King as the new European Research and Policy Officer in September 2006. Sarah has settled in well, and is making a major contribution to the work of the European Office.

3. SUPPORT FOR RECRUITMENT AND ORGANISATION

With an increasing number of EU migrant workers moving to the UK, predominantly from Poland, Latvia and Lithuania, the European Office is supporting GMB Regions in their initiatives to recruit and organise migrant workers. The European Office has developed contacts with officers of the Polish trade union Solidarność Śląsko-Dąbrowski Region established through an EU funded project involving GMB South Western Region. Through these contacts, joint initiatives are being developed, including use of the Solidarność regional logo for identification and solidarity support, and joint posting on each others websites with a letter from Solidarność, in Polish, encouraging Polish workers to join the GMB. The initiatives aim to raise awareness of GMB and encourage migrant workers to join the Union before they leave their home country. GMB MEP's are keen to support our work in this area. The European Office has continued its active involvement in regional training initiatives in the area of EU workplace rights and protections, and in providing support and advice to European Works' Councils. The office continues to receive regular requests to compare rights and conditions across multinational companies operating in other EU Member States, to support our bargaining agenda. The European Office also provides regular briefings and bulletins, updating officers and organisers on developments in EU legislation and rights such as Working Time and Health and Safety to assist them in their roles.

4. RECOGNITION

The GMB European Office continues to provide support in comparing recognition across key target multinational companies, which has proved valuable in supporting GMB bids for recognition. It is hard for employers to justify recognising a trade union in their company in some countries where they operate and not others.

5. EU POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND CAMPAIGNS

As EU Institutions and Member States continue to focus on improving EU competitiveness and economic growth, European trade unions remain concerned about the lack of balance between the economic and the social dimensions of policy and legislative developments. This has been clear in a number of major EU policy areas mentioned below, where GMB has worked actively in co-operation with our European trade union colleagues to promote and defend our members' rights and protections:

Services in the Internal Market Directive – GMB played an active role in the sustained European trade union campaign, which succeeded in removing the major threats posed by the original proposal, most particularly the country of origin principle. The Directive was adopted in November 2006 by the European Parliament, and GMB will now continue to campaign at UK level to address outstanding concerns, and ensure that the national implementation does not undermine our position.

Working Time Directive Revision – the current threat to the EU Social Model is clearly exposed in developments on the Revision of the Working Time Directive. GMB and other European Unions have been fighting to protect rights for on-call workers against a majority of EU Governments (including our own) who wish to undermine key European Court Judgments, which clearly confirm on-call time at the workplace as working time. The weakening of on-call rights would have been adopted in November 2006, but for lack of agreement on the other thorny issue of the opt-out preventing overall agreement on the Revision by Member State Governments in the Council. The UK Government persists in pushing to keep the opt-out, with France, Spain, Italy and one or two other countries resisting this. It is clear that

Governments across Europe are intent on watering down our working time protections in the name of flexibility, and European trade unions have little prospect of the political climate changing on this issue, which presents us with a major challenge in protecting our working time rights. GMB continues to work with the ETUC and European trade unions. The European Office provides regular updates on the position, and, supported by our GMB MEP's, we continue to urge our Government to change its position on this issue.

EU Labour Law – The EU Commission finally produced its Green Paper consultation on Labour Law in November 2006. GMB is concerned about the focus on the need for flexibility over security in employment, as well as concerns relating to the outcome of the Laval and Viking cases in terms of protection of collective agreements and the right to strike respectively. It is important that the increase of precarious work in Europe is addressed, that the role and position of trade unions in collective bargaining and developing and improving Labour Law is fully respected, and that, though work patterns become more diverse, we do not lose sight of the importance of quality of jobs and secure employment. In co-operation with our EU trade union colleagues, GMB will be actively involved in the debate on these issues and will submit a response to the EU Commission.

Public Procurement – GMB has continued its campaign to ensure that the rights we secured to reserve contracts for supported employment workplaces for disabled people are implemented and used at all levels of public contracting. The new public procurement rights were a key element of the trade union consortium alternative plan for Remploy. The European Officer has raised the matter with Ministers and Members of the Welsh and Scottish Assemblies, who have been very supportive. The European Officer was invited to make a presentation on the GMB's campaign in this area to a seminar organised by the French Government Ministry for Labour.

GMB continues to campaign to ensure that wider social, employment, ethical and environmental considerations are included in public contracting, and the European Officer was appointed expert to the workers' group of the EU Economic and Social Committee, to cover a report on Public Procurement. Together with the worker group representative for the report, they succeeded in heavily amending a very negative and pro-liberalisation report by the employers' group. Ultimately, the author disowned his own report, and it was withdrawn.

Temporary Agency Workers Directive – this issue remains unfinished business at European level, and completely blocked. Despite assurances we were given by the Government at Warwick, it remains one of the key blocking Governments in the EU Council on this issue, insisting that Temporary Agency Workers should be subject to long qualifying periods before they are entitled to equal treatment rights. GMB continues to campaign at European and National level to seek progress on this issue. Meanwhile, the vulnerability of such workers increases, with Temporary Agency Workers who are migrant workers being particularly badly exploited.

Decent Work for All – in May 2006 the EU Commission published a Communication on Decent Work for All. GMB has been active in urging the Commission to support the positive statements about the rights of all workers to decent work with practical action. Following his passionate address to GMB Congress 2006, the European Officer organised a series of meetings in Brussels involving SITRAP Costa Rican trade union General Secretary Gilbert Bermúdez Umaña, Ed Blissett, Banana Link's Alistair Smith and Sue Longley of IUF. Meetings were held with EU Commissioner for Employment, Vladimir Spidla, EU Officials dealing with EU Trade Policy, and several MEP's from the Central American Delegation of the European Parliament, including GMB MEP's Stephen Hughes, Robert

Evans, and David Martin. The trade union delegation urged the EU officials to ensure trade unions are involved in the development of trade agreements with the EU, and that complaints relating to breaches in Labour Standards and rights of trade unions to organise in countries receiving preferential trade terms under the EU's General System of Preferences plus (GSP+) are seriously investigated. Delegates also delivered a formal complaint under this system to the Trade Directorate of the EU Commission in relation to victimisation of trade unionists and breaches of labour standards and trade union rights in Costa Rica, which currently benefits under this system. MEP's have supported the trade union position in amendments to European Parliament reports on Trade/GSP agreements and Decent Work. At a Conference on the issue in December 2006, Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson stated his support for ensuring International Labour Standards were respected in EU trade agreements and other trade policy.

6. SUPPORT FOR TRAINING AND EU FUNDED PROJECTS

GMB continues to be successful in receiving EU funding to support projects. The European Office assisted with a bid by GMB South Western Region for EU funding for a project focusing on improving information and consultation in the workplace. The project involves trade union partners from Sweden (SIF) and Poland (Solidarność Śląsko-Dąbrowski Region). Links developed with Solidarność through this project have proved valuable in assisting GMB with organisation and recruitment initiatives aimed at Polish migrant workers. The European Officer was delighted to support colleagues from Liverpool, North West and Irish Region in the launch of the European awareness raising seminar programme developed by lay activist, Steve Boden. Events were held in Liverpool and Belfast, and the course will be integrated into the Regional training programme. The European Officer was pleased to be involved again in the now well established and successful Liverpool, North West and Irish Regional Womens' Conference, providing a presentation on EU Equality Rights and Policies. Cardiff University Business School extends a standing invitation to the European Officer to give an annual lecture on GMB/Trade Unions in Europe, as part of its graduate programme, which provides a valuable opportunity for GMB to raise its profile and an understanding of our campaigning work at EU level as Britain's most pro-active union in this area.

7. CEC EUROPEAN & INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

The European Officer provides the secretariat and reports four times a year to the CEC European & International Committee (twice per year) and CEC European Sub-Committee (twice per year) on progress relating to the European and International campaigns, policy- and legislative developments that the CEC Committee have identified as priority issues. The lively and detailed debate and experiences from our CEC members shared in the Committee is an invaluable source of information in developing our policies and campaigns.

8. REPORTS ON MOTIONS TO CONGRESS 2006 Composite 30 – EU Services Directive. GMB European Office played an active role with ETUC and European trade union colleagues in the lobbying campaign to remove the country of origin principle, private security sector and temporary agencies from the proposals, and to ensure the proposals did not affect labour law. These aims were reflected in the text finally adopted at the end of 2006.

Motion 212 – European Commission. Lobbying efforts by GMB and European trade union colleagues reversed the EU Commission's negative proposals for a Services Directive. GMB's long established call for the EU Commission to ensure all EU proposals undergo a social and employment impact assessment has received support from many MEP's, and the German Presidency indicated it wished to make progress with this in 2007.

GMB has also made progress on issues related to trade policy (mentioned above under decent work), and will continue to campaign to democratise the EU Commission.

(Adopted)

SIS. K. WALKER SHAW: Thank you, Vice President, President, let me take a liberty and use the benefit of this wonderful technology here today to extend 'Happy Birthday' to my daughter, Lauren, and to thank her at the age of 10 for her understanding that I am not with her today for the very best of reasons in the world. Thank you Congress and Vice President. *(Applause)*

I move pages 6 – 9 of the General Secretary's Report. Congress, our energies in Europe have, for many years, been devoted to furthering the rights and protections of our members and promoting solidarity and social justice at the European and international level, and I can assure you that our energies continue to be devoted in that direction in defence of those principles.

In that job we receive tremendous support from a very strong group of GMB MEPs, who, sadly, due to the pressures on the Congress timetable this year with the hustings, are not providing an individual report, but who send their warmest wishes to us for a successful Congress, and I pay particular and personal tribute to them who, throughout my career in Europe for the GMB, have given us sustained, continuous, effective and very practical support for us to achieve many of our campaigning aims and concerns at the European level. They, truly, are a credit to our union.

At last year's Congress we heard from Gilberth, the General Secretary of the Costa Rican Trade Union Movement, SITRAP, who told us of terrible conditions and abuses of trade union freedoms in his country.

As a union we very quickly responded, setting up meetings in Brussels for Gilberth, and for Bananalink colleagues at the European Parliament and the Commission, where we raised issues of decent work, trade union freedoms and compliance with labour standards, conditions which are embodied in the general system of preferences of trade that the EU extends to countries, including Costa Rica. We have issued a formal complaint there and to the ILO and we are very, very keen to see this matter investigated and satisfied.

The GMB in turn has received great solidarity from our trade union colleagues across the world, as the General Secretary mentioned. We have received fantastic support from our CFDT textile colleges in Paris and from our American trade union colleagues in America as part of the Burberry campaign, allowing us to sustain not a national but an international profile for our campaign, standing shoulder to shoulder with us. It is a sign of trade union solidarity at its very best.

Together with unions across Europe and our friends in the European Parliament, we re-wrote the Services Directive, finally adopted in November and addressing from a very bad start most of our trade union concerns, but we need, Congress, to remain vigilant on the Services Directive and to make sure that we can protect our public services from further general liberalisation of services to the detriment of workers and people in Europe.

The European Union borders continue to extend and we have welcomed Romania and Bulgaria to the European Union this year. Europeans are becoming more mobile. For many of us, this is the vision of Europe we always had, where people would be born in one country, work in another and perhaps retire in yet another country. I am such a person and there are many of us here today in a similar situation. The GMB is an organisation which has crossed borders and boundaries in the pursuit of protecting and promoting social justice for our members and for trade unionists across the world. It is an honour for me to work for an organisation with that dynamism which leaves other unions sadly lacking in this field. We are a credit to the international solidarity movement.

We have responded very positively to successive waves of workers who have moved to the UK over the years, seeking to organise and recruit them, and ensure that they are not exploited by employers and unscrupulous agencies, whose aim is to drive down labour standards and conditions in the interest of their own greed for profit.

Earlier this year, our officers Jurgita, Paulina, Aska and Tim Roach gave an inspiring account of the GMB's work and their motivation to organise mobile/migrant workers into the GMB to an audience of MEPs in the European Parliament, promoting the importance of belonging to a trade union for all workers who come to the UK, a message which these MEPs have taken back to their countries. We want it to stay in the press.

GMB continues to spearhead major campaigns which run at European and international level. I have mentioned Burberry, but GMB is internationally known for the work which we have done on private equity with our organisation being mentioned in the European Socialist Group report on this issue.

With our Remploy activists we changed European law to allow reserve contracts for supported employment factories across Europe and we will be back in Europe this month, colleagues, to fight these closures in the Remploy factories and to make sure that the rights which we fought so hard for over many years are put into action by public authorities in this country to keep our factories alive.

We put the spotlight two years ago at Congress on tagging in the workplace and Radio Frequency Identification systems, and this year our recognition for that is that the Commission contacted us and invited us on to the European Union Commission's Expert Group which will define future policy in this area.

Taking key issues and running with them, be it at regional, national, European or international level is our union's enduring strength, and we are the best in the business, let me tell you.

Congress, we will continue to rely on the solidarity of trade unionists across Europe and our trade union colleagues in the European Parliament for the challenges we face ahead, and what are they? They are to ensure that *flexicurity* – this big debate about how employment and economic growth will proceed in the future – which means flexibility and security for workers, not just for employers, and it is not *flexploitation*, as we have come to call it in its worst form. Let's get a balance in that debate.

We also want a balance in the debate on modernising labour law, that it reflects trade union concerns, and that it makes clear and unambiguous our rights to take industrial action and respect our collective agreements. We want to see that these are upheld in the final court decisions in the *Laval* and *Viking* cases.

We want to break the deadlock on the protections and rights for temporary agency workers, and we want to ensure that if and when the Working Time Revision comes back it does not undermine our rights and weaken them.

Challenges, Congress, where together, pooling our voices, our energy and our ideas, we can build on a Social Europe, where workers are well protected, respected, informed and consulted, and where we can work to develop those standards elsewhere in the global world through our agreements and influence.

Congress, I move pages 6 – 9 of the General Secretary's Report. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kathleen. Colleagues, I would like to say that Kathleen and her colleague in Brussels give us tremendous help and support. Well done. Please pass on our best wishes to your other colleague.

Does Congress agree pages 6, 7, 8 and 9 of the General Secretary's Report?
(Adopted)

WELCOME TO PETER MANDELSON

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I would like you to give a warm welcome to Peter Mandelson, the European Commissioner for Trade who will address Congress in a

little while. Peter is no stranger to the GMB. He is a longstanding GMB member. Peter worked as an economist for the TUC and later as Labour Party Director of Communications.

In 1992 he was elected as Member of Parliament for Hartlepool. He is now European Commissioner for Trade. Globalisation is a major issue for workers across the world, and has been a recurring theme at our Congress year on year.

We welcome the co-operation between the EU Commission Directorate for Trade and the ILO.

Peter, our Social Europe is very important to us and we trust that you will help us to develop it. Congress, please show your appreciation to Peter Mandelson. (*Applause*)

I now come to the movers of Motions 288, 289, 290 and 291.

INTERNATIONAL

MOTION 288

FAIR TRADE

Congress notes that recent research in Bangladesh has revealed the true cost of the low prices in our supermarkets that we as British consumers have become accustomed to. Despite signing up to voluntary codes established to protect workers producing goods for their companies, major UK supermarket chains are still profiting from a low wage workforce often working in sweatshop conditions.

In War on Want's recent report Fashion Victims based on worker testimonies, unsafe factories, unrealistic targets and compulsory overtime with workers locked in unsafe buildings have led to a spate of factory collapses and fires leaving almost 100 workers dead and many more injured in just two months.

Asda, Tesco and Primark have all made public commitments to working towards the payment of living wages in their supply chains. At present the national minimum wage still rests at £7 per month, yet even Tesco itself agrees that the figure should be more like £22 per month. While it is true that factory owners and Government policy are not blameless, it is the price-cutting tactics of low-cost clothing retailers sourcing from Bangladesh that have led to wage levels of as little as 5p an hour.

This conference notes that voluntary codes are not delivering decent working conditions or effective protection for many workers. Companies must be held accountable for their actions around the world, including the conditions in their supply chains.

This resolution calls upon this conference to instruct the CEC to:

1. Urge the Government to state its support for a binding framework of regulation that stops UK companies and their suppliers continuing the abuse of workers overseas.
2. Lobby our union-sponsored MP's to support the call for legislation.
3. Offer solidarity to sister trade unions around the world whose members are working in the supply chain producing goods for such multinational companies.
4. Support War on Want's ongoing corporate accountability campaign.

(Carried)

BRO. C. MURRAY (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, this motion is concerns everything that our union, the GMB, is about. We all know that the UK supermarkets are about exploitation of workers and we also know that voluntary codes of practice to protect workers do not work anywhere.

We owe it to our comrades in the Third World countries to protect them against British retail companies exploitative procedures and unsafe working practices just for financial gain by shareholders and for low cost goods in stores.

In the long term there is no benefit in cheap clothes made by exploited workers. I urge you to support the motion. Support the GMB's international policy and make sure that the Government carries out the four requirements set out at the end of this motion. I have kept my contribution short for time reasons. I move. Thank you.

(The motion was formally seconded)

MOTION 289

CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY

Congress, this conference notes that voluntary codes are not delivering decent working conditions or effective protection for many workers. Companies must be held accountable for their actions around the world, including the conditions in their supply chain.

LONDON STORES GENERAL BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. G. FRASER (London): I move Motion 289 on corporate accountability.

President and Congress, this motion echoes the sentiments expressed in the previous motion very closely. For many years now the GMB at both sectional and national conferences has debated and condemned the abuse, violence, poverty pay and dangerous conditions suffered by workers overseas who make products for our major High Street retailers.

The action wording of Motion 288 highlighted events in Bangladesh, in particular, Asda, Tesco and Primark. The minimum wage in Bangladesh is £7 per month. Tesco, by its own admission, say that a living minimum wage should be £22 per month, but they do nothing to improve on it.

Similar horror stories can be told about India, Pakistan, China, the Caribbean and South America. None of our clothing and sporting goods retailers can say, hand on heart, that child labour was not used in the manufacture of their products. They frequently, colleagues, try to hide such exploitation of their workers behind a screen of sub-contractors and sub-sub-contractors.

Pressure brought on these companies by the GMB in particular, through many campaigns, forced them into a voluntary code of conduct to guarantee rights and pay levels to workers in their supply chains abroad. However, that voluntary code is worthless. But why should we expect anything less from companies who have killed off whole communities in this country and exported tens of thousands of jobs to slave labour in the developing world on the God of profit. We should not expect anything better from them.

Not to have an enforceable regulation is not an option. These companies must be held accountable. I move.

BRO. M. AKBAR (London): I second Motion 289. President and Congress, if any further proof was needed that the UK retailers care little about their corporate accountability to workers in the supply chains, look at the case of Sainsbury's and the ethical bag. It was in April. It was Fair Trade and organic. It was a must have fashion item. Sainsbury's sold 20,000 at £5 a time in one hour. Subsequently, they changed hands on ebay for £225 a time. Then, colleagues, it transpired that the bag was not ethical. Fair Trade, organic, it was made in China by workers on poverty wages. It was not made with certified Fair Trade cotton, and the cotton used was probably picked by child labour. Even now Sainsbury's steadfastly refuses to confirm where the bag was made, by whom and with what.

Congress, we need the legislation. Please support. I move.

WORLD WIDE TRADE UNION RIGHTS OF MEMBERSHIP

MOTION 290

WORLD WIDE TRADE UNION RIGHTS OF MEMBERSHIP

Congress, the GMB Trade Union often receives appeals for donations from other Union Branches during industrial disputes within the UK. We help where we can.

In the last few months we have noticed that our Union has received many requests for help and assistance from Trade Unionists from overseas.

From June to November 2006 our Branch has received pleas for help from workers in struggle in Ecuador, Zimbabwe, Palestine, Guyana, Costa Rica and Venezuela. It is quite clear that the Trade Unions in these, and other, countries so not have the Legal Rights that we enjoy in the UK.

Unfortunately it is beyond the resources of the local Union Branches (and probably National) of the GMB to give more than a token offer of help to these people, in their efforts to establish fair and just Trade Union recognition. A relatively small but well intentioned, donation from us is hardly going to stop dictatorships and multinational companies from exploiting and sometimes even murdering these workers. The UK has trading and diplomatic relations with most if not all of these countries. Therefore;

This Congress urges the Labour Government's Foreign Secretary to apply pressure and persuasion on those countries to implement the basic Human Rights of a fair and democratic Trade Union Movement.

(Carried with qualification)

BRO. A. GUEDES (London): I move Motion 290. Congress, I have not prepared a speech for this particular motion but I probably could not add much to the text in the motion in the Final Agenda. You have all seen the video about Colombia. Similar things may be happening in Ecuador, Zimbabwe, Palestine, Guyana, Costa Rica and Venezuela. So this is not only about the trade union rights of membership worldwide, but also to press the Labour Government's Foreign Secretary to apply pressure and persuasion on those countries to implement those basic human rights of a fair and democratic trade union movement. Congress, I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. You did extremely well. *(Applause)*

BRO. M. HUSBANDS (London): I second Motion 290. President and Congress, the plight of trade unionists and would-be trade unionists in certain countries is well documented with the disappearances and imprisonment. Actually, you saw the video this morning.

The GMB at national and local level has a proud history of helping oppressed colleagues. Our aid alone will not solve the problems. The basic human right of belonging to a free trade union must be a requirement by this Government before any aid or trade can be contracted with offending countries. Along with America, this country gives vast amounts to Colombia to combat the drug problems. In reality, Colombia is an autocracy policed by private armies who proscribe trade unionists. That money, in effect, pays for trade unionists to be victimised. The solution is to stop the money.

Britain and the EU have ploughed millions into Nigeria. Nigeria has one of the worst records for treatment of trade unionists. Solution: stop the money.

Zimbabwe. We know about this country. What should we do? Stop Mugabe.

Colleagues, we will never give up the fight to secure trade union rights for anyone, anywhere, but let us highlight our Government's complacency in some of these atrocities and force their hands. Please support.

MOTION 291

TRADE UNIONISM IN CHINA

This Congress expresses particular concern that many millions of Chinese workers in the new economic zones of China do not have adequate trade unions, despite these being guaranteed under the Constitution of the Peoples Republic.

Much western business investment in China is often made at the expense of the loss of many thousands of jobs in the UK. If Chinese workers were properly organised, they would be subject to less exploitation. This in turn might contribute to a levelling out of grossly unfair global economic competition and the protection of employment in the UK.

(Carried)

BRO. D. WILSON (North West & Irish): I move Motion 291 on Trade Unionism in China.

Congress and President, China is a country on everyone's mind; the sleeping dragon which has woken up. It is a workshop with tremendous implications for everyone's jobs here. Today's paddy fields become tomorrow's sites for cash goods development. The Chinese Communist Party leadership claim they are encouraging capitalism to develop tomorrow's socialism. The jury is out on that one. Thousands of workers in Britain and elsewhere have seen their jobs exported to the new economic zones in China where western corporations rub their hands at the prospect of operating in a trade union free environment and under unregulated Victorian-style capitalism. We have to ask ourselves, as others have just said: what is the human cost of an imported DVD player at £25 or a child's school uniform which sells at less than £10?

On paper the Chinese Constitution guarantees trade union rights. Trade unions do exist in China but not in the same format as we organise here in the UK. The Chinese Trade Union Federation has little or no influence on the new businesses in China. Well, things are changing. Just as unregulated capitalism resulted in the birth of unions like the GMB, so the same has to happen in China. It just has to.

The Trade Union Federation in China does at last seem to be on the move and is responding to pressure from discontented migrant workers in the new economic zones in southern China. The Chinese Trade Union Federation has a total membership of 126 million out of a total workforce of 256 million, and that does not include the 100 million migrants employed in southern China. So they have got room for growth.

Chinese law has been amended to strengthen collective bargaining and much to their dismay, companies like Wal-Mart have had to concede to collective bargaining rights to employees. Other western companies, such as Dell, McDonald's, Kodak and so forth may well have to concede the same recognition rights to fall in line with Chinese law.

The Chinese trade union Movement also seems at last to be waking up. It is very much in their interest and the UK labour movement to encourage this development. Our advice is to say to the TUC and to the labour movement, "Let's give them advice on organising health and safety law and so forth, including training courses, on whatever we can do to help them". This does not need to compromise the long-standing principles of independent trade unionism but it may also help and force multi-nationals to think twice about relocating to China at the expense of jobs here. We need to act local and think global. I move.

BRO. J. TOOMEY (North West & Irish): President and Congress, let's have a little history. The Communist Manifesto: "Workers of the world unite!"; "You have nothing to lose but your chains". If you try that in bloody China, you would be shot. They have unions there but they are not as we know them. Independent unions are

banned. Any move to democracy, look at Tiannamen Square. You remember it: “You are entitled to your own opinion but you have no right to express it”. It’s like my motion yesterday, I wrote it but I couldn’t talk on it. (*Applause and cheers*)

As regards mandating, this union can go to the Chinese Embassy and mandate them on democracy in China on trade unions. Peter Mandelson, you are the Minister for Europe, you can tell the bloody Chinese to give the working people their own trade unions. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: You see, John, how democracy works. You still got it in. Does anyone wish to come in on the debate after that? (*No response*)

In that case, I call John Faulds to speak on Motion 290 on behalf of the Executive.

BRO. J. FAULDS (CEC, GMB Scotland): President, the CEC supports Motion 290 on World Wide Trade Union Rights of Membership but with a qualification.

Making representation to the Foreign Office is important but it is only one of the ways that we can support our brothers and sisters in the global trade union family. The qualification is that there are many ways that we can contribute, and one of them is by assistance with material support. No matter how small individual donations may seem, it is the cumulative total that has enabled us to support vital projects such as, most notably, CUT, the Federation of the Colombian Trade Union. Affiliators to Colombia collected over £9,000 in total towards computers and communication projects. Regarding support for SITRAP, our comrades in Costa Rica, we have donated material aid to provide for a headquarters and union organisers. We have also given support to Zimbabwe where we have made donations towards the *Dignity Period Campaign*. This support is vital and we should be proud of our combined achievements and continued giving wherever we can.

