

**GMB ANNUAL CONGRESS & BIENNIAL SECTION CONFERENCES**

Held on:

**SUNDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> JUNE – THURSDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2008**

At:

**THE PLYMOUTH PAVILIONS**

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**SIS. MARY TURNER**  
**(President of the GMB Union)**  
**(In the Chair)**

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**PROCEEDINGS**

**DAY FOUR**

**(THURSDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2008)**

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## **FOURTH DAY'S PROCEEDINGS**

**THURSDAY, 12<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2008**

*Congress assembled at 9.30 a.m.*

THE PRESIDENT: Will congress please settle down? Good morning, Congress. Did you all have a good night last night? Congress says a big thank you to Browells for putting on the President's Night, it was really great, and to the staff who organised it. Congress, this morning I just have a couple of announcements. The bucket collection for the Windmill Gateway Club for the Disabled raised £264.64. (*Applause*) Terry Trim of Southern Region would like to say a special thank you and Paul Kenny says, "We will thank him as well and we will double it." OK? (*Applause*) Thank you, Paul, for that.

Can I say thanks to you all for the raffle at the President's Night last night? We raised £450 for the Jimmy Knapp Cancer Fund. Thanks to you all.

We do have some raffle prizes that have not been collected so get in your top pockets. Salmon A24D number 861-865, LOOAE4L 581-585. White XG3Q666-670. Yellow KP5051 386-390. Blue AE4L 566-570. Yellow KP5051 416-420. If you have those raffle tickets please go and see Barbara of the London Region who has the prizes. And can I say thanks to Barbara, Brenda, Edna, and all those who helped out last night. Thank you.

I would like to thank Harry Donaldson in GMB Scotland for the whiskey and gin that you have on your tables and thank Diageo for providing it. We thought we would give you an after-morning drink! The hair of the dog I think it is called!

### **SOCIAL POLICY – General MOTION 158**

#### **158. ANIMAL RIGHTS**

Congress believes we must put a stop on animals performing in the circus. It is a disgrace that this is happening in Britain in 2008.

SALFORD NO. 1 BRANCH  
*North West and Irish Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. J. TOOMEY (North West & Irish): President, brothers and sisters, some of you might want to know what "animal rights" is doing on a union agenda. Well, you have protection. Animals have not. They are exploited. Under the Animal Welfare Bill, I think it was 2006, the Labour Government were going to outlaw animals in the circus and then they had a review and said that they were as well off as animals in captivity. Now,

then, they were looking through rose-tinted glasses, them greedy bastards, the expense ones. I would put them in a cage and make them perform in a circus and let the animals out. That is what I would do with them. *(Applause)*

However, during our time we have all been to a circus and watched the elephants, the tigers, the lions, whatever, and the brutality and humiliation that went into training them animals, an iron bar used on elephants, tigers, the electric pole and the whip. If you think I am lying there was a documentary on the Moscow State Circus a few years ago and it was horrific. It does want stamping out. The last I heard there were 113 MPs signed a motion to bring back this bill to outlaw animals appearing in circuses.

I am going to go a bit further from the circus to animal brutality, humiliation, and the degrading spectacle like the Japanese whaling fleet. Think about it, with the harpoon, taking three-quarters of an hour to die, and what do they say it is for, experimental purposes. They are filling their fat faces in Tokyo restaurants, and the rest of them.

Then we go to China, the elephant for the ivory, and the rhinoceros where his horn is supposed to be a Viagra supplement, believe it or not.

Then let's go over to Canada where the little pup seals are slaughtered. They do not slaughter them now with the white coat on them, only when the white pelt changes. Years ago, you have seen the photos in the press, little pup seals splattered with blood. Then we have the Welsh farmer over here, no disrespect to the Welsh lads but if ever there was a crime-bingeing life it is farmers. They say the badger has given the cattle TB - you would not believe it - so they want to cull them. There is no scientific evidence that a badger passes TB on to the Hereford cattle, but they just want to kill them. They just want something to do.

So what I would say for any animal organisation, and I am a member of the RSPCA, I have a monthly amount taken out, I would urge any of you to help these dumb animals. I will tell you something to think about: it takes 40 dumb animals to make a fur coat and it only takes one to wear it! *(Applause)*

If you ever do see one with a fur coat a little tube of super glue works wonders! *(Laughter)* So, I would ask all of you to take animal cruelty to your heart and give something towards it. I have asked Paul Kenny if he would be prepared to make a donation, anything from 25 quid onwards. Thank you, brothers and sisters. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: John, we have been selling some of our T-shirts outside and we have collected £250. You can have that for your donation. *(Applause)* A seconder? Formally? You could not follow that! Thank you.

*Motion 158 was formally seconded.*

## **MOTION 159**

### **159. ETHICAL TREATMENT OF INTENSIVELY REARED POULTRY**

This Congress asks that the CEC of the Union commit to fully support the national campaign of the RSPCA to further regulate and ethically improve the welfare of all poultry currently reared under intensive methods of mass battery factory farm production.

The success of lending of Trade Union support to such a widespread and popular campaign may result in ethical animal treatment, an end to artificial pricing and unfair pressure on producers and farmers by Supermarkets. Not least, it would also entail a choice of better quality of poultry meat and eggs sold to and consumed by the population at large.

113 MANCHESTER BRANCH  
*North West and Irish Region*

*(Carried)*

**BRO. D. WILSON (North West & Irish):** President, Congress, at the start of this year it was possible to pick up the lowest priced chicken for as little as £1.99, or maybe two for a fiver, and all underneath shrink wrap, but the so-called bargain bird will be packed with chemicals and pumped up with water. That chicken will have had a life that was nasty, brutish, and sharp. The modern intensively reared birds are fattened up in vast dark crowded sheds, genetically designed to grow to full size and overfed in a way that can only be described as completely obscene. Many do not even make it to their allotted five-week lifespan, dying due to distress or injury in often vile or grossly overcrowded conditions. Those that do survive may frequently endure the pain of broken limbs. Most people are normally upset and revolted once confronted by the evidence and true state of affairs behind the supposed bargain of the cheap supermarket chicken. The promoters and defenders of the current system will claim the production does meet the bare legal minimum and the prices are artificially low due to the strain put on farmers and suppliers due to driven demand from the customers.

Both the RSPCA and Compassion in World Farming maintain otherwise. The industry has either to self-regulate or otherwise be legally required to adhere to the standards of the RSPCA Freedom Food label. This was introduced so that hundreds of millions of chickens currently going through the process could at least have a little more room to breath and move round, and have a longer lifespan. This would in turn lead to a healthier and improved quality chicken meat for public consumption.

Some years back this proved indeed to be the case regarding battery-caged egg-laying hens. Public concern over salmonella resulted in improvements in free-range eggs that now account for more than 50% of total sales. A considerable section of the British public has been increasingly receptive to the RSPCA Freedom Food campaign and also this in turn has been driven on by the positive and very good TV media coverage from Jamie Oliver, and others, via Channel 4.

So, the message being received to the boardrooms of the big four supermarkets and also with their company shareholders' AGMs is that the current status quo of mass chicken production that lead to low prices is ultimately unacceptable and unsustainable. We

know that low paid, low income families with the money worries of today should not have to be confronted with the unethical choice of a £1.99 battery-produced carcass compared to a tasty organic free-range chicken which will probably be priced at over £10 or more and which only the affluent can afford. The Freedom Food label may well result in a higher price for chicken meat due to improved production but only an estimated pound or two more in the current cheapest option.

We do not tolerate in the GMB two-tier conditions in other social areas and poultry food production should be no exception. The GMB with its publicity resources could be of great help in reforming the food system long overdue for more regulation. Please signal your support for this motion. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

*Motion 159 was formally seconded.*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, Motion 165 has been withdrawn. I ask London Region to move 166, Licensing Hours.

## **MOTION 166**

### **166. LICENSING HOURS**

Congress is concerned at the increase in street crime as a result of the increase in opening hours of public houses and nightclubs. Congress feels that we should campaign for reducing the opening hours, and therefore reduce street crimes.

ISLINGTON 1 BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Referred)*

BRO. G. SHARKEY (London): Congress, the introduction of extended licensing hours across the country by the Government was welcomed in many circles, especially by the entertainment industry. The issues were that too many people were drinking to excess and consuming as much as possible within the restricted opening times of public houses and nightclubs. The proposals were to vary the opening times so that nightclubs would empty out at different times and reduce the overspill into our streets and keep public nuisance down to a respectable level. The Government's view was that these proposals would alleviate an already overstretched police force and hospitals, and educate the public into sensible alcohol consumption similar to that of our European colleagues on the Continent.

Colleagues, since the licensing hours were extended the proposals from the Government have had the reverse effect. Instead of a reduction in alcohol-fuelled street crimes, it is now recognised that these kinds of crimes have increased to such a level that the adverse publicity has highlighted that extending the licensing hours has not resolved the problems that were emphasised by the Government. Just look at the increase in television programmes relating to street crimes, and the increasing video clips on social networks over the internet. In addition, statistics show that there is an increase in young people

binge-drinking and where many alcohol-related problems affected people in their later years these alcohol conditions are now affecting more young people in today's society. There is also the impact on those who work unsociable hours in relation to the extended opening times, and affecting their families, many of whom are our members.

Congress, we are told by the Labour Government that they are committed to family values and work/life balance: surely this applies to all workers. Congress, we need to voice our opinions and campaign for the Government to review the extension of licensing hours and come up with sensible alternatives to assist our members, the police force, and the medical services. Colleagues, please support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

BRO. C. KERR (London): Congress, when the 24-hour drinking came into force in 2005, it was touted as a solution to the rising levels of alcohol-related crime and disorder in England and Wales. Information from around the country makes it clear that the Government's plan to create a Continental-style of drinking has failed. Many police forces have seen antisocial behaviour increased by almost half and witnessed more frequent violence since November 2005 when pubs and clubs could stay open all night. The Government was warned that changing the licensing hours without changing the drinking culture would lead to more violence, more drink-related admissions in hospital. The law must be reviewed. I second Motion 166. *(Applause)*

BRO. G. PHILBIN (North West & Irish): A surviving member of the recent Labour cull as a local councillor with responsibilities for licensing, there are other reasons concerned with alcohol apart from the hours. Last night is a good demonstration of how alcohol should be used, an excellent evening, some serious dancing, and no doubt with the funeral benefits going up some squeaky moments from the General Secretary.

This is not about demonising young people, it is about protection. Like many people in here, when I was 18 my father took me for my first legal drink. That is not the case today. We have hardened drinkers at the age of 13/14. We have liver-related diseases and associated problems with alcohol identified with people as young as 20. I have been campaigning for the last three years with police, MPs, and anyone who would listen. It is only when it comes to tragedy, like that in Warrington when Gary Newlove was beaten to death on his front door in front of his family when trying to protect his property, it is only then that it comes back (with the police involved) that there has been a serious issue.

What can we do? In the short term we can apply punitive measures. Parents who give their 13- or 14-year old children £10 on a Friday night or supply them with beers to go out just to keep out of the way should expect to come home with a fixed penalty fine of £50 under a byelaw. You may ask why under a byelaw. What we do not want to do is give these young people criminal records. A byelaw would allow that punitive action to be taken with no criminal record on that individual. Just think about this, a police officer finds a 13-year old drinking a can of 8% lager. At best he could ask them to pour it away. At worst, the youth throws the can on the floor and is prosecuted for litter. How mad is this? Thanks, Congress.

BRO. G. HARVEY (Birmingham & West Midlands): I think one of the main problems with drinking is off-licence hours. It is the supermarkets and garages that are selling drink 24 hours a day to anybody who wants to buy it. I work in the leisure industry and I go into pubs and clubs and it is not as bad as people make out. I think it is the people who are buying the cheap drink and drinking it before they go in anywhere, I think that is the big problem with drinking today, and young kids drinking. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Anyone else? No? I call Kevin Jones on behalf of the CEC on Motions 159 and 166. Kevin?

BRO. K. JONES (CEC, Public Services): Speaking on behalf of the CEC supporting 159 with a qualification and seeking referral on Motion 166.

Motion 159 asks the GMB to support the RSPCA campaign for all British supermarkets to sell only 100% welfare-friendly chickens by 2010. Standards in the intensive chicken farms are higher in the countries where the cheap chickens are in supermarkets and where processed foods come from. Chicken products packaged in the UK are labelled as British. The proposal could create the market for imported chickens bred in disgusting conditions abroad. Bear in mind what happened when higher standards were introduced for British pork that contributed to the virtual collapse of the British pig industry. Better to call for clear labelling for the country of origin and where the products meet the RSPCA standards.

Turning to Motion 166, 24-hour licensing was introduced in 2005 to change our drinking culture. The review of the Licensing Act has recently been published indicating overall crime from alcohol consumption was down but alcohol-related violence has increased in some areas in the early hours of the morning putting the burden on the emergency services. More research is needed on post-midnight drinking patterns. The CEC are not confident that the situation is as rosy as the report indicates so seek to refer the motion for full consideration. Therefore, please support Motion 159 with this qualification and refer Motion 166. Thank you, Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kevin. Would the North West & Irish Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you very much.

*Motion 158 was carried.*

*Motion 159 was carried.*

THE PRESIDENT: London Region, will you accept reference back? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Congress, the region accepts reference back. Do you agree? (*Agreed*) Thank you very much.

*Motion 166 was referred.*

## REGIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT: BIRMINGHAM & WEST MIDLANDS

### REGION (Pages 81-87)

### BIRMINGHAM AND WEST MIDLANDS REGION

#### 1. MEMBERSHIP AND RECRUITMENT

FINANCIAL MEMBERSHIP	
Section Financial Membership (by each Section):	
COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION	13,839
MANUFACTURING SECTION	15,754
PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION	22,443
Grade 1 members	38,555
Grade 2 members	9,484
Retired, Reduced Rate & Others	3,997
Male Membership	29,935
Female Membership	22,101
Total number recruited 1.1.2007 – 31.12.2007	8,650
Increase/Decrease 1.1.2007 – 31.12.2007	+2,490
Membership on Check-off	36,220
Membership on Direct Debit	11,560

#### RESPONSE TO ORGANISING AGENDA

I am pleased to report that the Organising Agenda within the Birmingham and West Midlands Region continues to be the priority. All Officers, staff and activists within the region are fully on board with our Organising Agenda which I believe shows in the improved recruitment figures and financial membership. Since my last report to Congress we have refreshed the Organising Team by placing different Officers within it. The team still have the same priorities which are to drive the organising agenda amongst the Officers within the region. Each member of the team is allocated a specific area of responsibility within the national and regional projects. They then ensure that that particular project is driven and has cohesion. The region continues to operate a system where each area team dedicates one week out of every four to solely organising which is still done in addition to general day-to-day organising. Also, with regards to the schools campaign, Officers diaries are accessible to a member of the Organising Team and where there are significant free spaces, school visits are allocated into their diaries and the Officers then visit the appropriate school. The GMB@Work Training for new activists and existing activists has been rolled out across the region throughout 2007. This has proved quite successful and as a result of that training, we have seen a marked improvement in both our recruitment figures but also in the quality of service provided to rank and file members by shop stewards who have attended the training. The use of lay representatives to assist in the area teams to organise, continues to be a success and the use of accompanying representatives to handle first line grievances and disciplinaries continue to be utilised which allows Full Time Officers more opportunities to devote time to organising and servicing the membership. Again, as with my last report, I am very pleased to report that the Organising Agenda continues to be positive throughout the region and all Full Time Officers and staff are totally committed to the Organising Agenda and the success of the region. In line with Motion 21 at Congress 2007, branches continue to adopt branch recruitment plans in accordance with Rule 37 and where requested, the region assists with funding to assist the branch recruitment plan. We also continue to receive funding from branch commission funds to assist recruitment plans within the region. As a result of the commitment of all involved in the Organising Agenda, it gives me great pleasure to report

an increase in financial membership on the twelve month period of two thousand, four hundred and ninety which I believe is a credit to all Officers, staff and activists within the Birmingham and West Midlands Region.

## RECRUITMENT TARGETS AND CAMPAIGNS

Obviously through 2007, we have been concentrating on the main national targets which were Public Services, where School Support Staff and Catering Staff are providing us with a constant steady stream of members and we are ensuring that when we do make new members in schools, we appoint a person as a contact who we are finding in turn, then become representatives in certain cases. As well as Public Services, G4S and latterly Asda have been targeted and again G4S has brought us a steady flow of new membership. Asda is slightly more difficult with regards to accessing the stores however we have begun to see an increase in our Asda membership and this will remain a target for organising. The other national target has been Southern Cross Care Homes, as a result of this we ran a very successful Southern Cross week whereby all Officers across the region were given specific homes to visit in the same week which resulted in an increase in Southern Cross membership of over one hundred and forty new members. As it was a success, it is our intention to make this an annual event in Southern Cross but also in other areas such as Asda, Wilkinson Stores and Casino's. As well as the national targets, we also have our regional project board and work in progress throughout 2007 have included the following companies or organisations; JD Heating, Father Hudson, which is a charitable society, GSA Cleaning, Private Hire Taxis, Euro Packaging Ltd, Trading Post Ltd, the Isle of Capri Casino, Rockline Ltd, Taylors Ltd and Nicklin Ltd. As well as the regional projects we ensure that the Organising Team and all the area teams have Greenfield targets in an effort to expand our membership base and from January 2007 through to December 2007, the following recognition agreements were secured; Transform in Telford, Whitefriars House, JCB World Parts Centre and West Mercia Women's Aid.

## OVERVIEW OF THE REGION'S ECONOMIC & EMPLOYMENT SITUATION

The Birmingham and West Midlands Region continues to lobby Government in an effort to get a coherent and sustainable manufacturing strategy for the region. As we are continuing to haemorrhage within the Manufacturing Sector, I have had a series of meetings with senior Government Ministers and towards the end of 2007 I met with the newly appointed Minister for the West Midlands, Liam Byrne and put our case forward very forcefully for a vibrant Manufacturing Policy. The issue of public procurement was argued for vociferously and this has resulted in a paper coming forward from the Minister for a strategy for the West Midlands. Never-the-less, this is not a quick fix and will have to be monitored over time. The West Midlands continues to have a high unemployment rate, the UK average unemployment rate is 5.3% and yet the West Midlands unemployment rate stands at 6.2% of the working population.