Congress, please support this motion with that qualification. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Does London Region accept the qualification?

BRO. E. BLISSETT (Regional Secretary, London): Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to the vote on Motions 288, 289, 290 and 291.

Motion 288 was carried.

Motion 289 was carried.

Motion 290 was carried.

Motion 291 was carried.

ADDRESS BY PETER MANDELSON, EU COMMISSIONER FOR TRADE

“THE GMB, EUROPE AND GLOBALISATION”

THE PRESIDENT: I would now, at this stage, like to ask Peter Mandelson, to address Congress.

PETER MANDELSON: Mary, friends, thank you very much, indeed, for inviting me back to speak to my own union. The GMB has been one of the great anchors of my political life. If there is any problem with my subs, I know that Tommy Brennon will be the first to check up and make sure that the money is still coming. I have been Apex and then I was GMB all my working life, and now I am glad to be the GMB's man in Brussels.

I would never have been selected for Hartlepool without the union's backing. I would never have had the privilege of serving in Tony Blair's Government had it not been for this union. Indeed, together we would never have turned Labour into a settled pro European Party without this union's steadfast support. Let me just say this as an aside, and I say it without hesitation – that's what I believe Labour will remain under our next leader and Prime Minister, Gordon Brown. (*Applause*)

Pro-Europe, pro-reform in Europe.

The GMB backed us in the 1990s to create New Labour and to go on to win three historic general elections, even when sometimes you found some of the changes difficult. As a union you have seen plenty of changes. You have seen the ruthless destruction of industrial jobs in the 1980s and the massive switch, as we have seen, from a manufacturing to a knowledge and service based economy.

It's the inevitability of change that is one of the biggest arguments still today at the beginning of this century for trade unionism; to help manage change successfully in the interests of all, together with employers and ensure the best possible deal for the individual working man and woman. That need is greater probably today than it has been in our recent memory, because the biggest factor shaping change, and it is the dramatic change – it is unstoppable and certainly irreversible change – that we see today is globalisation.

That is the context of the discussion that we need to have: rapid and deep change in our economies, our societies and politics driven by globalised markets and supply chains and technological progress. Creating opportunities, yes, on an unprecedented scale -- just look at the progress of China and India in lifting hundreds of millions out of poverty – but also bringing uncertainty and increasing inequalities in the world.

If I can just say this to John Toomey. John, I am seeing my Chinese counterpart, the Commerce Minister, next Monday and Tuesday in Brussels and I will be sure to deliver your message to him personally. (*Applause*) Perhaps I will do deliver the message in exactly in the same way, John, but the message will be there none the less.

Of course, these conditions of change and flux are ripe for those on the extremes to exploit the politics of fear in Europe and elsewhere. That is why we need not just the right policies, but the right politics of globalisation – a positive politics, which does not accept change blindly but seeks to shape it in the interests of all. And, for me, the European Union is one of the essential elements in shaping a positive politics of globalisation.

My views on the EU in the global age are set out in *this* pamphlet which I published recently. For those who have not yet made it to their local book stores or have yet to download it from my website, I argue in this pamphlet that people know that national governments alone cannot provide the answers to global problems like energy supply, climate change, migration or trade. These are not simply national problems, and they are, therefore, simply not susceptible to national solutions. That is why when the issues we face are global, co-operation with those who share our values and interests – other Europeans – should be a nature part of the response. How can we tackle climate change, address the pressures of migration, secure the energy our economies need, or promote development in Africa other than by working with our European partners? In an age of global challenges and fast growing continental powers as we see across the globe, whether in Asia, south or north America, the case for the continent-wide European Union is stronger than ever. But there is a paradox. The paradox is that today, whilst we see an ever greater need for the European Union to exist, support for the EU amongst Europeans is, frankly, at its weakest.

For some – the people I call the hyper-globalisers – the European Union is somehow irrelevant in an age of fast-moving global markets, equity funds and other international capital. They see the European Union as too bureaucratic, protectionist and obsessed with regulation, as they say. What they want to do is to step over Europe and ride roughshod over what we believe in, our values, and how we want to order our society and economy in Europe. As they do so they attempt to unravel the European Union from the inside.

But there is another camp as well, not just the hyper-globalisers over here, namely, the anti-globalisers. For them the EU is not doing enough to protect them from global change. For them the European Union is a sort of “Trojan Horse”, importing change and transmitting all that is bad about globalisation.

The problem for those of us in the middle ground, as I suspect you and I are, and where the vast majority of people are, too, is that the attacks of both of these camps – the hyper-globalisers and the anti-globalisers – on the European Union are weakening one of the key tools we all have, as Europeans, for coming to terms with and shaping globalisation.

The answer, I believe, is to make the case for stronger European co-operation, not to prevent change but to make us more effective in shaping that change. The public do not want excuses and they do not want false promises. They want strong and honest leadership that explains the opportunities of change; that responds to the fears of change by equipping us to better to exploit its benefits; recognising that solidarity is one of the main hallmarks of European society.

We need solidarity if globalisation is to be a force for good, and if the EU is to retain its broad support. This is, above all, the job of national governments, whether to provide strong, modern welfare states, schools that are both inclusive and promote excellence, an to give generous support for learning and training throughout life.

We need social security systems and labour markets that promote access and opportunity and compensate those who lose out from change. These are the basis of a

progressive vision of society, essential today and even more important tomorrow as ever more goods and services are traded internationally and competition moves to new areas of the economy.

But the point I want to make to you this morning is, yes, that is the important first role of national governments, but it is not only a job for national governments. There has always been a strong social dimension to Europe, creating basic standards in the workplace, equal opportunities legislation and re-distributive social and structural funds. That social role, in my view, must be renewed on the basis of an agenda for access, opportunity and solidarity across our continent, a modern social agenda which British trade unions are very well placed to contribute to.

I am very conscious of this agenda as Europe's Trade Commissioner. I represent every day, and I have the competence, the mandate and the sovereignty transferred to me to do so, all 27 Member States of the European Union in trade policy and negotiations. Some say that trade is the cockpit of economic change – more often it feels like the lightning rod. Many of the tensions of economic change come to the surface in my field, played out in the WTO world trade round negotiations or expressed in demands to limit Chinese imports or in calls for Europe to impose carbon tariffs on countries who are not doing enough to tackle climate change.

Trade, it sometimes seems, is either the root of all evil or a panacea, the answer to everything. It is, of course, neither of those things. The fact is that trade is a powerful tool for opportunity, if combined with the right domestic policies to even out and re-balance the impact of trade.

Trade is also a field where Europe counts powerfully in the world, where the interests and values of all Europeans are stronger because we act together. Defending our interests with China or the United States is not always straightforward, I can tell you, as an economic bloc of 500 million people, but imagine if we were trying to do it as a single country of 50 million or even 5 million people. I can guarantee you that we would all be worse off if we were not combining our skills and combining our strengths, standing and fighting together as a European Union.

One of my objectives as Trade Commissioner is to reconcile externally, as we do internally, the objectives of growth and solidarity; of individual opportunity and social justice for all. It is harder I trade because you have to negotiate toughly with a lot of other sovereign countries who do not always share your view of things.

But whether it is in the global trade talks or in our bilateral negotiations, as they are going on, with India, Korea and the countries of south-east Asia or those in the Gulf or Latin America, we seek to set fair environmental and social standards, not because we want to undermine the legitimate low-cost competitive advantage of developing countries but because we have a duty to encourage others to lift their labour and environmental standards as and when they are able to do so. And it is only by acting together as Europeans that we can have any chance around the world of levering up those labour, social and environmental standards which are so important.

Mary, this is my final message. The EU is today squeezed between the rejectionists who want to stop change altogether and the hyper-globalisers who want to get rid of

the EU precisely because it does try to impose standards on that change and what they are doing.

We are, in the UK, about to enter a critical period in public debate about the EU as discussions intensify on the reforms and the rules revisions that we need to the EU's institutions, to allow the EU to function properly in the global age, an EU which at 27 Members still has a rule book that is more appropriate for a Union of 15 or fewer members.

The European Union in the context of this debate, and it will be hard, and on these reforms and rules revisions which we need, needs the UK's active and positive engagement. We will not reform or strengthen the EU by being backmarkers in this country or deploying vetoes. Remember, others can play that game, too, to our disadvantage. Veto politics do not get you very far in the European Union.

The EU also needs, let me stress and say in conclusion, the active support, engagement and participation of the trade union movement. The trade unions changed Labour's stance on Europe in the 1980s, and I hope that same pro-European voice of the union Movement will be heard clearly in the months ahead.

Thank you for inviting me and thank you for listening to me. I have to say it's great to be back with the GMB. Thank you very much, indeed. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I would like to thank Peter for his address to Congress. Peter has agreed to have a question and answer session with us, which we are very grateful for. This is how I am going to proceed. I am going to go to all nine regions in turn, starting with the Northern Region. Delegates will put their questions and Peter will answer. We have three microphones. The first four regions will be Northern, GMB Scotland, South Western and London.

SIS. V.A. DAVIDSON (Northern): Commissioner, what are you going to do to ensure that more progress is made on including social and labour standards in the World Trade Organisation negotiations and structures?

THE PRESIDENT: The next is GMB Scotland.

BRO. F. ALEXANDER (GMB Scotland): Mr. Mandelson, the GMB has many trade union members in distilleries and bottling plants in Scotland. In April this year the European Union requested the World Trade Organisation to establish a Dispute Settlement Panel. This concerns India's export regime for spirits and wines, which is restricting access due to high duty burdens and other restrictions.

Can you, firstly, give us any news of progress? Secondly, will our members be able to look forward to this market opening up for our products? Lastly, are you partial to the occasional dram yourself? *(Applause)*

PETER MANDELSON: You know the answer to the last question.

BRO. K. DANIELS (South Western): As the architect of Labour's early election successes, what advice do you have for Gordon Brown to re-ignite the Party to ensure winning a fourth term?

BRO. M. HUSBANDS (London): The EU extends the Generalised System of Preferences Plus trade status to Costa Rica. The GMB has strong trade union ties with that country and we have seen with our eyes the breach of labour standards and trade union freedoms in the plantations there. A complaint has been lodged to your directorate and the ILO. What are you going to do about it? (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Peter.

PETER MANDELSON: Thank you very much for those questions. Let me go back to the first one: what are we doing in the trade negotiations at the WTO to promote social and labour conditions and rights across the world?

The straight answer to that question is that we, in Europe, regard any violations of labour rights, primarily, as morally unacceptable but also the basis for providing unfair competition. I do not object to developing countries taking legitimate advantage of their fair low cost competitive advantages in producing and trading with us. I want developing countries to do better. I want them to trade more. I want them to generate more economic wealth because that is the only way to tackle poverty in their countries. But where that development and growth is based on unacceptable exploitation of labour, we have a duty to speak up. We have done and we will continue to do so.

It is easier, I have to say, in our bilateral trade negotiations with individual countries and groups of countries for us to insist that the issue of social and labour conditions be addressed in the context of those negotiations because, frankly, developing countries are not at the moment accepting that these conditions are a legitimate topic for negotiation in the WTO and this present trade round. Why? Because many think and suspect that we in the developed world are using their less developed social and labour conditions as an excuse for our own protectionism, as a way of keeping their goods and, therefore, their economic growth down and out of our markets.

That is not the case. But what I am doing is insisting that in the negotiating directives and mandates that we have agreed for our forthcoming bilateral negotiations these issues, which I call 'proper sustainability', are included. I am not seeking trade sanctions to take against countries that do not entirely agree with us, but I am putting in place more and more incentives so that developing countries can trade more and have greater access to our markets the more they are doing in observing ILO labour conditions. We will continue to stress that.

In that context, let me just mention Costa Rica, because the question said that we have a system of what is called the 'Generalised System of Preferences Plus', i.e., certain trade privileges and additional access to European markets that we give to developing countries as long as they are observing ILO standards and conventions and are taking on serious policies to lever up labour conditions in their countries.

I know that there is concern about Costa Rica. We have not taken action yet in relation to Costa Rica because we rely on an ILO assessment of that and other countries' implementation of their commitments. We do not have the expertise to do that ourselves. But it is true that the case of Costa Rica may come up at the next meeting of the ILO later this month. Bear in mind, though, that Costa Rica has made some reasonable progress in social and labour standards. I have to say that our system of trade preferences and privileges has been instrumental in bringing not just Costa Rica but other countries, including El Salvador, for example, to a point where they are behaving differently and better.

Another example is Belarus which is not behaving differently or better and there the ETUC and the International Federation of Trade Unions have brought that to my attention. In the case of Belarus, after a great deal of discussion and debate amongst the European Member States, with no action having been taken by Belarus in the next couple of months, Belarus will have those trade privileges with the European Union removed on my proposal and recommendation, because they have failed, given all the time we have given them, to implement proper ILO standards. So I give you that as an example (*Applause*) of when we can and will intervene to use the measures and sources of pressure and instruments at our disposal, and you can rely on me to continue to do that.

Now to the very vexing question of India and the discriminatory duties they place to keep out our whisky, other spirits and wine. I have taken an action at the WTO in Geneva as the questioner said. I am glad to say that the good news is that India has indicated, since I brought the case at the WTO, that it is going to think again about these discriminatory tariffs, and they have said that they will take action in the next few months. I have to say to you that they have said that to me before. Last year they said, "In the next few months action will be taken", and we did not see the action materialise. That is why I took the case. If after two or three more months have elapsed and they have still not done anything, I will constitute the Panel and I will take the action to remove the discrimination that we are entitled to take. (*Applause*)

The last question was about Gordon Brown, the Labour Party and the future. This, in one sense, is very hard to answer because after the number of historic election victories that we have clocked up you might reasonably expect the pendulum in the normal order of events to swing against us and to give an advantage to our political opponents, and give them the opportunity to get back into office at the next general election. You might think that and, indeed, there will be factors playing in favour of our electoral opponents simply because of the length of time – be it ten years, twelve-and-a-half or however many years it will be – that we have been in office by the time of the next general election. But I have said, and I strongly believe, that victory for a fourth term is within the grasp of the Labour Party.

Why? Not only because of the enduring weakness of our electoral opponents but because we, as a party, are sensible enough, mature enough and have a good enough relationship with the electorate of this country to know that if we start sitting back resting on our laurels, taking anything for granted, then that is the sure fire way of getting a very bloody nose at the polls next time. I do not see us sitting on our hands and resting on our laurels. I see us constantly thinking "How is the world changing? What does Britain need? What are the hopes and fears of the people whose votes we

want? What are they looking to a government of any colour to do for them and their families?" We have got to keep thinking, modernising, getting ahead of the curve and making sure that we are and remain the party of change and modernisation in Britain, because the moment we stop thinking like that then the risk will be created for the baton to pass to others as the electorate looks to an alternative to keep maintaining the pace of sensible reform and change in our country.

The second thing I would say that the party has to do is to run itself in an inclusive way. I will tell you the main hallmark, as I see it, of the Labour Party in the 1990s and the beginning of this century, compared with the Labour Party I grew up with in the 1970s and 1980s. It is that we are not a factional party any more. We are not a party with one group or another trying to hi-jack the party in its decision-making in the interests of one ideological prejudice as opposed to another. Yes, we are a party that discusses and debates healthily, but we are also a party that comes to a good conclusion, respect the vote when it is taken, abides by it and implements those policies and decisions with a unity which eluded us throughout the 1980s and before.

So keep putting the electorate first and not going back to the days when the party preferred to talk to itself rather than to listen to the voters, but also remain as a party that can take decisions and hold debates in a reasonable way, respecting other people's points of view and then implementing those policies with a sense of purpose and unity. That is what we need to win the next general election, and I honestly believe that it is still within our grasp to do so. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Peter, on your last point about the party winning a fourth term, you said, quite rightly, that it must listen to the people. The party must also listen to the voters and their supporters who are in this hall and not shrug it to one side. Privatisation in public services has to be stopped because we are not going fairness and honesty. *(Applause)* We in this hall have no problem about modernisation. We have no problem with going forward with making them the best services, but I am afraid that the continual privatisation of our services, year in and year out, does nothing for what I call 'standards in public life'. *(Applause and cheers)*

PETER MANDELSON: Is that another question?

THE PRESIDENT: I felt it had to be said.

PETER MANDELSON: That was an observation, not a question. *(Laughter)*

THE PRESIDENT: I now call Southern, Yorkshire & North Derbyshire and North West & Irish Region. Then it will be Midland & East Coast and Birmingham & West Midlands.

SIS. J. HALE (Southern): Commissioner, tens of thousands of workers have seen their pension savings disappear due to the activities of private equity companies, yet across Europe, particularly in Denmark and Germany, governments have curbed the excesses of private equity companies. Would you not agree that it is now time for Britain to end the tax concessions and preferential treatment that we continue to give to these piranha-like asset strippers? *(Applause)*

SIS. I. WALTERS (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region): Peter, much of Europe was not with Tony Blair over Iraq. Where did you stand? Also, what can be done to get us out of this growing and tragic mess?

BRO. W. GOLDING (North West & Irish Region): Peter, what would you do to protect workers against private equity companies who, once they take over a business, quickly asset-strip that business, get rid of workers and destroy pensions?

BRO. P. MANDELSON: Let me take the first and third questions together. I think it is right that we have had in this country and also right across Europe, as I see it, from where I spend my time in different countries, an interesting and very important debate sparked about the complex issue of hedge funds, private equity funds and companies. This debate, yes, is expressed in terms of the threat, as it is perceived, to workforces and their pension rights but also how it relates to the role of shareholders in corporate governance, but also the stability of the whole international financial system. These are companies and funds which are growing in importance. They are no longer fringe elements. They are absolutely central to the way the international financial system and capital markets are functioning.

I do not think it is true to say that they are unregulated, not here and not across Europe. They are indirectly supervised because where they touch on and have a relationship to credit institutions, then the financial authorities do closely monitor and reflect on what is going on. I think that is right. There is a case, though, for greater transparency – I accept that – but there is also a case for a much more informed public debate about what many people rightly fear to be the short-termist interests and approach that equity funds sometimes take to different companies and the way in which, without explanation and justification, or indeed constraint, they ride roughshod over the interests of employees and pension holders.

I do not think that there is a case for outlawing private equity funds, hedge funds or similar financial institutions. Frankly, they introduce a source of dynamism and stimulus to financial markets and industry which we need. There are many countries in Europe, I can tell you – perhaps some of the newer developing countries in Europe and some of the smaller ones – who actually argue for having the benefit of greater equity fund activity in their economies and countries than they are receiving at the moment. As ever in these matters, there is a balance to be struck. There is a downside as well as an upside. Transparency, public debate and public pressure are essential to ensure that equity funds take a longer term interest rather than a short-term interest based on shareholder value. It is very important indeed.

The next question was about Iraq and Europe. I voted as a Member of the House of Commons in favour of support for the Government's policies on Iraq. Had I known then what I know now about some of the intelligence upon which some of those decisions were based, obviously, like everyone else, I would have approached that debate and decision in a different way. But at the time I shared the revulsion of Saddam Hussein. I knew enough about what he was doing, in killing his fellow citizens in Iraq; that having already invaded, he was perfectly capable of invading again his neighbours and bringing a great deal of unwarranted, unneeded and undesirable instability to the whole of the Middle East region.

But in addition to my revulsion of Saddam Hussein and in addition to the very real concern which all of us had at the time – remember, there was no intelligence agency at the time which second-guessed the conclusion about Saddam’s capability to generate and manufacture weapons of mass destruction -- there was a third factor which I felt at the time, and which I know the Prime Minister and the Government felt at the time, which was that if the United States was not going to be deflected from the course of action on which it had settled, it was better for the United States, better for Europe and, thankfully, better for the Middle East if the United States was not simply deserted by its allies and forced to go in alone.

I can tell you that bad as the situation is in Iraq, it would be much worse if you did not have the co-operation and the steadying hand of European and other forces alongside American forces. It would be worse for the Transatlantic Alliance, which we have, which is the rock on which the international security system is based, between the United States and Europe and the role of NATO. That alliance, that security organisation, would be in a much weaker and fragile state today if all of Europe had deserted the US side and forced them to go in alone. I do not think that the international system as a whole, the multi-lateral system based on the United Nations, would be any stronger if the United States had been forced to go it alone.

So, yes, as we know and acknowledge, mistakes have been made in the implementation of policies in Iraq, but one thing I do know is that the last thing the Iraqi people need, and the last thing that surrounding countries want – I know because I travel in the Middle East and the Gulf a lot – is simply for the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and others who have a presence in Iraq, to up, go and opt out of their responsibilities to bring this situation to a proper conclusion.

That conclusion must be a stable and democratic Iraq; it must be a people able to live together within the sovereignty of that nation; to make their living, to develop their economy, to rebuild their nation, economy and society in the way that they are entitled to expect.

We have a duty, a continuing responsibility, to help the Iraqi people to do that. In my view, it would be irresponsible just to cut and run.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Peter. On the first and third questions concerning private equity and these companies, I would like to present you with the GMB’s Investigation on the broken pension promises of these companies. It will make good reading. There are 96 of them in *there*. (*Presentation made amidst applause*) They not only have robbed this country and the taxpayer but they are also robbing the European Commission of their monies, too. Please read it. It is factual. I hope you enjoy it.

PETER MANDELSON: I will do so.

THE PRESIDENT: I ask Midland & East Coast and then Birmingham & West Midlands to put their questions.

BRO. V. RABETTS (Midland & East Coast): Peter, the GMB has been welcoming workers from the new EU Member States into our union in numbers, ensuring they

are properly protected, yet too many workers who can freely work in the UK have been exploited by disreputable employers and agencies on unacceptable pay and conditions, driving down pay, conditions and undermining collective agreements.

What is the EU Commission going to do to stop this, and are we ever going to see an EU directive on temporary agency workers agreed?

SIS. M. INGRAM (Birmingham & West Midlands): Peter, today, here amongst fellow GMB members, can you tell us if you have any regrets at all in your political career. (*Laughter*)

PEER MANDELSON: How long have you got? Let me answer the first question by saying that I do not regard and do not refer to these workers from the new European states as 'migrant' workers. I refer to them as 'fellow' workers. They are fellow workers who come here, as they are entitled to do, as workers from Britain and elsewhere are entitled to travel and find work in other EU Member States, if they choose to do so. They are workers who are entitled to exactly the same rights and treatment in our country as British born workers are. We have to make sure that that is the case in practice and not just nominally in name.

That is why, incidentally, we have a statutory National Minimum Wage in this country which I felt very privileged, as Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, to sign into existence when I served in that department. We have to make sure that we do not stoke up prejudice against our fellow workers -- that we do not make their conditions and prospects even more difficult to realise than they are at the moment -- but that we invite them to join in with us to enjoy and exercise the rights which we have in this country, to join the same trade unions that we have the right to join in this country and to make sure that we are fighting together for these rights, not just in Britain but across the continent. I would like to see the Temporary Agency Workers' Directive brought into effect, but do not ask me when our Member States are going finally to agree and do that.

We are almost always, let me tell you, in the European Commission the good guys when it comes to making the proposals, introducing the directives and proposing the new laws. However, it is when those laws and directives leave our hands and office that they either get lost in the labyrinth of the European Parliament, or more often get lost in the highways, byways and corridors of our Member States, that the trouble starts to set in.

As to the second question, which was have I any regrets ----

THE PRESIDENT: Don't do an Edith Piaf.

PETER MANDELSON: No Edith Piaf rendition will come from me.

I can tell you what I do not have any regrets about. I do not have any regrets about going into the service and employment of the trade union Movement when I left university and joined the economic department of the TUC, as I did in the late 1970s. I have no regrets working as I did as a young Shadow Cabinet researcher and then working my way up through the ranks to apply for and to be given the job in 1985,

when I was a mere 32 year old, of Campaigns and Communications Director of the Labour Party, and setting about the very difficult task under Neil Kinnock's leadership of climbing what seemed to us in those days a very, very steep mountain as we climbed up to the summit re-gathering, re-deserving and re-recruiting public support to us, region by region, vote by vote, which finally enabled us to get into power in 1997.

I directed two election campaigns for our party, Mary. One was in 1987, which those of you who are old enough to remember – I must say, you are becoming quite a young union, aren't you? There are a lot of youngsters around the place, which is good for you – was called the *Red Rose Election*. Do you remember? It was Labour putting people first. When you came to Blackpool, to that Labour Party Conference, you came in and saw stretching across the entirety of the backcloth of the Party's Executive platform "*Labour Putting People First*" and that rose proudly flying for the first time.

If you had been at that conference in 1987, I remember that you would have been given what were salmon pink rather smart document holders with the red rose on. I always remember being told weeks before that conference opened, when I had already sent these salmon pink coloured document wallets off to the printers for every lucky delegate to have, that neither the trade union delegates and certainly not the mineworkers would go around conference carrying salmon pink document holders with that wonderful red rose emblazoned on the side. Shall I tell you what we found after the second day of the conference? These document holders were passing hands at a price. People were seizing them, hoarding them, secreting them away in their other bags and exchanging them for other things. They loved them, and why? Because it gave us so much new confidence as a party that presentationally we could get across a party that was really proud to be labour and was really putting people first. But it took us another ten years of hard grind and hard graft to get ourselves into a position where people not just in Scotland and Wales, nor in the northern and midland regions of our country but people in the south, south west and London were prepared to put their faith in us. That was the second campaign that I directed in 1997.

So I have no regrets about being on that frontline. I have no regrets about doing the heavy lifting and treading on a few eggshells as I did during that ten year period. Yes, I know I made enemies, but sometimes you do not bring about the change you need to do without taking people on from time to time. As they say, you don't make an omelette without breaking a few eggs. I have broken a few in my time, but if I had the chance to re-live all of that period again I would have done exactly the same for our party, which brought us in 1997 a great government led by a great Prime Minister, which has earned us three great election victories with one or more yet to come.

Regrets. Well, if I have one regret it is that when the issue came up, as it did in the press, as usual with lurid headlines, claiming things about me that I had not done, that I had not so easily given way to the media clamour and, frankly, the panic which set in amongst some in government, and been so quick to resign. If I had not been so quick to resign the facts would have been known, the truth would have set in and I would be sitting here today, I hope, as a member of the Labour Cabinet, but I am not. I am, instead, doing Labour's work, your work, elsewhere in a job that I am very

proud to hold and enjoy very much, but this European Commissioner job only lasts, let me tell you, until November 2009. Just make a note of that date, will you – November 2009.

THE PRESIDENT: There will be a big party.

PETER MANDELSON: There will be a big party and I will be back, I hope, still with the GMB's backing. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Peter, on behalf of the GMB and this Congress, thank you very much. I think Congress will agree that it has been a very enlightening hour. We are not your enemy and you are not our enemy. You are our friend. We have always worked with you in the Party, as you well know, even with the criticism, but that is how it should be. I would like you to accept a gift from the GMB, made by our members, for your office and, of course, you will be coming back to us to let us know how the whisky trade is going. *(Presentation made amidst applause)*

PETER MANDELSON: If you want to keep supplying me with a powerful incentive to keep fighting your whisky corner, you know what to do, don't you?

THE PRESIDENT: These quality glasses are made by our members in the union.

PETER MANDELSON: Thank you very much. That is smashing.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress is closed until 2 o'clock.

(Lunch break)

AFTERNOON SESSION

(Congress reassembled at 2.00 p.m.)

THE PRESIDENT: Will Congress come to order, please? We have a long afternoon. While Congress is coming to order can I tell you that tomorrow there is a fringe meeting on private equity in the centre here at 12.45, chaired by Dave Clements, and speakers are Paul Maloney and Maria Ludkin of the Legal Department. OK.

I remind delegates that the North West & Irish Region have a social tonight down at the Brighton Trades & Labour Club, and they have 50 tickets still for sale. It will be first come, top cabaret acts, first served. I cannot remember who the first cabaret is but I will make one up as I go along. It should be good.

Can I also remind Congress that tomorrow, very important, the North West Region has a fringe meeting that I am chairing, and it is by Jasvinder Sanghera, the Fighting to Free Women from Forced Marriages. Colleagues, it should be very interesting. The stall outside is selling her book. It will be very worthwhile to attend that fringe and very important to us. Please come along tomorrow at 12.45 here in the East Wing Hall, Hall B. OK.

I think that is all the announcements. Can I announce the winners of the Sunday raffle draw, GMB Financial Services Stand 2, a bottle of champagne has been won by Mr. J. Langridge, GMB Essex, London Region branch. Well done. Is he here? On the Liverpool & Victoria stand umbrellas have been won by Mrs. P. Devine and Jim King. Congress, there will be a daily prize draw on both stands and I will announce the winners each day. Could you please collect your prizes from the stall. OK.

This afternoon's business will be the Public Services Section Report. I will be calling Brian Strutton, then we will move to the Industrial & Economic Policy: Public Services, and I will be reminding Congress that Motion 139 has been withdrawn as advised by the SOC this morning in Report No. 2. Then I will be calling Motions 140, 141, 142, 143, 145, 146, and 147. I will be asking Gary Doolan to reply on 141 and 147. OK, Congress? Right.

PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION REPORT (pages 95, 96, 97, 100 excluding NHS section pages 97-99)

PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION

1. Section Membership

At Congress 2005 we reported that the Public Services Section membership stood at 255,000; at Congress 2006 it stood at 260,000. Now PS Section membership is over 271,000 members and growing. The GMB's combination of clear, member focussed national policies and the best levels of representation on the ground continues to attract thousands of new members. We recognise and place on record our thanks to all the branch activists and Officers whose hard work and commitment to members underpins our growth.

2. National Committee

The PS National Committee has met four times since last Congress. The National Committee membership is:

- Mary Turner - President - London Region
- Vic Baines - Midland & E Coast Region
- Paul Bedford - Yorkshire & N Derbyshire Region
- Jean Chaplow - Northern Region
- Linda Clarke - Birmingham & West Midlands Region
- Keith Cook - GMB Scotland
- Gary Doolan - London Region
- John Faulds - GMB Scotland
- Gordon Gibbs - Birmingham & West Midlands Region
- Pamela Hughes - Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region
- Brian Jackson - Birmingham & West Midlands Region
- Kevin Jones - South Western Region
- Susan Lee - North West & Irish Region
- Evelyn Martin - London
- Jim McDermott - North West & Irish Region
- June Minnery - GMB Scotland
- Jimmy Philbin - North West & Irish Region
- Robin Richardson - London Region
- Eileen Theaker - Southern Region
- Peter Dow - MPO

- Heather Starr – MPO
- Richard Passmore - NHS NAG Representative
- Barry Lambert - HE Representative

The National Committee considers and determines strategic and policy issues at national level across the range of public services. It also takes reports of Regional activities and receives briefings on topics of importance. Matters taken by the National Committee included:

- Equal Pay
- Agenda for Change
- Local Government pensions
- NHS pensions
- School support staff
- The Probation Service
- Local Government pay
- Privatisation
- Defend Council Housing
- The Rent Service
- MPO
- Care sector
- Age discrimination
- Single status
- Two-tier code
- Membership and recruitment
- Public Eye magazine

3. Local Government Pensions

The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) covers 3.3million people. Negotiations to defend the LGPS against attacks from employers and government whilst ensuring it remains viable for the long term has been a major priority. Building on the back of a successful one-day strike last year of over a million council workers we were able to put together a new LGPS package that met many of our negotiating objectives.

Earlier blueprints for the new LGPS including doing away with a final salary scheme altogether and everyone paying an extra 1%. Instead, the new LGPS remains a quality final salary scheme with many better benefits than before. It matches or surpasses other new final salary public sector schemes so that local government workers are no longer the poor relations in terms of pensions.

The new LGPS provides for:

- A final salary scheme
- Variable contributions averaging 6.3%
- Normal retirement age of 65
- A $\frac{1}{60}$ th accrual rate
- Option to exchange pension for a tax-free cash sum
- Three levels of ill-health pensions
- 3 times salary on death-in-service
- Up to 10 times pension on death in retirement

The Rule of 85, which allowed some people to retire early on an unreduced pension if they were over 60 and their age and service added up to 85, was removed with protections from the LGPS in October 2006. This was because it was discriminatory. GMB and the other TUs successfully argued that the resulting cost savings should not go to the employers but should be shared equally with members to help fund improvements and protections.

Most crucially, GMB had uniquely committed that we would consult members on the new LGPS. We did so in January/February and the result clearly supported the new proposals.

However with a pension scheme as large and as complex as the LGPS there are always more issues to be resolved. So GMB is not letting up on our negotiating stance as we move from scheme design to scheme implementation in April 2007.

5. CARE SECTOR

During 2006, GMB's objectives in the sector remain in developing its membership and organising within Southern Cross Healthcare: Issues relating to pay, terms and conditions and facility time-off being our main focus.

Since summer 2006, three quarterly newsletters have been sent to members at their home addresses and distributed amongst workplaces.

6. HE & FE

There have been two meetings of HE senior stewards nominated by the regions since last year. They have formed themselves into a national committee which received approval from the Public Services Section National Committee.

The main areas of work of our union in this sector has been to ensure that the framework agreements are implemented at each HE establishment, along with the review that is taking place of the existing national agreement, which we are seeking changes to.

The work in the FE sector is a little more problematic in that most establishments opt out of the national agreement. However we are looking at how we can support our representatives more in the further development of this sector.

7. EQUAL PAY

Perhaps the most difficult and important issue facing Trade Unions is how to deliver equal pay against a background of limited resources and ever-changing law. Local government and the NHS have been at the cutting edge of this debate and GMB is right at the centre. But it is not about organisations - it is about millions of women and the equal pay owed to them. The responsibility, the fault and the blame lies fairly and squarely with the employers who have dragged their heels for so long and with government for refusing to fund equal pay.

Women (read gender both ways) are entitled to equal pay with men including where their jobs are different but are of equal value. Women's employment contracts are deemed to include any preferential terms that men have. Hence any unequal pay is owed to women as a contractual right unless the difference can be objectively justified. In addition women are entitled to up to six years arrears of equal pay.

For local government alone the equal pay gap is equivalent to £1bn per annum on the paybill and £5bn in backpay. Remember that is money owed to but being withheld from low-paid women. Some estimates equate this to an extra £250 on every council tax bill.

In 2004 GMB moved to a more aggressive stance on local government equal pay by inviting members to sign up with us for mass litigation for equal pay. During 2005 we had also been taking an increasingly tougher line in negotiations. We have been criticised for our approach - mainly by employers, of course - but the message has gone out loud and clear that GMB will relentlessly fight for equality. In 2006, with employers still delaying and with negotiations stalling, GMB ratcheted the campaign up another few notches with the strongest "negotiate or we litigate" policy yet. As a

result we are taking thousands and thousands of equal pay cases and we are proud to do so. We are also securing huge pay rises and backpay for tens of thousands of women through negotiation.

But we are under attack from two sources. Firstly employers, who do not want to meet the cost of equal pay and instead dumb down men's pay or impose detrimental changes to terms and conditions. Secondly, no-win-no-fee lawyers who have no interest in establishing equal pay or the damage they do but instead see an opportunity to make a fast buck by submitting claims for backpay (and getting a fat percentage on it) while at the same time taking cases against Unions as well. These are serious issues. GMB will battle back hard against them. Where employers undermine hard fought for terms and conditions we will defend these and seek to extend them to women. Where statute or case law or practising lawyers divert us from the overriding objective of delivering equal pay we will argue our cause until we prevail.

Most of all, we have to insist that government takes on its responsibility under European legislation and gives employers the financial wherewithal to give meaning to equal pay.

8. LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY

The 2004-7 three year pay deal in local government saw increases of 2.75%; 2.95% and 2.95% - just pitching along with inflation. During those three years local government has produced efficiency savings of over £3bn. So our new pay campaign for 2007 is based on a decent increase because we've earned it and we deserve it. The 2007 local government NJC pay claim seeks a one-year deal:

- £1,000 or 5% whichever is the greater
- A minimum hourly rate of £6.30
- An increase in annual leave of 1 day for all employees and a minimum 25 day annual entitlement with no loss of pay
- A reduction in the standard working week to 35 hours with no loss of pay
- Increase the sleep-in allowance to £60
- Increase night shift allowance to double time over three years.
- This claim mirrors GMB decisions at a lay delegates Conference in November 2006 to seek an increase that would benefit the lower paid the most.

(Adopted)

BRO. B. STRUTTON (National Secretary): Brothers and sisters of Congress and anyone else around here who might be listening, the future of public services and the future of the Labour Government are inextricably linked. The simple question for Gordon Brown and his new team is, do they want to win the next election. If so, the mathematics dictate that the 5 million public sector workers will need to be motivated to vote Labour. For that to happen, this Labour Government is going to have to start supporting public sector workers, not disrespecting them. *(Applause)*

They can start with pay. The Treasury - that is Gordon Brown - and the imposition of pay restraint across the public sector at a level only half of inflation is insulting and immoral. *(Applause)* In local government where we have 250,000 GMB members, do you know, there are still 300,000 people in local government earning less than £6 an hour. That is a crime and an outrage. The workforce in local government has delivered £3bn in efficiency savings over the last three years. Top management in local government has had average pay rises of 6%. What are we offered? A measly

2%, maybe 2.5%, if we are good, and that is against RPI of over 4%, a real terms pay cut. How on earth can a Labour government justify that?

The great shame of it is that there is some really good news that we would like to focus on. We have succeeded in defending pension schemes across the public sector and the Government has helped us to do that. GMB has led negotiations and our clear and regular communications have ensured that our members have been confident enough to vote 98% in favour of the new local government pension scheme. The GMB is the only union to have put this to its members to a vote, and that is something we can be proud of as well.

Personally, I am even more pleased that two weeks ago Government at long last gave the go-ahead to set up a new national negotiating body for all school support staff, long being GMB policy to end the abuse and the unfairness meted out to support staff. (*Applause*) It is also going to be the first major national bargaining machinery, in this case covering up to half a million people across 20,000 schools, the first that has been set for God knows how many years.

We will establish that new body and design a national framework for school staff, then of course members will have the chance to be consulted on the result before any changes take place; absolutely right. In answer to one of the earlier motions we had at Congress this year, of course we put decisions like that to our members. This means that we are going to need to be prepared for a huge job of work. We need to involve all of our current school reps, we need to get reps where we do not have them, and we have every reason to further redouble our organising efforts in every single school.

There are, of course, significant challenges that we face on behalf of our members, foremost amongst these is delivering equal pay. Primarily, for us that is through single status in local government and agenda for change in the NHS. Who would have thought that the great cause of equal pay would have become such an issue to its greatest champions, the trade unions? Why? In local government it is primarily because central government will not fulfil its obligation to fund or to allow councils to fund equal pay. The amount is huge. It is a billion pounds on the payroll, it is up to £5bn in back pay, but that money is owed to women council workers and whether that is through council tax or whether it is through the Exchequer we intend to get it for our members.

Now, as you know, some renegade lawyers have seen this as a chance to make money and attack unions in the process. On the eve of last Congress we had a case lost against the GMB. We are fighting back against that. We are waiting the result of our appeal there. It is with some sadness that on that vein I have to respond to a senior Labour politician who said last week that unions were now frightened to reach deals on equal pay. Frightened? Not this union, not the GMB, we do not do frightened, we continue to collectively negotiate equal pay as the only way to ensure lasting future equality.

I want to finish on the most positive message. Along with our initiative in school and in the wider education sector, and in the NHS, and care homes, the public services section continues to grow strongly. 255,000 members at Congress 2005, 260,000 members at Congress 2006, 271,000 at the time of writing the General Secretary's

Report, now 278,000 members in the public services section, a net growth of 23,000 members, nearly 1,000 a month since the 2005 Congress. (*Applause*) We must be doing something right. It is, I believe, our clear, honest, member focus national policies with the best on the ground representation in the entire Trades Union Movement that continues to attract thousands of members to us.

So, on behalf of the National Committee I would like to thank all of the officers, all of the activists who have contributed to that success. I would like particularly to thank Mary, who is our section president and does so much on behalf of all of our members. On that note I move the report. Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Brian, very much indeed and thanks for the compliment. Can I now move to pages 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100. Which one, 100? OK.

BRO. V. WEST (London): Can I just ask Brian to give us a bit more update on the state of the national pay negotiations in local government and just to say that so far as I think our members are concerned a 2% offer is completely derisory and, as Brian just mentioned, in effect that is a 4% pay cut for our members and is not acceptable. Could Brian just give us a bit more update of where we are on the negotiations? Thanks.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Anyone else? Hang on, Bri. It is a question on the report (*to member from the floor*). Give your name and your region.

BRO. R. GEORGE (Southern): I am Rufus George and I am in, is it Southern Region, my branch? (*Laughter*) You can see I have been here before.

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Budgie.

BRO. R. GEORGE: The question was really relating to the pensions and the deal that has been negotiated and follows on from a couple of contributions made earlier when there were a couple of motions that went in. As the first speaker got up I thought they might have made a very good point, he said basically workers have become a lot more productive. Yes, we are living longer, we are producing more wealth, but look at how that proportion of wealth is going, like public sector workers being offered a pay cut this year whereas we see in the City bonuses of like 14% or 15%, unprecedented levels, really, since the 1950s and 1960s. What I am saying to you is, is rounding up the pension age to 65 really progress? Shouldn't we really bring it down to 60? Similarly, I am not ----

THE PRESIDENT: Listen, Budgie, you are going to be flying in a minute.

BRO. R. GEORGE: That is my question.

THE PRESIDENT: My God, that was a composite! Well done.

BRO. R. GEORGE: I am just calling into question whether that is the best deal, particularly as there was pretty good strike action about a year ago.

THE PRESIDENT: Brian, over to you.

BRO. B. STRUTTON: Thank you very much, Mary. I will take those questions in reverse order, if I may.

Could we have negotiated for the retirement age to come down to 60? I would rather be honest than give a misleading answer. No, we could not have done that, it would not have been possible, absolutely impossible. The cost of doing so in the local government pension scheme would have been quite horrendous. I do not think our members would have been able to bear the increase in contributions because the employers certainly would not have done. Of course, we started from an aspiration to do something like that but, frankly, not possible within the confines of the negotiations. In any case, do not forget the local government pension scheme has always had a standard retirement age of 65, unlike some of the other public sector schemes that have a standard retirement age of 60.

In addition, one of the remits that I had dictated to me by the CEC was for the local government pension scheme to ensure that it was one scheme for all the members, not a two-tier scheme, not a “variated” approach, so we had to deal with it in that way. I would like to have had a retirement age of 60 but, frankly, in the terms of negotiation it is not possible.

Vaughan’s question, can I give further update about local government pay negotiations? I am happy to do that because it is quite a difficult situation for us sometimes to get our minds around. We submitted a claim on behalf of the trade union side in local government for 1.4 million workers asking for 5% or £1,000, whichever is the greater, and some other terms and conditions improvements as well.

We submitted that in January. The employers made a formal offer of 2% in March, which we rejected out of hand, and negotiations have formally stuck at that point since then, although the due date is April. Informally the employers have said to us, “But we might be able to increase to 2.5% if you are prepared to recommend it.” Well, I am not. 2.5% is simply not good enough. (*Applause*) It is OK, it is a no-brainer. It is not good enough. Inflation is at 4.6%, 4.2%, or something.

Accepting a deal like that is just something that I do not want to countenance and I do not think any of you would thank me for doing it either. The state of that negotiation is such that we have this formal/informal position. We have to expose that. For what it is worth, at best it still amounts to 2.5%. We have to say that is not good enough. I do not think it is good enough. You should say it is not good enough.

When we have some of the Labour Party politicians coming along, government ministers, who, by the way, have said to the local government employers, “Even if you want to pay more we don’t want you to because we don’t want you to go out of step with public sector pay policy,” I hope you give them a resounding message that 2.5% is not good enough and there has to be more money on the table in local government.

THE PRESIDENT: Can I say to Brian, Brian, from the National Committee we thank you for the hard work that you have done on the pensions, you are upfront with this,

and for your honesty. I think that is well deserved and this Congress should know the work that you do. Thank you. *(Applause)*

Congress agree to accept the report? *(Agreed)* Thank you very much.

(Public Services Section Report (pages 95, 96, 97, 100 excluding NHS section pages 97-99) was adopted.)

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now call Motion 140, the North West & Irish Region, then 141, Northern, come to the front.

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION

MOTION 140

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Congress asks the CEC to maintain the pressure on employers not to reduce hard earned terms and conditions when negotiating Single Status agreements under the NJC Green Book.

NO 2 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. SUTCLIFFE (North West & Irish): President, Congress, this type of motion I am moving today occurs regularly at Congress. I make no apology for that. The issues that local authorities are facing now are ever greater than before. The other greater funding issue is the Government reducing the budget to the local authorities, the cost of job evaluation (and as Brian said before it is what we are entitled to and what we should get) and the cost of equal pay claims. These problems are greater now than they ever were.

The employers more and more look to our terms and conditions to reduce the cost of funding these issues. Of course, we in the GMB fight all attempts to reduce terms and conditions. I ask the CEC to keep the pressure on the national employers and not to go down the road of reducing our terms and conditions. We should be fighting other issues to increase the terms and conditions of our members, not being stuck in having to try and retain them. The GMB aim is to increase terms and conditions and that is what it should be as a union.

Brian has just said about the 2.5% as a pay rise. I hope the fact he is resilient about the 2.5%, I hope he will be resilient about the funding for local authority and that must be uttered to the employers at very stage. We should not have the employers, in effect, reducing our hard-earned terms and conditions. I move.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Secunder.

Motion 140 was formally seconded.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you. 141, Northern Region to move and second.

MOTION 141

EQUAL PAY

Congress recognises the success of the GMB's campaign in Local Government, in particular to secure retrospective back payments and new fair and equitable pay and grading structures. However, despite 30 years of Equal Pay and Sexual Discrimination legislation, the gender pay gap in the UK remains.

Congress calls upon the CEC to extend the successful Local Government Equal Pay Campaign into the private sector and to seek improvements to the current legislation to ensure that employers in the private sector who employ predominantly low paid female employees are unable to avoid the provisions of the legislation.

SOUTH SHIELDS 2 BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

SIS. M. MALE (Northern): I am a first time delegate moving Motion 141 on equal pay. Congress, in 1974 the Labour Government passed the Equal Pay and Sexual Discrimination Act. Although the position of women in the workplace was improved, over 30 years later the gender pay gap remains a disgrace. Women manual workers continue to be paid on average 80% of male manual earners.

Congress, it was this union, the GMB, that took the legal cases that challenged the pay gaps, the Julie Ward case at Cammell Laird Shipyard in Liverpool, the Cleveland dinner ladies, and dozens of similar cases across the country, not ambulance chasing but the GMB and our sister unions that set the agenda. Across the Northern Region our officers have negotiated massive multimillion pound settlements for back pay and in single status negotiations have secured an increase of 20, 30, 40, and 50%. Congress, the GMB Equal Pay Campaign has been a massive success. The pay gap has been massively reduced. In the public service our female members are at last getting a fair deal.

President, Motion 141 calls on the CEC to extend our campaign from the public to the private sector. Under the present legislation our members are only able to claim equal pay if they can get and identify an opposite gender comparator with the same employer. If the local authority contracts the workers to the private sector the women lose their comparator. Colleagues, can that be justice? If it is wrong for a woman to be paid £6.47 working for her local council, how can it be right to be paid £5.30 working for a private contractor? Congress, private sector employers cannot be allowed to continue to exploit this loophole in the law. The GMB needs to campaign now to ensure that the victories that we have won are not lost, that councils are not simply allowed to farm out work to the private sector and to escape the equal pay responsibilities.

Congress, I urge you to support our low paid members and support Motion 141. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, that delegate was terrified. You have done extremely well. I am proud of you.

SIS. E. JEFFREY (Northern): Colleagues, as the mover of this motion has highlighted, the GMB's Equal Pay Campaign has been an enormous success. In the NHS and in the local authorities hundreds of thousands of our female members have received hundreds of millions of pounds in back pay on top of massive pay increases. But, Congress, low pay does not just exist in the public sector, in fact in the private sector the position is much worse.

Congress, one single example shows the extent of the problem. In South Tyneside Council we have secured retrospective back payments of up to £10,000 for home care workers. In the single status negotiations we are seeking to increase their hourly rate from £6.47 to £9.47. In addition, our Pensions Campaign has secured their pension and our efforts have also secured their National Joint Council terms and conditions, including sick pay. Yet within the same authority 60% of the home care work is farmed out to the private sector. In many cases the same women who work for the council do additional work for the private sector. In the private sector our members earn £5.40 per hour, no pension, no sick pay, no benefits.

Congress, the GMB's Equal Pay Campaign cannot stop within the public sector, to do so we would be simply sitting back and witnessing jobs going to the private sector and our members once again falling back into low pay and exploitation.

Congress, I urge you to support our low pay members, support Motion 141. I second. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Can I remind delegates there is another rostrum over *here*, please? 142, Equal Pay – Funding, Northern Region to move.

MOTION 142

EQUAL PAY – FUNDING

Congress recognises the success of the Local Government Equal Pay Campaign to secure £millions of retrospective back pay on behalf of our low paid female members and in implementing new equal pay and grading structures.

However Congress further recognises the enormous costs of these settlements and that National Government has failed to provide any additional funding to Local Government to cover these costs.

Congress calls upon the CEC to campaign to ensure that the victories secured in Local Government are not lost through further privatisations and job losses and that the Government demonstrates the strength of its commitment to equality by ensuring that the additional costs of providing equality in Local Government are fully covered by Central Government.

SUNDERLAND CITY LA BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

SIS. C. LINES (Northern): Congress, the GMB Equal Pay Campaign has without a doubt been an enormous success. Millions of low paid female members will benefit. Discrimination will cease and in local government and the NHS for the first time equal pay for the work of equal value will be a reality but, Congress, there is a catch,

a fault in the strategy, which, if not corrected, will undermine the GMB efforts: funding.

Congress, as we hear from time to time from government employers, money does not grow on trees, and many local authorities not counting the cost of payments running into hundreds of millions of pounds, the cost of implementing a fair pay structure is adding 4, 5, 6, even as high as 7% to the pay bill, although over 80% of local authorities' spending is funded by central government grants. The Government has not allocated a single extra penny to fund the cost of implementing single status.

Congress, unless someone comes up with the magical money tree local authorities will face one of three choices: one, to raise the additional funds required through Council Tax which will mean increases of 50% in many authorities; two, to cut back dramatically on frontline services and, three, to contract frontline services out to the private sector where employers will be able to escape the implications of single status and equal pay and push our members back into low pay. In reality, without additional government funding authorities will implement a mixture of all three.

Colleagues, Labour-controlled authorities are already working on such strategies, councils which in the past have supported their workforces, who have worked with the unions to retain services in-house, are now working to farm out huge areas of frontline services. Congress, the Government needs to be forced to act, they need to put their money where their mouth is. They say they are pledged to improve the position of working people, to reduce social inequality and discrimination, to reduce child poverty and help hardworking families. Well, colleagues, if what they say is true, we need action, not words. Please support our low paid members. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder.

SIS. D. JONES (Northern): Congress, as a mover of the motion has already said, our campaign to secure equal pay in local government is a model of success but without additional government funding ultimately it will be our members who will fund the changes. The Government repeatedly tells us they are committed to reducing inequality and reducing poverty but without additional funds to finance single status the exact opposite will occur.

President, if you were cynical you could not be blamed for thinking that that is exactly what Gordon Brown wants. For those of us who lived through and worked in local government during the Tory years, the new Labour Government has been a huge disappointment. After 18 years of fighting privatisation, in many cases successful, it has been a bitter disappointment to see more privatisation during the past 10 years than during almost 20 years of the Tories. (*Applause*) Councils have lost control of housing and PFI has all but destroyed the link between councils and schools.

Congress, we need to challenge this Government, and in particular the new Prime Minister, Gordon Brown. There are 1.25 million local government workers in this country, 1.25 million workers who choose to work in the public services, not because it is well paid, because it is not, no, they choose to work in the public services because they are committed to the ethos of public service. All we ask is that the Government demonstrate the same commitment.