### 2. GENERAL ORGANISATION

Regional Senior Organisers	4
Membership Development Officers	Nil
Regional Organisers	16
Organising Officers	2
No. of Branches	116
New Branches	1
Branch Equality Officers	18
Branch Youth Officers	9

### 3. BENEFITS

Dispute	50.00
Total Disablement	Nil

Working Accident	1,322
Occupational Fatal Accident	4,000
Non-occupational Fatal Accident	3,040
Funeral	9,259

#### 4. JOURNALS & PUBLICITY

The Birmingham and West Midlands Regional magazine, GMB Centrepoin is now well established within the region. We have taken a conscious decision to make it a members magazine with branch and members stories as opposed to Full Time Officers. We also have within the magazine, a dedicated Women's Section in line with our Birmingham and West Midlands Regional Women's Charter. We also have a regional website which provides a variety of information and regional activity for members logging on and we continue to have a significant amount of on-line joiners. We also have links to branch websites and national and regional sister organisations. Throughout 2007, press releases have been published in most of the regional newspapers with interviews taking place on both TV and radio. Press releases and radio TV interviews were on the following subjects; compensation recovered through our legal services, pensions within the Local Government, fighting job losses in Severn Trent Water, Workers Memorial Day, Single Status, JCB Strike Ballot, GMB at the V Festival, GMB Women's Conference, Council Tax, Black History Month, Sandwell Council Schools under threat of closure and Asda stores deducting their employees pay. Regular news letters are circulated amongst our Section membership and we have now bedded in and utilised a fairly new service whereby we send text messages on a variety of subjects to our activists which is proving very successful and is welcomed by them. In conclusion, we have established for some time now and maintain a useful and informative media strategy.

#### 5. LEGAL SERVICES

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

Applications for Legal Assistance	Legal Assistance Granted
860	860

##### Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Court	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
593	277	6	£4,119,124.60	£500,000	£4,619,124.69
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2007			916		

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

Claims supported by Union	98 ET cases and advice matters (of which 33 are equal value pay cases)
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##### Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Tribunal	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
19	4	0	23 £169,342.92		£169,342.92
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2007			39		

(c) Other Employment Law Cases

Supported by Union	Unsuccessful	Damages/ Compensation	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2007
53 (compromise agreements)	0	£0	2

(d) Social Security Cases

Supported by Union	Successful	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2007
16	3	6

## 6. EQUAL RIGHTS

During the past year the main work of the Committee has focused on raising the profile of the GMB as the champion organisation for addressing inequality issues. This has extended to Regional Council, Regional Committee, full time and lay officials, representatives, employers, members and non-members. Full-time Officers have also been encouraged to use RERAC as a resource for organising in the workplace and utilising Committee members in recruitment campaigns throughout the Region. During the past year the primary work of the Committee has focused on how the Committee can become involved in organising. The Organising Team have been encouraged to utilise the Committee in terms of information and assisting with recruitment/organising campaigns. The Committee helped with the setting-up of the LGBT Shout Forum with a commitment from the Regional Secretary to financially support its work. RERAC members were involved with helping Ann Lafferty in organising a women's conference which was attended by over 120 women members.

### Regional Race Advisory Committee Report

During the past 12 months the main work of the regional race committee has been focused on raising the profile of the Black History Month event. This was organised and held on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2007 in Chamberlain Square, Birmingham.

The committee started to have regular meetings along with the regional secretary and made it a high profile event that required a poster campaign. The committee agreed it would be best if the school children designed the posters as we believed this would provide an ideal opportunity for children, schools and the wider community to celebrate the cultural and religious diversity of the black and ethnic minority communities in British society. The competition was welcomed by the school children and the designs/drawings received were of high standard, the winning poster was designed by Lucy Franks, aged 11 from Park View School in Birmingham.

The prize for the winning poster was presented at the Black History month event by the Lord Mayor of Birmingham. The committee gives special thanks to all the schools and children that participated in the competition.

We would also like to thank the speakers who attended and participated in the event which were:-

- Little Young - The first ethnic representative for the GMB
- Bob Hazel - Ex footballer
- Roger McKenzie - Regional Secretary, TUC
- The Lord Mayor of Birmingham
- Joe Morgan - Regional Secretary, GMB Birmingham and West Midlands Region.

We would also like to extend our thanks to those other branches who supported us for this event and the local people who made it a successful day for the awareness of the Black History Month.

The committee have put together an action plan for the forthcoming year of 2008 which include:-

- Regional race meetings
- Regional race events
- National race events
- Training
- Information
- Internal publicity
- Branch organisation
- Local elections

## 7. YOUTH REPORT

The young members have continued to maintain a presence at the music festival, raising the profile of GMB amongst young workers.

A letter of invitation has gone out to all members, 27 and under, inviting them to join a steering committee, in order for them to lead a campaign to encourage young people to get involved in campaigning on issues that are of interest to them and find ways of educating school leavers on the merits of Trade unions. The response from this has been good and those people not volunteering for the committee have asked to be involved in the young members network.

We will be sending a delegation of young members to congress this year, in order for them to see the workings of the unions decision making body, hopefully helping them to engage with their branch.

Two volunteers will also be attending the TUC young members conference in March.

## 8. TRAINING

<b>(a) GMB Courses Basic Training</b>					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
GMB @ Work	3	35	9	44	132
Induction course	5	62	11	73	365
ULR training	5	17	10	27	135

<b>(b) GMB advanced courses</b>					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Industrial Relations 1&2 (10 Days)	2	14	2	16	32
Health & Safety Intermediate	2	23	3	26	52
Health & Safety Advanced	2	25	1	26	52

<b>(c) TUC Courses</b>					
	No. of	Male	Female	Total	Total

	Courses				Student Days
Union reps stage 1 (10 days)	2	1	1	2	4
Union reps stage 2 (10 days)	6	6	0	6	36
Health & Safety 1 (10 days)	4	3	1	4	16
Health & Safety Techsp	6	4	2	6	36
Representing unions on public bodies	1	0	1	1	1
Employment Law Cert (36 Days)	1	1	0	1	1
ECLD	1	1	0	1	1
How to take a disciplinary hearing	1	1	1	2	2
Accident investigation	2	2	0	2	4
Successful negotiating	1	1	0	1	1

<b>(d) Northern College</b>					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Advanced health & safety	2	2	0	4	8
Understanding DDA	3	3	0	3	9
Employment Law (5 Days)	3	3	0	3	9
Understanding Pensions (5 Days)	2	2	0	2	4

<b>(e) GFTU</b>					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Organise Now (3 days)	1		1	1	1
Preparation for retirement	4	4	0	4	16
Tackling discrimination (3 Days)	1	0	1	1	1
Tackling workplace hazards	1	1	0	1	1
Bullying & Harassment	1	0	1	1	1
Advocacy skills	1	1	0	1	1
International issues	1	1	0	1	1
Organisational behaviour	2	2	0	2	4
Introduction to powerpoint	1	1	0	1	1
Public speaking	1	1	0	1	1
Advanced course	1	1	0	1	1

## 9. HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Birmingham and West Midlands Region has continued to carry out the Union's policy with regard to health and safety. The Region continues to offer advice and assistance to our representatives by providing both an information service and workplace visits when requested. The department has been instrumental in driving health and safety issues forward and raising awareness throughout the Region. This has been achieved by using the Media Officer to promote health and safety campaigns in the media in conjunction with providing materials for the *Centrepoint* regional website.

In the past year the health and safety department has been involved in a number of workplace organising campaigns. One of the key strategies was to link the Health and Safety Euro Week into an organising week. Officers were first asked to identify workplaces where MSD was an issue. Information was then given to the workplace reps to go around their workplaces using workplace inspection as a tool to highlight the issue of MSD with members and non-members; with the latter group being explained the benefits of joining the GMB. Workers Memorial Day was again commemorated with a multi-faith service held at St John's Church close to Regional Office and was attended by over fifty people. We also linked in with the Women's Charter Group. The Department has been instrumental in driving health and safety issues forward and raising awareness throughout the Region. This has been achieved by using the Media Officer to promote health and safety campaigns in the media along with providing materials for the *Centrepoint* Regional magazine and the regional website.

**Lifelong learning:**

The Regional Learning Co-ordinator (RLC) Jackie Wyatt has been working with various employers on promoting the learning agenda. We have learners going through a number of centres – one at Pilkington's the other at Abro Donnington We have more than doubled the amount of ULRs in the Region, with most of the ULR's starting to do work with their employers in pushing forward the learning agenda and putting learners through various courses. One of the projects involves working in partnership with Walsall branch's 'Union Learning Reps', and 'Walsall College of Continuing Education' and Nextstep in supporting Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council's commitment to 'GO' awards which was recently launched to support employers help their employees develop Skills for Life.

*(Adopted)*

THE PRESIDENT: Can I ask Joe Morgan, Birmingham & West Midlands Region Regional Secretary, to move his report? Joe?

BRO. J. MORGAN (Birmingham & West Midlands): Formally moved.

*Regional Secretary's Report: Birmingham & West Midlands Region (pages 81-87) was formally moved and seconded.*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87. Does Congress agree to accept? *(Agreed)*

*The Regional Secretary's Report: Birmingham & West Midlands Region (pages 81-87) was adopted.*

## **CONGRESS LOCAL GIFT: ACORNS CHILDREN'S HOSPICE, BIRMINGHAM.**

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, the Local Gift - and, as you know, it is something we do every year - this year is for the Acorns Children's Hospice in Birmingham, which is a children's hospice offering care for life-limited children and support for their families. This hospice receives very little funding from the government and relies almost entirely on community donations. Could I ask Joe Morgan to speak about the hospice during which a short video will be played. Joe?

BRO. J. MORGAN (Birmingham & West Midlands): Thank you, President. Congress, I am very pleased that our region is to be the recipient of the Congress Local Gift this year. As the President just explained, it is a very, very important charity. The charity we have chosen to benefit from this is obviously Birmingham & West Midlands based and it is an organisation that provides an absolutely invaluable service. The organisation, as the President said, is the Acorns Children's Hospice. This is a charity that provides care for life-limited children but just as importantly provides support for their families.

We adopted the Acorns as our local charity about four years ago and since then we have worked with them to both raise awareness of them and, vitally importantly, to raise money. Congress, I am sure like me you could not begin to imagine what it must feel like to be told that your child has a life-limiting illness. Losing any member of your family is tragic but losing or being told that you will lose your child must be absolutely devastating and destroy life as you know it. That is why the support and respite to the family is vital, and the support does not end when your child passes away, the Acorns still provides family support and counselling for as long as the family feel they actually need it.

Congress, we will now see a short film which will highlight far better than I can in my speech just how important the Acorns Children's Hospice is. This is Vicky's story.

*DVD shown to Congress.*

BRO. J. MORGAN: Congress, I am sure you will all agree that that was a very moving film which will remain for her family a celebration of the short life of a very courageous young girl and there are, unfortunately, a lot more children just like Vicky. One of our delegates at Congress, Paul Coombes, has seen first hand just what the Acorns Children's Hospice does. His nephew, Ryan Cowen, received care by the hospice until his sad and untimely death to cerebral palsy aged just 9 years old. Paul and his family attended the ceremony at the hospice, and they do this regularly, where a pebble with Ryan's name etched upon it was dropped into a pond in the grounds. Paul told me that it was only when the pebble was dropped to the bottom of the pond that he realised there were literally dozens and dozens of similar pebbles in the pond with the names of other children who the Acorns have looked after for as long as they could.

The Acorns is only able to exist and provide the care and support it does with the help of financial donations. We were fortunate enough on Tuesday to raise £484 at our function which the region has agreed to round up to £1,000, and along with the Congress Local Gift gives the Acorns £3,000 which will help them no end.

Congress, on behalf of the Acorns Children's Hospice I would like to thank all delegates and I would like to thank the GMB for this very generous donation. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Joe, it is very moving and all of us in this room shed a few tears. Give our best wishes to everybody there, thank them, and I give you this promise, that at the next NEC I will have a resolution to the government that these hospices all through this country should be funded and people should not have to rely on charity. *(Applause)*

Thank you, Congress. It is hard to come down after seeing such a moving video. I now vacate the chair and ask the Vice President to take over, please, because I am involved in the next group of resolutions. Malcolm, thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, the next item on the agenda is item 4, Social Policy.

### **SOCIAL POLICY: General MOTION 162**

#### **162. FUNDING FOR HOSPICES ADULT AND CHILDRENS CARE**

Congress agrees to mount a campaign to increase funding for hospices adult and children's care.

B43 - BIRMINGHAM CITY GENERAL BRANCH  
*Birmingham & West Midlands Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. J. LAWSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): Chair, Congress, before I give you some statistics I would like you all to think about your healthy children. I have three and I have been a single mother for 10 years and had to bring them up on my own and, as you know, they bring their own problems. Can you remember the 2-year olds and running round behind them with a potty, wondering whether you would ever get them clean and dry by the time they were 10. Then there are the terrible teenagers, that alien species you suddenly find that you have given birth to and do not understand. These are just problems that every one of us has had with healthy children and we really do not think about them now. They were just life problems.

The National Health Service when it was first introduced agreed that we should be looked after from the cradle to the grave. For a lot of children that is not very long. We have come to understand that government funding just means not nearly enough to do the job. In a recent report the low level of funding for children's hospices was highlighted. Adult

hospices fared a bit better when it was shown how it was shared out, 28% for an adult facility with children's facilities running at 3.6%.

Fundraising for hospices has always been emotional considering the kind of work that they do and never more so when a child is involved. It can become very aggressive and frustrating for volunteers. When you become involved it takes over most of your life, and your time, and your energy, and the most important issue is making a success of whatever you have chosen to do.

Our hospices rely on fundraising. They need it to keep going. It takes, so I am told, £6,000 a day to run one facility and it is so unfair to expect the wonderful caring staff to have to make difficult and emotional decisions on a purely financial basis when they should be using their unique skills to help their patients. It takes a very special kind of person to be able to care for life-limited patients, especially when it is a child.

Acorns Children's Hospice serves the whole of the West Midlands. Our flagship at Selly Oak was opened in 1988 and was only the third children's hospice in the world. Acorns Walsall opened in 1999, which was the first facility with a dedicated unit for life-limited adolescents. The hospice facility at Acorns Worcester opened in 2005 and embraces all that has been learned over the last 16 years of care provision.

Acorns is the largest children's charity in the world and is among the top 150 fundraising charities in the UK. We have 38 charity shops all over the West Midlands, helped by approximately 400 volunteers. The statistics for 2006/7 were that 602 families received Acorns support. 490 children receive Acorns support. 63 children unfortunately died. 326 children have accessed the hospices' 18 beds available. 170 families have received bereavement support. 198 siblings have received Acorns support.

I appreciate that the death toll is probably higher in an adult facility but a lot of those patients have already lived a reasonable amount of time and fulfilled so many of their goals and their dreams. It is not the true nature of life that parents outlive their children and a lot of Acorns' patients have never known what it is like to be well and healthy. We know that with a bit more help from the government at least another 1,600 children could benefit from Acorns paediatric and palliative care. I move. (*Applause*)

**BRO. F. BROOKES** (Birmingham & West Midlands): Colleagues, I doubt there are many in this Congress who have not suffered the most traumatic and stressful times as a family when a loved one is faced with a stay in a hospice or care home due to serious illness. It is, however, comforting to know that when families are faced with a situation like this the care, compassion, and support, shown by doctors and staff working in this area of the care sector is something we all recognise and are extremely grateful for.

This motion calls upon the GMB to campaign for increased funding for adult hospices and children's care, and believe the responsibility for adequate funding lies squarely with the Government. They should not have to rely on charitable handouts to function

effectively. A number of references have been made this week to when 60 years ago a Labour government created the NHS to provide free – yes, free – healthcare for everyone. We do believe there should be no difference for hospices or special care organisations like this which, as we are all aware, provides an important and invaluable service to our communities. I therefore call upon Congress to support this motion. I second. (*Applause*)

### **MOTION 163**

#### **163. NATIONAL INSURANCE DEDUCTIONS**

Congress wishes the CEC to start a campaign to ensure that all employees pay the same percentage towards National Insurance, based on the ability to pay.

At the moment the national insurance payment is deducted at 11% of gross salary up to a ceiling of approx £36,000. Anyone earning more than £36,000 continues to have the benefit of having their National Insurance deductions at this rate even though they may have earned millions of pounds per year.

The system is neither fair nor appropriate and needs a review.

ISLINGTON 1 BRANCH  
*London Region*

(*Carried*)

BRO. D. PARMENTER (London): President, Congress, as you know National Insurance is a system of taxes in which the tax component of the system consists of taxes paid by employees and employers. Recent developments of the system have meant that National Insurance provides a significant part in the government's revenue, £90bn in the years 2006/7, which is approximately 17% of the total government receipts.

Congress, most of our members pay 11% and their employers pay 12.8, that is if they earn between £450 a month raising to £3,300 per month. If you earn above this figure, you pay the same amount so someone on the breadline, on low earnings, pays the same percentage as someone earning hundreds or millions of pounds, the same as the big city fat cats who are sitting on millions. This is fundamentally wrong.

Congress, this motion is purely asking the CEC to start a campaign to ensure that all employees pay the same percentage in National Insurance deductions based on their ability to pay. The CEC must start to address this important issue. They must start a campaign to end this grossly unfair system now. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

BRO. K. BARKER (London): I feel that people on lower income need a bit of help from the Union, all the help we can give them. So, surely, like Income Tax, National Insurance should be on a sliding scale with the ceiling being raised. This would not affect the higher earners but for someone on the breadline it would make a big difference. Would this not be a way of making the rich bastards help to pay for the care that the poor

worker on minimum wage needs when he is worn out while they sit on their bums getting richer and richer? Please support. I second this motion. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Congress, before I call Motion 164 I would just like to make an announcement. I would like to welcome David Smith, the People Director from Asda, who is now in the hall. *(Applause)* Welcome, David.

## **MOTION 164**

### **164. ABOLITION OF PRESCRIPTION CHARGES**

The Branch calls upon Congress to pursue and obtain the abolition of prescription charges for people with disabilities and debilitating illnesses.

NORTH LINCS UNITARY BRANCH  
*Midland & East Coast Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. K. SLATER (Midland & East Coast): Congress urges the Government to abolish prescription charges for people with debilitating illnesses. The prescription charge system is outdated and there are many unacceptable inequities and anomalies in the present system. The price of a prescription is now £7.10. With each rise patients will be dissuaded from visiting the doctor when they are ill. All GPs have evidence of patients asking which of two or more items on a prescription form are the most important as they cannot afford to pay for more than one item at a time and this could be lifesaving medication. The current list of medical exemptions is more than 40 years old and needs to be reviewed as it is inherently unfair. Anyone taking medication for life with a debilitating illness should be exempt. Please support. *(Applause)*

BRO. D. JOBSON (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, there are many unacceptable inequities and anomalies in the present system. Although around four out of five prescriptions are exempt the price of prescriptions often hits those on a low income. There are many people for whom without the daily medication of some kind are rendered even more disabled on a day-to-day basis. For some disabled people taking medication is what gives them the ability to be able to go out and work, giving them a greater sense of self-worth, both personally and socially, but having to pay for our medication we are effectively paying for the chance to go out, earn a living, and lead a more regular life.

Congress, the current exemption list has to be reviewed and updated. This is long overdue. Please support. I second. *(Applause)*

## **MOTION 167**

### **167. HUMAN ORGAN DONATION**

This Congress calls upon the GMB to support and campaign to promote an opt-out donorship system for human organ donation.

R35 - ROCESTER JCB BRANCH  
*Birmingham & West Midlands Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. G. RICHARDSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): Eight months ago a good friend and ex-work colleague died awaiting his second set of organ transplants. He previously had undergone an agonising wait for complete heart and lungs which proved completely successful. From a sportsman to being wheelchair-bound needing an oxygen cylinder at times placed a massive strain on his family and friends and some, as you can imagine, dwindled away as things got worse. Yet if the Government could legislate for an opt-out donor system for human organs as opposed to an opt-in system like we have at present, then a major part of this problem, the lack of organs suitable for donation, could disappear overnight.

Unfortunately, this usually emotive subject provides lots of arguments against the system, sometimes resembling a horror film with mad doctors chasing people for their organs before they have died. There are also religious implications that have also to be respected but on the whole the system could work in a regulated form.

At the moment, the opt-in system relies on you to fill in a form or carry a card at all times, and the sad part is, like others, I do not have a card, I have not filled it in, I have not been to the doctors, or phoned up an agency in the event of my own death. I suppose I am not in the minority here because we do not get round to it. At the moment, the NHS is desperate with a short supply of blood, organs of matching recipients of bone marrow and, as usual, this leads to some kind of corruption. The rich can pay and buy into a faster scheme that can sometimes be the unscrupulous harvest of Third World organs, but wouldn't you in those circumstances?

So let's remove that and allow our own competent NHS to carry on their terrific job of saving lives of the vulnerable in the most efficient way possible. Medical science has come on leaps and bounds since the first heart transplant and there are no bounds to the life expectancy of the lucky new owners of donated organs, and the transplant science is one of the most successful and most improving branches of British medicine. Only one thing holds it back, that is, the lack of donors.

I dedicate this motion to Bussy Thornton for whom I am about to launch an awareness campaign in our local area. After contracting a diseased lung and heart through work in spray booths where the use of PP was not as successful and efficient as it should have been, eventually, as I said earlier, he was a successful heart and lung transplant patient and after a long recovery the bad news was given back to him that one of the lungs had lung cancer. He died just prior to the other lung becoming available, far too weak to receive it. Even in the time of desperate need Bussy still wanted to donate his other organs to somebody more lucky. What he did was never complain; there was always someone worse off than he was. What he never did was use his ailments as an excuse not

to have a good time, or for his wife to have a good time. He always had a sarcastic dry wit right to the very end and, most importantly, he never gave up hope and neither have the friends he has made who are in a similar situation with the spectre of death lying above them.

So, I instruct the CEC to throw their weight behind, and get to improve, the system of organ donation: opt-out, not in. Like Bugsy, never give up hope. (*Applause*)

*Motion 167 was formally seconded.*

SIS. L. HOLMES (North West & Irish): (Speaking in support of Motion 167) Congress, President, at the age of 21 with two small children I found myself in hospital with a kidney problem. I was told by the kidney specialist what problems I had. Three major kidney operations later the problem does not go away. Treatment with dialysis can be a daily routine. We need your support. Organs are vital for other people to survive. Please support. (*Applause*)

BRO. S. COUGHLIN (North West & Irish): Speaking in support of 164, I live in North Wales and about three or four years ago we actually got in, our local Labour, we went through the abolition of prescription charges and we pushed and pushed it through every means we could so that everyone, regardless of age, gender, or origin, got free prescriptions. About 15 months ago it was abolished and everybody now in Wales through the Welsh Assembly has achieved that and this Congress cannot stop until everybody gets that. I support. (*Applause*)

SIS. S. MEMMOTT (Southern): (Speaking in support of 162) President, Congress, I have had the honour of having worked with a young man who sadly died before his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. His mum looked after him during all of his life with little or no respite care. I welcome our President's motion to parliament for public funding but may I ask her also to push for more children's hospices. This is a vital service that should be mandatory. There are too many parents like Chris's mum who are left with little or no care because they cope. Chris's mum looked after him 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Please support this vital lifeline (*Applause*)

BRO. J. FAULDS (GMB Scotland): Morning, Chair. Morning, colleagues. The SNP and are prescribing free prescriptions, but there are a lot of problems with that. They are going to save £60m. Now, it may seem a lot but one thing if you are going to go down this road, please make sure you take the companies with you. What we are getting from the big companies in Scotland who make the drugs, if there is no money in there, you are not going to get any more new drugs. It is all right saying one thing, free prescriptions, but if they are not putting money in, and you know your government just now, they might not put any money in. You heard what I said before, the hospital I work in, I do not work now but I still do business for Harry Donaldson in the health service, they are under the same thing. You can have two people and if it comes to it they will choose that one

person because of the drug and then they tell the other person they cannot give it to you because they do not have the money. I know for a fact it is happening in some trusts in England. All I am saying to you is, it is a good thing but please just watch what you are doing. If you are doing it, and you ask the CEC, you have to talk to these drug companies. Please believe me. Thank you. (*Applause*)

BRO. J. WHISTLECRAFT (London): (Speaking in support of Motion 164) President, Congress, I think it is about time it was abolished as there are people like myself who need medication on a daily basis but do not fall into the exemption category to be able to get it exempt. We have to pay for the pre-prescription certificate to be able to get our medication. This is long overdue. I support the motion.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, colleague. I now call on the President, Mary Turner, to speak on Motions 162, 163, and 164. Mary?

SIS. M. TURNER: Thank you, Malcolm. The CEC are supporting but each with a qualification. Motion 162 asks the GMB to mount a campaign for hospice adult and children's care. Congress, we have just presented the Congress Local Gift to the Acorns Children's Hospice in Birmingham. This demonstrates our support for the hospice movement which has earned admiration, endorsement, and devoted support for its work with children and adults who face the end of life, and those who love them. With the aim to help them live their lives to the full, however long or short, help them through their last journey, hospices have enriched the lives of well over 250,000 people in the last year alone.

The CEC fully supports the principle in the motion, to campaign for increased funding for hospice adult and children care, but because hospice funding is a devolved matter separate campaigns will have to be run across the four UK nations. The CEC's recommendation is to support Motion 162 subject to that qualification.

Now turning to Motion 163, reform of the National Insurance is GMB policy. We support the aim of making National Insurance contributions fair and progressive but this motion is a little confused asking both for a fixed percentage contribution rate and a rate based on the ability to pay. It is also the case for those who earn above the upper earnings limit there is now 1% contribution rate on top of the 11% referred to in the motion. The CEC's recommendation is to support Motion 163 subject to that qualification.

Finally, turning to Motion 164, abolition of prescription charges, currently people suffering from certain listed illnesses do not have to pay for an NHS prescription. Prescription charges is a matter for the devolved governments. Since April 2007, for example, prescription charges have been abolished in Wales. However, the Scottish Parliament rejected a similar proposal. Subject to that qualification, the CEC's recommendation is to support 164.

Congress, the CEC's recommendation is to support Motion 162, 163, and 164 but subject to the qualifications I have just given you.

Congress, you may not be aware of this but in 1997 there was very little government support for hospices and this union, the GMB, myself and others, moved at the NEC that funding had to be increased. That was done. Now we will take up the part that we have not finished. After all, if you can fund a war in Iraq and take no tax from the venture capitalists, you can fund our hospices properly. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mary. Colleagues, we will now take the votes. Motion 162 is being supported by the CEC with the qualification. Does Birmingham accept that qualification? (*Agreed*)

*Motion 162 was carried.*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Motion 163 is being supported by the CEC with the qualification. Does London Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*)

*Motion 163 was carried.*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Motion 164 is being supported by the CEC with the qualification. Does Midlands & East Coast Region accept that qualification? (*Agreed*)

*Motion 164 was carried.*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Motion 167 is being supported by the CEC.

*Motion 167 was carried.*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, the raffle for the Belfast Children's Hospice, North West & Irish Region, raised £841 and with branch donations that has reached £1,210. The region would like to thank everyone who supported this worthy cause. Well done. (*Applause*)

Also, Midland & East Coast Region on the bucket collection for the *Heaven can Wait* have raised £780. The Midland Region has agreed to match the fund; that means they get double. Well done to you all in this hall. (*Applause*)

Colleagues, that was an emotional debate and I put off something I was supposed to do earlier because of it. You will have seen we have been joined by a guest on the platform, and I would like you to give a warm Congress welcome to Michael M-Poffu, Movement

for Democratic Change in Zimbabwe, and the Zimbabwe Congress of TU, the Trades Union Movement. Welcome, Michael. (*Applause/Standing Ovation*)

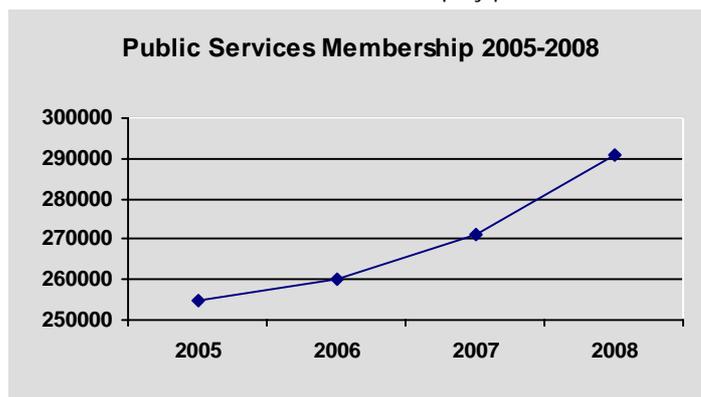
THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Michael should have joined us yesterday but I understand that he was delayed; but we kept the best for last, didn't we? Well done. Welcome, Michael.

## **PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION REPORT (Pages 72-81)**

### **PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION**

#### **1. PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION MEMBERSHIP**

The Public Services Section continues to grow and at the time of writing this report membership stands at 291,000. Organisation and recruitment, the bedrock of trade union strength, underpin all our activities at National and Regional level. The outstanding work done by our branch secretaries, shop stewards and other activists for our members; backed up by professional and committed full-time Officer support; all within



clear member-led national policy direction; makes GMB the union of choice and the fastest growing union in the public sector. The Public Services National Committee wishes to place on record its thanks to all the lay activists and Officers whose hard work and service to members has contributed to this success.

#### **2. NATIONAL COMMITTEE**

It is the role of the National Committee to consider and determine policy issues and Public Services Section activities at national level.

The National Committee has met six times since last Congress. The National Committee membership is (since CEC elections in December 2007):

- Mary Turner - President - London Region
- Elizabeth Blackman - Midland & East Coast Region
- Dana Bruno - North West & Irish Region
- Linda Clarke - Birmingham & West Midlands Region
- Gary Doolan - London Region
- George Fraser - London Region
- Gordon Gibbs - Birmingham & West Midlands Region
- Pamela Hughes - Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region
- James Jones - Northern Region
- Kevin Jones - South Western Region
- Evelyn Martin - London Region
- June Minnery - GMB Scotland
- Peter Murphy - Southern Region
- David Noble - Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

Lorraine Parker - Southern Region  
Vivien Smart - Birmingham & West Midlands Region  
Billy Tonner - Southern Region  
Michael Widdison - Midland & East Coast Region  
Peter Dow - MPO  
Heather Starr – MPO  
Steve Rice - ASU Representative  
Richard Passmore - NHS NAG Representative  
Barry Lambert - HE Representative

Thanks are due to members who left the Committee during the year: Vic Baines (Midland & East Coast); Paul Bedford (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire); Jean Chaplow (Northern); Keith Cook (GMB Scotland); Jackie Faulds (GMB Scotland); Brian Jackson (Birmingham & West Midlands); Jim McDermott (North West & Irish); Jimmy Philbin (North West & Irish); Robin Richardson (London) and Eileen Theaker (Southern).

The Section's National Office staff are Brian Strutton, National Secretary; Rehana Azam and Sharon Holder, National Officers; Mick Hubbard, Productivity Services Officer; Gerry Carr, Research and Policy Officer; Angela Sayer, Section Administrator and PA; and Rita Compton, PA.

As part of its work the National Committee considers issues raised through Regions and Regional reports; brought directly by Committee members themselves; being current in national negotiations; and arising from Section Conference and Congress. The Committee's meetings are minuted and distributed to Branches as well as being posted on the GMB website. Matters considered by the Committee have included:

- Membership, organisation and recruitment
- School Support Staff
- Equal Pay
- Local Government single status
- Pensions
- Public Sector Pay
- NHS Agenda for Change
- Housing and the Rent Service
- Prisons and Probation
- Further and Higher Education
- Care sector and care services
- MPO
- Privatisation and PFI/PPP

The Section has had excellent support from National Office departments and the National Organising team to help deliver its objectives.

### **3. PUBLIC SERVICES**

Despite the continuing onslaught of privatisation in its various guises there are six million public sector workers. But the privatisation agenda - accelerated under this Labour government - remains a fundamental threat to service standards and to the jobs, pay and conditions of public sector workers.

The GMB remains committed to challenging all forms of privatisation and that also means calling for the rigorous monitoring of contracts already placed. We do this at every opportunity including Ministerial meetings and the Cabinet Office Public Service Forum in 2007 and 2008. These are also opportunities to raise other social effects including the run-down of residential and home care for the elderly which GMB believes should meet national minimum standards. We have also called for other benefits for the elderly including free TV licences, free bus travel, increases to winter fuel allowances and we have objected to the programme of post office closures which particularly affect the elderly and vulnerable.

GMB has given strong support to campaigns for new council house building and investing in the current housing stock. We made this a principle issue at Labour Party Conference in September which secured concessions from Government and has helped re-direct policy. But the shortage of housing is a worrying problem and one of the most serious social issues we face.

#### **4. PUBLIC SECTOR PAY POLICY**

The overriding concern of our members has been the imposition of public sector pay policy in recent years. In 2007 the Government set a limit of 2% growth in public sector pay overall which meant that most negotiations were capped at this level. In addition, Government has argued that inflation should not be measured by the RPI but by the CPI (Consumer Prices Index) which yields a lower number. They have also made it part of their anti-inflation policy to keep public sector pay down. For 2008 this policy is slightly more relaxed but it remains the case that Government, a Labour government, is using public sector workers pay as a tool of economic management.

As a result, pay settlements in the public sector have lagged considerably behind the cost of living. This is an appalling and untenable situation which all public sector trade unions are determined to break through.

#### **5. LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

The 2007/8 negotiating round followed a 3-year RPI based deal that had yielded increases of 2.75% in 2004; 2.95% in 2005 and 2.95% in 2006. For 2007/8 the employers made an opening offer of 2% which was rejected out of hand by the unions. There was then a considerable delay, caused by political uncertainties, with a final offer being tabled in August of 2.475% with the establishment of a new minimum hourly rate of £6. The unions decided to consult members on this offer but then one union changed its mind and instead initiated an industrial action ballot. GMB kept its promise to members and consulted, with members voting reluctantly to accept. The union that held an industrial action ballot got a marginal vote to strike on a low turnout but decided to accept the pay offer anyway. This all caused even further delay so that the pay award was not implemented until December or even January for some - which is nine or ten months late and overlaps with when the 2008 negotiations should have started. The lesson, that has got to be learned, is that the Trade Unions have got to work *together* and in line with the wishes of *members* if we are to end the low pay cycle in local government.

#### **6. SINGLE STATUS AND EQUAL PAY**

It is a serious indictment of society and this Government that equal pay for women remains a stubbornly hard nut to crack and that where we are making progress - for example, in local government - the ramifications for our members are often problematic. The simple fact is that the eradication of pay inequality costs money or else it just ends up with some people losing out to fund other people's entitlements. In practice this is what has happened in many local authorities.

2007/8 has seen a significant advance in the implementation of single status. Now 50% of local authorities have completed the process, giving a route to equal pay for around 400,000 women. We have successfully delivered pay rises of up to 40%; and backpay compensation of up to £50,000. Where Councils refuse to negotiate with us properly we are more than ready to use the law and to prove the point GMB has 25,000 equal pay claims going through the Employment Tribunal system, one third of their entire equal pay caseload. The GMB has established itself as the lead union and the leading authority on equal pay.