Congress, on behalf of our dedicated and hardworking local government members, I urge you to support Motion 142. I second.

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Can I now call 143, Equal Pay, South Western, then 145, London Region, Outsourced Contract Monitoring.

MOTION 143

EQUAL PAY

We ask Congress to continue lobbying for equal pay audits and equalities impact assessments to be undertaken by all employers and not just within the public sector. Even in the public sector who, as part of the three pay award, have been tasked by the NJC to undertake equal pay awards employers are dragging their heels as many have still not implemented single status job evaluation schemes. We request Congress share good practice across regions where local authorities have undertaken these audits with the GMB input.

By having a JE scheme does not give automatic right of an equal pay structure – why do we still have part-time women workers in the care sector, cleaning, catering and schools still earning less than their male equivalents.

When a restructuring or reduction in services are being undertaken, local authorities should be made to undertake an equalities impact assessment jointly with the trade unions. This would show any inequality that may result from any changes to both services and staffing implications. The Equal Pay Commission Working Group on Equalities is currently working on this. but employers appear less than keen to progress this. Congress we call upon you to support this motion.

BRISTOL PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH
South Western Region

(Carried)

SIS. R. HAYWARD (South Western) moving Motion 143 said: Colleagues, it is over a century since the motion on equal pay was debated and supported at a TUC Conference. Congress, have we achieved it? No. Brothers, you would not have waited this long. Colleagues, single status job evaluation was meant to tackle inequality in the public sector. Sadly, what appears to be emerging is the reinforcement of low pay in traditional women's jobs.

One particular council in the South West has completed their pay and grading scheme. There has been a modest pay increase in these jobs but they remain low paid. Cleaners now earn between £5.80 and £5.87 an hour after three years service, an increase of 7 pence per hour. Compare this to the pay of a traditional male job, £8.36 rising to £9.32 an hour, over a 4-year period an increase of 92 pence per hour, not great but better.

Another contributory issue around equal pay is a lot of women's jobs are part-time. These examples are of course an over-simplification of the issue but when pay claims continue to be negotiated using percentages it widens the pay gap. Whilst employers are determined not to bottom load we continue to perpetuate the gap in public services. The employer is offering an insulting 2%. Colleagues, I think you get the point.

Equal pay is not just about pay but the impact it has upon the person's life. Lack of education, of carrying responsibility, may result in limited employment opportunities, shoe-horned into what is deemed as unskilled, low paid, and quite often part-time jobs. They find themselves trapped, not being able to move out of the cycle because of lack of training opportunity at work and through low income not being able to access education qualifications. Many women have to do more than one job resulting in less time to spend with their families or invest in themselves. If sustained over a long period of time, this lifestyle can have a detrimental impact upon their health and general wellbeing. Poverty wages means poverty pensions. According to research by Scottish Widow, many women opt out of any occupational pension once they have children. Interestingly, many men do not. Some decide not to take the organisation's pension scheme because they cannot afford it and have to rely on either their partner or the state. Recent research shows a 10% gap in pay leads to a 20% gap in pensions.

Congress, we are one of the world's richest countries. What a disgusting way to treat pensioners in the 21st century. One way to highlight this continued inequality is through equal pay audits. Colleagues, how many of our local authorities have actually carried out an equal pay audit let alone undertaking the equalities impact assessment process?

Congress, there is a lot of work to do in the public sector but the GMB has both the will and support to take this work forward. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Rowena. Secunder.

Motion 143 was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sheila. Can I ask London Region to move 145?

MOTION 145

OUTSOURCED CONTRACT MONITORING

This Congress calls upon the Government to introduce the same vigorous inspection process on outsourced contracts as those applied to the in house provider.

This would ensure true value for money the government should also introduce BVPI targets for local authorities to monitor externalized contracts to ensure best value.

CAMBRIDGE 2 BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. K. ROBERTS (London): Congress, how many times in local authorities is best value quoted to us. I have had it quoted to me loads of times. Tell me, where can it be best value when they outsource contracts to private contractors and then they do not monitor it? There is no monitoring of the private contracts. How many of these contracts actually give best value for money? As soon as the contracts go out the shareholders want their share so surely that must then affect the services? How does the Government know? They do not. How does anybody know? Nobody knows

because there is no monitoring on these. It is not only unfair but it is a waste of taxpayers' money. Surely this Government is failing in its duty actually to provide best value.

They should actually be putting in basic measures to monitor them like they do local authorities. All local authorities are monitored so vigorously that as soon as they do not start performing it gets outsourced. Surely it should be the same on private companies. If they are not actually giving best value, these contracts should come back in-house. This is why we call upon Congress to get this Government to introduce such measures in the private sector. Please support this motion. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder. I will then call 146, Southern Region, and 147, Birmingham.

SIS. B. BENHAM (London) seconding Motion 145 said: President, Congress, best value in public sector contracts does not or should not relate only to value to the body offering the contract or the private company awarding the contract. It by necessity must also apply to the most important people in the equation, the users, patients in hospitals, families, Council Tax payers, residents in local authorities. Far too often once the contract is awarded making money becomes the sole aim and without any inspection progress service providers can under-perform for as long as the contract lasts, or it goes pear-shaped. The only people who suffer are the service users.

As an example I can think of the award of a parks and grounds maintenance contract in Barnet and without any quality checks the contractor so seriously under-performed the parks of Barnet look like a jungle. To their credit the Labour Council eventually took the contract away but the damage had been done. If services are to be privatised quality monitoring must be introduced. Please support this motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Barbara. Can I ask for the mover of 146, Southern Region?

MOTION 146

TWO TIER WORKFORCE/CODE OF PRACTICE ON WORKFORCE MATTERS

The purpose of the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 1981 ("TUPE") and European Directive 77/187/EEC on Employees' Rights on Transfer of Undertakings (The Acquired Rights Directive - "ARD") is to preserve continuity of employment and to safeguard employment rights of all employees whose employment transfers to a new employer as a result of a relevant transfer.

The Code of Practice was introduced to reinforce these principles by ensuring that staff taken on by an undertaker following a TUPE transfer are provided with no less favourable terms and conditions of employment as staff transferred to them when they took over the business.

Local Councils should ensure that all individual contracts comply with Best Value requirements under the Local Government Act 1999, including workforce requirements in the Code and accompanying statutory guidance.

In reality Local Councils up and down the country have failed to consult the trade unions on workforce matters either through Best Value Reviews or through the tendering of new contracts.

The responsibility of Local Councils to monitor and exercise their statutory duty under the Code has been largely neglected. Local Councils have no incentive to monitor new starter contracts because of the potential cost implications. Similarly trade unions have been slow to react to Local Councils indifference which has, in many cases, led to a worsening of the Two Tier problem. GMB must ensure that the Code is embedded in all Local Council service contracts. As usual it is our members at the bottom of the pile who continue to suffer the most. These include Cleaners and Carers amongst others and they deserve better.

GMB should make it their priority to campaign to ensure that all Local Councils comply with their obligations to consult with GMB on Best Value reviews and on every service contract transfer. GMB should make it their business to identify every service contract in every Council where new starter employment contracts fail to meet statutory requirements to provide employment contracts for new starters that are no less favourable than the transferees from the Council. GMB should write to the Leader and Chief Executive of every Council to demand our consultation rights and highlight GMB expectations on all existing and future service contract. GMB need to highlight every detail in the Code to ensure that activists know what they need to do to deal with breaches of the Code. Let GMB make a difference and demonstrate that organisation in the workplace will deliver improved terms and conditions. GMB must go back to basics and fight for the rights of the less well off and those members who are being exploited.

L.B. LAMBETH L09 BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. B. MODLOCK (Southern): Two-Tier Workforce/Code of Practice on Workforce Matters in local government TUPE transfers. I think everybody in this hall knows about the pernicious legislation CCT and the legacy that that has left connected certainly to those speakers before me on equal pay.

Four years ago a code of practice was introduced through the office of the Deputy Prime Minister. This was seen as a major breakthrough by the trade unions. Of course it was. One of the bulletins that was put out I have in front of me and it says on the code a number of things. It says new starters to be engaged on terms and conditions no less favourable than those of transferred staff, and that meant the original staff; a requirement on all best value authorities to include an enforcement arrangement in the contract with the service provider, in other words, ensuring that they do what the code says; continued membership of the local government pension scheme for transferred staff or alternative good quality pension schemes; pension arrangements for new starters, including membership of the LGPS where the contractor has admitted body status. It went on to say it will no longer be possible for contractors to cut the terms and conditions of new starters following the transfer. I am sorry to say that that is not the case. Four years on that is not the case.

So what has gone wrong? Firstly, the code of practice did not apply to existing contracts; it applied to contracts that were let after the code of practice came in, in March 2004. Also, it was not retrospective; it did not deal with those people that were already employed on worse terms and conditions. Also, when the new contracts were let by the local councils and if the code was implemented and you took people on, on new starter contracts that were no less favourable, you were left with a sandwich effect. It was those people in the middle that we had no way of actually dealing with unless we applied the code and then dealt with those issues subsequently.

So what has gone wrong since the introduction of the code? Firstly, the authorities are not consulting the trade unions on best value transfers in most instances. The authorities are not monitoring the contract compliance which the code says they must do. Client officers are often unaware of the authorities and their own responsibility under the code. Authorities are not fulfilling their duty in the performance plans to monitor compliance independently, and the trade unions have not been doing as much as they could do actually to challenge this. The trade unions can do more and I think we should do more, and the disillusioned members who believe that the code would change things have been disappointed.

So what can we do? I think we should make the code of practice and two-tier work a national campaign, inform activists and officers about the importance of the code and how they can use it to bring about real change, identify the key steps that need to be taken to challenge non compliance of the code, including taking a grievance against a contractor, using the ADP (the alternative disputes procedure) and formal written complaints to the District Auditor. The District Auditor can actually take action against a council not because the trade unions have asked them to do so through the alternative disputes procedure, but simply because they have not actually been ensuring the contractors comply. They have a duty to do that and they are not doing it.

Lastly, where we take on people on new starter contracts that have been agreed with the trade unions in the companies, and not anybody else I have to say, what we then need to do is ensure that those people in the middle get their terms and conditions brought up to everybody else's, and of course that potentially may mean a ballot. What I would have to say to you is, in many cases local authorities have not been complying with the code and if we brought it to the District Auditor I think that that would make a difference.

I would also say that we have an opportunity to eradicate two-tier working and make no mistake there is a major opportunity to recruit. I ask for support of this motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Secunder.

BRO. T. TRIM (Southern) seconding Motion 146 said: The GMB has not been consulted on best value TUPE transfers and the contractors have not been consulting the GMB about the new starters' contracts. The contractors in Wandsworth Council are employing staff on contracts that are in breach of the code on two-tier workforces. The council has not monitored the contract to ensure that they are complying with it as they are required to do so. The code of practice is not being enforced in the way that it is intended and the council are not meeting their statutory obligations. Please support this motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. 147, Birmingham & West Midlands Region.

MOTION 147

CONTRACTORS ADMITTED BODY STATUS

Congress agrees that all future Local Authority Contracts being moved to the Private Sector should be on condition that Admitted Body Status Applies, giving GMB members some protection.

B43 – BIRMINGHAM CITY GENERAL BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. KEMPSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I will give you a brief background to this motion. Over the last 10 years or more we have contracted out public services, we have seen large numbers of members being transferred to the private sector. I must say this is with a Labour government since 1997 and Birmingham City Council until recently was Labour-controlled. A small example of services that were contracted out: grounds maintenance, cleaning, housing repairs, and many, many more, too many to list today.

The problem 10 years on is because admitted body status did not apply in all cases and all contracts so we are left with some members who still enjoy the local government pension scheme but for a lot of others, Congress, this is not the case. We now have groups of gardeners, for example, where admitted body status did not apply. The end result is this group of members has been in three different pension schemes and could have many more before retirement. The number of schemes depends on contractors selling on contracts, loss of contracts, or re-tendering by local authorities.

Congress, we have groups of members being treated a lot less favourably than others and that cannot be right. If admitted body status applies to all future contracts, then what this motion is calling for would remove the unfairness surrounding this issue. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder. Formally?

Motion 147 was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? *(No response)* No. Congress, a lot has been said about best value, the best thing since sliced bread. I have a view of best value, it is of no value at all to our members, it is of no value to the clients, the only value that someone gets out of it is the employers lining their bank balance. If the Labour Party wants to succeed, best value has got to go and bring our contracts back in-house when they are up. *(Applause)* I call Gary Doolan.

BRO. G. DOOLAN (CEC, Public Services): Speaking on behalf of the CEC covering Motions 141 and 147. Congress, the CEC supports Motions 141 and 147 but with the following qualifications.

Turning first to Motion 141, this motion calls upon the CEC to extend the union's successful local government Equal Pay Campaign to the private sector as well as to seek improvements to the current legislation. Congress, the CEC's qualification to this motion is about the further legislation which could have unforeseen consequences and so this needs to be considered very carefully.

Turning to Motion 147, the motion is for all future local authority contracts being moved into the private sector to be on the condition that admitted body status applies giving GMB members some protection. Congress, the CEC's qualification to this motion is that we need to ensure that admitted body status is open to new starters and not just protection for existing workers.

The CEC is asking Congress to support Motion 141 with the qualification that further legislation needs to be considered carefully. The CEC is asking Congress to support Motion 147 with the qualification that admitted body status is open to new starters as well as existing workers. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Gary. Does Northern Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you very much. Does Birmingham Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. I will put 140, 141, 142, 143, 145, 146, and 147 to the vote. All those in favour please show? Anyone against? They are carried.

(Motion 140 was carried)

(Motion 141 was carried)

(Motion 142 was carried)

(Motion 143 was carried)

(Motion 145 was carried)

(Motion 146 was carried)

(Motion 147 was carried)

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now ask the mover, South Western Region, to move Composite 14, Keep Public Services Public, and London Region to second. I will then be calling 152, Contractors in Public Services, moved by Birmingham, 153, PFI, and 154, PFI. Isn't it funny, I am replying to them.

COMPOSITE MOTION 14

(Covering Motions 149, 150 and 151)

149 – Keep Public Services Public – (South Western Region)

150 – Public Services in Public Ownership – (London Region)

151 – Retention of National and Public Services – (London Region)

KEEP PUBLIC SERVICES PUBLIC

Congress, we would ask for your support in the fight against the continuing privatisation of our public services. The attacks are focussed upon the low paid workforce mostly in the facilities management sector (catering, cleaning), but recently we have seen an increase in direct attacks in the care sector – both in residential and community care – we must highlight and fight to protect our members' jobs.

Congress agrees that there is still more that the union can do in the fight to Keep Public Services Public, in particular raising the profile of this fundamental campaign and ensuring more information is regularly available to our lay membership regarding rallies, parliamentary lobbies and other campaigning initiatives.

This Congress calls for a campaign to retain and restore what is left of our once national and public services.

(Carried)

SIS. R. HAYWARD (South Western): Congress, the public sector is under constant attack from the get-rich merchants who see councils as cash cows. Many local authorities employ consultants on exorbitant rates to tell them what they already know but when it comes to frontline workers receiving a small increase in their pay we are told in-house services are too expensive. Their solution is to outsource the workers to drive down the costs by attacking our members' terms and conditions.

When this Labour Government first took office they got rid of compulsory competitive tendering and put best value in its place. Ministers kept repeating the mantra, quality services and decisions will not be made on costs alone. Where has that gone? Now all we hear is the public sector must be more cost effective in order to meet yet another new initiative dreamt up by Whitehall and Number 10, and of course without any extra money.

Now ministers' mantra is, public bad, private good. How many more exposés of showing the lack of investment into the care of our old and most vulnerable in society before the Government and the public sector realise in-house provision is best? Reality in many local authorities is they see outsourcing of frontline services as a quick-fix to their budgetary problems. Colleagues, in one local authority in the South Western Region we have over 300 school catering staff facing privatisation. The in-house provider has been barred from tendering for the contract. Why? It might put the private sector off from bidding.

Recently workers had a letter from the LibDem councillor in charge of schools, headed up, "Reassurances and congratulations". She congratulated them all on their "amazing hard work over the last year, conscientious and creative, no challenge has been too much for you. The number of children eating healthy meals continues to rise." She reassured them they were highly valued members of staff. They were not changing the contract because they were unhappy with their work, but the schools needed financial investment to the service, investment which the LEA should have made. In this May election her majority dropped from 900 to 9 after high-profile local union campaigning against threats to in-house services.

Colleagues, we must continue to mount a campaign against any council or councillor who insists in keeping privatisation on the table. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Rowena. Secunder.

BRO. D. RIGBY (London): Congress, we must keep what remains national and public as it says, national and public. Over the last 15 to 20 years we have seen our services the length and breadth of the country torn apart, decimated, by the private sector: our once proud national rail network gone, the National Coal Board all but gone, public services eroding weekly. The future looks bleak. We will soon have a sham public services and a sham national workforce, if there is a national workforce left. We once had a National Coal Board, national railways, national bus services, and many, many more, all run not for the profit, national meaning for the nation, public for the public; even our Post Offices have all been torn apart.

The only thing that we will have that will be national which the Government do not seem to mind getting bigger is the bloody National Front. Congress, the Government must stop this lunacy. Why have good services taken away from the public and the nation? I feel as a public servant aggrieved that the fat cats are getting fatter on the backs of our members all because the Government will not invest in its services. Congress, I second this motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. 152 to be moved by Birmingham & West Midlands Region.

MOTION 152

CONTRACTORS IN PUBLIC SERVICES

Congress agrees that a full review will take place of all National Agreements of Private Contractors working and operating in the Public Sector.

B43 – BIRMINGHAM CITY GENERAL BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. KEMPSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, it has been many, many years, in fact it was in the 1980s and 1990s when compulsory competitive tendering started. At that time all public sector unions rushed in to try and sign agreements for contracted out members, in most cases agreements which in the main not worth the paper they were written on, very very basic and very weak. Congress, we must remember that being transferred from public to private was and still is very daunting. It also means probably pay conditions erosion, more temporary workers, and no trade union organisation or involvement in most cases. We have had and still will have large numbers being contracted out.

Congress, this motion is asking for a full review of existing agreements we had with the private contracts in public services. All existing agreements and arrangements should be looked at. Where we can improve or renegotiate with the private sector we should. We should also look at where we have no agreements to bring new members in and protect them.

Congress, if we do not do this we will be recruiting one end in public services and losing them all at the other end. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Dave. Secunder. Do we have a seconder?

Motion 152 was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. 153, North West & Irish Region, PFI.

MOTION 153

PFI

This Congress is totally opposed to PFI, a racket in which private companies rake in billions of pounds of taxpayers cash.

MANCHESTER 101 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

BRO. J. McDONNELL (North West & Irish): As we are all aware the ethics of business is to make as much money for the least amount of effort, so what does PFI mean? It means the manufacture of another money-making racket that fills the ever bulging bank balances of the pin-stripe suit of the elite at the cost of public money. Private companies are raking in billions of pounds of taxpayers' money and the Government are thanking them for doing it. This rip-off of public money was invented by the Tories as a scam to pay back their bankers and continued by New Labour, an ingenious scheme that appears to deliver state-of-the-art schools and hospitals but at the most profitable rates of return for the private sector.

At present, there are over 700 deals signed for a total of £48bn of taxpayers' money. So the privateer builds a school or a hospital, gets paid for 30 years for delivering the facility, then when the building is dilapidated and nearly run down they hand it back to the public sector. The public finances do not allow for the renovation of the facility so the privateer is asked to build another facility and get paid another number of decades, a complete rip-off.

Public money should be invested into public facilities without the private sector being able to cherry-pick its most profitable stream of income. Governments can borrow at a far better rate of interest than taking this option, the benefit being very little for the public sector and diversely massive for the private sector. Who is in favour? Well, the money-makers, obviously. They do not want these money pits to run dry. That is why three-quarters of projects were delivered on time and on budget so they can get in line for the next multimillion pound public facility project that they can get richer on. The working-class people of this country have never relied upon the private sector for anything. Everything that we have we have had to struggle and struggle hard for. The NHS, for example, was never designed to be a profit-maker for private business but that is exactly what has happened.

To conclude, President, maybe, just maybe, if the Labour Government had invested in public infrastructure and internal services that benefit the people of this country instead of investing in George Bush in his relentless pursuit of global power, we might not have to rely on blood money of the private sector. PFI is just one more money-making venture for the fat cats, for exploitation and deceit, using lies and treachery. They do what they have always done, make money from the people who can least afford it so let's throw it in the dustbins of history. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, John. Secunder.

Motion 153 was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. 154, to be moved by London.

MOTION 154

PFI PROFITS

This Congress calls upon the GMB to campaign for a capping level to attach to all PFI projects to ensure value for money.

It is sensible to put a fixed percentage limit on PFI projects that should all be subject to best value criteria.

CAMBRIDGE 2 BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. M. FOSTER (London): As in the previous motion, 145, this motion seeks to address our concerns over PFI contracts and, in particular, the obscene profits that some companies are making from them. These services should be about best value and not about how much profit can be made. Every penny that goes into the shareholders' pockets is another penny not going into the service the public pays for. This motion calls upon the GMB to campaign for a capping level to be attached to all PFI contracts. One of the ways this could be achieved is by limiting the link for these contracts. This would ensure, as far as possible, that the companies who bid for these contracts do so with the clear knowledge that they will not be making huge profits on the backs of GMB members or the local communities they serve. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder.

BRO. S. ELLIS (London): President, Congress, privatisation comes in many shapes and sizes. We have had compulsory competitive tendering, there has been outsourcing, and public private partnerships. Among this multitude of obscene titles given to handing over public assets for the profit-hungry privateers was the private finance initiative. This enabled the private to build public facilities and then lease them back to the public bodies. Their original estimate for building costs almost inevitably overran and is almost an institutionalised criminal conspiracy.

Let me just explain how far this level of corruption has gone. In London, much against his will, our Mayor, Ken Livingstone, was forced to have upgrades to the Underground system carried out by this type of privatisation arrangement. One of the firms is called Metronet. The Mayor cynically joked last week that they were four years behind on the project but this outfit is something else. They are a consortium and one of the four firms who make up the consortium is Balfour Beatty. Guess who has been given the building and renovation work? Yes, Balfour Beatty. They then sub it out to Mickey Mouse companies like Henleys. Only last week there was a dispute where 40 GMB members walked out after not being paid for four weeks on the trot. Yes, there should be caps on PFI projects so that the public are not robbed by these outfits but we need to ensure they are not robbing workers at the other end of the contract through scams like this. Congress, I second.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? Anyone else? Come down the front, Bill Bailey!

BRO. R. GEORGE (Southern): I understand what the colleague was just saying about PFI and I understand why they are putting the motion because they want to ameliorate what is happening in terms of PFI. Really, I think we need to think about the fact that pretty much everyone this morning has spoken about the effect of privatisation pushed through across the board and the effect it is having. Our public services are basically just being completely put up for sale, the health service, council services, everything that is left.

I think Paul Kenny in his address made an important point this morning when he said that as a relatively small union in order to recruit, in order to compete, if you like, with the other major unions at the moment we need to do something with our size, we need to be qualitatively different, right? I think that in this situation we need to have quite a galvanised position. We have to have a position which does not say, we want to ameliorate the effects of PFI. I do not mean any disrespect to my colleagues that have come up and spoken, but we do not want to be capping PFI projects or putting best value criteria, we need to be galvanising a serious campaign actually of industrial action against all those things.

So, without wishing to be disrespectful I think we should go with the first motion but I question the second one.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Tom?

BRO. T. BAILLIE (London) supporting Composite 14 said: Congress, there is nothing new here in what I am saying for we as a union agree 100% that public services should remain or be returned to public ownership, but it is how we achieve this. Our National Officers, Brian Strutton and Iain McNicol, are doing all they can but it is not enough. What is being asked is some help for Ian and Brian. Remember, 50% of GMB membership comes from the public sector. There should be a better structure in place, better communications between the National Office and the lay membership so the lay members can do their part in making sure that these campaigns we are running are properly supported and are successful. So, if Brian is organising a campaign we are there to give the full support it deserves.

We need better liaison between the regions to assist each other, to get the support where it is needed at the time it is needed. We need to be better at getting news in the media for our benefit. Again this is not taking anything away from the hard working staff in this area, it is just that we need to be doing more and more often. Again, we do not blow our trumpet loud enough and it is time we started before Unison and that new group, Unite, actually steal our thunder.

So, Congress, I would urge you to support this motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Tom. Can I call Mary Turner to answer Motion 152! Can I have five minutes, please? Thank you.

Where is he? Dave, Birmingham Region, you know that we care very deeply about the sentiment that is in this resolution, but we have reviewed our national agreements with contractors. You are quite right, most of them were crap; they were sweetheart agreements and we have stopped that, but we do need to know and you

need to know, and everyone in this hall. We do not need to lose the members that are transferred out of local authorities, we should be keeping them within the union and when we make members there then we will probably have better agreements. But we are reviewing them, the National Committee, with Brian, quite regularly. I hope you accept that qualification. Dave, agreed? (*Agreed*) Thank you.

Can I now put them to the vote? Composite 14, 152, 153, and 154. All those in favour please show? Anyone against? They are carried.

(Composite Motion 14 was carried)

(Motion 152 was carried)

(Motion 153 was carried)

(Motion 154 was carried)

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now move to item 3, Social Policy: Housing, 227, to be moved by Southern Region and 230, to be moved by Southern Region.

SOCIAL POLICY: HOUSING

MOTION 227

HOUSING MARKET

Congress notes the inexorable rise in house values in the UK and recognises that many young working people will find it impossible to afford a home of their own.

Congress further notes, that many key sector workers, particularly in inner city areas, cannot afford to live within a reasonable distance of their employment.

Congress welcomes many of the scheme's providing assistance to key sector workers, but believes that this does not adequately address the fundamental problems.

Unsustainable house price increases have helped to create a myth of economic prosperity in the UK which has hidden core problems, such as the decline in the manufacturing base and the loss of quality jobs, to low pay, poor condition employment.