Money-grabbing no-win-no-fee lawyers who prey on low paid women continue to attempt to undermine Trade Unions and collective bargaining. But the main test case - *Allen v. GMB* - was found in our favour at the EAT and at the time of writing this report we expect this to be upheld at the Court of Appeal. Allegations by no-win-no-fee lawyers that they are suing us in the High Court on behalf of thousands of our members remain just allegations and no such claims have materialised. GMB has for decades fought for equal pay for women and we continue that fight - successfully - despite the efforts of those against us.

## **7. SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF**

GMB's policy to establish a national framework of terms and conditions for school support staff continues to advance. In September the Secretary of State for Education announced that a support staff national body would be established and that was repeated in the Government's Children's Plan in January 2008.

The proposal is that a new National Negotiating Council for all support staff will be ready hopefully for the September 2008 term. Before then, a shadow body would be formed, with an Independent Chair, to design the future Council and how people would migrate from the current NJC to any new arrangements. Of course, GMB has already committed to member consultation.

The Section's work at national level is dovetailed with the GMB's organising agenda in schools and thanks are due to Avril Chambers and Eamon O'Hearn Large for their assistance in this.

## **8. LEGAL SERVICES COMMISSION**

GMB is well established and organised in the Legal Services Commission with sole recognition up to senior grades. We have a good network of reps throughout the country led and co-ordinated by Peter Earley from Newcastle.

The Commission has been subject to various Government reform programmes as changes are made to the system of legal aid - often in ways that GMB considers detrimental to social justice and which we campaign against. The effects on the Commission have resulted in job losses and office closures. However, GMB negotiations have put in place good redundancy avoidance policies and a voluntary approach.

As a stand alone government agency the Legal Services Commission has been able to use restructuring and efficiency arguments to justify better than average pay increases; in 2007 the award was valued at 3.2% consolidated plus 1.6% non-consolidated. GMB members overwhelmingly accepted this.

A Conference was held for lay delegates in January and this was well attended, discussing 2008 pay policy and the future of the Commission.

## **9. THE PRISON SERVICE**

During 2007, GMB responsibility for HM Prisons in the Public Sector moved to the Public Services Section. GMB represents industrial grades, that is maintenance, catering, cleaning and other staff. Negotiations are conducted through the Prison Service Joint Industrial Council (PSJIC) on which GMB is recognised along with Unite and Ucat.

Serious workforce issues prevail in the Prison Service exemplified by the 2007/8 pay negotiations. Due in April 2007, a first offer was eventually made in December 2007 (for 2%) and imposed in January while the TUs were still consulting members! This is unacceptable behaviour and GMB is raising this with Prison Ministers and the Secretary of State at the Ministry of Justice - how about a bit of justice for prison workers?

A lay Delegates' Conference in February agreed to a programme of non-co-operation with management but also to refresh GMB organising activities following an address by Martin Smith of the GMB's National Organising Team.

## **10. HIGHER EDUCATION**

There continues to be significant changes and developments in Higher Education in particular to our members' employment pay and conditions in recent years. GMB representatives have faced many challenges in negotiating modernisation of pay and conditions in Universities and Colleges. Some key areas of the framework agreement have been the promotion of equality, transparency and harmonisation. This challenge certainly cannot be underestimated and our representatives have made a significant contribution in meeting this challenge. However, the challenge to achieve pay parity continues in the sector.

The 2006 pay negotiations were lengthy and complicated and finally a three-year pay agreement was reached with an overall total pay increase of 13.1 per cent by 2009. The agreement also provided for two important reviews:

- Review of the Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff (JNCHES) by July 2007
- Review of HE Financial and Pay Data in autumn 2008

The Review of JNCHES concluded with a negotiated agreement by all signatory trade unions to single table bargaining. This agreement was put to all trade unions' respective committees for approval including the GMB HE committee. All unions responded with approval that this was the best that could be achieved through negotiations, central to the negotiations being the agreement to single table bargaining. At the time of writing this report the academic union UCU despite being part of the negotiations to the final agreement are now ambivalent about single table bargaining and we are currently awaiting the outcome of their ballot on this issue.

The Review of HE Financial pay data commenced earlier this year. A major review will be undertaken to assess and evaluate financial pay data within institutions. A review group will consider commonly accepted data on universities' and HE colleges' income and expenditure in 2006-07, 2007-08, and forecasts for 2008-09 and later years; the outcomes of the Framework Agreement, the earnings of HE staff following its implementation; and relativities to the earnings of other UK employees. This review will draw on independent data sources and will report by autumn 2008 to inform subsequent negotiations in the JNCHES machinery for academic year 2009-10 and later.

The new GMB Higher Education Committee has now had some time to embed into the Public Service section. The Committee has continued to strengthen its profile in the GMB with all regions now represented. The first edition of GMB HE news was circulated to all members earlier this year with a comprehensive questionnaire requesting detailed information of the sector.

Working alongside the NOT team the HE Committee will steer the three organising pilots agreed in the GMB. Initially GMB workplace mapping and assessment of activists has started at University Arts London and Plymouth University. The Committee has placed significant importance on the management of these pilots as they are seen as being central to membership development. The goal is to develop a model for Higher Education workplace organisation.

Finally the HE Committee need to be congratulated for the excellent work they have undertaken in a short time, in particular highlighting the contribution Barry Lambert and Pat Maddock made in negotiating the Single table proposal.

## **11. FURTHER EDUCATION**

The six trade unions including the GMB have submitted the 2008/09 pay claim. Highlights of the claim included 6% or £1500 with a minimum of £7.38 hourly rate. The sector is putting emphasis on this years' claim as a catch up claim due to the below inflation increases awarded over the last few years.

In England the vast majority of colleges are members of the Association of Colleges (AOC), an employers' organisation which negotiates with the GMB alongside other recognised trade unions to produce recommendations for individual colleges to adopt, but there is a problem as colleges can adopt locally independent positions on any pay issue. A national campaign is being launched to change this situation and the GMB could be looking to secure recognition locally if this is not achieved and where it may remain the case.

A recently organised GMB representatives meeting agreed a stronger presence on the AOC National Joint Forum (NJF). Mick McGarry from Yorkshire and Rory McQueen from London were nominated to work alongside the National Official on key areas of pay and conditions in the sector. The GMB is undertaking a consultation exercise to assess which colleges in England conform to the national AOC recommendations. Responses will shape the GMB's campaign in this area. Some joint working between colleges in London

was agreed in order to explore cross networking of stewards and strengthening of local bargaining arrangements. The GMB FE Representatives are keen to develop a network for the sector.

## **12. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY**

The sector has faced many challenges, none more significant than the emergency response to the floods that hit Britain recently. Many of our members have been on the front line in responding to this challenge. Mike Sutton and Terry Sadler have led most members' negotiations until August 2007 when the decision was made to bring the sector under the National Public Services section. The 2007 pay and conditions claim settled at 3.9%. At the time of writing the 2008 pay claim is about to be submitted with members highlighting their concerns regarding the Government's position on public sector pay.

The GMB has strengthened its presence in the sector and has been challenging the agency in their response to outsource workers which includes some craft workers. Greater emphasis has been requested on local consultation and involvement of stewards.

After a brief evaluation of the sector it has been agreed that the National Officer will assist and lead on all national negotiations working alongside convenors. A GMB membership assessment has been carried out and the implementation of a robust communication policy in the sector has been set up. Initial work on this is proving to be a success as local representatives are responding more effectively to pay and conditions consultations and arrangements.

## **13. POLICE STAFF**

The terms and conditions are negotiated through the Police Staff Council (PSC), and until July 2007 Yorkshire Region led nationally. This sector has also been brought under the National Public Section and the National Officer leads on all negotiations working alongside Robert Wright, GMB PSC member. Much of the year's work was taken up with the pay claim submitted as many difficulties had to be overcome during this process. GMB are keen to ensure that similar difficulties do not occur in future pay negotiations and is therefore currently pursuing timely discussions with both Employer and Signatory trade unions. After extensive negotiations with the employer's association a pay settlement of 2.5% has been agreed and accepted by the GMB membership. The GMB have supported the Police Federation position on pay and lobbied the Home Secretary to implement the arbitration panel's recommendation.

GMB stewards from the regions will be meeting shortly to discuss the 2008 pay claim and key challenges facing the Police sector. Forces will need to be encouraged to carry out equality impact assessments and the GMB has worked with other unions in preparing some guidance on this. GMB membership has been audited and this has highlighted difficulties local stewards face in securing GMB recognition. The audit will form some basis to developing GMB workplace organisation in the sector.

## **14. MPO**

The Managerial and Professional Officers group which merged into GMB in 2001 retains a distinct identity for senior managers in the public sector. Mainly for Chief Officer grades in local government, the Probation Service and The Rent Service. MPO's National Committee and lay activists forge close links with their colleagues in other parts of the GMB. MPO leads negotiations for senior grades in local government and has sole recognition for its bargaining area in the Probation (led by David Walton) and The Rent Service (through Heather Starr). MPO President and member of the Public Services National Committee is Peter Dow.

## **15. ASU**

In January 2008 the membership of the Ambulance Services Union transferred into the GMB within the Public Services Section. Joining the ASU up with our existing GMB ambulance membership in the NHS

means that we can give an even better focus to this vital emergency service and the people that work in it. ASU member of the Public Services National Committee is Steve Rice.

## 16. HEALTH SECTOR

Significant developments included:

- Lord Darzi published his interim report 'Our NHS, our future', in October, which set out his emerging vision to develop a universal world class NHS *'personalised to individuals, available to all'*. In early January, 2008, he launched consultations aimed at the public, staff and stakeholders.
- During 2007 smoking was banned in workplaces and public buildings throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- In November 2007 the Department of Health in England announced a hospital "deep clean" programme with £57.5 million funding, to be completed by March 2008.
- Health Services in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland all launched policies designed to tackle violence against staff.
- In the same month, the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review set out the central departmental spending commitments in the years to 2010/11. The NHS will get a 4% real terms increase per year, taking its budget from £90bn in 2007/08 to £110bn by 2010/11.
- The Department of Health, in November, announced that in the financial year 2007/08 the NHS would have a £1.8bn surplus compared to the £547m deficit in 2005/06.

### Workforce initiatives

Criticism levied against the Department of Health in 2006, regarding the lack of engagement between the DH and its policy development teams, led to a review of the Social Partnership arrangements between the Department of Health and NHS unions.

Ann Keen, parliamentary Under Secretary of State, took over last year as Chair. Relationships between the Department of Health and ourselves have much improved.

Arising from the Social Partnership Forum has been a number of policy implementation initiatives, which GMB has co-operated in the development of since Congress 2007.

Firstly, the Darzi Next Stage Review, *'Our NHS, Our Future.'* GMB expressed concern that the Review is largely being considered from a clinical perspective without taking into account the wider healthcare workforce, particularly staff on lower grades; i.e., cleaners, porters and administrative staff without whom the clinicians could not do their work. This expressed view was welcomed and the Darzi Review Team has made greater efforts to engage staff from those lower grades, whilst consulting at local Trust level.

Secondly, the 'Annual Staff Attitude Survey' which, over three years, continues to show very little improvement in the treatment of staff by NHS organisations on key issues such as career development, bullying and harassment. GMB is currently involved in an initiative looking at the health and wellbeing of staff in the NHS. The main objective is to develop steps to improve the experience of our members at work and eliminate barriers to those improvements.

Thirdly, the development of knowledge and skills for all staff in the NHS. The NHS 'Knowledge and Skills Framework' (NHS KSF) is a key strand of the Agenda for Change agreement but has not been fully implemented throughout the NHS. This remains of grave concern to GMB members, as this Tool, and its associated development review process, lies at the heart of NHS staff developing up pay bands. Its implementation, therefore, has long term economic benefits for staff. Representation last year to the ministers on the failure of some NHS Organisations to implement brought about a commitment by ministers to support a re-launch of KSF in autumn 2007 and resources from the Department of Health to fund

activities and events. These included a video, staff communication and local Partnership events which were well attended by senior Trust officials, officers and staff side representatives. A number of emerging themes were raised which the NHS Staff Council and KSF Group will be tasked with to carry forward. How successful the events had been to increase momentum is yet to be fully evaluated.

Other policy areas progressing or emerging in 2008 are:

- The accountability of Foundation Trusts.
- A possible NHS Constitution being taken forward as part of the Next Stage Review which could lead to ever greater autonomy in the NHS.
- The 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the NHS to be launched in early July.
- World Class Commissioning.' Setting the framework for commissioning in health, social care and amongst multi-disciplinary providers; i.e., local authorities and including the private and voluntary sector.
- Health Care Acquired Infections (HCAI's) Strategy. Ensuring all Trusts complete their deep-clean programme and that the programme is fully-funded and resourced.

## Pay

Like other Public Sector departments, NHS pay in 2007 was staged by Central Government. GMB voiced its deep disappointment with the decision to reduce the NHS Pay Review Body's recommended award, (which, in itself, was significantly below the rate of inflation), from 2.5% to 1.9%. Income Data Services found that 94% of NHS staff thought that the staging of last year's award was unfair. The Government and Independent Review Body in England have been advised that expectations from GMB members in the NHS would be to receive "*a better deal for 2008*," particularly as colleagues in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales were not subjected to a staged award and received the full 2.5%. Rates of pay between the English regions and the other three nations were different during this period and, therefore, the value of pay less for those in England.

In response to the threat of industrial action in England, the Department of Health offered NHS staff additional funding for learning and development opportunities in the form of £25 per person for non-clinical grades and 50% contribution towards annual registration fees for the clinical grades. In addition, the Department of Health agreed to enter into talks on the potential for reaching a negotiated agreement on a range of bargaining issues, which could mutually benefit staff and NHS organisations over the next comprehensive spending review period, 2008 – 2011.

Talks continued until January 2008 when it became evident that little progress had been made. Any possibility of a joint proposition to this year's Review Body process had also run out of time.

Staff side Evidence to the NHS PRB was submitted to the Review Body in October 2007. GMB, following consultation amongst regions, submitted its own individual organisation's evidence and oral evidence to the Review body for the first time, additional to the joint staff side. Coverage from 2007 includes all NHS staff represented by GMB.

### The claim for 2008.

- A pay award significantly above inflation (RPI) on AfC pay scales and applied uniformly to NHS staff in all four countries.
- A reduction in the number of incremental points.
- Support from the Review Body for full implementation of the KSF.
- A pay uplift in related pay allowances including a high cost area supplement for South Cambridgeshire.

## 17. SOCIAL CARE

The Health and Social Care Bill was published, in November 2007, setting out proposals to establish the Care Quality Commission which would replace the existing regulators by 2009 and establishing powers to regulate health professionals and the health and social care workforce.

The 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) confirmed that adult social care spending will only rise by 1% per annum in real terms with a direct funding increase of between £190m to £1.5bn by 2010/11, compared to a 4% real terms annual increase for the NHS.

An adult social care green paper is anticipated in spring 2008, which is expected to set out proposals to tackle the funding crisis in social care. A Treasury statement said that any new system must promote independence, be affordable to the public purse and "*be consistent with the principles of progressive universalism*". The latter phrase suggests a system with at least some state-funded services available to all in need, with some more support for the most disadvantaged.

The vast majority of GMB's private sector social care membership remains in Southern Cross Healthcare, the largest private care sector provider in the UK.

The implications of funding in the care sector, low pay, inadequate staffing levels and the treatment of senior care workers refused an extension of their permit to work in the UK, has formed the basis of GMB's activities in this Company since Congress 2007.

The Borders and Immigration Agency (BIA), formerly known as the Immigration and Nationality Directorate agency of the Home Office, is now responsible for issuing work permits. In summer 2007, it changed the 'occupational' guidance used when considering applications for work permits from applicants outside the European Economic Area as the occupational requirements often stated on the application forms for Senior Care Worker (SCW) posts could not be justified. Later, under pressure from the sector and GMB, the BIA relaxed its guidance.

Membership in this Company, and in other care sector providers, has increased across the union. Continuing efforts to recruit, organise, service and retain membership are key elements of the overall strategy GMB has planned in this Company as a national target. The National Organising Team is providing great support to this project.

At the time of writing this report, the first National Committee of regional Southern Cross representatives is shortly to be convened and officers are now receiving joint national briefings where it's requested.

## **18. MOD**

Reports of MOD budget cuts has led to speculation that orders for Euro fighter, joint strike aircraft and naval ships will all be reduced or delayed. The GMB had a joint meeting of our MOD and CSEU members with Lord Drayson, the Minister for defence procurement, to express our concerns.

On the pay front, 2007 was the second year of the two year pay deal. This deal further managed to improve rates at the bottom of the scale while proving a 2.5% increase to all others. On the Productivity Bonus we finally got the MOD to agree that bonuses could be applied to all Industrial staff, not just a percentage. This is a huge leap forward in MOD thinking.

The GMB are leading the way with discussions on Equal Pay opportunities and along with the other trade unions will be looking at promotional opportunities for women in the MOD

For the 2008 pay round we will again be looking at the pay rates and pay system, along with another improvement in the productivity bonus. However, this has to be seen in the light of the Government's announcement of restricting public sector pay to around 2% per annum. We also expect a further review of services regarding more privatisation and outsourcing.

We would like to pay a small tribute to Bob Gunn, our national lay rep who retired in 2007. Bob has worked hard for GMB in representing MOD members in Northern Ireland when a member of FTAT and in his national role across the MOD as the GMB national lay representative.