Approximately 20 years ago, house prices reflected a 3 to 4 multiplier of average earnings, but this has risen to a present day situation of average house prices being 8 to 9 times earnings with the average home costing in excess of £200k.

Congress requests GMB leadership to lobby government to resolve the housing crisis and in particular, end its laissez faire, free market, liberal approach, which is such a feature of this Labour Government.

Congress wishes to see constraints on the activities of estate agents whose interests are served by ever spiralling house prices and also see government controls on individual borrowing amounts and time periods. Mortgages based on excessive multipliers of earnings and time periods in excess of the traditional 25 years are not in working people's interests and only help fuel further price rises.

Congress wishes to see government policy that creates an attitude of house ownership for a home, not as for an investment. It further wishes to see legislation, such as in France, that penalises

housing as a speculative or investment adventure. Clearly in the UK, house price rises have gained momentum due to the buy to let business agenda of many individuals.

Congress wishes to see the investment in housing stock, particularly in the renovation of existing property and new build on brown field sites, but does not wish to see the erosion of further green belt and space. Furthermore, it does not wish to see the continuation of 'parachute', (requires a parachute to enter the property), development, where properties are crammed into very small areas (often people selling off their garden space), with total disregard to other locals.

Congress deplores the current two tier situation, where those who have owned a property for many years, sit very financially comfortable, but clearly at the expense of many working people, in particular young, working class and key sector workers.

DOVER FERRIES X23 BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. P. GOODACRE (Southern): Congress notes the dramatic rise in house prices over the past decade and the accompanying detrimental and alarming consequences for large sections of the population and our society in general. With the average house now costing in excess of £200,000 representing a price to earnings ratio of between 8 and 9, which is more than twice the historic average, the cost of owning a home is at an historical high. Certain groups particularly disadvantaged in the current housing market are the young, public sector workers, and other vulnerable groups who are low paid.

The efforts of government to help key workers are welcomed. However, the scope of this programme and the definition of a key worker must be expanded. All workers are key workers and as such quality affordable housing must be accessible to all. Government action is required. This should begin by addressing the chronic under-supply of housing with public investment and an appropriate and ambitious building programme. This does not need to be at the cost of a shrinking countryside. The building programme should be responsible focusing on renovation of existing housing stock and regeneration of brown field sites wherever possible.

House price inflation is partly due to the buy-to-let boom where one in five properties are now being bought for this purpose. As a nation we need to psychologically recondition ourselves as to the true value and purpose of houses. They are places people live in, a place where families are raised with building blocks of communities. They are not and should not be treated like other financial assets or investment vehicles. Government policy should recognise and encourage this view with a tax regime that discourages residential property ownership for purposes other than that of a primary residence. Those of us fortunate enough to have bought our own home will also agree on the necessity of curtailing and regulating the activities of estate agents.

As well as addressing under-supply and discouraging the purchase of residential property for speculation, government action is required to curb the current and frenzied boom that is such a feature of the recent housing market. Sensible controls must be imposed on the amounts that can be borrowed relative to earnings, and on repayment periods. It goes without saying that 50-year mortgages that take up most

of your salary are not conducive to a good quality of life. By addressing the fundamental under-supply of housing this would be rendered possible.

The shift towards a more continental balanced and civilised policy towards housing would be advantageous for the economy. History suggests that the current credit boom based largely on house prices invites economic instability and leads to structural problems in the wider economy. Economic growth based on consumer lending is unsustainable. Industry continues to suffer from high interest rates attributable largely to house price inflation.

Congress, the chronic lack of affordable housing represents a crisis for our nation but is not only practical and material in nature but is a source of injustice and inequality focusing as it does on the groups mentioned earlier. Given this, solutions cannot be left to market mechanisms. Congress requests GMB leadership to lobby government to resolve the housing crisis with appropriate intervention ending the *laissez faire* free market approach which has been such a feature and a failure of this Labour Government. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Can I have a seconder?

BRO. M. FLAMBARD (Southern): With the increasing property values still going up a lot of low income members are stopped from joining the property ladder. Affordable housing, what is affordable housing? You ask me. I do not know because I live in one. The incoming Prime Minister made a comment when he accepted his speech to become the Prime Minister and leader of the Labour Party. He said that housing was one of his third items. Can I say, Congress, I hope he sticks to it. If not, can we question him why. Congress, I second Motion 227.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. The mover of 230, Southern Region.

MOTION 230

KEY WORKER HOUSING STATUS

This Congress welcomes the introduction of key worker status to provide housing for workers in cities and towns of the UK. However, Congress is of the view that the criteria for key worker is too restrictive in that it applies to professional people such as teachers, nurses and police officers. This Congress is concerned that the non professional but key workers nonetheless can no longer afford to live in London and many other cities of the UK.

Therefore Congress should campaign for key worker status to be extended to local authority and utility workers.

CROYDON C60 BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

SIS. B. TERRY (Southern): President, Congress, key worker housing status, although we all welcome the idea and introduction of key worker status, we do feel that it should apply to all of our colleagues. However, at this moment in time it only includes professional workers. Living in London myself I can quite understand the costs of rent that people on low wages struggle to find. It must be frustrating living in

one room and even sleeping in one room, or at least trying to sleep, sometimes the whole family, and then having to get up early for work, normally most manual workers have early starts, and to have to travel to work being tired and stressed even before they start work.

All this for a small wage and being told one answer would be to move out of London. Sounds fine but cheaper housing means fewer jobs. We should all be entitled to have somewhere decent to live and bring up our families. That old saying is, “There’s no place like home”, now it is more like, “I wish we could afford a home.” I would like to ask Congress to campaign for key worker status and that it should be extended to all local authority and utility workers. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Secunder.

Motion 230 was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Anyone wish to come in on the debate? (*No response*) No. Can I put 227 and 230 to the vote? All those in favour please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

(Motion 227 was carried)

(Motion 230 was carried)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, just listen carefully to this announcement. I want to remind you that you have a copy of the Special GMB Report on Private Equity’s Broken Promises, which Paul Kenny mentioned in his address this morning. I would also like to advise you that I intend to take the CEC Statement, item 5 in your programme but item 4 in mine, OK, so can I call Paul Maloney to move and Ed Blissett to second.

GMB CONGRESS 2007

CEC Statement on Private Equity and Venture Capitalists

Composite Motion 9 draws attention to the growing danger to British industry of the unregulated growth of the Private Equity and Venture Capital industries. The CEC supports this composite. The GMB has consistently voiced concerns about the shady activities of the private equity industry, which now employs 1.2 million people in Britain – around 20% of the private sector’s total workforce. Globally, no company is safe from a potential buyout by Private Equity Funds (PEFs) which can now access purchasing power of over 2 *trillion* US dollars. The industry’s influence in the UK is growing – there was £11.7bn of private equity funding invested in Europe in 2005, and over 50% of all private equity activity in Europe currently takes place in the UK.

The GMB Special Report “*Private Equity’s Broken Pension Promises*” focuses on the links between insolvent pensions funds and private equity companies. It highlights the contrast between the way that the multi-millionaire elite that control the PEFs like to portray themselves – as innovators who create jobs and wealth, and make a vital contribution to the economy – and the harsh reality for thousands of workers, whose pensions are threatened by the insatiable greed of the private equity industry. The CEC Special Report illustrates how the private equity fat cats, who surround their operations in secrecy to avoid exposure of their true intentions, are responsible for *at least* £2 billion of liabilities for insolvent pension funds. Many of the pension funds affected are from companies employing GMB members, whose futures have been thrown into doubt by the activities of the private equity asset-strippers.

There is widespread recognition that the UK now provides the most friendly environment for private equity funds in Europe, and this has encouraged a massive growth in the number of PEFs that choose to invest here. Amongst the reasons for this are: the lack of regulation of PEFs compared to stock exchange listed companies; the many tax advantages the PEFs are offered, particularly in relation to debt repayment; the fact that there are many buoyant asset-rich but cash-poor companies in the UK; and a misconception that PEFs will create leaner and more successful companies, and are therefore good for business and the economy.

The private equity industry currently operates within a completely self-regulating environment. The Financial Services Authority has no regulatory control or powers over the industry at all. This lack of regulation also means that there is no consideration of the impact of PEFs on industrial relations and recognition agreements with trade unions, nor of the threat that they often pose to worker’s pensions. When a PEF takes over a company the ownership, structure and status of the firm changes, allowing the PEF to ignore existing collective bargaining arrangements and act in any way they choose to destabilise the terms and conditions of the workforce. We have witnessed the effect of this upon companies like Little Chef, Birds Eye, and

the AA - where the GMB was derecognised and check-off discontinued before 3500 staff lost their jobs. There were also significant changes enforced to the terms and conditions of the remaining workforce, and a restructuring of the pension fund.

PEFs operate primarily to unlock value in the companies they acquire to redistribute to their own investors. In order to guarantee good returns to investors, PEFs raise funds by selling off or borrowing against (“leveraging”) the company’s valuable assets. This money is then passed on to investors in the PEF, and the company is left in massive debt and responsible for making interest payments. Whilst the investors enjoy the benefits of the cash squeezed out of the debt-laden company in exorbitant dividends, staff are usually made redundant to ensure that labour costs are lowered. Long-term business concepts related to staff welfare and morale are not a priority because the PEF will not be involved with the company long-term.

Unlike (stock exchange) listed companies, PEFs are not subject to accountability or scrutiny by shareholders or the public. They don’t have to provide any insight into the way they are structured, nor do they have to explain their intentions when buying into a company. Even the banks that compete with each other to fund their activities often have little idea of the full range of debts that are loaded onto the target companies after their acquisition. A deliberate tactic employed by PEFs is to spread the leverage debt widely across a number of lenders to obscure the overall picture for anybody but those in control of the fund.

This lack of transparency and the complex layers of debt allow the PEFs to avoid the economic and social consequences of their activities. The investors quickly secure huge returns for themselves through the sale of assets, shedding jobs and raiding pension funds, and escape any responsibility for their actions. To add insult to injury, they also avoid paying vast amounts of tax because of a series of loopholes that are ideally suited to their purpose of making maximum short-term profits. In particular, excessive leveraging is supported by the advantages of writing down the cost of the debt incurred

against taxes due. Other measures include interest payments being written off against corporation taxes, which are then not contributed to the public purse, and taking advantage of taper relief on Capital Gains Tax, which means that provided they have owned a company for just two years, PEF senior executives only have to pay between 5 and 10% in CGT on earnings through company schemes - a benefit which is not available to publicly listed companies.

The CEC believes that the special advantages that the Treasury has granted PEFs have resulted in an excessive amount of private equity investment in the UK economy. The negative impact of the private equity industry cannot be over-stated. The purpose of the PEFs is entirely related to the swift extraction of profit for their investors - they are becoming increasingly less selective in their targets, are taking on more high risk debt, and are focused exclusively on getting in and out of the target company in the shortest possible time needed to extract funds to repay their investors.

The result is that the private equity industry destroys jobs, undermines workers rights and creates insolvent pension funds, in order to allow small groups of individuals – the multi-millionaire elite - to make huge personal fortunes by asset-stripping household names. Furthermore, the industry lacks proper accountability and is not taxed effectively. In short, private equity investment, which is concerned only with the generation of short-term mega-profits, is totally incompatible with the employment rights and long-term interests of working people.

The threat that the private equity industry poses to our members is one which the CEC takes very seriously - that's why the GMB has conducted a vigorous and effective campaign against the private equity bloodsuckers. The success of our campaigning has put the private equity industry under the spotlight in a way that has never happened before. Without the storm created by the GMB's campaign, private equity investors, who prefer to remain anonymous and unaccountable, would have remained in the shadows. However, as a result of the political and media pressure generated by our Union's campaign, a

Treasury Select Committee was recently established to conduct an enquiry into the impact of Private Equity Firms on the economy. This is the first step towards achieving the goal called for in Composite Motion 9.

The GMB submission to the Select Committee concluded that the Treasury needs to urgently consider the economic impact of the massive amounts of tax that are being legally avoided by PEFs and their investors, the advantage this gives them over stock exchange listed companies, the cost to the public purse, and the amount of value being stripped out of British companies. It called for the introduction of a Regulatory Authority to oversee the private equity industry, and stated that the Treasury should also: remove the economic advantages for short-term investors; equalise the balance between private and publicly listed companies so that taxpayers are not subsidising private equity; consider ways to make PEFs more transparent and accountable; identify measures to protect the economy and the labour market in the event of a rise in interest rates putting excessively leveraged companies at risk of being unable to meet their debt liabilities; put measures in place to protect existing collective bargaining agreements and the position of trade unions within companies taken over by PEFs; and provide funding and support for genuinely independent research into the social and economic impact of PEFs in the UK.

A supplementary submission to the Select Committee concentrated upon the damage that the private equity industry inflicts on the pensions funds of the target companies it acquires. As outlined in the CEC Special Report, there have been various examples of private equity investors taking control of companies, then causing the failure of the pension scheme by a variety of methods, thus forcing its entry into the Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS) or Pension Protection Fund (PPF). Private equity effectively dumps the pension fund liabilities and pockets the proceeds, robbing the workers involved of their pensions and leaving other pension funds or the taxpayer (through the FAS or PPF) to pick up the tab. The economic, practical and social consequences of this type of sabotage are enormous, with the repercussions affecting almost everybody but the multi-millionaire gluttons who are responsible. It is little

wonder that the UK occupational pensions system is in crisis, with the private equity industry launching corporate raids to fill its pockets with cash contributed by working people and their employers towards their retirement.

The GMB has called for the Pensions Regulator and the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to take urgent action to address this issue. The recent acquisition of Boots, yet another household name to fall prey to the private equity industry, highlights the need for legal powers to be used to protect pension fund members when companies are targetted for takeover by asset-strippers. With £8 million of borrowings as a result of the £11 million takeover, it is clear that Boots would not be able to cover its pension fund liabilities towards existing or future pensioners in the event of the scheme being wound up.

In the next phase of the GMB's campaign, the General Secretary will lead a delegation to a meeting of the Treasury Select Committee on 20th June, to discuss the impact of private equity on our members and the UK economy. The GMB will highlight the links that the CEC Special Report has established between the private equity industry and a number of identified pensions schemes, and ask the Select Committee to establish exactly how much of the total of £15 billion of insolvent pension fund liabilities the private equity companies have walked away from.

The GMB's campaigning and political lobbying will continue until action is taken to exercise proper control over private equity investors. The jobs and security of our members, and their terms and conditions of employment, have been developed through decades of collective bargaining and union struggle. They have paid contributions to pensions funds for years, working towards a decent retirement. Their jobs, and their futures, are far too important for the GMB to allow them to be trampled over by the greed of private equity profiteers.

June 2007

(Adopted)

BRO. P. MALONEY (Southern) speaking on behalf of the CEC in support of Composite 9 and moving the CEC Statement on Private Equity and Venture Capitalists said:

Firstly, President, I would like to thank yourself and the CEC for giving me the opportunity to be able to come to the rostrum and speak on this very, very important issue. The CEC Statement has been circulated and with the insight of our senior management team within the GMB and the CEC I think that encompasses all that needs to be said about private equity.

I encourage every delegate to take that statement back to your branches, back to your workplaces, back to your regions, and ensure that every representative is aware of the actions and what happens when private equity moves in because they are unscrupulous in their attacks and they do not mind who they are going to attack.

President, there is a picture behind me of the camel and that is the camel that was proudly paraded around Buffini's church at Clapham Common. The camel looks somewhat distressed there and it is rumoured that Richard Ascough was on the picture originally and the camel is making sure that he has disappeared with his tie and is properly shaded out! In seriousness, the GMB Southern Region has now decided that we are going to seek planning permission from the local council that we plant a money tree on Clapham Common in memory of the poor camel that is dead! We are going to name that tree Buffini.

Congress, in real terms and in the real world of private equity 3,500 AA members have been sacked, and sacked I mean. Do not ever believe the story you will hear of voluntary redundancies and people who wanted to get out of the job. 600 jobs have been lost in Bird's Eye in Hove, 660 jobs Burton Foods in Merseyside, all at the hands of private equity, and that is to name but a few. Their jobs have gone, their future rights to pension schemes have gone, their dignity has gone.

The venture capitalist who has recently taken over Boots Chemists has placed that company in £8bn debt and is not committed to maintain the funding of the pension scheme. The GMB urges the trustees of the pension fund to take immediate and legal action to ensure that that pension fund is protected on behalf of past and present contributions to the pension scheme.

The AA once renowned for an emergency service is for the first time in its history in £1.9bn debt and the final salary pension scheme closed to new starters. Congress, the human impact of what must have been the biggest single exercise in corporate bullying to be known in this country and the impact it had on our members is, to say the least, devastating.

Staff at call centres who are sacked are marched out the door by security folk whilst on the other side of the street temporary staff, many on part-time contracts, were coming in to be employed on terms and conditions less than half of those staff who were being marched out of the door. They were regularly paid £6,000 per annum less than the staff who had been doing the job traditionally.

Staff were given a few thousand and told to sign a compromise agreement and the scabs who set up the scab union signed those compromise agreements and I am sure received a handsome payment at some point in time for doing so, thus denying the staff the right to an employment tribunal or to any recompense against the Automobile Association.

Many of those staff could not gain access to the benefit system because they had effectively voluntarily left their own employment. Many of them could not afford presents over the Christmas periods whilst they were being dismissed, or to maintain the dignity for their family. Staff were being bullied, intimidated, and put under surveillance; once you come into the workplace until you leave there, and your time was clocked from the toilets to the second.

All this while Tim Parker, Chief Executive of the Automobile Association is to receive a reported £50m, and that is £50m bonus on top of his salary will be effectively tax-free all but for 5%, 5% to 10% of all of that £50m is all he would pay in tax. That has been introduced by the Government, by the present Government, and is exclusive to venture capitalists. It is exclusive to them so when you hear the stories that they do not have any concessions with their company, that is a blatant lie. Better still, Buffini, the famous Buffini, has the AA up for sale for £3.5bn, that is a £1.75bn profit in two years to enhance his millions and again between 5% and 10% tax-free.

When we attacked them when they launched one of their foundations in London in February, we were asked what did we think of this Robin Hood and all we could say was they are robbing bastards, they ain't Robin Hood. *They had a bit of decency! (Applause)*

Congress, since we demonstrated on the banks of the Tyne in 2005 it has been a long, long road from there to today. We had very, very little publicity and the best we got out of the camel was when the Animal Rights Institute complained that we were abusing animals! But today we have had the front page of the major national papers and that has only come from the GMB campaigning, the support of the GMB from the top to the bottom from our representatives and branches, and those people who have kept a sustained attack on the AA.

On the front page of today's Financial Times, Congress, and just listen to this: "Private Equity has defended themselves, 'We have done nothing wrong. We don't have any favoured tax concessions. We are doing proper investment in pensions.'" Well, you heard what Paul Kenny said about that today and you have seen our report. On the front page of today's Financial Times Nicholas Ferguson, who is the Chair of SBG Capital Group, and he supplies a third of the money to Permira who owns the AA, states: "It is ridiculous that the multimillionaire elite pay less tax than a cleaning lady on the minimum wage." That is a fact and the GMB agrees that is the case – *(applause)* - and that fully endorses the GMB campaign and just enhances where we are going from here with it. We are on their tails day and night, up every drainpipe and down every rat hole until we find out what they are up to and expose what they are made of. *(Applause)*

Congress, I will give you one example and I wish he was here today, and I will respect the red light, President. How do they do it? Every department was told they

had to make a 15% to 20% savings and they did that on the hotel inspectors. The local manager, Jane Wyatt, and she does not mind me saying it, defended her employees and promoted the GMB and successfully recruited everyone of those hotel inspectors into the GMB with our assistance, and successfully fended off a £6,000 a year pay cut and a £3,000 reduction in their pension contributions. What does she face today? She was faced last week with a dossier some four inches thick, up for gross misconduct and dismissal on trumped up charges, one being, inviting the GMB to come and speak to employees. Jane, I can tell you, and I know I have the support of everybody in this Congress, we are behind you and I wish you could have been here today to hear that these people will be there to support you. (*Applause*)

Congress, the GMB, branches, regions, will have and will continue to support all of our members against a management who are hell bent on keeping the GMB out of the AA but we are going to get back into there and we will get that scab union out with it. Congress, I move. (*Applause/Cheers*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Ed?

BRO. E. BLISSETT (Regional Secretary, London) seconding on behalf of the CEC the Statement on Private Equity said: Sisters and brothers, over the last 10 years we have seen the insidious creep of private equity companies into the British economy. As they have come into the economy we have seen them slash and burn and destroy the economy as they sell off, flog off, and make vast profits for themselves whilst destroying jobs and large sections of that economy.

Sisters and brothers, you would have thought that the Labour Government, our Labour Government, would have been opposed to the policies that are being put forward by these private equity companies, but far from it. What we have seen is tax breaks for these companies and I have a simple message for the Deputy Leadership candidates who are in the hall and for Gordon Brown soon to be the Leader of the Labour Party and our Prime Minister: Gordon, Deputy Leader candidates, you need to stop supporting those people who attack this union and attack our members and put them out of jobs. (*Applause/Cheers*)

Sisters and brothers, the GMB, though, is not simply about calling upon leaders of the Labour Party to support us, it is about being active and out on the ground, and I am proud to say that the London Region with NCP has been doing exactly that. NCP is a company owned by 3i, a private equity company, who attempt to cut wages and keep terms and conditions low for its workforce. The mainly Afro-Caribbean and Eastern European workforce for NCP in North London on the Enfield contract were organised magnificently by both our organisers and the stewards. They did not use the now corrupted CAC policy of seeking recognition but instead took five one-day strikes. Those strikes were effective in gaining recognition for our members and winning collective bargaining rights and we will drive up their wages against 3i and NCP. (*Applause*)

Sisters and brothers, I would like briefly to pay tribute, though, to one of the wounded in the battle with NCP. Erik Cosmerek, who is at the back there, Eric was sacked by NCP for his struggle against them in Enfield. (*Applause*) Have no fear, sisters and brothers, the London Region will ensure that Eric is properly looked after and

defended in his position. We are a union that is proud of supporting our members and we will continue to do so.

Sisters and brothers, I would like to conclude in this fashion. 300 years ago Percy Bysshe Shelley wrote these words, and I think the words I am about to say are eloquent today for all of the oppressed workers in companies such as NCP on poor terms and conditions, and even worse wages, he wrote thus: "Like lions after slumber in unvanquishable number, shake your chains to earth like dew which in sleep had fallen on you - Ye are many - they are few." Thank you, Congress.
(Applause/Cheers)

THE PRESIDENT: I call Composite Motion 9.

PRIVATE EQUITY – VENTURE CAPITALISTS

COMPOSITE MOTION 9

106 – Private Equity – (Southern Region)

107 – Venture Capitalists – (Southern Region)

Conference condemns the activities of venture capitalists who are destroying British industry, for example; Birds Eye, Little Chef and the AA.

Conference calls upon the relevant Government Departments to regulate the Private Equity Industry, (Venture Capitalists).

(Carried)

BRO. S. THOMPSON (Southern): Private Equity. I am afraid to say that I have no respect for the workforce whatsoever. They have no respect for workers' pensions. We need regulations and transparency and they are destroying all of our British companies. For example, Birds Eye, Little Chef and the AA. I was a victim. I was an AA Patrolman a few years back. Private equity took over and because I would not take along the scab union, and I was a GMB national rep for the AA at the time, I was hounded out of my job. So I need you all to support this composite. Thank you.

BRO. R. DONALD (Southern): I am concerned that the workplace by capital venturists has become a place where bullying, intimidation and harassment has become rife. They use any means possible to dispose of staff, many of whom are long-term staff and they are also discriminating against disabled people. These disabilities can be minor or major. It makes no difference to them.

They are getting away with their actions under the guise of management and feel that they are justified in doing so. They make vast amounts of profit through human misery. They only pay 10% tax on their profits. Can this be justified? Surely, some sort of action can be taken against them. Although I understand what they are doing is not illegal but, in my opinion, it is immoral.

These people are causing misery to untold numbers of staff and their families. They are causing financial hardship and, very often, health problems which could lead to long-term problems. The Disability Rights Commission needs to become involved to

protect the most vulnerable employees. I have suffered, personally, at the hands of these private equity companies and I have lost all confidence in any sort of management. I appreciate that the GMB has put tremendous pressure on these people, and long may they do so. I hope for everyone's support at this Congress. Thank you.

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

BRO. T. OWEN (Midland & East Coast): I am speaking in support of Composite Motion 9 and the CEC Report on Private Equity and Venture Capitalists.

I work for a well-known UK brand which is partly owned by venture capitalists, and I have to count myself lucky that I still have a job, but for how much longer is the question I ask on a regular basis, as they cut overheads to maximise profits to the detriment of employees. When they have squeezed as much profit as they can and run the business into the ground, what will they do? Will they move production overseas or break-up and sell-up? We could be the next casualty of this Government endorsed extortion which makes it far too easy for private equity and venture capitalists to cut and run. Our industries and utilities need protection before there is nothing left to protect. We support this composite motion. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: I will now put the CEC Statement to the vote.

(The CEC Statement on Private Equity and Venture Capitalists was carried)

(Composite Motion 9 was carried)

Labour Party Deputy Leadership Candidates to Address Congress and a Hustings, Question and Answer Session.

THE PRESIDENT: Conference, I now move on to give you some guidelines. We have, as you know, some visitors in the hall. While they are coming to the platform I will be giving Congress some pointers.

We now have with us the Labour Party Deputy Leadership Candidates who will be taking part in hustings. This session will take the format of question and answer. I will take one question at a time and then give each candidate the chance to answer. You have 30 seconds to ask your questions when the candidates will each be given one minute to answer. I will call out the regions in order. The first region to ask a question will be the London Region, followed by South Western and so on.

Before coming on stage, I have to tell the candidates who drew the short straw. We have drawn up the list of how the candidates will be answering your questions. The candidate to answer the first question will be Harriet Harman. The second question will be to John Cruddas and then along. It will then be Peter Hain, Hazel, Alan and finally Hillary Benn. We will try to get in as many questions as we can. This will be done strictly on the rules. I welcome everybody.