## **19. PRODUCTIVITY SERVICES**

### **Introduction**

Based at National Office and part of the Public Services Section, the Productivity Services Centre (PSC) is operated by Mick Hubbard. Areas of expertise cover a wide range of productivity, pay and work organisational issues, and have developed over the years to reflect the changing nature of management initiatives in both the Private and Public Sectors. The range of work has included:

- Job Evaluation
- Pay and Grading Systems
- Performance, incentive and competency schemes
- Teamworking
- Work Study
- Work Organisation

### **Activities in 2007/08**

While the work of PSC has been wide-ranging, the bulk of the work in the last year has been concentrated in three areas: Local Government Single Status job evaluation and work study, in an advisory and educational capacity. Following is a summary of those particular areas:

#### **Local Government Single Status**

Under pressure to complete their new pay and grading systems by March 2008, many Local Authorities have struggled to complete the exercise within the deadline. As of February 2008, some Authorities had yet to start their job evaluations, and others are trying to take shortcuts, some of which defy the principles of good practice in job evaluation. PSC continues to provide training courses in job evaluation, pay and grading to Officers and Representatives to assist them in their negotiations. Additionally, in anticipation of appeals against evaluation results, specific Appeals Training Courses have been provided and have proved popular.

#### **Job Evaluation**

Aside from Local Government, PSC has been involved in job evaluation in the private sector. Astra Zeneca have virtually completed a two year job evaluation and re-grading project. Advice provided to the Joint Trade Unions and Management Steering Group and training for Representatives of the three Trade Unions has proved invaluable, and the outcome of the exercise has been well received by GMB members.

The job evaluation exercise at Her Majesty's Prison Service continues and was due for completion this year. However, that looks unlikely in view of the slow progress being made. PSC involvement took the form of membership of the Advisory Group and advice to the Industrial Staff Representatives. It has not proved easy and we have issues with many management decisions. The terms of reference of the Advisory Group are being reviewed and the Trade Unions are considering their future role.

#### **Work Study**

Bookers at Haydock have introduced a performance related incentive scheme following a large scale work study project, which has been monitored. Despite initial caution, we can report that GMB members' earnings have increased by an average of 10% across the site since implementation.

#### **Future Projects**

Following restructure of the GMB Sections, Mick Hubbard has been assigned to the Public Services Team, where he will continue to provide support for Single Status issues. He has also developed a training course – Tackling the Two-Tier Workforce – based on the Best Value Code of Practice. The Course is designed to make Officers and Representatives aware of their rights in contracting out of Public Services.

Assignment to the Public Services Team is a move intended to prioritise resources in recognition of the membership profile of the GMB. While this means that support for the other Sections will be limited for the foreseeable future, it does mean that the Productivity Services role can concentrate on Public Services issues, adding valuable resources to the Team.

## 20. SUMMARY

The Public Services Section of the GMB has had another highly successful year. We continue to grow and organise better while providing an excellent service to our members. The strong focus that we give to public sector pay policy and equal pay as two of the main challenges facing our members; the effort we are committing for school staff; and the additional resource we are putting into supporting the NHS including the Ambulance Service; and Further and Higher Education; all mean that the Public Services National Committee has every reason to expect the year ahead to be just as successful.

*(Adopted)*

THE PRESIDENT: I now move Public Services Section Report and call Brian Strutton to move the report, pages 72-81. Brian?

BRO. B. STRUTTON (National Secretary): First of all, I move pages 72-81 of the report to Congress covering the Public Services Section, this having been questioned, discussed, and approved at the Section Conference on Tuesday. The Public Services Conference had 140 delegates in attendance and a number of guests and visitors who we were pleased to include. We had 54 motions on the agenda, one was withdrawn, one was lost, one was referred, and the rest were carried, including one against the platform recommendation. There being only one candidate, the election of Section President saw a new young delegate, Mary Turner, being re-elected unopposed. Well done, Mary. *(Applause)*

Our keynote speaker was Jim Knight, Minister for Schools, who addressed conference and took a series of questions about the new schools negotiating body for support staff. This was indeed one of the themes of our conference. This new body covering up to 400,000 support staff is due to be set up in September and will bring into reality a longstanding GMB policy to deliver fairness to school support staff. It is also a great incentive for support staff to join the best union in the business, our union, the GMB.

A second theme was the enforcement and the keenness shown by so many delegates to grow our union through recruiting and organising. We have some really good delegate speakers, I thought, this year and again and again in moving or seconding the motions on the NHS, or schools, or the care sector, or further education, what came through was the dedication to growth that pervades everything we do.

The strongest theme at our conference was about the relationship between this Labour government and public services, and the workers who deliver them. Not the usual frustrations but a real cry from the heart, that privatisation for its own sake and treating public sector workers like second-class citizens is driving core support away from the party. The clear message was, the time is short but Labour has got to change.

Finally, all the feedback that I had from delegates was that Plymouth has been a very successful venue. Well done, Plymouth. Although we have some learning points, Congress and sections taking place together has worked well. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Brian. Do we have questions on Brian's report? If you have, please come forward now.

BRO. V. WEST (London): On page 75 of Brian's report and something that Brian mentioned in his introduction was the establishment of the new negotiating body for school support staff. London Region really welcomes this and admires the progress that has been made towards this to try and establish it in September. The issue for us, however, is that this union has a proud tradition of lay-led delegations to negotiating bodies such as this. We want a commitment from the National Secretary that there is a lay majority on the new lateral negotiating body.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Vaughan. Anyone else? Brian? My, you got off lightly. Don't put your hand up, you are Manufacturing!

BRO. B. STRUTTON: The answer to Vaughan's question is, yes. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Brian.

## **EMPLOYMENT POLICY: Rights at Work Motion 92**

### **92. A NEW PUBLIC HOLIDAY – ARMISTICE DAY**

This Congress believes that now there are less than a handful of 1<sup>st</sup> World War veterans left alive. Those who saw active service in the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War are now over 75 years old.

The time has come for a lasting mark of respect from the Nation to all our service men and women who died in those two wars and in other wars and conflicts since. That Armistice Day on the 11<sup>th</sup> November should be made a Public Holiday. This should be in addition to Remembrance Day services.

This would have the added advantage of creating a Public Holiday in the Autumn.

CROYDON C60 BRANCH  
*Southern Region*

(*Carried*)

BRO. P. GOODACRE (Southern): With the addition of extra days through the Bank Holiday calendar Congress calls for 11<sup>th</sup> November to be made a statutory public holiday Armistice Day. Armistice Day would act as a mark of respect to all those who gave their lives in the two World Wars, and other conflicts. It is a sad fact that only five veterans from World War One are still alive. We can never repay our debt to those who sacrificed

their lives to defend our freedom such is the enormity of that debt. However, the Armistice Day Bank Holiday would remind us of our collective and historical mandate, lest we forget. I move. *(Applause)*

BRO. N. WARN (Southern): President, Congress, I have been asked why do I support this motion for a new public holiday for November 11<sup>th</sup> because if the weather is bad we could do some Christmas shopping? It is not about the weather, or Christmas shopping, it is about the millions of lives that were lost and remembering those who have lost their lives. I ask Congress to support this motion, which I second. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## **EXTRA DAY HOLIDAY FOR ST. GEORGE'S DAY**

### **Motion 94**

#### **94. EXTRA DAY HOLIDAY FOR ST GEORGES DAY**

Congress calls on Government to implement an extra day as a public holiday.

SUNDERLAND CATS BRANCH  
*Northern Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. D. JONES (Northern ): Congress, public holidays are an opportunity for workers to have a day's rest, to be with their friends and family. In this country we have less public holidays than most other European countries. Is this right? Although we have had an occasional extra public holiday for things like the Queen's Jubilee, the last time we were given a permanent extra day's holiday was in 1975; that was the May Day holiday. Is this good enough? Being flexible as good trade unionists always are, we could have a day to celebrate many things. We suggest that a public holiday to commemorate St. George's Day would be a good idea. The crucial thing is that we get the extra day's holiday to bring us in line with other European countries. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

BRO. M. EBDEN (Northern): Congress, public holidays in this country are often referred to as bank holidays. That is because traditionally they are days the banks were closed. In this day of open-all-hours, it is important that we try to protect what we have in terms of public holidays but we strive for more. We are calling on Congress to lobby the Government to give us an extra day's holiday and if that is at the same time to celebrate something important, all the better. Congress, I second. *(Applause)*

BRO. B. HULLEY (Southern): I just want to make one quick point that I do not think has been mentioned. Fighting alongside our soldiers in the Second World War were Polish, Indian, and the Ghurkhas, apart from the Americans and Canadians, etc. I just think that Armistice Day as a new Bank Holiday would reflect the diversity that we have in this country today and would be more inclusive for everybody. I support. *(Applause)*

SIS D. PETERSON (London): I want to speak on both motions, if possible, please. I support Motion 92 with the Armistice Day Bank Holiday for most of the reasons everybody else has said, plus it is in the Autumn. In Australia they have their own Armistice Day and I think we should have an Armistice Day. I oppose the other one,

Motion 94 is it, on the grounds that we are not all in England. We belong to the UK and a lot of people in England are not English, and it is in the Spring. We already have two Easter Bank Holidays, May Day, and a Spring Bank Holiday. Do we really need another Spring holiday? Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dott. I call Dana Bruno on behalf of the CEC on Motions 92 and 94. While Dana is coming to the platform, colleagues, I know I called the other resolutions but I am going to call our colleague and brother from Zimbabwe to address Congress; I think that should be inspiring. Thank you. Dana?

SIS. D. BRUNO (CEC, Public Services): President, Congress, the CEC is supporting Motions 92 and 94 with the qualification that I am about to give. Both motions are calling for a new extra public holiday; quite rightly so, it is our existing policy to campaign for more holidays. We have far less public holidays than the rest of Europe and far more working hours.

The qualification comes when we decide on which day this should be as there are differing views across our membership as to what the actual public holiday should celebrate, St. George's Day, as in Motion 94, or Armistice Day as asked for in Motion 92. Also, given that the public holidays are now spent on leisure pursuits or shopping, it may not be appropriate for a public holiday to be used as a mark of respect for those who fought valiantly against fascism and sacrificed their lives for their country.

Recent proposals for an Armed Forces Day with the possibility of a public holiday at the end of June now being considered by government may be a better way of showing respect and recognition for the sacrifices made by servicemen and women.

Congress, this week we also heard the good idea that we should have a day to celebrate the founding of the National Health Service and all of the people who work in it.

With the qualification that the CEC reserves its position on the precise date of an additional public holiday until such time as public consultation takes place, I ask you to support Motions 92 and 94. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dana. Does Southern Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Does Northern Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you.

*Motion 92 was carried.*

*Motion 94 was carried.*

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, it gives me great pleasure to now ask our speaker and guest, friend and colleague, Michael, to address Congress. Michael?

**MICHAEL M-POFFU of THE MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE IN ZIMBABWE and the ZIMBABWE CONGRESS OF TU: ADDRESS TO CONGRESS**

MICHAEL M-POFFU: My friends and colleagues of the GMB, your welcome, your sincerity, is overwhelming. I humbly accept it on behalf of the people of Zimbabwe. The plight of the people of Zimbabwe is a domestic political situation deserving every international attention and assistance that we can get. Despite the mad ramblings of the tyrant it is humbling that you still give us a platform to speak.

On 29<sup>th</sup> March the brave people of Zimbabwe, despite all circumstances facing them, sent out a loud, clear message, not only to Robert Mugabe but to the world at large, and the message was, Robert Mugabe is no longer the legitimate leader of the people of Zimbabwe. (*Applause*) The people's choice is Morgan Tsvangirai, leader of the Movement for Democratic Change, fondly known to its supporters as the MDC, born out of the works of the Congress for Zimbabwe Trade Unions and the National Students Association, and the civil bodies.

It is in my capacity as office-bearer of this movement that I stand before you today. I stand here before you today to deliver the message of Zimbabweans living in the (?)Desbro and living in Zimbabwe. The message is, please help us get to our freedom. The situation has come to the point where a mere slice of bread and basic healthcare have become luxuries that only the elite with high political connections can afford. The country faces an inflation rate of over 150,000%. Unemployment in the country is at 80%. The majority of the skilled labour has fled to the (?)Desbro and they want nothing better than to walk the streets of their birth country celebrating the dawn of a new era and starting the hard work of rebuilding a country which the brutal ZANU-PF regime have turned into ruin and turned into a living hell on earth.

Since the March elections the world has seen the regime setting its own militia against the defenceless people of Zimbabwe in retribution for that loss of the elections. The Movement for Democratic Change believes unreservedly in the right of every Zimbabwean to life, to freedom, and to the right to choose their own government.

With the events of the last few months and indeed the events of the last couple of decades, it is evident to the world to see the ZANU-PF regime under Robert Mugabe does not share this belief. The suffering of the people of Zimbabwe is evident for all to see in the international media.

Our affiliation with the GMB has brought a bright ray of sunlight in our struggle. The kindness and the messages of solidarity, the administrative support, and the offer of meeting places in Southampton have been touching to the people of Zimbabwe. A friend and sympathiser, Mr. Alan Fraser, on behalf of the GMB, addressed a public march

against the activities of the Zimbabwean government in Southampton much to the great appreciation of every Zimbabwean present at that event. I am here to thank you for that and to encourage your hard works. As we have seen in South Africa and Zimbabwe, the work of trade unions is highly instrumental in shaping the destinies and the political destinies of these nations. You can never ever underestimate the power of your actions and your sympathies in shaping the destiny of my people.

On 12<sup>th</sup> July with the help of Mr. Alan Fraser from the GMB, the African Society and Eastern European working immigrants, and also some British workers as well, will engage in a social activity to face these issues and share perhaps from social grounds how we can cooperate to make this journey a bit easier for all.

I would like to take this opportunity to personally invite Mr. Paul Kenny to this event, perhaps to give our people a message of solidarity and let Mugabe know we are not walking this road alone. (*Applause*)

The good work of the community of this world will not go unnoticed and indeed every day every penny given in the capacity of charity towards the suffering people of Zimbabwe displaced by political violence, every bit of first aid kit, medical works, tinned foods sent by the Movement for Democratic Change saves lives every day.

I stand here to say, please, answer the humanitarian call of the people of Zimbabwe. They do not get the high profile because the profile, the high political platform to speak to the world is given to the tyrant who uses it to attack Western governments and divert the topics from the families in Zimbabwe suffering.

As I speak today the Movement of Democratic Change in its headquarters in Zimbabwe is housing over 250 people who have been displaced from their homes due to this political violence. It is the Movement's responsibility to take care of these people because they are in that situation because they voted perhaps in what the ZANU-PF people believe to be the wrong way.

The kind acts of the Red Cross association present a lead that everybody could follow. As charity is not a political act but an answer to a humanitarian call, this is an avenue that regimes like Mugabe despite thinking they can control cannot do so. The good people of this world will prevail. We note with disappointment that last week the regime halted the works of humanitarian associations accusing them of being politically motivated. The world has treated these ridiculous claims with the contempt they deserve and the Movement for Democratic Change will not let these barbaric policies hinder its efforts towards helping its people. That is what legitimate leadership does, it takes care of its people in times of need.

In this effort we call for the support of our friends in the international community. Heeding the call of suffering people has never and will never be a crime but if Robert Mugabe thinks it is, then the Movement for Democratic Change is happy to stand guilty as charged.

Having the Movement for Democratic Change here today you have shown a touching interest in our struggle. We hope it will be followed by a development of long-term avenues of cooperation. Our people want nothing but an opportunity to work towards building our own country. We are in the depth of Desbro. We want to develop our skills and we want to be ready to put a new government in as soon as the regime is gone.

I thank you from the depths of our hearts for your kindness and may your kindness serve as an example to all the international community, particularly those with the strength to bring change. Thank you again for having us and this road to freedom is too long and too harsh for the people of Zimbabwe to travel alone. Thank you, again. (*Applause/Standing Ovation*)

THE PRESIDENT: Michael, the GMB will always stand shoulder to shoulder with you and our colleagues in Zimbabwe. We have and always have been the union which will fight tyranny wherever it may raise its head. Michael, I would like to ask you to accept these glasses as a token of appreciation from the GMB. I have not given you spirit. The only spirit I would like to see next time I see you is the spirit of freedom. (*Presentation made amidst applause*)

The Finance Committee made a decision last week that we will be doing a national funding appeal to go to every single branch and every single region. Would you all make sure when you go back that you give generously, as you do every time, in this Congress so that we can put just bread on the table of our colleagues, brothers and sisters in Zimbabwe. Thank you. (*Applause*)

### **35 HOUR WORKING WEEK COMPOSITE MOTION 4**

(*Covering Motions 98 and 99*)

**98 – Towards a 35 hour working week (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region)**  
**99 – Shorter Working Week (Northern Region)**

### **35 HOUR WORKING WEEK**

Congress agrees that no worker should work more than an average of 35 hours per week.

Congress believes the implementation of the EU Working Time Directive is not the final goal in the fight for a maximum working week. Instead, it believes it is only a means towards achieving a 35 hour working week.

(*Carried*)

BRO. P. BROWNE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I move Composite 4 – 35 Hour Working Week. The Luddites for several years, starting around 1806, put up a brave struggle against the introduction of new machinery and methods of working. They knew that less people would be employed causing massive job losses. Today people still lose jobs, except that the struggle against new methods of machinery no longer exists. We know that if companies do not introduce new technology they will be left behind. This now brings us to the question of what do we get out of it?

Today's struggles should be focused on extra leisure time. My basic hours are 39 hours a week and they have been like that for years. The employers reap the benefit of the new technology but it does not rub off on our daily lives. Many delegates will recall the successes in the shipbuilding and engineering industries to reduce the working week. That was achieved by the membership flexing their muscles or, in some cases, just threatening to. We should take lessons from these successes and maybe adapt the same methods.

To make matters, the retirement age is to be equalised, not by bringing men down to the same as women but increasing both men's and women's retirement age to 68. What a disgrace! A Labour Government increasing retirement age! Shame on them. When it comes to leisure time, it appears that we are going backwards. A reduction of the working week to 35 hours with no loss of earnings should be top of the list and given priority in all wage claims we submit. It has been TUC policy for years. Let us now push it to the front.

Remember the old saying: "We work to live, not live to work". I move the composite and in doing so I ask for your support.