I am going to use the Chair's prerogative, as you would expect me to do, for the first question, which is to all candidates. Tell us who you are and why you want to be Deputy Leader of the Labour Party? We will start with Harriet.

HARRIET HARMAN: Thanks, Mary. I want to be Deputy Leader of the Labour Party for two reasons. The first is because I want to help us rebuild the Labour Party and because I want us to win back the trust and confidence of the British public and make sure that we win a fourth term. I represent a hard pressed inner-city constituency. For 15 years when we were in Opposition we could not do anything that we wanted. All the reasons why we are Labour and what we believe in, we could not do anything about unless we were actually in government. Those are all the things which you have been discussing in your conference today.

I want to be Deputy Leader because the evidence from the polls is that it is me alongside Gordon Brown which gives Labour the best chance of winning a fourth term. I want to be Deputy Leader because this party needs to be rebuilt as the Labour Party, and I think it can be rebuilt but only if party members have a say and we have an active and campaigning Deputy Leader who can not only talk about rebuilding the party but can do it. I have done it in my own constituency where we have 700 members, and that is the best way to beat off the threat whether it is the Tories, the Lib-Dems or the BNP. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. John.

JON CRUDDAS: Conference, I am the MP for Dagenham and East London. I want to be Deputy Leader of the Labour Party because I think that things have got to change. I think we have to change the way in which we view our party and change our policy priorities as a Government.

In terms of the party, we have lost more than 200,000 members in ten years. That is 20,000 members a year. Last month alone we lost 500 councillors and the activity base in the party continues to decline. We have to turn that around, and I think we can only do that by having a full-time Deputy Leader of the Labour Party charged singularly with rebuilding the party from the bottom up and articulating the views of the party to the Government.

Secondly, I think we need new policy priorities in terms of confronting growing insecurity at work in terms of what I see as a modern race to the bottom. We see greater inequalities in communities like mine. We need to stop the privatisation of frontline public services; we need a reconciliation with the British people over the situation in Iraq, and all of this we can do if we had the political will to do so. It will be a tough ask but unless we change direction I think we are going to lose the next election, but if we do change our direction we can reconstruct the Labour Party as a vehicle to articulate the concerns of working people. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jon. Peter.

PETER HAIN: Mary, it is great to be back at Congress again after addressing you last year in Blackpool. It is a bit sunnier in Brighton. I have been a GMB member for 31

years and I have campaigned with the union on many issues during those years, and I want to be your voice in the Cabinet as your Deputy Leader of the Labour Party.

I think it is absolutely vital that we reconnect government to the grassroots, that we start listening more to trade union members, to grassroots party members, that we build a proper partnership and that we make sure that we have a government which listens and not just lectures on issues like Remploy, corporate manslaughter and temporary and agency workers. All of these are questions which are affecting employment across Britain which your members are involved in, including private equity. We must have a relationship between the Cabinet – you have to be in the Cabinet right at the centre of policy-making – and the movement at the grass roots which really comes together. If we come together we can win next time together. It is absolutely vital that we build that relationship otherwise the Tories will win next time. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Peter. Hazel.

HAZEL BLEARS: Thank you, Mary. I am Hazel Blears. I am the Member of Parliament for Salford. It is where I live, it is where my family lives and it is where I was born and brought up. I want to be the Deputy Leader because I want us to win the next general election. I do not need to tell any single one of you that that next general election is going to be tougher than any election which we have fought for the last ten or twenty years. We are going to have to fight street by street, house by house, for every single vote at the next election, and the GMB has a fantastic record at fighting; fighting for people who have been the victims of mesothelioma; fighting to organise classroom assistants; fighting the BNP, and making sure, from that last debate on private equity, that we are on the side of decent working people.

I think that the next election needs a Deputy Leader who is the party's campaigner-in-chief, whose is plain talking, straightforward and direct and connects with people on the estates and in our communities and is prepared to go out *there* and put our message across day in, day out, week in and week out.

I remember the days when there were three million people unemployed, when in my constituency we had 75% youth unemployment, a whole generation of young people who were condemned to the scrapheap. That situation has changed after ten years of a Labour Government. The one thing which drives me every single day of my life is to make sure that we win the next election for Labour and that means not just in our heartlands like Salford but winning those marginal seats as well. I am absolutely determined to go out *there* and take that fight to the Tories and Liberal Democrats and win the next election for Labour. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Hazel. Alan.

ALAN JOHNSON: Conference, I am Alan Johnson. I am the Member of Parliament for Hull West & Hessle. My background is that I left school at 15. I was sacked by Tesco when I was 16. I suppose it is probably too late to take out an employment tribunal case against them. I joined the Post Office as a postman when I was 18 and then took on every elected office through the national executive, as national officer and, finally, as general secretary.

I want to be Deputy Leader because I really believe that we have now established the fact that if you have long periods in government you can really transform society. The problem with the Labour Party in the 20th Century was that we were in office for short interludes in Conservative rule.

What do we need to do now? We need to work much more closely with the trade union Movement. I negotiated the deal that protected the normal pension age for three million public sector workers in health, education and the Civil Service. I took a lot of stick for it but it was the right thing to do.

I have just established in education a negotiating network for support staff, which is one of our biggest groups of members. I really believe that if we work closely together with the trade union Movement, not in a little box marked “Warwick 2” but on issues like private equity, pensions, globalisation and energy security, we can win that fourth election.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Alan. Hillary.

HILLARY BENN: Thank you, very much, Mary. My name is Hillary Benn and I am the Member of Parliament for Leeds Central.

What would I seek to do in this job? I would bring my experience. I have spent almost all of my working life in the trade union Movement. The very first union I joined was APEX, 32 years ago. I bring my experience as a Member of Parliament and a Cabinet Minister. What will I try and do? We have got to unite the party because the next Deputy Leader has got to give 100% support to Gordon Brown but tell him what he needs to hear when he needs to hear it.

The unions want to be heard in government and listened to as we debate the big policy decisions that we have to take to keep the British economy strong and successful and Labour a party which goes on winning elections. We have to champion straightforward politics because that is the only way that we are going to defeat the cynicism that will otherwise destroy us because we should be proud of the fact that our campaigning, both labour and trade union Movement campaigning – you are a union which campaigns 52 weeks a year – changes society and builds a better Britain. If we have confidence in our beliefs and values, that is how we are going to win.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Hillary. I ask London Region to move their question, please.

BRO. C. WHITMORE (London): Do you fully support the Trade Union Freedom Bill and, if you don't, which current anti-trade union legislation would you like to repeal?

THE PRESIDENT: John.

JOHN CRUDDAS: I was one of the ten signatories to the Trade Union Freedom Bill when it was introduced as a Private Member's Bill in the House of Commons by John

McDonald on the same day that there was another Private Members Bill on Temporary Agency Workers.

I support it because I think it would create more of a level playing field in terms of those workers involved in genuine legitimate industrial action, but I also support it because I think it is the right thing to do when we look at what changes are happening in the economy now, especially the abuse of migrant workers in very large parts of the labour market, in communities like mine. It is critical that the Labour Party starts confronting some of these increasing inequalities in the labour market and the racialisation of some of these things when unscrupulous employers are abusing migrant workers.

The Trade Union Freedom Bill would be a critical part of rebuilding a sense of fairness at the workplace to choke off the spaces that are used by organisations like the BNP and which would allow us to reconnect with traditional Labour voters.

PETER HAIN: I think that there are many principles in the Trade Union Freedom Bill which I support. We have to negotiate the detail properly and, as Deputy Leader, I would make sure that that happens. When you look at what is happening, Ed Blissett was telling me about the fact that they are redefining a bargaining unit to say that it is actually in Jordan on one case. Isn't that right, Ed? There is another case where they have got agency workers – I think it is J.J. Sports – being brought in to replace legally striking workers. We have also got the Friction Dynamix dispute in north Wales where the owners sacked workers who were legally on strike. Their definition of trade disputes is that they are bargaining units. Asda is playing all sort of games between distribution centres, redefining which particular bargaining unit you are in, as to whether you can take supportive action or not. We have got to reform all of this legislation to make sure that trade unions have a level playing field and that the people who we legislated the rights for actually are able to implement the rights and have those rights applied to them. I think there are many principles in Bill which we must take forward. We must have a fair labour market under a Labour Government and I will try to achieve that as your Deputy Leader.

HAZEL BLEARS: On all of these issues, I think that people are looking for is fairness. They want a fair deal and a level playing field, but they do not want people not to be able to take the action in order to protect people's terms and conditions. I think that is going to be a matter of negotiation between Government and the trade unions in getting the legislation right.

What I think we need to do is not necessarily to have a Warwick Agreement which is negotiated at a quarter-to-4 in the morning and then we all spend months arguing the fine details saying, "Did we agree this?" or "Did we agree that?" We need an on-going relationship between government and the trade unions. We are not always going to agree 100% all the time, but what you need is mutual respect.

On the Trade Union Freedom Bill I think there are some issues on getting around some of the bureaucracy, around the balloting procedures, that we could look at. I think there are other issues which are going to be much more difficult in terms of secondary action. I think you have to be straight about that.

I was delighted to be able to help on the JJ Sports dispute and make sure that those agency workers were not able to come in and expose the people who were working full-time there.

I also think that there is an issue about political fund ballots. We are supposed to have them every ten years. In the last ones we have had, in fact every single trade union unanimously has voted for them. It is a huge bureaucratic thing to do and I think that is another bit of the agenda that we need a proper dialogue about. For goodness sake, let us get out of this idea that we have one agreement made at a quarter-to-4 in the morning. We should have an on-going relationship of mutual respect between the government and trade unions.

ALAN JOHNSON: Let us deal with the straight questions. What don't we like about the Trade Union Freedom Bill? We had a settlement about what we would do in this Parliament and it was called 'The Warwick Agreement'. During that negotiation, and the GMB was present with three other affiliated unions, we had the argument about whether we ought to go back to making secondary picketing illegal. In 1990 I was the General Secretary of the CWU and we decided that we would not go back to the closed shop, not go back to secondary picketing and not go back to having strikes without ballots beforehand.

The point about the Trade Union Freedom Bill is that there is an awful lot in it that we could work on. But you know as well as I do, because it was not part of the Warwick settlement, that whoever you elect as the Deputy Leader, we are not going back to secondary picketing. It is not going to happen. We are not here to tell you what you want to hear. You know that because we debated it through the Warwick Agreement and we decided not to take it forward.

HILLARY BENN: I agree with Alan, I think we have to be straight with each other and I think the fundamental challenge facing the Trades Union Movement in Britain is not actually the lack of legislation on the statute book, it is getting out there, as you do all the time, and persuading the millions of workers who are currently not in a trade union that they should be because we know that unionised workers have better terms and conditions, better health and safety, and a better chance in their working life than those who do not. That is really where we should concentrate our effort.

Are there things that we can look at? Yes, there are. People always talk about red tape affecting business, and rightly so, but I think we should look at some of the red tape affecting the Trades Union Movement. That is one thing that I would do.

I would also look at the issue of the protection of agency and vulnerable workers. If anyone says to you, "Why do you still need trade unions in 21st century Britain," you have a lot of stories that you could tell them and you are doing that at this conference, but there is also the piece played on the radio two weeks ago of supervisors at the banana packing factory in Luton shouting and swearing at the workers in that workplace; that is why we need strong trade unions and that is why we have to support the Trades Union Movement.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Hillary. Harriet?

HARRIET HARMAN: I do think that there is some strengthening of the law we need to have around trade unions and employment rights. I would suggest the following. I think there should be a new right – it was not in the Warwick Agreement and I do not think it is in the Trades Union Freedom Bill but I think there should be a right – for trade unions to go into non-unionised – (*members not able to hear*) – sorry. Shall I start again? No!

OK. I think that there needs to be new laws for trade unions and also for employment rights. I will just mention a couple of them. The first is I think something that was not in the Trades Union Freedom Bill and was not in the Warwick Agreement but I think it is important. If we believe as we do that the best defence for an individual at work is the trade union backing them, we should have a new right for trade unions to go into workplaces that are not unionised in order to be able to make the case to the employees.

Secondly, something that was in the Warwick Agreement but which has not yet been implemented, and should be, is statutory mandatory equal pay audits in the private sector as well as in the public sector.

Thirdly, I agree with what John said about new laws on agency workers.

Fourthly, I do think that we need to sort out employers who get round the law about secondary picketing when in fact it is the same enterprise, like Gate Gourmet, where they just contract out or they change the company structure to prevent people who are in fact co-workers supporting each other in action.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Can I ask South Western to put their question?

SIS. R. HAYWOOD (South Western): Will you give your full commitment and support to the implementation of the Corporate Manslaughter Bill during this parliament and to the introduction in a future parliament of better legislation to establish specific legal duties on directors of companies for health and safety in the workplace?

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Peter?

PETER HAIN: I give my 100% support to the Corporate Manslaughter Bill. It is outrageous that the hereditary peers and the Tories in the House of Lords tried to kill it the other week, another reason to reform the House of Lords. I was at the Wales TUC last week where they had the Daniel Dennis Campaign: a young building worker on his first day at work fell through the roof and was killed, with no protection at all and no redress at all for his family. You will hear from his mum, Anthea, tomorrow. What we need to see is that workers in the workplace, whether it is building sites or anywhere else, are properly protected. We have a situation where health and safety inspectors have been cut. The number of prosecutions is falling, even though actually the number of deaths at work is increasing. This is under a Labour government. This is not acceptable.

In my view, strong corporate manslaughter legislation, including by the way reviewing as to whether it should be applied in future to individual company directors,

has to be the policy of the Labour Government, it has to be the policy of the entire Movement and something that I will press for if elected as Deputy Leader.

THE PRESIDENT: Hazel?

HAZEL BLEARS: I absolutely support 100% the Corporate Manslaughter Bill and in fact I personally, with responsibility for the Warwick Agreement, made sure that that came forward as a Bill in this session. I was absolutely determined we would fulfil our manifesto promise, which, if I am honest about it, has been hanging around for far too long. Therefore, not only do I support the bill, I want to make absolutely sure it gets through in this parliamentary session. It is vital we do that. I am very concerned about the lack of enforcement of some of our health and safety laws. If you look at the kind of penalties that are now being imposed, and there has been a survey across the country, there is complete inconsistency in the kind of fines that are imposed; all of them are very low, but in some places somebody can die and there is only a fine of about £1,000. The impact of that on the relatives of the people who have died is absolutely devastating; they do not feel there is justice.

I think there needs to be more enforcement and there certainly needs to be more consistency in terms of sentences. I think there is something that we can do after we have this Corporate Manslaughter Bill and that is look again at our health and safety legislation. There is provision in that to bring cases and I think what we need to look at is, are there some ways in which we can strengthen that existing legislation.

This has to be a top priority for us.

THE PRESIDENT: Alan.

ALAN JOHNSON: Yes, I support the Corporate Manslaughter Bill; indeed, it has taken too long to get into parliament and now we need to get round this problem we have in the Lords. I think then we need to move further than that on health and safety. Actually, we came up with a really good idea in this parliament over the last 10 years about how we can use trade unionists as Union Learning Reps. If you look at health and safety reps and the job they do, it is not too hard to imagine that we could add a new dimension to that given the climate change in the environment has become such an important issue, and give health and safety union representatives a role on looking at environmental issues as well. All of this cements the importance of the Trades Union Movement and gives trade union officials and trade unions much more power in the workplace.

The Corporate Manslaughter Bill, together with these changes and together with looking at strengthening health and safety, I think is the way forward.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Hillary.

HILLARY BENN: Rowena, we all support the bill because we jointly agreed it between us as part of the Warwick process and it shows that a Warwick Agreement does deliver change. There is already legislation on the statute book that deals with negligence of individuals and if there is evidence it should be used in those cases. I think the most important thing, because we know this lesson only too well, is that legislation is one thing on the statute book but in the end it has to be enforced, it has

to be implemented, and someone has to be on the lookout for what is happening. Strong union representation, with the health and safety reps that Alan was talking about, is the single most important contribution that can be made along with more effective enforcement. When you have those two things side by side that is when employers who are not up to standard get the message, that if they do not apply proper health and safety protection to their workers, in the end they are going to have to face the consequences.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Harriet.

HARRIET HARMAN: When I was Solicitor General I was responsible for superintending the prosecutions of the Health and Safety Executive. That reinforced very, very strongly to me that with these fatal so-called accidents at work - and most of them are not accidents, they are employers who cut back on training, cut back on supervision, are pushing the workers to do more and more - the thing that will make a real difference so that people do not have to go into work and lose their life is if company directors actually get sent to prison when somebody is killed at work. That is what will absolutely make the difference. If they can just spend some money off the bottom line of their accounts, move something over from one year's accounts to the next, it will not make the difference. I think there has to be accountability right at the top and that will protect people. Nobody should lose their life going to work in this country in this day and age.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Jon.

JON CRUDDAS: I agree with Harriet there. I support the Corporate Manslaughter Bill but it is not the bill that I would have liked. I would have liked a tougher bill which would have enforced directors' duties on employers, and that would have been in line with Labour Party policy, actually, which I support as well. I think there is an issue here about the Deputy Leader of the Labour Party articulating the views of the Labour Party to the Cabinet so as to ensure that the voice of the Party when it comes together at the conference to ensure that directors' duties should be in the Corporate Manslaughter Bill is voiced in the Cabinet when we decide this legislation; for too long, for eight years, this has been debated in government and it has always been resisted around directors' duties. I think we need to look at it again and ensure that Labour Party policy is enforced in legislation.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jon. Can I ask for the next question to come from GMB Scotland and then Northern Region would you stand by your boxes?

SIS. M. BOYD (GMB Scotland): What relevance does the Deputy Leader's post have for Scotland?

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Hazel.

HAZEL BLEARS: Margaret, I think the Deputy Leader's post has a real relevance for Scotland. I was up there half a dozen times during the recent Scottish elections and we were up there doing our hustings just a few days ago as well. What I found during those Scottish elections was that there were pretty varied results right across Scotland. In the places where we were well organised, where we had good local candidates,

where people had worked all year round, for example in places like Dumfries where they had 10,000 contacts in the space of about three months, they had a fantastic campaign team, they have an MP that is known by virtually everybody in the community, and they actually had a 10% swing to Labour; in places like Cumbernauld and Kilsyth a really good local candidate, really good organisation, and a swing to Labour. Unfortunately, not the same right across Scotland and you could tell the places that were well organised and you could tell the places that were not.

I think the Deputy Leader's job of campaigning, building the Party, making sure we have organisation, getting candidates out there, getting a new generation of activists, is just as relevant in Scotland as it is in Wales and as it is in England, and unless we do that we will not win the next election across the country.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Alan.

ALAN JOHNSON: Of course it is relevant to Scotland, it is relevant to us winning elections and in Scotland, despite all your best efforts and despite pulling things back over the last few months, we have the SNP in power although not for long, I would suggest, the way that Alex Salmond is playing his cards. It is essential to ensure that we have a strong campaigning party throughout the United Kingdom.

One of the things I would like to see is us learning more lessons from the Labour administration and the Labour Party in the devolved administration. What we tend to do on policy is talk about it in an English silo and in a Scottish silo, and in a Welsh and even Northern Ireland silo where we now have members thanks to all your efforts in the GMB. If we could actually integrate that and learn from each other, I think we would actually be stronger not just in England but in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland as well.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Hillary.

HILLARY BENN: Margaret, of course the politics have changed as a result of the elections in Scotland and Alex Salmond is now the First Minister. The problem for the SNP, which we have to exploit, is that they represent the politics of bitterness and grievance, but now they have to take responsibility for being the government in Scotland and we have to harry them at every single turn. In the end you have to take decisions when you are in government. It is very easy to luxuriate in opposition, which is what they have done. I think we have to start the fight back now. We have to work to strengthen the links between the Party in different parts of the country, we have to start preparing the plans now to win those seats back. We have to say to people, "Look, this is a party which came to power that does not want to talk about its most important policy, which is independence, because they know it is not popular with the people of Scotland," and we have to strengthen those links, support our comrades in Scotland, and start preparing now to win back all of those seats so that, as Hazel says, Alex Salmond's term as First Minister is very, very short.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Harriet.

HARRIET HARMAN: I think devolution to the Scottish Parliament is one of Labour's great achievements but I think one of the downsides is that the Labour Party

works less closely together than it used to between the Labour Party in Scotland, and in England and Wales. I think we should change that and as Deputy Leader I would definitely determine to do that. I think that we can work together and we can learn from each other. I remember when Strathclyde Regional Council was really pioneering childcare and nursery places and how much we in England learnt from that pioneering work in Scotland. I think of the pioneering work that Labour women were putting forward in Edinburgh on zero tolerance on domestic violence and how much we learnt from them.

The truth is that Labour councillors used to work together in Scotland, England, and Wales, and those institutions have slightly weakened. I think that should be built up so that we can work together, learn from each other, share experience, give each other support, and the institutions need to be built actually to make that happen.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Jon.

JON CRUDDAS: Margaret, it seems to me it depends on how you view the job of Deputy Leader and it depends, therefore, on the relevance of it to Scottish Labour. I will give you an example. If it is simply more of the same, where you have a Deputy Leader who then becomes Deputy Prime Minister, who then has a big ministerial job with the country houses, the gongs, all the croquet sets, all of that stuff, then I think it does not have the relevance to Scottish Labour that it should do. If you separate it out so that it is solely the Deputy Leader of the Labour Party charged with representing the party in all its different regions and countries in terms of the Cabinet voice, then I think it could have a relevance, but that is up to us in terms of redefining what the job is.

If it is just more of the same, I do not think it has the significant roles it should have. I think it should completely change to be the voice of the Party from the bottom up and should be part of abolishing the Chair of the Party, which is simply there to impose the views of the Cabinet on the Party. If we can overhaul the job, then I think it could have direct relevance to Scottish Labour.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jon. Peter.

PETER HAIN: We had our worst result in Scotland for a very, very long time and it is the same in Wales, our worst result in Wales since the First World War, and unless we bind the grassroots of the Movement back to the Government and unless we start listening more and stop bouncing policies on the Party, often through the newspapers rather than developing through the policy forum with the trade unions involved - I do not agree with Jon and Alan who argue for a reduction in the trade union share of the vote at conference. I think it is vital that the unions are in there and putting their point of view to the Government, and I think you need a Deputy Leader who is right at the heart of the Cabinet. I understand Jon's point of view but I do not agree with him.

It is not just a party job, it is actually making sure - as I know having done some of the toughest jobs in Cabinet, like Secretary of State for Northern Ireland - you have to be there right in the middle sorting these problems out on Remploi and corporate manslaughter, making sure we rejuvenate the Party. You cannot just do that

by being up at Party Headquarters in Victoria Street, you have to be right next to Gordon making sure the voice of the grassroots is heard all of the time, whether from Scotland, Wales, or England.

SIS. J. JEPSON (Northern): As a region and as a union we are heavily involved in leading negotiations and litigating in the courts related to the numerous issue surrounding equal pay. We are extremely worried about the trend that decisions in the courts are going to lead to problems with collective bargaining. Do the candidates support the concept of collective bargaining?

THE PRESIDENT: Alan.

ALAN JOHNSON: Yes. I talked to Paul about this and to other trade union leaders. This is a really worrying development because what, effectively, is happening is that individuals using no-win/no-fee law firms are taking on issues where collective bargaining should have established the terms and conditions. We fought very hard for equal pay. I say "we" in the sense of the trade union Movement. Indeed, the trade union Movement put this on the agenda, and it was the Labour Party that was the first political party to say that women should be paid the same as men. We have made many achievements but we are not there yet, as the Margaret Prosser Commission Report on Women at Work showed. There is still a lot more that we can do, but we cannot do it without collective agreements, and we cannot reach collective agreements without collective bargaining, which is why we have to find a way through this which protects your ability to reach agreements because that also protects those people who we want to see treated with equality and fairness.

HILLARY BENN: Yes, I do indeed support collective bargaining because it is best way of dealing with these problems in the workplace. Forty years after the passing of the legislation, the fact that the statistics show that women on average are paid 17% less than men in the workplace shows how far we have yet to go.

One of the things that we could do is to require all companies to publish information on the gender pay gap because if more people saw that there would be more debate and argument. It would be a very good recruiting argument for you to use in the workplace on top of what you are already doing by saying, "Come along. Join. The stronger we are, the better chance we have of negotiating in the workplace to deal with this." The great merit of collective bargaining is that the law can be helpful, but sometimes it can be an instrument which does not actually take account of realities in the workplace. What collective bargaining does is to give you and your elected representatives the means to sit down with the employer and sort out a way through the problem. It is how we have achieved most of the great gains we have seen in the Movement throughout our history and we need to support it.

HARRIET HARMAN: Jan, if I was Deputy Leader one of the things that I would want to take responsibility for is being equal pay champion and actually getting the situation sorted out. I think the idea that this is a problem which can or could go away if it is just left on its own is not going to happen. It needs somebody to sort it out who will take a grip on it, who is a strong champion of equal pay and committed to equal pay as a matter of principle, and I always have been, and is committed to public services and wants to make sure that the women are paid the back pay they are

owed but that it does not threaten the public services that women work in and that women and families need. It needs somebody who will be a strong supporter of the trade unions because trade unions are threatened by these actions that are being taken and who has no fear of the courts.

I think the problem is that everybody has been hoping that somebody else in government will sort this out and it has not happened, so this is my pledge to you. If I get to be elected Deputy Leader, I will become equal pay champion and make sure that we have fairness for women and a stable and properly negotiated agreement to sort out these equal pay settlements.

JOHN CRUDDAS: I think the Government has got to do more to introduce the single status arrangements in local government because they did help in terms of the *Agenda for Change* in the Health Service.

In our local authority as it stands now we have Steffan Cross and his no win/no fee ambulance chasing lawyers all over us, actually. We are not being helped by a local authority which is not putting enough money across to fund the job evaluation exercise. In turn they are not getting enough support from the national government in funding this situation, and this is creating real problems for the union, it is undermining collective bargaining and it is not actually helping the local authority either because we are leaving vulnerable individual trade unionists who are susceptible to some of these moves made on them by these lawyers. I think the local authorities as well as the national government have to take a lead here in terms of funding these job evaluation single status arrangements so that we can support the trade union Movement at the local level.

PETER HAIN: I agree with everything, particularly, that Harriet and John have just said. I was a full-time trade union official for 14 years and collective bargaining is absolutely at the foundation of effective trade unionism. But I think we need to go further. The majority of workplaces, unfortunately, in Britain do not have unionisation and where collective bargaining is not recognised. That is why I want to see a new Employment Rights Commission with the same powers as the Low Pay Commission to go in and investigate breaches of employment law, to enforce the legislation that we have actually enacted but which in many places is being ignored, including the minimum wage, and we have to make sure that the trade unions have the ability to organise in those places. We have to remember that individuals bringing complaints often are intimidated from doing so but that unions are able to bring complaints as well. So we need a lot of legislation actually to underpin collective bargaining, to strengthen it and to strengthen the ability of trade unions to reach literally millions of workers who are not involved in organised workplaces at the moment.

HAZEL BLEARS: I absolutely support the importance of collective bargaining for a number of reasons. First of all, I was a branch secretary for seven years representing 7,500 members. It was by far the best way to get an agreement and actually the best employers support collective bargaining because if they had to negotiate individually with every single employee it is an absolutely nightmare. So actually having collective bargaining that is well organised is in the interests of companies and employees.

I think the equal pay issue is one of the most complicated issues facing us. It will cost a huge amount of money to resolve, and you have got individual lawyers who, quite frankly, are striking at the heart of collective agreements for their own person aggrandisement. They have made millions of pounds. If you think about the millions of pounds that lawyers made out of the compensation to miners, we have already seen what has happened in that regard.

I think, seriously, as a government we have got to look at the issue of legislation. Governments are traditionally reluctant to look at retrospective legislation. We very, very rarely do it, but this situation is so complex, the numbers involved are so large and protecting collective bargaining from not being ripped up and destroyed, I think we have to look at as a government and as a trade union Movement at some pretty complicated, far-reaching and sustainable solutions to this problem.

THE PRESIDENT: Midland & East Coast Region.

SIS. D. MILLS (Midland & East Coast): What do the candidates think about the current situation where we have a three tier minimum wage?

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dorothy. Hillary.

HILLARY BENN: I think the first thing we have to recognise is that we have got a minimum wage and that is the product of having had a Labour Government. We should celebrate that fact. The second thing is that we are going to have to look at this because of what Alan is now pursuing, and rightly so, which is in effect raising the school leaving age to 18 with the legislation that we are going to put on the statute books, so that no-one will be either in full-time education or training or some sort of further learning by the time they get to 18. That is the first change that is going to require us to have a look.

I think the second issue, which we ought to ask the Low Pay Commission to consider, is what then in those circumstances is the continuing argument for having a differential rate for those up to the age of 21 and those over? Having said that, the minimum wage is now fundamentally enshrined in our politics. Why? Because we introduced it in the way that we did. We dealt with the argument that it would be a job killer. Actually, it has been a good protection for people and we should carry on with that approach because that is the way to sustain support for the principle.

HARRIET HARMAN: When I was Shadow Employment Secretary, when we were in Opposition, I formulated the policy for the Low Pay Commission and I think it has been one of the great achievements of the Labour Government. But looking recently at pay and the minimum wage you can see that although the minimum wage has gone up while Labour has been in government, the average pay has gone up higher than the minimum wage. So what is happening is that the gap between the average wage and the minimum wage has grown, so that the minimum wage is falling behind average pay. I think that we have to look at the growing gap that exists within the labour market. That is something which I think we should do.

The other thing that I think we should do is this. I am concerned not just about tackling poverty, and we have done a great deal of that not just with the minimum wage but tackling child and pensioner poverty, but about inequality, the growing gap in society between the super rich and those at the bottom. That is why I am suggesting that we reconvene what Thatcher abolished which was the Royal Commission on the Distribution of Income and Wealth. I do not think that we want to live in a society which is growing in inequality.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Harriet. John.

JOHN CRUDDAS: My approach to this is quite simple. If you are not in education or training and you are in work, you should be paid the minimum wage. A worker is a worker regardless of how old they are if they are in work. That should be the standard. (*Applause*) That is all I have got to say. It is a straightforward answer to a straightforward question.

PETER HAIN: I think that John has made a very powerful point. We have got to look at this through the Low Pay Commission and see how we can take it forward.

I think there are some other thing that we have got to be aware of. In London there is a big campaign for a London living wage because of the fantastically high cost of living in London and the South East. Our minimum wage does a great deal for workers in my South Wales constituency. When it was brought in at £3.60 per hour it doubled the wages of carers and cleaners and other workers in that area, but it is not enough in many places across Britain now, including London and the South East. Nor do tax credits help all that much. That is why I think we have to look at the whole situation and look at London weighting. There was a proper inner London and outer London weighting situation. We do not have that any more. I am not in favour of regional pay, but I do think that we have to look at this whole issue and make sure that we get through this structure freedom, fairness and equality in the workplace because there is far too much inequality, not least with a few hundred City workers getting £8.8 billion of bonuses which I regard as an absolute outrage in a fair society.

THE PRESIDENT: Hazel.

HAZEL BLEARS: I think that the Low Pay Commission is one of the best examples we have of trade unionists, employers and Government all working together and the fact that the minimum wage is now an accepted fact of life is a great credit to the Commission. Never forget that it was the Tories who said having a minimum wage would lose a million jobs. Virtually the reverse of that happened because we have two-and-a-half million more jobs in the economy and we have got a minimum wage. The Tories now would never, ever be able to get rid of the minimum wage, so it is a fantastic achievement. There will always be pressure to increase it, and rightly so. I think people should pressure the Government to do as much as we can on this.

I also think that young people as well as being in work should have an entitlement to Training. Young people want to get on, they want to get the next job and the fact that we have now committed to doubling the number of apprenticeships from 250,000 to 500,000 in the next few years will mean that many more of our youngsters can get the skills they need to be able to do those vital jobs that our new economy will have on

board. So, yes, the minimum wage, but let's aspire to more than that. Let's aspire to people getting decent jobs where they can get on, get more money in the future and better qualifications.

ALAN JOHNSON: Of course, when we introduced the minimum wage it was a two-tier minimum wage and 16 and 17 year olds did not get the minimum wage. We looked at that again, mainly in response to lobbying by the trade union Movement and when we looked at it on that piece of social partnership called the Low Pay Commission they pointed out all the dangers of suggesting that a 16 or 17 year old should have the same minimum wage as the adult rate.

They said that if you smoothed it out, it would be a lower minimum wage for everyone, and if you insisted on giving 16 and 17 year olds the same as adult workers – there are not many countries which do this, incidentally – all you will do is make it much harder for kids to get into work because they cannot get into work because they do not have the experience and they cannot get the experience because they cannot find work. So, yes, it might be a bit of applause for saying that they should all get the same rate. No country that has established the minimum wage successfully has ignored those points about how it would drive up youth unemployment if you set their minimum wage too high.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Alan. Could I now ask Yorkshire & North Derbyshire to move?

BRO. J. STRIBLEY (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Do you support the deplorable decision to close 43 Remploy factories without proper consultation with the trade union and the workforce? No factory closures!

THE PRESIDENT: Harriet.

HARRIET HARMAN: I think it is very important that we have an anti-disability discrimination programme, where we are helping people with disabilities get into work, we have legislated against discrimination against people on the grounds of disability, and we are trying to help people with disabilities be in the mainstream of getting decent jobs. I think in relation to Remploy my view is this, that we should not be knowing better than the people in those factories and to say, "We are going to go ahead with this because it is in your interests and it is good for you," I do not see how that can be the right attitude to people who want to go out to work and who do not want a change in their circumstances. I think if Remploy is helping people move into mainstream jobs which they prefer, so be it, but for those people who want to remain in Remploy factories doing that sort of work with Remploy as their employer, I think if you cannot get the support of the people in the factories, then it should not be changed; it has to be by agreement.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Jon.

JON CRUDDAS: Yes, I have 43 factories, 2,500 people's jobs, that is the first instance, and they will come back for more, is my view. I think the manner by which it has been done is extraordinary. I was talking to Phil Dennis and a number of Remploy workers the other week and they were telling me that they were marched in

and shown a video and the first thing that was said on that video was, “Today we are announcing that your factory is going to shut.” That is not good enough in 2007 in terms of modern employment conditions. The PriceWaterhouse report was not good enough. I think the Remploy 21 Strategy was a very good framework to build for the future and I think the trade unions are right to argue against these closures. We put a resolution down in the House of Commons a couple of days ago arguing for a moratorium on these closures and a full independent audit of the books so we can put together a change for the future.

THE PRESIDENT: Peter.

PETER HAIN: I worked with my local Remploy factory for 17 years as an MP and these are the most vulnerable workers in our country. Frankly, as a Labour government and as a movement if we do not stand up for Remploy workers’ rights and disabled people’s rights, we do not stand up for anything. The day after this news was announced I called the Chairman of Remploy and spoke to him and the next day I went down to the factory threatened with closure in Wrexham and talked to Remploy workers. One of them told me that if he was forced to go home, even on full pay - I do not see the point of paying people on full pay to stay at home, frankly; why not allow them to work – he would actually go home to die, was his view.

I think that we have to work this out together. We have to have a negotiated solution to this problem. As a Deputy Leader I would seek to achieve this right in the middle of the Cabinet. To broker an agreement there has to be a temporary moratorium in order to resolve the situation with your union and the others working together with the Government, and never lose sight of the fact that people who want to work and can work with disabilities should be allowed to work.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Hazel.

HAZEL BLEARS: First of all, Mary, I think all credit to the GMB for pushing this issue up the political agenda and the fact that we are all talking about it, thinking about how we take it forward, is a great credit to your organisation. I think we have to look at this issue from the point of view of the people who work in those factories. I talked to them in Scotland and I talked to them in Wales. It is not just a job. Many of those people have been there 20 or 30 years. It is also their social life, it is their family, and some of these people are very vulnerable indeed. It is not a decision to close all 43 factories. I think there have been certain guarantees given about jobs and that is important.

What I am concerned about is I do not want management going over the head of the trade unions; it should be a proper negotiated settlement. A lot of the people in the factories have said to me they do recognise a case for change but to get that change, you can do it in two ways. You can either do it with conflict and anger, or you can try and do it in a proper negotiated way. That is absolutely what I would be pressing for to happen but I do think it is important that disabled people who need sheltered employment continue to have that, but people who can work and want to work in mainstream employment should be helped and supported to do exactly that so they can achieve their potential as well. Where we are at the moment is very unhappy and we need to take this forward with the trade union in a negotiated way.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Alan.

ALAN JOHNSON: I would like to have a crack at resolving this issue, actually. When I was Secretary of State for Work and Pensions I dealt with Remploy and I dealt with the Remploy unions. They are, I think, a very enlightened group of workers. We set up Remploy into Work because of the recognition that now all the disability lobby and everyone involved in disabilities wants to see a situation where people who are disabled are not cast aside to be the passive recipients of benefits for the rest of their lives, and now we have 51% of disabled people in work it actually challenges that notion. So Remploy into Work was about those people who wanted to leave that factory environment and wanted to go out to work in all kinds of jobs, to allow them to do that.

Now we are at a situation where obviously the factory in Hull, in John Prescott's constituency, is under threat. People feel threatened and the end result of this should be people given the confidence and being able to relax and know that whatever happens through this project they will still have work with Remploy, if they do not want to go out and work elsewhere. That has to be the end solution.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Hillary.

HILLARY BENN: I agree with Alan. I have both a factory in my constituency in Leeds and also one of the Interwork Centres that is placing people in mainstream employment. We just have to recognise that we are dealing with change here and I know there is a lot of anger and bitterness amongst your members about the way this has been done, but Remploy was set up at a time when nobody else would give employment to people who were disabled, those coming back from the War. Thank goodness our society has begun to change. That is a good thing. We ought to celebrate it. The fact that Remploy was able to place about 5,000 people in mainstream employment last year is a good thing, too, and it is about how we manage this change.

I think the fundamental principle, and I agree with my colleagues on this, is there must be no compulsory redundancies, there has to be proper consultation, and there has to be negotiation with the union. People must not end up feeling abandoned by the change. If that is what happens, then rightly you will feel angry. If I was elected, like everyone else, we would have to sit down and find a way out of this to sort it out.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Can I ask North West and Irish Region to put their question, please?

JOHN McDONNELL (North West & Irish Region): I would like to continue with the Remploy debate but we cannot, can we? We have had three successive ballots to ask our members if we can have a trade union political fund. Each time the ballot has been both expensive and overwhelmingly supported by our members. Do the candidates think it is worth continuing with this bureaucratic piece of legislation?

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, John. Jon Cruddas.

JON CRUDDAS: No, I do not. I think we should get rid of it. I think it is an over-bureaucratic mechanism. I think, actually, when the Tories first instituted it they thought they would get rid of the political funds to the unions and actually they were startled by the amount of support across the Trades Union Movement for the retention of a political voice. That has been good, actually, over the years in maintaining a link between the grassroots and the political stance of the unions but I think it has served its purpose. I think we should get rid of it. I think we should get rid of it as soon as we can.

I think all our resources should be targeted in ensuring that the unions can act as a collective voice for their members rather than this tireless bureaucratic thing they have to go through every few years. Instead we should unleash your resources and campaign to confront the real enemies, which are the employers.

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Jon. Peter.

PETER HAIN: I agree with Jon and I remember helping to organise the Post Office workers political fund ballot in 1984, the first one, and the Tories thought they could actually get rid of the political funds and affiliation to the Labour Party. We are wasting millions of pounds every 10 years, money that could go into the Labour Party to help us beat the Tories. In my view, we should turn it around. This is a ritual which has done its time and ended its purpose, if there ever was one. There should be a change that if a proportion of members, it could be as low as 2% and we could try to agree and negotiate on that, want to get rid of the political fund then they could trigger an individual membership ballot to do so. There is a democratic right enshrined there, but in the meantime get rid of this 10-year farce of a ritual process that always produces the same thing and do not keep playing into the hands of the Tories who are now out-spending us by millions and millions of pounds, and if we do not get on a level playing field with them we cannot beat them.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Hazel.

HAZEL BLEARS: Yes, Mary, I think in my answer to the very first question I said that I thought the political fund ballots were bureaucratic, they cost a huge amount of money, and I certainly think that we will be moving towards abolishing them. What I think is more important here is making sure that we keep the trade union link in terms of our party funding and we get some caps on election expenditure for the next election. Unless we get caps on election expenditure I can tell you this, the Tories will be out-spending the Labour Party probably by about 5:1. They have money coming out of their ears and unless we get a cap, national, local, all year round, then we are going to be really disadvantaged at the next election. I think we have absolutely to keep our link with the trade unions, our affiliations; it gives us more than money, it gives us strength. My overriding priority at the moment is to make damned sure that those Tories are not going to be spending £60m at the next election like they did with the Ashcroft money, where they bought constituency seats; they had an advantage because they had money coming out of their ears. That has to be our top priority.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Hazel. Alan.

ALAN JOHNSON: Yes, we ought to get rid of it but the problem with this is because it happens every 10 years we in government tend to see the ballot through and then kind of doze off until it is too late. I actually tried to stop it when I was DTI Secretary of State last time but you need primary legislation and it would have meant that five unions would have had to have balloted before you could have stopped it for the rest; but we do need to stop it.

I would just add a point here and now is probably not the time to raise this as a big issue because now, at the moment, we are on the side of the angels. Our funding is transparent. The fact that our members have to re-ballot every 10 years actually puts us in a strong position under this Hayden Phillips Inquiry to look at where the real problem is, which is the funding of the Conservative Party. We have another seven years before we have to ballot again. I just think let it go quiet for a couple of years, deal with the Hayden Phillips stuff, and then make sure it has gone before the next 10-year period.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Hillary.

HILLARY BENN: Yes, I agree, this is exactly the kind of red tape I was talking about that I think we need to look at. You are right, this was put in place because the Tories thought this would undermine our funding and it has come as a great shock to them. Alan is absolutely right, we need to maintain the link. That is in the end where we ought to concentrate our effort. We are stronger when we do this together. We have to as a Trades Union Movement and the Labour Party face outwards there and persuade people that Labour politics is going to change their lives. As we always put it, people joined the Labour Party because they wanted to change the world, not because they wanted to change the minutes of the previous meeting. That is a really good thing to remember as we go about our work.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Harriet.

HARRIET HARMAN: Thanks. When talking about the link between trade unions and the Labour Party I just want to on behalf of Celia Barlow MP and the Labour candidate in the Brighton Council election thank the GMB for the enormous effort that was put in, in the May council elections, here in Brighton. I also know that effort was put in up and down the country, not just at general election time but every time there is an election coming up with backing and support for Labour's candidates. I think that that is very important indeed and we should not do anything that weakens the link between the trade unions and the Labour Party. I would like to see that to be a living link with more trade unionists coming to be councillors and more trade unionists coming to be members of parliament.

I have never understood the people who cannot tell the difference between one millionaire giving a million pounds and a trade union giving a million pounds which is the donations from individual members that have contributed to it. I think that it is right we should have a cap on election spending. I think all that money spent on billboards and advertising, the more that is spent on that the less turnout there is; it turns people off. I think we should have a cap on the election spending and not undermine the link.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Harriet. Can I ask Southern Region to put their question, please, and then Birmingham?

BRO. A. HUTCHINGS (Southern): Every summer this country suffers from water shortages. If you become Deputy Leader do you consider that renationalisation of these utilities would improve this situation?

THE PRESIDENT: Peter.

PETER HAIN: You are absolutely right. There is far too much leakage from the water system and there is far too much of an imbalance in the water system with some parts of Britain having too much of it and others having too little. When I had the opportunity as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland reforming the water system I insisted that there would be no privatisation of the water industry. That is what I was able to do there. But I think renationalising is going to be very difficult, but what we need to do is make sure that we have the water service working for the staff who are within it and making sure that we get a proper water supply right across Britain, that we deal with these problems of leakages, that we deal with the problems of the imbalances in the system and we make sure that we get a fair and properly regulated water industry.

HAZEL BLEARS: I do not think it will be practical simply to renationalise and I do not think that the structure of ownership is going to determine whether or not you necessarily have water shortages. I think we need to be quite tough with the utilities now in terms of regulation and incentives on them to make sure that they stop the leakages. The leakages are absolutely horrendous and a complete waste for the whole economy. It is quite interesting that some countries run their utilities as co-ops. I think the biggest supplier of electricity in Canada is actually a co-op. If people had a bit more of a say you would not necessarily have to renationalise the industry but perhaps if you gave the users and the people who pay the bills a bit more of a say in the organisations you would see them being a little bit more efficient.

In terms of water shortages, I think one of the biggest problems facing us is going to be around climate change more generally. I think this is going to be a problem not just for this country but internationally as well. Unless we absolutely tackle climate change then we are going to see the problems of water shortages and the effect on the climate being a huge international and global threat to us. I am concerned about that. It does start at home by making the companies more efficient, blocking up the leakages, but we have some massive work to do right across the world if we are going to tackle these problems.

ALAN JOHNSON: If there was a view in the GMB that renationalisation would stop water shortages I would be prepared to listen to it. I do not quite see the linkage there. I certainly remember water shortages when water was publicly owned. But the issue here is about how we can get a regulator and the consumer voice to such a sufficient pitch that the water companies deal with this problem of leakages, and that means investment in the infrastructure, that means ensuring that there are proper penalties against companies which ignore the seepage of water. I think that is very

much where the debate should be, not a debate about whether to return to renationalisation.

HILLARY BENN: Andy, we need to do all of those things to make sure that the regulation works to ensure that we have got a proper water supply, but a very straight question you put to me to which I will give a very straight answer. No, I do not agree with you, and do you know why? Because if we have got money available to spend on a cause, I tell you what I would spend it on. I would spend it on helping the one billion of our fellow human beings who do not have any of this at all. I would spend it on the five thousand children in the developing world who will die today because they drink dirty water and get diarrhoea diseases, they become dehydrated and they lose the fight for life. It was Nye Bevan who said that socialism is the language of priorities, and we are a government that has made helping people in other parts of the world a priority for this government. It is one of the reasons why I am proud to have been a Minister in this Labour Govern, and it is one of the reasons why we should be proud of Labour politics in this country because we are helping more people in the developing world to get the water, frankly, that we take for granted.

HARRIET HARMAN: I do not agree that we should use public funds to do renationalisation but I do think we should use the power of public policy for tough regulation. As well as having tough regulation which ensures investment in renewing the infrastructure to ensure that there is less leakage, I think that we ought to help families use their water more efficiently. There is incredible waste not only in industry but also in domestic use of water. We ought to help people use and re-use water like grey water. Personally, we should all try and use less water.

If there is anything you can do to help on this, my husband is coming down to the Conference tomorrow and I want to report to you that he runs the tap while he is cleaning his teeth. So if there is anything the GMB can do about that, that will help with some personal wastage of water.

JOHN CRUDDAS: I agree with a lot of what has been said about the question of leakage and tougher regulation. However, I would not rule out, actually, the state taking a more active role possibly in the ownership of the utilities. I would not. And I would not do that either in terms of the railway industry. I think we should not close these doors. We should keep our options open with the possibility that if we cannot beef up the regulatory regime to secure socially desired outcomes, we should think again, possibly, about ownership down the road. I still support Labour Party policy in terms of public ownership and public accountability of the railway network. I do not see that that is actually wrong or old-fashioned. I think it could be quite a modern role to play in terms of a more creative role played by the state in terms of security the greater ownership of some of our key utilities.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, John. I ask Birmingham & West Midlands to put their question.

BRO. D. KEMPSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): President, candidates, Congress, I would like to ask the candidates a straightforward question. If you are successful, what steps will you take to ensure that you use your influence to deliver the Warwick Agreement in full?

HAZEL BLEARS: I am already doing it, Dave. I have been responsible for the last 11 months to take forward the Warwick Agreement and I think most people who have been involved with TULO with me, and we have had a series of meetings, would recognise that we have made swifter progress in the past 12 months than we have done for quite some time. There is now an agreement across the trade union Movement that 50% of the Warwick Agreement has actually been completed; about 80% of it is under progress and there is still about half-a-dozen issues which remain to be resolved between us. I do not think that is bad going two years into our Parliament. Remember, Warwick was an agreement for the implementation within the lifetime of this Parliament and I am absolutely committed 100% to making sure that we deliver that. That was part of our manifesto at the last election. I can tell you that you get a trusting government if you actually deliver what you promised to deliver. That is Warwick is really, really important.

I said at the outset of this meeting that I think, as a matter of priority, we need to sit down together and work on day-to-day issues so that we have a better on-going relationship with the trade union Movement rather than simply a very hurried agreement made at the last minute. In Scotland that is what has happened and in Scotland there is much more of a sense of the trade union and the Government coming together, and I think that is a priority for us.

ALAN JOHNSON: Yes, I will make sure that the Warwick Agreement is implemented in full. At the DTI we had a large part of the Warwick Agreement that was our responsibility. We published the document as to how we were going to do it. We took through the Women In Work Commission. We took through the extension to the work/life balance. We implemented the extra eight days of Bank Holidays to be additional to the four weeks' paid leave entitlement, except we put an added flourish to it and insisted that those Bank Holidays were paid. Some employers do not pay their employees for Bank Holidays. The strict terms of Warwick is that those eight days should be added. We insisted that they should be added and paid as well.

I guess we need to know which bit you think needs to be implemented. I would guess it was agency workers. On that the European Union Directive has become so bogged down that we need to look at that now in terms of domestic legislation and get on with protecting agency workers domestically rather than through Brussels.

HILLARY BENN: Yes, I would see it as a priority to sit down and make sure that the Warwick Agreement was implemented in full. I think the Warwick framework has been a good one. It has served us both well, and that is why I think once we have done that we should be discussing what are the issues that we next need to consider. In the questions which have come up today we have a list of them: equal pay, Remploy, agency and temporary workers, reviewing the red tap that affects trade unions and I would add to that the right to ensure that workers can ask to work flexibly because it is one of the ways we are going to need to change our society to help people to better balance work and family life in the future. I think it is the right way to go about trying to govern the relationship between the Government and the trade union Movement because we sit down and look at the issues in a practical and purposeful way and come up with solutions that we agree between us. That enables you to go back to your members and say, "Hey, look, this partnership with the Labour

Government works. It has delivered these changes. Now will you come and support the work that we are doing”.

HARRIET HARMAN: I agree that we should be implementing the Warwick Agreement not only for what is in it in terms of the substance that I support but also because if people take part in a discussion around a policy forum and it comes to an agreement, if it is not implemented people lose confidence and think what is the point of being a member of the Labour Party and being in a policy forum and actually taking that forward. I would say the same about national conference policy. People join the Labour Party and go to their branches and pass resolutions. If it comes to conference, it is passed and the conference has taken a view then, especially if it has taken a view year after year, I think there is an obligation on the Government to take that seriously and implement it.

That is why one of the things that I would do if I was Deputy Leader is after each conference chair a joint committee between the NEC and the Cabinet to look to how you are going to put into practice things which have been agreed by conference. For example, the things that Jon is always complaining about which is the failure to implement conference policy on council housing.

JON CRUDDAS: I think there should be a speedy enforcement of Warwick 1, and I do take Hazel’s point that she has moved things along. But, however, I was one of 120 MPs a month or two ago who, on a Friday morning, watched the Government talk out a Private Member’s Bill on Temporary and Agency Workers and that was not our greatest moment, I can tell you that.