SIS. E. JEFFREY (Northern): I second Composite Motion 4 on the 35 hour working week. Congress, in seconding this motion I want to say how sad it is that in 2008 we are still talking about the shortening of the working week. It was 30 years ago that we established that working long hours was bad for our health and was not good for business. The longer hours you work, the less productive you are. The trend recently has been for employer trying to extend the working day, not shorten it. We must continue the campaign for a 35 hour week for all workers to establish a true work-life balance within all of our workplaces. Our members will benefit by being able to spend time with their families and on their leisure pursuits, leaving them fresh and relaxed when they are at work. Employers will benefit because people will come to work refreshed and at their most productive. This composite motion is common sense. Please support.

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

A DELEGATE (162 Branch, North West & Irish): I addressed the subject of manufacturing at our conference the other day. I told people there that I have been a steward for 18 years. At the beginning of my stewardship I was lucky enough to meet Derek England, a fine upstanding union guy, who told me that the first priority for the working class man, in his first pay talk, was for the introduction of a 35 hour working

week. For eighteen years I have gone in on every single pay deal and every single time to be refused, to be rejected, to be told it is not possible, yet now we find, as an EU Directive, that the Working Time Directive has now been increased to 60 hours plus and there is nothing we can do about it. We have campaigned tirelessly and endlessly for a 35 hour week. It is time we showed our teeth. Support this motion.

BRO. I. KEMP (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I speak in support of Composite 4. President and Congress, just before coming to Plymouth I had a bit of a de-clutter. Well, being a bloke it was just transferring one pile to another space that I could find. Amongst all my stuff I found a sticker still in pristine condition – it has never had its backing taken off – from 1981 supporting the fight for a European-wide 35 hour week. At that time it was quite easy for me to support it because I had just left school and started work and I worked 35 hours. So if it was good enough for me, it was good enough for everybody else in Europe. Now, 20-odd years later I am still with the same firm (they are not the world's worst employer), yet now I am on a 40 hour week, plus overtime, which will be paid at my basic rate and, on occasions, I can add my contribution to the millions of unpaid overtime hours done as well. We are supposed to see progress.

The 1847 Factory Act established a 58 hour week, and here we are now with a 48 hour Working Time Directive, without many opt-outs and derogations, but with so many complex calculations that it is totally useless. As I said, that is progress! Despite all the evidence pointing to better productivity, less time off with ill-health and reduced accidents, the CBI tell us that reducing working time will be expensive and cost jobs. They told us this about equal pay, but we do not have equal pay so that is probably a bad example. They also said the same about the Minimum Wage, yet the bosses even said it the 1847. They were wrong then and they have been wrong about everything else. They are wrong now. Support Composite 4.

BRO. M. LAWS (CEC, Manufacturing): I am speaking on behalf of the CEC. The CEC is support Composite Motion 4, which covers Motions 98 and 99, with the qualification which I will set out.

Congress, UK employees work the longest hours in Europe. Recent analysis by the TUC shows an increase in the number of people working more than 48 hours a week. That is a worry reversal of the slow but steady fall in long UK working hours during the past ten years. However, the European Union introduced the Working Time Directive with a maximum working week of 48 hours to which the UK Government negotiated an individual opt-out from the 48 hour limit. The result is too many workers working far more than 48 hours per week, let alone 35 hours per week. The opt-out is frequently abused by employers who coerce employees into signing up to the opt-out or they do not get the job. The opt-out was originally only intended as a temporary measure designed to get the agreement of the then Conservative Government. The Directive is currently being reviewed and, despite years of campaigning by the GMB's European office and the GMB MEPs to remove the opt-out, the Government this week pushed to formalise the

opt-out in the reverse direction. We appeal to MEPs to stop this when it comes back to them.

The GMB supports the principle of the 35 hour week and it has achieved this through negotiation with a number of employers. The qualification is that although the 35 hour week is a long-term goal, the immediate priority for the GMB is to remove the individual opt-out and reduce the maximum working week to 48 hours for everybody in the UK. With this qualification, I ask you to support Composite 4.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Does anyone wish to come in on the debate now you have heard the qualification? *(No response)* Does the region accept the qualification? *(Agreed)*

*Composite Motion 4 was carried.*

## **TRADES UNION COUNCILS MOTION 173**

### **173. TRADES UNION COUNCILS**

This Congress believes that local Trades Union Councils play a positive role in supporting trade union struggles and striving to build a labour *movement* in their local area. They can act as a vehicle for developing collaboration between unions and for linking the unions with working class communities and the defence of their wider interests beyond the workplace.

To support their further development, this Congress determines to support the call by the RMT for Trades Councils to have the facility to send delegates to the TUC Congress, in line with the right of Trades Councils in the Welsh and Scottish TUC's.

WILTSHIRE AND SWINDON BRANCH  
*Southern Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. A. GOODFELLOW (Southern): I move Motion 173, Trades Union Councils. President and Congress, Tony Blair thought he had a good idea when he set up the focus groups. The fact is that trade unions already had their focus groups through trade union councils. This motion asks for collaboration, but I prefer co-operation. The remit should be to have one aim, to re-establish working people back into social politics. Delegates should come from local branches and local constituencies with trade union liaison officers, to share information, to share ideas and to share what is going on in the workplace and in the community. There should be no hidden agenda, no dominant force or individual. We cannot let it degenerate into a talking shop. They must be pro-active, forward-looking and their aim must be to win back our Labour Party by nurturing the grassroots by getting involved in local issues. I move.

*(The Motion was formally seconded)*

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? (*No response*) I call John Dolan.

BRO. J. DOLAN (CEC, Manufacturing): President and Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC to Motion 173. The CEC is supporting Motion 173 but with a qualification. Firstly, on behalf of the GMB, it is important that the work of the trades union councils are both recognised and appreciated by our union for what they do to ensure that the trade unions and our members have a local voice, which is important and should be celebrated. Trades councils provide a vital role in defending working people outside of the workplace as well as promoting trade unionism. The CEC wish to applaud trades councils because through their endeavours they have brought unions together to campaign against those who seek to undermine and attack us.

The CEC supports the spirit of this motion, but before we can give unqualified support we need to establish the following. What would, for instance, be the number of delegates to the TUC? What voting power would they have? What cost to the GMB would this entail if affiliation is to be advanced? Also, Congress should be made aware that both the Welsh and Scottish TUCs are entirely separate from the TUC, and no motion from either of these bodies are sent to the Annual TUC Congress. Please support Motion 173 with the qualification I have just given.

THE PRESIDENT: Does the region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. With that, Congress, we are supporting.  
*Motion 173 was carried.*

## **RULE AMENDMENTS TO PLAIN ENGLISH RULEBOOK**

THE PRESIDENT: I now ask Andy Worth to move Rule Amendments to the GMB Plain English Rulebook. You tried to catch me out there, didn't you?

### **Congress 2008**

#### **Rule Amendments to Plain English Rulebook**

#### **Deputy General Secretary Report Rule Amendments:**

##### **Rule 8, Clause 6**

**Line 4: Delete “ ■ The deputy general secretary”**

##### **Rule 10, Clause 2**

**Line 3: Delete “The general secretary and treasurer, and the deputy general secretary will also be voting members of the Central Executive Council”**

**Insert: “The general secretary and treasurer will also be a voting member of the Central Executive Council”**

**Rule 14a**

**Delete: entire Rule**

**Rule 15**

**Title of Rule**

**Delete “, and deputy general secretary”**

**Rule 15, Clause 1**

**Delete: entire Clause**

**Insert:**

**“1 This rule will apply to how the general secretary and treasurer is elected. They will hold office for five years.”**

**Rule 17a, Clause 3**

**Lines 10 & 11 Delete: “or Deputy General Secretary”**

**Rule 17e, Clause 2**

**Line 2 Delete: “or rule 14a”**

**Line 3 Delete “, deputy general secretary”**

**Rule 18, Clause 2**

**Line 8 Delete “ ■ The deputy general secretary”**

**Rule 18, Clause 3**

**Lines 5 & 6 Delete “or deputy general secretary”**

**Rule 60, Clause 1**

**Line 4 Delete “and the deputy general secretary”**

**Rule 61, Clause 1**

**Line 3 Delete “or deputy general secretary”**

**Rule 62, Clause 1**

**Line 3 Delete “ deputy general secretary,”**

### **CECRA1**

**Rule 9 Business of the Congress**

**Clause 3 Line 4 & 5**

**Delete “.....held in 2006 and thereafter to every third Ordinary Congress”**

**Insert** “.....held in 2009 and thereafter to every second Ordinary Congress”

## **CECRA2**

### **Rule A3 National Conferences**

#### **Insert new clause A3.3**

“3 A section national president will be elected in 2008 and at every second Section Conference from then on, from among the members of the Section Conference elected in line with rule A3.2 for that year, and from the members of the Section National Committee. The section president will hold office for four years, chair the Section Conference after that at which they are elected and be eligible to be nominated and re-elected after their four-year term of office. During their term of office the section president will chair all meetings of the Section National Committee.”

#### **Contributions and Benefits Report Rule Amendments:**

##### **Rule 46 Clause 1,**

**Line 3: Delete “£2.40”, insert “£2.50”**

**Line 8: Delete “£1.28”, insert “£1.38”**

##### **Rule 46, Clause 2,**

**Line 2: Delete “£2.40”, insert “£2.50”**

**Line 3: Delete “£1.28”, insert “£1.38”**

##### **Rule 48a**

###### **Clause 4(b)**

**Line 1: delete “The retired life member’s grade will be their grade on the day immediately before the date they paid the lump sum under this rule.”**

##### **Rule 49**

###### **Clause 1**

**Line 2, after “funeral benefit” insert “and”**

**Line 3: delete “, and gratuity payments”**

**Line 7: delete “funeral benefit,”**

**Insert: “and”**

**Line 8: delete “and gratuity payment”**

**Line 10, after “in a row.” Insert: “Funeral benefit is not payable to any member with less than eight years’ continuous membership.”**

##### **Rule 55 , Funeral Benefit**

###### **Clause 1**

**Line 1: delete “grade-1 or grade-2”**

**Lines 1-3: delete “, who has paid contributions for 53 weeks in a row and has been a continuous member for 12 months,”**

**Insert: “who has been a continuous member for 8 years,”**

**Line 5: delete “(except in cases where a member has died at sea)”**

**Line 6, after “widower”, delete “or”.**

**Line 6, after “family”, insert “or nominated person”**

**Line 6-7: delete “the following scales of benefit”**

**Insert: “a funeral grant of £250.”**

**Lines 9-21: delete table of benefits, beginning “Number of” and ending “58”**

**Lines 22-24: delete “New members, or past members who are rejoining (and who are aged 50 or over) will be entitled only to 50% of the benefit set out in this clause.”**

**Line 25, after “widower”, delete “or”.**

**Line 26, after “relative”, insert “or nominated person”**

**Line 25: renumber “We will not consider paying funeral benefit unless the member’s widow, widower, relative or nominated person makes a claim within 12 months of the member dying.” as clause 2, and renumber following clauses.**

**Old clause 2**

**Line 1: after “sea”, insert “or in instances where no death certificate has been issued,”**

**Line 3, after “widower”, delete “or”.**

**Line 3, after “relative”, insert “or nominated person”**

**Old clause 4: delete “Branches will make a charge of 1p for cancelling a nomination.”**

**Rule 65 Clause 8,**

**Line 11: Delete “£7.20”, insert “£7.50”**

**Line 11: Delete “£3.84”, insert “£4.14”**

**Line 17: Delete “£7.20, £3.84”, insert “£7.50, £4.14”**

**Rule 65A , Clause 5,**

**Line 5: Delete “£7.20”, insert “£7.50”**

**Line 6: Delete “£3.84”, insert “£4.14”**

**An additional minor amendment has been requested by the Northern Ireland Certification Officer.**

**Rule 65a, Clause 8**

**Line 26: delete “is subject to the right of appeal provided for by Section 82(4) of the 1992 Act.”**

**Insert: “may, subject to the right of appeal provided by section 95 of the Act, be enforced in the manner provided for in section 82(4) of the Act.”**

**BRO. A. WORTH (Regional Secretary, Midland & East Coast): No. I was smiling, President. I get all the good jobs. The General Secretary has left it is that interesting. (Laughter)**

Congress, as a result of decisions made earlier, it is necessary to amend the Plain English Rulebook. For anybody who is interested in the technicalities, we are probably best dealing with that over a pint after Congress, but it is truly necessary to amend it. Congress passed a motion on the Deputy General Secretary and the Report on the rule amendments which calls for various changes. We could, if Congress wished, go through *this* document line by line, but it would probably be the driest speech in the house, and I would, President, crave the indulgence of Congress that, when I get to the moving point, they simply agree that the document which they have before them, which sets out the rule changes, is transcribed into the record. Otherwise people will then we are calling out the Lottery numbers.

There are rule changes relating to the Deputy General Secretary, and you can see those set out on page 1 of the document. A rule change is required in respect of Rule 9, which relates to the business of Congress, which involves increasing the democracy by making the Rule Change Congresses every two years.

There are changes to Rule A3 – National Conferences. There is the need to insert the new clause A3.3 which rationalises the election of the sectional conferences. Let me congratulate Ronnie Waugh, Kevin Flanagan and Mary Turner as Presidents of the respective sections. There is a need to change the rules relating to contributions, Rule 46, Rule 48 and 49. That is where the Lottery ends because we go to 55 and there are only 49 numbers in the Lottery, as I recall. We need to change Rule 55, as set out in front of you, delegates, to reflect those changes that you agreed earlier. So this is not trying to spring anything on anybody. It simply reflects and complies with technicalities. We need to change Rule 65, clause 8; Rule 65A, clause 5 and in addition we need to make minor amendments because of the requirements of the Northern Ireland Certification Officer. They are set out as 65a, clause 8.

Congress, I am sure you have had enough of the numbers. I am sure you have read *this*. I think it is the one which woke you up this morning when you came into the hall after a fairly heavy night. I would move that Congress adopts formally all of those resolutions and allows us to get on with putting those into the Plain English version you agreed earlier, and then we can get it out to members as quickly as possible. I move.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I formally second the proposed Rule Amendments to the Plain English Rulebook.

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come into the debate?

BRO. P. DUNCAN (North West & Irish): On a point of clarification. My point concerns Rule A3: “A section national president will be elected in 2008 and at every second Section Conference from then on”. Further it down it says “after their four-year term of office”. Can you clarify?

THE PRESIDENT: Every second one. They only run every two years.

BRO. DUNCAN: The section conference is only every two years?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. You see I did know the answer to that question. I didn't need a man to tell me. With that great qualification, which needed endorsing, I will come to the vote.

*The Rule Amendments to the Plain English Rulebook were carried.*

*(The General Secretary entered the Congress Hall)*

THE PRESIDENT: You see, I knew the General Secretary would come back when it was over.

## **SOCIAL POLICY TRANSPORT**

### **MOTION 185**

#### **CALL TO GOVERNMENT TO PROMOTE THE CREATION OF A WORLD LEADING PUBLIC TRANSPORT SYSTEM**

##### **185. CALL TO GOVERNMENT TO PROMOTE THE CREATION OF A WORLD LEADING PUBLIC TRANSPORT SYSTEM**

The GMB calls on Her Majesty's Government to take urgent action towards an environmentally sustainable, publicly funded and accountable transport system in order to enable citizens to access increasingly concentrated services.

People who do not live in major urban centres generally do not have reliable, clean, safe, accessible and affordable public transport.

To achieve this aim the GMB calls on the Government to repeal the legislation that privatised the railway network and to re-nationalise the railways, re-integrating track operations and trains. Also, to re-open branch lines or create new ones, and to repeal the legislation that deregulated buses and return to a regulated bus system.

GRANTHAM COMMUNITY BRANCH  
*Midland & East Coast Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. C. GUNTER (Midland & East Coast): I move Motion 185. Privatisation and deregulation over the years has led to a massive reduction in the quality of our public transport system in the UK. This is at a time when we are told to leave the car at home or we are being taxed off the road, anyway. People who live in rural areas are particularly hard hit as private companies choose profit by saving busy routes to the detriment of lesser used routes. If you look at many of our European neighbours, we do so with envy. You see modern, low-cost, integrated transported system which services the whole population, both urban and rural. These systems are controlled and regulated by local and national governments to provide quality, not profits. If we are ever to have a public transport system to be proud of we need to take the railways back into public ownership.

We need investment in new lines, both light and heavy rail, integrated with a regulated bus network accountable to the public it serves. I move.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Can I have a seconder?

BRO. V. RABBETTS (Midland & East Coast): I second Motion 185. President and Congress, yes, let us re-nationalise the complete railway system and expand it. It should be run like a proper business and suppliers should not be charged excessive prices the system is nationalised. Also the same thing should happen to the bus system. All this will allow more people to use a proper public transport system. This would allow people with no transport to get about. Also people with cars would use it if the cost were right. This would help with the congestion and green agenda. Please support.

## **ROAD SAFETY MOTION 186**

### **186. ROAD SAFETY**

This Congress is appalled that a child is killed or seriously injured on British roads every 18 minutes, 7 out of 10 of them while on foot or on a bicycle.

Traffic congestion, road rage and rat runs, boy racers, white van man or lorries with no wing mirrors. The causes of dangerous and deadly driving amount to the same thing – not enough protection on our roads for our children.

This Congress calls on the GMB to join the campaigns lead by bereaved families and road safety campaigners BRAKE for:

- Full funding for 20mph zones around every school including all the routes taken between home and each school.
- Improved pavements, cycle paths and traffic calming measures within these zones.
- Compulsory road safety classes in each school.
- Full prosecution of every driver involved in a collision with a pedestrian with meaningful penalties.

139 BRANCH  
*North West and Irish Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. L. HOLMES (North West & Irish): I move Motion 186 – Road Safety.

President and Congress, there can be nothing more devastating than the violent, sudden death or a serious injury of a child. Road deaths amongst children under the age of 16 in Britain have increased by a startling 20% since 2005. Child pedestrian deaths have risen by 13% and child cyclist deaths by 55%. In 2006, 169 children were killed, 71 of whom were pedestrians and 31 were cyclists. A further 2,426 children were seriously injured. These injuries included brain damage, limb loss and paralysis. The causes of these accidents are excessive speed, too much alcohol, drug-related, fatigue and lack of concentration.

All children should be free to explore their neighbourhoods, walk or cycle to school or visit the park without their lives being endangered by fast traffic. Each year BRAKE receives hundreds of calls and emails from parents asking what can be done to improve road safety measures locally. The GMB, as a responsible employer, must be commended for introducing its Road Safety Awareness Training for all our officers. This ensures their safety and that of other users of the road.

You may wonder why some of my colleagues at the front of the hall have joined me. In the time it has taken me to deliver my speech at least three have either died or been seriously injured. Congress, please support this motion.

BRO. J. McDERMOTT (North West & Irish): I second Motion 186 – Road Safety. President and Congress, here are some more startling facts which I find frightening. Children in the 10 per cent most deprived areas of England are more than three times likely to be pedestrian casualties than those in the least 10 per cent deprived areas. That is partly because there are fewer safe places to play, such as big back gardens, and they walk more as their parents do not own a car.

BRAKE is aware that the safety of people on foot and bikes, particularly children is an issues that is desperately important to communities across the UK. Every year BRAKE receives hundreds of calls and emails from such communities across the UK asking what they can do to improve road safety measures locally. BRAKE supports those communities by giving them a voice on a national through the *Zak the Zebra* hotline, whose number is 0800 068 7780. It is used to report roads in your area where children are at risk by helping communities run local media campaigns and offering advice on their website. As the GMB is seen as a union that is as active in the community as it is in the workplace, joining in these campaigns led by bereaved families and road safety campaigner BRAKE seems a natural thing to do. Please help to make a difference. Congress, please support this motion.

SIS. V. SMART (CEC, Public Services): I am speaking on behalf of the CEC. The CEC is supporting Motions 185 and 186 with the following qualifications that I am about to give. The creation of a leading world public transport system is in line with existing GMB policy, which supports re-nationalisation of the railways. With the rising fuel costs and the need to address the issues of climate change and global warming, it is important that the UK has a world class integrated public transport system.

On regulation of bus services, GMB along with other transport unions which have a bus membership have been in discussions with Ministers and DfT civil servants to implement quality bus contracts in line with the Warwick Agreement. The qualification we make to Motion 185 is that we have supported the re-opening of branch lines in rural areas, but propose it might be better for them to be opened as light rail or tram systems.

On Motion 186 – Road Safety – the GMB supports wider use of 20 mph zones, but we would make the following qualification. 20 mph zones may not be suitable on every route to school as this definition could cover every road in the UK, which could be on the

journey to school. A further qualification is that we could not support the prosecution of all drivers involved in a collision with a pedestrian as it cannot be assumed that it is always the driver who is at fault. A common cause of pedestrian accidents today is pedestrians using mobile phones and iPods and not hearing or paying attention to on-coming traffic. With these qualifications, I ask you to support Motions 185 and 186.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Viv.

## **CONTROLLED PARKING ZONES MOTION 187**

### **187. CONTROLLED PARKING ZONES**

Congress recognises that the car is a major contributor to carbon emissions and global warming. However congress also recognises that the increased and continuing introduction of controlled parking zones in residential areas does little to reduce dependency on motor vehicles, but is in fact an indirect tax on car owning residents, forcing them to pay for residential parking permits, to park outside their own homes. In reality these charges are little more than a cash cow for local councils.

ISLINGTON APEX BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. L. GAYLE (London): I have been told I am not supposed to say I am a first-time delegate, so I won't. *(Laughter and applause)*

President and Conference, I move Motion 187 on Controlled Parking Zones. The GMB recognises that the car is a major contributor to carbon emission and adds to the effects of global warming. However, we also recognise that for many of our members the car is their only means of dependable transport. Local councils appear to be continually increasing their controlled parking zones often with the excuse that they are greening the area and helping to reduce populations' dependency on private motor vehicles. In reality, this is a smokescreen to indirectly tax our members through the introduction of residential parking permits, pay and display zones and parking meters. Let us continue to campaign and support initiatives such as the Conference on Climate Change but also let us expose the hypocrisy of local government in introducing indirect taxation and dressing it up as environmental concerns. Thank you.

BRO. T. SASSI (London): President and Congress, once again working class people are being asked to pay because of Government cuts to local authorities. Once again it is ordinary working people who have to pay and for low paid workers on the minimum wage the fines mean the loss of a day's pay or more in some circumstances. It is unfair. Please support the motion.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, we will now take the vote on those motions. The floor is open to debate.

BRO. D. POLE (London): Vice President, my branch is the North West London branch, the branch that represents the staff who work for the railway unions. Not surprisingly, I wish totally to support Motion 185. I did raise this matter with Phil Woolas the other day, but regrettably his response was not to directly answer the question. Re-nationalising the railways is GMB's policy. I should know because I have moved the item enough times from this rostrum. It is also the Labour Party's policy, agreed at Conference in 2004 following the overwhelming passing of a resolution moved by the TSSA General Secretary, who incidentally along with some delegates was the subject of a thorough nasty, bullying and threatening campaign by some who were empowered to get him to withdraw the motion.

Public transport with an affordable, fully integrated public transport system and a fair system you can understand makes economic, social and environmental sense. It should be a system run for those sound reasons, not for the profits being enjoyed by the fat-cat train company operators currently running the show. For my branch and the overwhelming majority of the electorate, this is a long overdue move. If it was done without compensation, it would be even more popular. Regrettably, I can see no signs of this happening or Labour carrying out its own policy, but I would urge GMB support again and ask for as much pressure as possible to be put on the Government and MPs, including our sponsored ones, to achieve this end. Please support Motion 185. Thank you.

BRO. T. FLANAGAN (London): I am supporting Motion 186 from North West & Irish Region. Yes, you are highlighting some real problems. My branch is the GMB Professional Drivers branch. Of course, being professional drivers we are well aware of what is going on on the roads. Courier drivers are told to do a certain amount of deliveries. If they don't, when they get back to the base they are sacked on the spot. So, obviously, the tear round the streets and run people over. Chauffeurs working 80-100 hours a week is not unusual. We had a meeting in the House of Commons with Paul Kenny, that excellent organisation BRAKE and various people on the issue of working hours of chauffeurs. We got nowhere. Six weeks ago, along with Gary Smith, I once again met Rosie Winterton, who is one of the Ministers of Transport. So it is not only you who gets these headaches. She gets it as well. We said to her, "This is unacceptable. People are being slaughtered out *there*." We got the usual New Labour tactic that nothing could be done. Gary and I will be going back and giving her some treatment. The motion is right on the ball. We need to have strong legislation on drivers. It is not only the private drivers. I think the most dangerous section drivers on our roads are professional drivers who work for ununionised firms and being viciously oppressed. I support.

BRO. S. COUGHLIN (North West & Irish): President and Congress, I am totally in support of the Motion 186 on road safety. I have worked with Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service on a scheme called *Twenty Plenty*. I would like to challenge one aspect of the CEC qualification. I, personally, accept the arguments of the Professional Drivers branch. I worked in the Fire Brigade for 14 years and I have seen the results of 20 mph

crashes. The facts are that 10% of children hit at 20 mph die. That is the issue. Support this motion.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does anyone else wish to speak? *(No response)* I will take the vote. Motion 185 is being supported by the CEC with the qualification. Does the Midland & East Coast accept that qualification? *(Agreed)*  
*Motion 185 was carried.*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Motion 186 is being supported by the CEC with a qualification. Does North West & Irish accept the qualification? *(Agreed)*  
*Motion 186 was carried.*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Motion 187 is being supported.  
*Motion 187 was carried.*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We now come to Item 10 on the Agenda, which is Social Policy.

## **SOCIAL POLICY**

### **WELFARE RIGHTS & SERVICES**

#### **NATIONWIDE CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL FOR OVER 60'S**

##### **COMPOSITE MOTION 12**

*(Covering Motions 203 and 204)*

**203 – UK Wide Concessionary Fare Schemes for Senior Citizens (Southern Region)**

**204 – Free Bus Travel for the Over 60's (London Region)**

#### **NATIONWIDE CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL FOR OVER 60's**

This Congress wishes to congratulate the Labour Government for introducing a Senior Citizens free concessionary fares scheme to all local authorities across the country from April 2007.

This Congress also supports the making of these schemes inter-available across the country from 2008. This means a Senior Citizen with a concessionary pass for Manchester buses can use the pass while on holiday in Cornwall or London and vice versa.

However, this Congress is concerned to learn that these concessionary schemes are not available across the devolved nations but only within each of the four nations. This means an English pass will not be valid in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland and vice versa.

We still do not respect this generation so let's give them the freedom to use this facility no matter where they reside in the UK.

Congress calls on the CEC to campaign for UK wide availability of Senior Citizen concessionary bus passes.

We ask the GMB to put pressure on this Labour Government to nationally introduce free bus travel for all over 60's.

*(Carried)*

SIS. E. THEAKER (Southern): I move Composite Motion 12. We congratulate the Labour Government for introducing a nationwide concessionary fare scheme for those over the age of 60. This matter has been an issue at Congress for more than 20 years and at last we have a scheme. In London we probably have the best scheme in the UK. Men and women over 60 get free travel after 9.30 on buses, trains, Underground, Docklands Light Railway and now trams. It has been given to us by a Labour GLC. This *Freedom Pass* is valued by every Londoner who has one. The Tories have tried to take this away many times but Londoners have rebelled and now, not even the new Mayor, Boris, has tried to take it away. We should welcome the fact that the Labour Government made all local authorities introduce the concessionary bus pass and, from 2008, the pass can be used nationwide. People in England can use the pass throughout England. However, if you come from Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, you cannot, as each of the four nations have separate schemes. This must be wrong. We are the United Kingdom and the scheme should be a United Kingdom scheme.

Why the difference? This is because the devolved governments cannot agree the cost between them. We must campaign for a real national scheme which is fairer. The Northern Ireland bus pass applies only to the over 65s rather than to the over 60s, but it is inter-available in the Republic of Ireland, a different country, no less, yet it cannot be used in England, Scotland and Wales.

The composite asks that we campaign for a UK-wide scheme with equal treatment for all UK citizens. Please support.

BRO. D. GREEN (London): I am speaking in support of the Composite. As my colleague has just stated. It has to be unilateral. It is the United Kingdom. I believe it is time that we all stand together and ensure that everybody gets everything equal across these borders as well. I support.

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? *(No response)* The CEC is supporting.

*Composite Motion 12 was carried.*

## **ROAD TRANSPORT WORKING TIME REGULATIONS COMPOSITE MOTION 3**

**96 – Road Transport (Southern Region)**

**97 – Working Time Directive 2008 Transport Regulations (Midland & East Coast Region)**

**ROAD TRANSPORT WORKING TIME REGULATIONS**

Conference calls upon the Department of Transport to fully implement the European Directive on Working Time as adopted by the EU Regulations of 2007.

Conference calls upon the Government to look at revising the Working Time Directive to remove the current interpretation of the so-called periods of availability, i.e. non-working time, because actually for the vast majority of lorry drivers, it is working time. Companies like the Automobile Association should not be allowed to interpret the Law to their own advantage

Currently there is no derogation from a 60 hour week for lorry drivers. The 48 hour working week is averaged over a four month or six month reference period. Periods of availability are being recorded as non working time in a similar context as a rest break. When the vehicle is stationary in traffic delays, plus loading and unloading delays, the driver is still at work and in charge of the vehicle, but when periods of availability are recorded on the tachograph, it is currently recorded as non working work, actually extending his or hers working day and week.

In some cases the employer does not pay for periods of availability, lorry driving has always been a long hours culture and still is. The 48 hour working week was supposed to be designed to reduce the long hours culture in the UK in line with Europe. This is not the case for lorry drivers in the UK.

*(Carried)*

**BRO. P. EYRE (Midland & East Coast):** I move Composite 3 – Road Transport Working Time Regulations.

President and Congress, Conference calls upon the Department of Transport to fully implement the European Directive on Working Time as adopted by the EU Regulations of 2007.

Conference calls upon the Government to look at revising the Working Time Directive to remove the current interpretation of the so-called periods of availability, i.e. non-working time, because actually for the vast majority of lorry drivers, it is working time.

The whole idea of the Working Time Directive was to cut the number of hours that drivers worked. However, in reality they are still working the same amount of hours, if not more before the Directive came into force. Companies like the Automobile Association should not be allowed to interpret the law to their own advantage. Currently, there is no derogation from a 60 hour week for lorry drivers. The 48 hour working week is averaged over a four month or six month reference period. Periods of availability are being recorded as non-working time in a similar context as a rest break. When the vehicle is stationary or in traffic delays, plus loading and unloading delays, the driver is still at work and in-charge of a vehicle. But when periods of availability are recorded on the tachograph it is currently recorded as non-working time, actually extending his or her working day and week.

A calculation of the periods of availability subtracted off the working day to equal supposed actual working time to achieve a 48 hour working week is a total fudge and nonsense of the true facts. In some cases the employer does not pay for periods of

availability. Lorry driving has always been a long hours culture and it still is. The 48 hour working week was supposed to be designed to reduce the long hour culture in the UK in line with Europe. This is not the case for lorry drivers in the UK. Please support.

BRO. P. GOOACRE (Southern): I second Composite 3. President and Congress, many UK businesses – this will not surprise you – the Automobile Association included, have a puzzling attitude towards EU regulations. They appear to believe that regulations are drafted in order to test their ingenuity in avoiding them. Obviously, this is not the intent. Directives and regulations are made in order to protect workers. Employers who force drivers of heavy goods vehicles to work excessive hours are a danger to their employees and to the public in general. Immediate action is required by the DTI to stop this abuse of the Working Time Regulations by employers. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: Terry.

BRO. T. FLANAGAN (London): These two issues are very much connected with my branch once again. We have met with the Minister on this matter and we got the same response. They are not really interested. It is the only time that the Minister, I think, has surrounded herself by six Civil Servants. Obviously, they were extremely worried. I suggest that Gary Smith, the Commercial Services Section and us get together and organise a massive campaign on these Ministers. The situation is an absolute disgrace. I repeat. One hundred hours a week behind the wheel for a chauffeur is not unusual. These guys fall asleep behind the wheel on a regular basis. The situation is an absolute disgrace. It is a disgrace that the Government will not react to it. Let's get it together and organise.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not see any more delegates wanting to contribute. The CEC is supporting.

*Composite Motion 3 was carried.*

THE PRESIDENT: We now come to Item 12, Social Policy. Motion 174 is to be moved by Birmingham & West Midlands; Motion 175 is to be moved by GMB Scotland and Motion 198 is to be moved by Birmingham & West Midlands. Will the movers and seconders and anyone who wishes to contribute in the debate, please come to the front of the hall.

**REVIEW THE REGULATORS OF PRIVATE INDUSTRIES TO MAKE THEM MORE ACCOUNTABLE TO THE CONSUMERS  
MOTION 174**

**174. REVIEW THE REGULATORS OF PRIVATISED INDUSTRIES TO MAKE THEM MORE ACCOUNTABLE TO THE CONSUMERS**

Congress instructs the GMB to canvass central Government to strengthen the regulators in the privatised industries to make them more accountable to the consumers.

W40 - BIRMINGHAM COMMUNITY & WATER BRANCH

*(Carried)*

BRO. J. DUGGAN (Birmingham & West Midlands): I move Motion 174. I am trying to simplify this motion. In recent years, as we know, everything has been privatised. Competition was supposed to make all of your bills cheaper, obviously, than they used to be. We all know that. What we all know is that it has been an absolute disaster! The regulators have been in place for what, 10-12 years now? It may be longer. It is time they looked at whatever remits they have. It is a simple remit, to increase the workforce and to deal with people on a personal level, not to be churning out rubbish with computers, threatening people, usually old age pensioners and old people living alone, with being cut off, etc. instead of sending somebody out just to sit with them, to talk to them and, more than likely it is a total mistake. But that is no good to old people when they are living alone when they have no one to help them. The situation is very simple.

If our Labour Government reviews the situation and puts something in the remit of the various privatised industries to say they will deal with certain things on a personal level or a compassionate level, Motion 174 would be brilliant. So please support the motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Can I have a seconder?

*Motion 174 was formally seconded.*

## **FUEL POVERTY MOTION 175**

### **175. FUEL POVERTY**

Congress you do not need a PhD to know that the energy market is not working.

Despite the power companies making massive and unjustified increases in the cost of its domestic gas and electricity the Regulator OFGEM continues to insist that the UK energy market is competitive and working well in the interests of consumers.

The Regulator OFGEM has also allowed suppliers to continue to get away with woefully inadequate levels of customer service and penalise those living in fuel poverty.

OFGEM should be scrapped and replaced with a "Regulatory" body that has the powers and commitment to take on the energy companies and protect consumers especially those on low incomes.

This motion calls for the GMB to campaign for these proposals.

NORTH LANARKSHIRE PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH  
*GMB Scotland*

*(Carried)*

SIS. L. MILLER (GMB Scotland): For more than ten years this Labour Government has sat back and allowed the greedy sharks who run Britain's energy firms to wrack up their prices and profits, whilst the poorest members of our society are left to choose between food and heating their homes. After a public outcry about vulnerable people having their hearing and lights switched off by the energy cartels, more than five million households are forced to have pre-payment meters installed. These households no longer have to wait to be cut off. It now happens instantly when they run out of money.

A recent study showed that more than 6,000 households had their power cut off by this method. These meters can cost some customers to be paying up to £400 a year more than those who have bank accounts who can afford to pay by direct debit. Where then is the so-called regulator, OFGEM? They are usually having cosy meetings with the energy privateers to make sure that their super profits are not threatened.