Second, I think there should also be a Warwick 2, and I would suggest to you that the cornerstone of a Warwick 2 would be a new minimum employment clause in all public contracts. If anyone bids for public money they should provide minimum standards over and above their statutory minimum in terms of money, hours and sick. *(Applause)*

PETER HAIN: Jon is absolutely right. Not only do we have to deliver Warwick 1 which, after all, came through the night after a crisis between the Government and the trade union Movement. We have got to establish a proper partnership between the Government and the trade unions all year round, resolving issues like Remploy, making sure we carry through our commitments to protect agency and temporary workers. I am extremely concerned about this twilight world now where there is no union organisation, where people are not having their rights enforced, where people are operating by migrant labour sometimes filling the places of local labour, dreadfully exploited and creating a toxic atmosphere for the BNP to exploit. We have got a lot more work to do.

When you have got the Gate Gourmets, the JJ Sports and Asda playing the games that they do, when you have got all of these definitions of trade disputes and all the rest that we talked about earlier, we have got to have a new deal for trade unionism and employers in the future. That will come by a proper partnership all year round. As the Deputy Leader I will make sure that that happens with the Government and the trade union Movement working together.

THE PRESIDENT: Let me now go back and ask London Region if they have another question. I will have to look at the time to see if this will be the last one because the candidates have to sum-up.

BRO. T. BAILLEE (London): If elected as Deputy Leader will you allow councils to use their own housing revenue to build more council housing for rent? (*Applause*)

ALAN JOHNSON: Yes. I think we have got to the stage now where those local authorities which have a two star or three star rating ought to be able to borrow against their rental income in exactly the same way that housing associations are allowed to do with the specific purpose of building more affordable housing. I think we have moved beyond the fourth option now. I think it is not a case of having referendums but it is a case of actually seeking to address this mis-match between supply and demand of public housing.

One thing I would not do, though, is go back to those days – I brought up three kids on a council estate – where the estate was miles away from where the work was, that had no proper transport interlinks and that was an isolated community. What we need to do is, imaginatively, as many councils are, build this social housing in a way that ensures that these communities are part of local society, not isolated from it.

HILLARY BENN: Yes, because we have a ticking time-bomb that we have to deal with, a simply inadequate number of affordable homes in our society. Although we do not have as many people sleeping rough on the streets now, you have relatives who are staying with other relatives, and sleeping on the floor. You have young couples who are wondering how on earth they are going to afford to buy somewhere to live. We have to increase the supply of housing and we have to make sure that it is good quality housing, and we have to make sure that it is well managed because otherwise the electorate is going to look at us and say, “You saw it coming, why didn’t you do anything about it?”

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Harriet.

HARRIET HARMAN: Yes, the Government since 1997 has put hundreds of millions of pounds into repairing and refurbishing council houses. In my constituency in Peckham there has been new roofs, new windows, new lifts, but there is a chronic shortage of affordable housing that people can afford to rent or afford to buy, so we have to act on that. One of the reasons why we have to do that is because there is growing a big housing divide. It is contributing to a more unequal society between those who have decent housing and those who have not. I think we should make this a big dividing line between us and the Tories and we should be starting on it now. We should be saying at the next election we are going to build hundreds of thousands more council houses and make that something that we ask people to vote Labour for.

THE PRESIDENT: Jon.

JON CRUDDAS: I am going to agree with the question, not least because Tom Baillie is my branch secretary in Dagenham. I would say this, I think if we are going to be honest the biggest failure of the Government over 10 years is to provide low cost rented housing for local people. There are 1.6 million on the transfer and allocation

lists now and 100,000 have been added to the housing list in London alone since 2003. It is the biggest outstanding issue of our time. I am very pleased now that everyone is going to talk about the council housing because for years we have been going to the Labour Party conference supporting Labour Party policy, which has been what they call a fourth option, to have a level playing field so councils can build more council housing units. I welcome everyone's support for this now. It is the big policy priority for a future Labour government and I fully support the right to build new council housing.

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Jon. Peter.

PETER HAIN: I agree with Jon and he deserves a lot of credit, by the way, for making this a priority issue in his campaign. I as a local MP deal with housing cases where there are more and more people who are living in incredibly crowded circumstances with their parents, having to share beds with three or four in the same bed, where they are sleeping downstairs in the living-room, where youngsters cannot get their own place to rent or to buy and have to live with their parents, we have a real big crisis on our hands. The problem is that it is our Labour voters, our working class supporters in the main who are being hit the hardest and they are going to say increasingly, "Why do I vote Labour, unless you are giving me a roof over my head either to rent or an affordable house to buy?"

This has to be a priority for the next period in government in the way that we made health and education rightly a priority in our first period of government. We have to build more council houses, more houses by housing associations for rent at decent rates, and we also have to build more houses that people can afford to buy with new shared equity schemes to enable them to get on the housing ladder.

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Peter. Hazel.

HAZEL BLEARS: I think you have probably just seen a manifesto promise being made before your very eyes. We are making history because we are all agreed on this: yes, councils should. I will say two extra things. One, we do need council housing. I agree with Alan, we do not need massive monolithic estates because they did not work and that is why we are tearing down some of the estates that we did build, particularly tower blocks. What we also need is shared equity. A lot of young people in this country aspire to own their homes as well and we have to make sure that they can get on the ladder. At the moment, you have to buy 50% of the house; that is too big a step. If they can buy 10% or 15%, they have a chance of getting a home of their own.

The other thing I think we have to do is regulate the private rented sector. I do not know about you but some of the private landlords, the rogues who do not manage the property properly, is absolutely appalling. In my city on Friday we launched the first compulsory landlord licensing scheme and if they do not sort out the antisocial behaviour, if they do not manage it properly, we can take the housing benefit off them. I think we have to be pretty tough on this to make sure people who are in private rented property also get a fair deal.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I am going to pick one more question and it is going to be Yorkshire.

SIS. P. ROSS (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region, Yorkshire Coal Staffs): What future do you envisage for the UK coal industry, in particular if the UK Coal plc decides to close its last four deep mines? Would you step in to maintain access to our reserves? Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Hillary.

HILLARY BENN: Britain's reserves of coal are a really important asset for the future of the country and in the changing world in which we live where tackling climate change is going to be a responsibility that every country has to face up to at the same time we need to ensure that we have a balanced source of energy supply so we are not dependent on someone who has their fingers on the tap somewhere else in the world. Now, what contribution can coal make? With the new clean coal technologies, with the development of carbon capture and storage, then coal does have a contribution to make to the fight against climate change but also to keeping the lights on. It has to go alongside investment in renewables, it has to go alongside other forms of energy supply which does include looking at whether nuclear has a contribution to make because in the end we have to keep the lights burning.

We are going to have to do a lot of things in a very different way to the way that we have done them in the past. In the end, the fundamental responsibility of government is to ensure that our national security is protected, including ensuring we have enough energy, and that means we have to look after the assets we have, including coal.

THE PRESIDENT: OK. Thank you. Harriet.

HARRIET HARMAN: I would agree with Hillary on two points in particular, clean coal technology and carbon capture. I would say that we have to see also how with these initiatives we can give a boost to the British manufacturing industry, that we should every time we are taking things forward look at how we can ensure that British manufacturing is manufacturing the things that help develop clean coal and carbon capture, and the same with renewables, that we should make sure there is an opportunity for British manufacturing when we are developing wind turbines or the River Seven barrage that it will benefit the whole country.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Jon.

JON CRUDDAS: Yes, I agree both with what Harriet and Hillary have said there. We have the coal reserves. We have the clean coal technology. Coal has a role to play in the future energy mix, not least because of the unstable countries that are providing oil and gas, so we need security in terms of our own energy supply for the future. Therefore, I think we should invest in clean coal technology and we should also maintain the role of the state necessarily to step in if it is needed to, which I think lay behind the fundamental question there.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Peter.

PETER HAIN: With the trebling of the oil and therefore gas price and the massive rocketing of utilities bills coal has suddenly become much, much more competitive. I have had two new mines open in my own South Wales valley constituency over the last few years. With one power station being built every week in China, every week, there has to be a future for coal, clean coal, with carbon storage and sequestration, with the whole structure of new technology that can make coal clean with low emissions, and we have to lead the world on this. There is a fantastic number of jobs in exporting that clean coal technology, if we can make it the very best in the world, and in the meantime producing more coal so that we can have a balanced energy supply and we do not have to rely on unstable parts of the world. With renewable energy and all the other sources of energy we can have an energy policy that serves our interests and that we have control over. There has to be a future for coal, clean coal, and our Labour Government has to make sure that there is.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Peter. Hazel.

HAZEL BLEARS: I think you are going to get pretty much agreement across the panel on this one as well. I think there are two challenges for us: one, to make sure that when we get the clean coal technology we actually get the benefits for our people out of the jobs. We have gone up from 140,000 jobs to 400,000 jobs in the whole field of renewables, the new opportunities that are available in new technology, but we have to do more of that. The question you asked was whether or not government had a role in securing our assets, if in fact those pits are going to be closed. I think sometimes decisions are taken on a short-term basis and we do not look to the future. We are going to need our coal as part of a balanced energy policy. I think if there is a danger that those pits close and we lose those reserves because the pit collapses, then that is something that as a government we have to look at. Whether or not there are steps we can take to make sure even if that coal is not needed now, if it is needed in 10 or 20 years' time, we have to think long-term and think ahead. Actually, that is the role of government. Sometimes business will take a short-term profit take; government should be thinking longer-term and thinking ahead in the best interests of this country.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Hazel. Alan.

ALAN JOHNSON: This is a crucial question for the energy review. What we have to do, firstly, is deal with the situation where we are committed to a 60% reduction in CO₂ emissions by 2050. On the other hand, we know that gas and oil have now depleted, we are now net importers of gas, and we are in the same situation now with oil. How do we secure our energy for the future? Coal is in a bit of a renaissance now for the reasons that other panellists have mentioned. I look at Tower Colliery in Wales as a terrific example of a cooperative being formed, successfully. I know their stocks are running down now and I wonder why we cannot replicate that, given that we do have to ensure that our own indigenous supply of energy is secure and we do not have to link up with some fairly dodgy parts of the world to guarantee our gas and energy supplies. It is exactly the question that we need to tackle during this energy review.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Congress, I have got time for some more questions so I will move back on to the agenda. South Western Region.

SIS. R. BENNETT (South Western): Recent reports have suggested that over the last ten years the gap between the rich and the poor has widened. My question is what action would you as candidates take to reverse this shameful trend?

HARRIET HARMAN: Thank you. The gap, Ruth, between rich and poor is widening again, having closed a bit. I think we have done a great deal to tackle poverty particularly amongst pensioners, particularly amongst families with children. But I think we have to ask ourselves a pretty fundamental question now. Do we want to live in a society which is characterised by a growing divide between those at the top and those at the bottom? Do we really want to have a society where some people struggle and others pay £10,000 for a handbag? This is not about the politics of envy. This is about a belief in equality.

I do not think that you can have equal opportunities for everybody in a very divided society. I do not think that you can have peaceful and cohesive communities when there is a huge gap between rich and poor. That is why I suggest that we should set up a Royal Commission on the Distribution of Income and Wealth. There are a great many complex things which contribute to inequality and, therefore, we should have a serious debate which involves the inequalities between different regions as well as inequalities between different ethnic groups and genders. I think inequality must be on the agenda for the future, the same as poverty was on our agenda in 1997.

JON CRUDDAS: There is a growing inequality and that raises fundamental questions as to what we are going to do for the next ten years, without questioning the fact that we have done many good things over the preceding ten years.

Two things we should focus in on that the Government are now committed to. The first is to abolish child poverty by 2020. The second is to ensure that we put the same amount of money per head in terms of educating kids in the State system as they do in the private system, and they are the two building blocks to confront inequality over the next few years, it seems to me, both in terms of life opportunities through the education system as well as the child poverty which is still endemic, unfortunately, in too much of this country.

We are going to have to face up to the consequences of that if we do not have enough money to fund those commitments and that might mean some people at the top end, the very rich, contributing more in terms of the tax take in the future in terms of rebuilding public services in this country.

PETER HAIN: We have got to look at the tax system, of course we have, to make sure that it is as fair as possible. I think there are other things that we can do because inequality is a very serious problem. I do not want to live in a society, especially under a Labour Government, where, as I said earlier, a relatively small number of people can get £8.8 billion of bonuses in one year in the City of London, and then people do not have a roof over their heads and they are struggling without proper rights at work, if they can get a job at all. So I want to see inequality tackled right across Government.

I think there should be a requirement on every government department to have an anti-poverty agenda in order to make sure that the whole of government meets that. I also want to see us doing innovative things, like I have done in Northern Ireland, for example, before I handed over to the dream ticket of Ian Paisley and Martin McGinnis, and that is to put free solar panels on the poorest households of Northern Ireland in order that you cut the utility bills but you also make a contribution to climate change. We can have a red/green agenda in that way, but we have also got to make tackling inequality and rights at the workplace absolutely central to our future Labour Government's programmes.

HAZEL BLEARS: Tackling poverty, injustice and inequality is probably the one single thing which brought every single one of us into the Labour Party and the trade union Movement. In order to carry on being able to do that, there is a big, big lesson. We have got to stay in Government because, make no mistake, Tory governments are not about tackling poverty, injustice and inequality.

I think it is really important that we do two things. One is that we continue to tackle child poverty. We have 3,500 children's centres right across this country because we have a Labour Government. Secondly, improving education for every single working class family in this country. We have only been able to invest in education because we have had a Labour Government. I have youngsters in my constituency in Salford who have got the best education you can imagine. We have doubled the number of youngsters who are getting 5 decent GCSEs. That is the way out of poverty to be able to get on and to be on the side of the decent hardworking families in this country. The big lesson is that we can only do that if we carry on having a Labour Government because the Tories, quite literally, would betray every single poor family in this country and it is a big lesson for us.

ALAN JOHNSON: Hazel is right. Let us recognise what we have done in Government over ten years. In 18 years under the Tories the bottom 20%, the poorest 20% in society, saw their income increase on average by less than 1%, whereas the top 20% saw their incomes increase by 3%. During the last ten years that situation has actually reversed. We have not gone far enough, sure, but no other government is going to do this. Only Labour will eradicate child poverty.

I want to mention one point about this. Children in care are half a per cent of the child population; 27% of the prison population; 40% of the homeless in this country and 60% of young juveniles. They get a rough deal and it needs government right across, not just education but social services, health and everyone working together to ensure that we tackle these problems. That takes a Labour Government in power not just for one term, not just for two or three. We can really transform society with long periods in government.

HILLARY BENN: We have got to be straight about this and say that inequality matters, and we should worry about it. The statistics that Alan has just given you make the case as to why politics matters and Labour politics makes a difference. It is no accident that the graph looks very different in the last ten years compared with the previous 18 years because we have had a Labour Government. That is the first point.

The second point is that education is the key. We, as a movement, know that the single most important start we can have in life, apart from the love of encouragement of those who bring us into this world, is the chance to go to school and to bring out the potential which is within every human being. If we do that we can then set a target to say “How quickly can we lift the next 600,000 children out of poverty?”

There is one other thing that I would do. It is to campaign on this. If we can campaign, as we have, to try and eradicate poverty in the rest of the world and we have to go on doing that, why shouldn't we also have a campaign in this country to eradicate poverty in the United Kingdom? Let's get people out on the streets on this because that will help the Government to make progress.

THE PRESIDENT: I am afraid, Congress, that that will be the last question. I know the candidates are ever so upset about that and I know that you will be. But the candidates will be now summing-up. They each have two minutes to do so. This time I am going to start with Hillary.

HILLARY BENN: Mary, thank you very much, indeed. I think we have had a really good discussion. We have raised many issues this afternoon. Whatever the outcome of this election campaign, we have got to keep talking because if there is one lesson that I have learnt from my 22 years of working in the trade union Movement, it was about the importance of solidarity, not just in the workplace but solidarity between the Labour Party and the trade union Movement. We can only achieve change for the better if we stick together. Therefore, as Deputy Leader, I will work to unite the party, supporting Gordon Brown and showing people that we have pride in our Government.

In the end, when people see Labour politics as a means of dealing with their problems and realising their hopes and aspirations for a better future, that is how we win people's confidence, that is how we win elections and how we defeat cynicism, which will otherwise destroy us.

I think that we, as a Movement, should be really proud of our values because they are Labour values and trade union Movement values. We have just been talking about poverty. We have got to be a national that acts on its concerns about poverty wherever we find it. We have got to be a society which celebrates the contribution that people make, including the contribution that trade unionists make, that GMB members make, day in and day out, to building a better country. We have got to be a democracy in which we ask people to give something back as well as asking things of others. We need to be a culture in which we actually value the relationships one with another as much as we do economic stability. We need Britain to be a force for good in the world because the fight against poverty is not just on our shores.

The last and most important lesson we all know is that we need a Labour Government because without one we are not going to go on being able to redistribute power and opportunity and wealth which is, in the end, how we are going to change our world for the better.

ALAN JOHNSON: Mary, I was motivated by the trade union Movement, educated largely by the trade union Movement and inspired by the trade union Movement,

although not often at branch meetings, I have to say. To me I have watched from being a trade union leader in the 1970s – I wore that tank top and those flares – and I saw what happened as we left office in 1979, fell into this culture of betrayal and tore ourselves to pieces. I was at the Wembley Conference or the witch hunt that they called the Wembley Conference. I vowed like many other trade union officials and leaders never to go down that route again.

If you think what has happened, the trade union Movement has changed. When we left office in 1979 we were in favour of secondary picketing and against the national minimum wage. We voted it down year after year. Now we have changed. We were not just against the European Social Model but we were against Europe in 1979. We have changed. As part of that change, coming back into Government, that failure and determination not to slip back into that culture of betrayal is one of the things is one of the things that has kept us in Government for ten years.

What do we need to do next? Two things, I think. As a Government we need to stop treating the trade union Movement in John Monks' words as if they are "embarrassing elderly relatives". The trade union Movement is a huge asset to the party. We could not exist without the trade union input and we ought to celebrate that fact more often.

On the other side I do think it is important to find this language of mutual respect because trade union leaders in affiliated unions who act as if this Government is somehow anti-worker and anti-union, and then four weeks before a general election suddenly tell their members to go out and vote Labour, that is not going to work either.

The Tories have only announced three policies. They have not announced many. One is to withdraw from the Social Contract. The second is to break the link with the Labour Party. In their submission to Hayden Phillips they say that it is not a threat but a promise. The third is to unravel the pensions deal I made for three million public sector workers. We know where they are going to come from. If we find that language of mutual respect, we can stay in Government and make this the century of the progressive left.

HAZEL BLEARS: I think we have had a great session this afternoon. It has been the same at all of the Deputy Leadership hustings. I said right at the outset that we should make these hustings a way to build the party and a way to attack the Tories because we know where the real enemy is. I can tell you that it is working.

Since we started we have had a thousand new members join the Labour Party every week. If we carry this on for a year we could rebuild the Labour Party. I do not think that we are all too keen on maybe doing this for a year but it is a serious point. We are now starting to see a Brown bounce in the opinion polls, and just as that is happening the wheels are starting to come off Cameron's bandwagon. He has come back today, his party is in complete disarray, his education policy is in tatters, his MPs are revolting, but they always were that, anyway – (*laughter*) – and I think we are really starting to see a crack in the Tories. The reason why this is so important is that if at the next election we can show that the Tories have not really changed – you know, when you scratch them you still find the same nasty right-wing elitist Tory

Party – that is not what the British people want to vote for. So where we are now is a really important place for us.

I said at the outset that the Deputy Leader should be Labour's campaigner-in-chief, taking the message to our communities, our streets and our estates. You want somebody who can connect and talking in real language, not confuse people with a kind of ministerial speak but actually absolutely be eye-to-eye and get our message across as hard as we can. That is the kind of Deputy Leader that I want to be.

You are a fighting union. You fight for people who get a raw deal. Fairness is absolutely at the heart of every single thing you do, and I am that kind of fighter. I was brought up in the 1950s and '60s in Salford, my dad was a fitter in a factory, an AEU steward unfortunately, not GMB, and my mum worked for the Electricians' Union. They left school at 14 and my brother drives a bus in Manchester. I joined my union before I joined the party. I have been a branch secretary, chair, health and safety rep and all the rest of it. I have actually done it the hard way. When you do it the hard way, it teaches you to be tough. It is the lesson that we have to learn.

If we want to carry on improving life for working people in this country we have got to have a Labour Government and means taking some of the tough decisions on immigration, people trafficking, crime and anti-social behaviour, looking after carers, which is going to be the next big problem out there for us. You want a Deputy Leader focused on winning that next election. I am tough and I will do it for you.

THE PRESIDENT: Peter. I have been very good. I have been very quiet.

PETER HAIN: I have been very grateful for more nominations from national unions than any of my colleagues on the top table but I would be proudest of all if you, my union, the GMB, nominated me here today. I want to inspire all those who share our values to come back to Labour, all those trade unionists and millions of voters that we have lost; we have to be the umbilical cord between the Cabinet and the grassroots. I want to inspire people to come back who share my values, my values that were forged watching my parents fight apartheid, being jailed and banned, and eventually forced to leave the country. Then I became an anti-apartheid leader. I helped to set up the anti-Nazi League to destroy the National Front. I was a trade union official for 14 years, and now having joined the Labour Party 30 years ago I am standing for Deputy Leader.

Yes, we have to reconnect and reach out to all those we have lost and we have to do so by celebrating what we have achieved these last 10 years, the minimum wage and the settlement in Northern Ireland being amongst our proudest. But we have made mistakes too. Iraq has been very difficult. We need a radical new vision, tackling all the problems your conference has discussed, including PFI, including private equity fund takeover, no more asset-stripping, no more tax on pensions, making sure the tax regime is fair, working these ideas out together, the Government and the trade unions together. I would be an umbilical cord between the Cabinet and you, making sure all these issues are resolved. What is more, having been in government for 10 years I am an experienced minister having done lots of tough jobs. You cannot do this job unless you are right at the heart of the Government. It is the only elected position in the selection. It is Gordon's deputy. You have to have

somebody who can represent your views, broker agreements, negotiate outcomes, and resolve disputes. What we have to do is inspire people to come back to Labour with our values of social justice and equality, and human rights and democracy.

Good luck to the GMB union, let's campaign for those values, and beat the Tories next time.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Jon.

JON CRUDDAS: I think that is my branch secretary again. I am going to sort of finish where I started off. My view is for the Labour Party to win an election it has to change, it has to change in terms of how it views its own party and it has to change its policy priorities. In terms of its own party, 200,000 members have been lost, 20,000 a year, nearly 500 a week for 10 years. Now we have to do something about that and we have to separate out the post of Deputy Leader from that of Deputy Prime Minister, and the ministerial jobs, and the cars, and all of that.

This should be solely about, firstly, rebuilding the Labour Party in every part of the electoral landscape of this country and, secondly, articulating the policies and the views of the Labour Party to the Government from within the Government. Second, it has to be about changing the policy priorities. I came across in my own constituency a Lithuanian gang on £15 a day, they were eating cold beans and stale bread, on a public contract this year, in London. That is not good enough. I had a roofer shouting at me who had lost £2.50 an hour in the last six months. And I had a bloke complaining that across the road from him on his council estate a bloke had rented out his shed, he had put an oven in it, and he had eight East Europeans hot-bedding it, on local public contracts.

That is not good enough and we need a new settlement for people at work in this country, just as we need a new settlement in terms of new build council housing, just as we need a new settlement in stopping the privatisation of frontline services, just as we need a new settlement in terms of reconciling ourselves to our culpability in the situation that is in Iraq. We can do this if we have the political will to do so. If we do it we can return to what we are at our best, a Labour party articulating the material concerns of working people. If we get it right, we have in our grasp returning to the central job and role of the labour Movement, which is to articulate an economic and social transformation of working people's lives. That is what everyone in this room joined for and I urge you to join me in the future to do that.

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Jon. Harriet.

HARRIET HARMAN: Thanks, Mary. I think the task that lies ahead of us is clear, we have to rebuild the Labour Party and we have to win back public trust and confidence. We can rebuild the Labour Party; we have lost half our members in the last 10 years. We can rebuild the Party but it has to be a powerful and democratic party. I agree with Alan, we do not want to go back to the fratricidal days when Labour was disunited and divided which meant that we could not win elections and we could not do anything for the people who need Labour to be in government. I do not think there is any threat to go back to those days. I think that we can trust the

Party. We need to give the Party a say. People did not join the Labour Party for it to be a leader supporters club.

I think we need a Deputy Leader who can not only talk about building the Labour Party but has shown a commitment to actually doing it. That is what I have done in my local party, where we have seen off the LibDems and the BNP do not get a look in because we are 700 strong members deeply rooted in the local community. I think we should never lose sight of the good that this Labour Government has done. We would not have a national minimum wage if it was not for the Labour Government. We would not have a Department of International Development, let alone double our aid budget, if it was not for a Labour government. We would not have had extended maternity pay and leave if it was not for a Labour government. But people have problems in their lives: although we have invested in health and education there is a problem with housing, we have to get onto that; although there are more jobs there is a problem with people feeling insecure at work, we have to legislate on that, and we do have to address the anger and bitterness that is felt not just in the Party but also in the wider public about our decision to use force in Iraq.

I agree, too, that we have to take the attack to the Tories. The Tory press is giving Cameron a free ride. We should be saying that if you want commitment, substance, principles, then Gordon Brown is your man. If you want froth, superficiality, shallow opportunism, then you have to have a choice, David Cameron or Paris Hilton. I would say that you need a Deputy Leader who can help Labour win the election and that is the team of me and Gordon Brown. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Can I say to all six candidates, thank you very, very much. I hope you feel that you have had a fair hearing and have been respected by the Congress, which I could trust them immensely to do. I thank everyone. If you would like to stay there, I will give some directions to Congress, and then I will close.

The CEC is going to meet at 6.15 tonight to discuss the leadership issue. The regions, I believe, and you will each know from your own region, will be meeting up and your CEC representatives will be meeting with us at 6.15 to give us your verdicts region by region. OK. Then we will be sending out through the ERS a full individual postal ballot of all members who pay the political levy, so everyone will have their say in the GMB.

With that Congress, I will see you all later and most of you tomorrow morning at 9.30. Do not party too much tonight. Thanks very much.

Conference adjourned for the day.