OFGEM even supports the premium charges as pre-payment meters have extra costs. Instead of decisive action to help those in fuel poverty, the so-called Regulator, OFGEM, has agreed a so-called action programme. What action will they take while they, the energy sharks, intend to share information on low income families so that they can better target them? No doubt one action will be to send a high powered salesman to the poor people's homes to encourage them to switch from one robber to another. The Government is no better. They suggest that those in fuel poverty get a few vouchers, go to the nearest B&Q and buy a few rolls of insulation for their lofts. This would be laughable if it was not so serious.

OFGEM should be replaced by a real regulator with powers to rein back the power companies and protect all of us. The Labour Government -- is it still called "Labour"? -- should act immediately. Conference, don't hold your breath for this to happen. Gordon Brown now says that he is listening. Maybe he is, but more importantly does he understand? Until now it does not seem that he does. Please support.

BRO. F. MCKAY (GMB Scotland): I speak in support of Motion 175, Fuel Poverty. President and Congress, there is not much more I can say that this motion has not. The massive profits are wrong. The fact that the low paid have been forced to contribute to these massive profits is wrong. OFGEM's opinion of the energy market is wrong and should be scrapped and replaced with a Regulator. Congress, fuel poverty is fundamentally and morally wrong. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on that debate? (*No response*) Thank you.

## **WARM FRONT MOTION 198**

### **198. WARM FRONT**

Congress supports the Governments National Warm Front Scheme, but not the way it is implemented.

The most vulnerable in our society have ended up having to pay extra money towards the cost of installation due mainly to excessive costs of labour charges. It therefore calls on the Government to increase the amount of grant aid above £2,700 or move away from preferred installers to a more competitive system, enabling individuals to get tenders for best value.

R35 - ROCESTER JCB BRANCH  
*Birmingham & West Midlands Region*

*(Referred)*

BRO. G. RICHARDSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): I move the Motion on Warm Front. Warm Front is part of the Government's pledge to eradicate fuel poverty in vulnerable households by 2010, but should this be at a cost to the people who need it the most? This issue has already been raised in Parliament after floods and floods of complaints from residents in Stoke-on-Trent. Under Warm Front vulnerable people, including the elderly and disabled, are able to apply for a grant of £2,700 for new central heating, insulation and other conservation methods. Congress supports measures which help the needy in our society but not at any cost.

The problem seems to be the cost of the labour being so high to install and the grant not being sufficient to cover the overall costs. I put this to you, Congress. How many of the country's most in need citizens have not had this done because they cannot afford the top-up charges? Government preferred installers may not be the way forward. Is it the best deal for the individual? Charges reaching up to £1,000 a day for labour have been quoted. I think I am in the wrong job. Colleagues, this is totally unrealistic. We all know about inflation but this is exploitation. The installers are probably not only ripping-off the old people and the vulnerable but possibly ripping off the Government as well, who are paid for by our taxes.

This Congress deplores the kind of action or anything similar where the weakest in our society end up suffering the most. The answer is that the Government should increase the grant to meet the overall cost or, like in other grant systems, the individual should be able to access the grant and then move to their preferred installer of choice. Surely, that is what open competition is about. How many times have you heard recently that the Government has been trying to get involved with different multi-nationals because of their concern with price-fixing?

Warm Front is possibly not the only scheme of its kind in operation. As I speak today, many suffer the same things throughout the country. It needs action. Therefore, Congress instructs our union to get involved with this issue and approach the DEFRA Minister, Mr. Woolas, to explain why this is happening and address the issue without delay.

SIS. E. JEFFREY (Northern): I second Motion 198. I applied for a Warm Front grant for my 93 year-old mother-in-law. Although she was awarded the full grant of £4,000, the amount that was required for a partial refit was £1,734 above the £4,000 figure. I dread to think what it would have cost for a full refit. After a fight and help from Age Concern and the local MP, the council agreed to pay the excess amount. This agreement

is not available to all applicants. The Warm Front grant should cover the full costs of the work for the elderly and disabled, or the cost of the work should be realistic.

Warm Front and the companies they contract do not appear to be in any rush to do this essential and often life-saving work, as it took over a year to get this work done for my 93 year old mother-in-law. Do you realise that there are elderly or disabled people possibly dying of hyperthermia during the long wait for the work to be done. I urge you to adopt this motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Do we have any speakers who wish to contribute? *(No response)*  
In that case, I call Roy Dunnett to speak on behalf of the CEC.

BRO. R. DUNNETT (CEC, Commercial Services): I am speaking on behalf of the CEC. Congress, the CEC is asking for your support for Motions 174 and 175 and to refer Motion 198. Motion 174 is asking the GMB to lobby the Government in making the industry more accountable to consumers. The CEC fully agrees that regulators should take the needs and concerns of the public much more into account than they do. However, while the public voice must be heard, other factors must be taken into consideration. These include the security of supply, ensuring that workers who provide the services are fully trained and skilled to carry out their jobs safely. We also believe that price should be a factor which comes into the control of these regulators.

Turning to Motion 175, the motion rightly condemns OFGEM's flawed policies and highlights the higher prices which working people are paying for their basic energy needs, which cannot be helped by the forecast last week that gas prices will increase by 34% by the end of this year. Imagine, a 34% increase! The qualification is that disposing of one regulator and replacing it with another to do the same job would not serve any useful purpose. Instead, the GMB should continue to press Government for increased transparency and accountability for all regulators, again allowing these regulators to control pricing.

Motion 198 is asking for changes to the Warm Front scheme. This scheme provides grants for up to £2,700 for installation and heat improvements for people on low income or benefits. The motion is seeking to improve the position of people who qualify for this grant by asking either for an increase in the grant itself or by increasing the flexibility to use low cost installers. The CEC, whilst understanding the intent of the motion, has some reservations. There is a danger that to move away from preferred installers would lead to the exploitation of vulnerable people by unscrupulous cowboy builders.

Therefore, we are recommending Congress to refer this motion for further consideration to determine whether this proposal is viable. Please support Motions 174 and 175 and refer Motion 198.

THE PRESIDENT: Does Birmingham & West Midlands accept the qualification?  
*(Agreed)*

*Motion 174 was carried.*

THE PRESIDENT: On Motion 175, does GMB Scotland accept the qualification?  
(Agreed)

*Motion 175 was carried.*

THE PRESIDENT: To Motion 198, does Birmingham & West Midlands accept the reference back? (Agreed)

*Motion 198 was referred.*

**PENSIONER FUEL POVERTY  
EMERGENCY MOTION 4**

THIS CONGRESS NOTES THE DISASTROUS ELECTION RESULTS AT LOCAL, REGIONAL AND PARLIAMENTARY LEVEL IN THE LAST FEW WEEKS AND MONTHS. SUPPORT FROM WORKING CLASS PENSIONERS IS HAEMORRHAGING AT AN ALARMING RATE AS RISING FUEL AND FOOD COSTS PUSH THEM INTO CHOOSING BETWEEN HEATING, OR EATING AT THE SAME TIME AS THE GOVERNMENT IS POURING OVER £100 BILLION INTO THE BANKING SYSTEM.

THIS CONGRESS WISHES TO MAKE IT CLEAR TO THE NATIONAL PENSIONERS CONVENTION AND OTHER PENSIONERS THROUGHOUT THIS COUNTRY THAT WE WILL BACK ANY INITIATIVES TO DEFEND THOSE WHO HAVE GIVEN THEIR WORKING LIVES FOR THIS COUNTRY ONLY TO BE BETRAYED BY A SO CALLED LABOUR GOVERNMENT.

**PROFESSIONAL DRIVES BRANCH  
LONDON REGION**

*(Carried)*

BRO. T. FLANAGAN (London): What you see in front of you is a somewhat neutered version of a motion passed unanimously by the London Region on the opening day of Congress. Let me tell you a story – I am not Max Bygraves – because this is serious.

Let me tell you a story. Back in the 1970s before some of you were knocking around there was a very prominent story in London about a pensioner found dead in a flat in Victoria. For those of you who are not familiar with the layout of London, Victoria is very close to parasite headquarters – Buckingham Palace. This woman was found wrapped in newspaper in a freezing cold flat and she had been dead for a couple of weeks. When the autopsy had been carried out, it was found that she died by choking to death on a lump of cardboard, whilst down the road is Fraulein Liz feeding her corgis the finest fillet steak on solid gold plates. Let's fast forward to the present day of this Labour Government. Every year 22,000 – 24,000 pensioners die of hyperthermia. I think the situation is a disgrace. We have an oil crisis, yet there is a casino policy. We have just heard a very good description of how the oil prices is going awry, how

everything is going potty and the pensioners will have no chance whatsoever of paying their fuel bills in the coming year. They are going to have to make the choice of heat their house or don't eat, or don't eat and heat the house. It is a fact that pensioners in London get on the bus, because Ken made them free, and sit on the bus all day in the winter because it drives round to keep them warm. What a situation under a Labour Government!

This motion has been looked at by the CEC. I will save the CEC a little bit of time by responding to some of their criticisms, which I accept. The motion calls on you to support any initiative by the pensioners. Quite obviously, one initiative is that they might want to go and burn Buckingham Palace down. I wouldn't be in favour of that because I would rather they turned it into a home for the homeless. They might want to commit mass suicide because the message from this Government is "You're worthless and we don't care what happens to you". Twenty-four thousand pensioners a year die of hyperthermia.

We need to remember, so the CEC tell me, that the Tories introduced this policy. So they did. The Labour Party, or New Labour, has had ten years to change it and they have not. Every year thousands die. They are now saying they will change the policy by 2012. Thanks very much. In four years there will be 80,000 dead! Are you prepared to tolerate 80,000 dead? I am not. And I am told we cannot take illegal action to support these people. Well, you might need to consider that.

The Government has introduced the Fuel Allowance. The pensioners say it is absolutely worthless. I can tell you what, to my mind they have proved it.

This is a bit of a joke, so do not take it too seriously. If you go on a march through Blackpool, you are a brave man because I wouldn't march through that place not if I could help it. These people, who are deadly serious, are going to say, "We are not tolerating what is happening to our people". I cannot see that any trade union Movement or any union could accept that we are going the Government to kill 24,000 people a year. Support the motion.

BRO. V. WEST (London): I second the emergency motion on Pensioner Fuel Poverty. Some people may say that this motion is gesture politics but sometimes gestures are useful to get our message across. Despite the progress made by the Labour Government, such as the Winter Fuel Allowance, many, many pensioners still have to make the stark choice of heat or eat. Rising fuel and food prices, coupled with above annual inflation rises in Council Tax, adds to that stark choice and to pensioner poverty. The choice is of heat or eat. Whilst welcoming the restoration of the pension link, for many pensioners – it will not be introduced until 2012 – will be too late and, bear in mind, from recent polls we will be lucky to see a Labour Government in 2012. Pensioner poverty is real. It is now and the Government needs to tackle it. We must use the GMB links with our own retired members association, the National Pensioners Convention, to get this message across, or voters certainly will in two years time. I second.

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

BRO. S. MCKENZIE (London): We have a situation where the parasitic elite in the casino economy of the City of London are trading billions of pounds a day gambling on what the price of real oil may be at a certain time in the future. There are more barrels of fictitious oil traded in a day than there are real barrels of oil traded in a year. At the same time, in the last year 300,000 pensioners fell below the official poverty line. With the phenomenal increases in energy costs, I think the figures that Terry has quoted are an under-estimate. Very, very many pensioners will die from cold in the next few years. Still, as long as the hooray Henry's have enough for their Porches, mansions and diamond studded lifestyles, then that is all right. I wonder how many pensioners are going to be putting on sippy hats and going to Royal Ascot next week. I suppose there might be one or two.

I am sorry that the words "industrial action" were manipulated out of this resolution, and I strongly believe that we should be prepared to go to any lengths necessary to put an end to this obscenity. Still, Gordon might put one of his light bulbs, which evidently cost £15, on his head and have a bright idea, take some action, but now I really am being unrealistic, aren't I? So what about talking to the National Pensioners Convention and others in the movement about organising a march and demonstration at least on the Labour Party Conference to highlight the fact that it is time for action now. I think anything less means that we could kiss goodbye to the next election.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Steve. Hang on! We had the mover and seconder from London. That contribution should have been incorporated in the mover. I want to take people from other regions to give them an opportunity to speak.

SIS. D. PETERSON (London): I am supporting Emergency Motion 4. Everyone in this hall is going to be a pensioner, God willing. Today's pensioners have paid their dues during their working lives. Those who have children, grandchildren and great grandchildren, and I have had ten of them – I have got 20 grandchildren and four great grandchildren – have done their bit for God and country and contributed to the future. Do pensioners not deserve a decent amount of money to live on to be comfortable in the autumn and winter of their lives and not have to worry day to day if they can eat properly or pay the fuel bills? It is okay for the Labour Government pledging that pensioners will be better off in 2012. The likelihood at present is that there will not be a Labour Government in 2012 and the Tories, sure as hell, won't uphold Labour's pledge. They were the ones who cut the link in the first place. But maybe Labour knew this when they made the pledge. We must have action now. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: Next speaker. No, Terry. You cannot move the motion and then come in as a speaker. (*Laughter*) Rules of debate have to be taught. Terry, please leave the rostrum.

BRO. FLANAGAN: I don't understand what you are asking me to do.

THE PRESIDENT: Terry, please leave the rostrum and await for the CEC speaker. I call Tommy Brennan.

BRO. T. BRENNAN (Regional Secretary, Northern Region): I am the Northern Regional Secretary and responding on behalf of the CEC to Emergency Motion 4 on Pensioner Fuel Poverty.

Congress, the CEC is supporting this motion but, having said that, it is with a number of very, very strong qualifications. I thank the mover of the motion for his qualifications but the CEC has some more. Why? Why do we support it? It is because we, obviously, sympathise with all those ordinary families, including our pensioners, who are disproportionately feeling the brunt of escalating food and energy costs. The CEC is fully aware of the threat to the elderly from fuel poverty. Indeed, it was only on Sunday that you had an extensive debate on the subject and formed policy to take us forward to next year. So if this motion was less self-indulgent and accurate, we could have recommended acceptance without any comment.

As an organisation, we do not give campaigning blank cheques. The GMB will support campaigns as we have done in the past which are targeted on results and not gestures. To accept this motion without qualification would mean that we may as well abandon the Finance Committee, send the CEC home and hand over the management of this great union to the proposed recipients of this motion. I did not intend to be disrespectful or resort to emotive language, but the mover did and I will, of course. I do not mean to be disrespectful to our colleagues from London. Having said that, to suggest we hand over the running of our organisation to an outside organisation is absolutely crackers. It is barmy. It is not worth considering.

The GMB has a track record second to none in supporting pensioner issues. We do, of course, have our very own GMB Retired Members' Association. Yes, of course, we do look to our Labour Government to lend support in their time of need. However, to suggest in this emergency motion that the saving of five thousand jobs in the Northern Rock sub-prime fiasco is in some way linked with the pensioners' situation is, we believe, taking liberties. We should applaud this Government for stepping in for saving jobs, most of them in the north-east, where they are badly needed, and for preventing a potential collapse in the financial system, which would have had a devastating impact on all of our members, not only in the north. We would have criticised this Government if they had allowed Northern Rock to go under, and we applaud them, as we should applaud them, for taking action in saving jobs.

We should recognise who the real culprits are in the oil and food price free-for-all. It is the same speculators who caused the sub-prime market fiasco. Yes, of course, we expect and we look to our Labour Government to assist, safeguard and protect our pensioners from the excesses of these global pirates. Of course, we could ask the conman and the Tories. The choice is yours. I am sorry, President, but I have to bite my tongue because there is no choice.

Congress, 'betrayal' is a very strong and emotive description of this Labour Government. Although we have our differences and will continue to have our differences, we can look to what we have achieved jointly in terms of working time, the minimum wage and equality regulations. Therefore, that tag to this Government is undeserved. This only provides succour to a Tory Government waiting in the wings with that conniving, scheming, chameleon conman at the helm. Do we honestly believe that the Tories will deliver our pensioners, our people, from this present financial predicament? Lest we forget, it was the Tories who severed the link between pensions and it is Labour reacting to the trade union pressure, our pressure, which is restoring that link. It was Labour who raised the Winter Fuel payments to £400 for the over 80s following previous increases. It was the Tories who are responsible for the scandalous mis-selling of personal pensions and the devastation of public services on which our pensioners, more than anyone, rely.

So when we are staring down the barrel of a Tory bazooka, let's use the language that puts our case fairly, proudly and constructively. Without throwing the baby out with the bathwater, we must not give our enemies a stick to beat us with.

The CEC, therefore, supports the emergency motion with these very, very strong qualifications to which I have referred. Of course, if not accepted, we ask delegates to oppose this motion. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: I call Terry Flanagan to reply.

BRO. FLANAGAN: Apologies, President. I was unaware of what you were trying to do. I was being confused by other issues occurring.

THE PRESIDENT: You should have been concentrating on the issue that you were moving, not on other issues, Terry.

BRO. FLANAGAN: When people are tugging at your shirt tails it is a bit difficult. However, I have given my apology which I hope you take sincerely.

I appreciate Tommy's contribution. You are right Tom that the Tories will never solve this problem -- of course they will not -- but the problem has festered for too long under the labour Movement. I am saying that we need to change it round. Certain letters have arrived from legal departments when the Tories have been referred to as 'vermin', and that is exactly what I feel about them. Believe me, I am not interested in the Tories.

The point of the issue here is that the trade union Movement needs to stop the bloodshed that is going on. These oil dealers are the merchants of death. They are just proliferating the oil price rises. It is a scandal.

THE PRESIDENT: Terry, do you accept the qualification as Tommy Brennan has moved?

BRO. FLANAGAN: I have.

THE PRESIDENT: In that case, I ask you to stand down and I will take the vote, please. All those in favour of Emergency Motion 4, please show? Anyone against?

*Emergency Motion 4 was carried.*

## **COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION REPORT**

### **COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Since last year's Congress a great deal of work has gone into setting up the new Section, particularly with the appointment of staff and officers. The new Section National Committee has met and agreed a plan for the Section in 2008. The focus will be growing the Section, building Shop Steward organisation and campaigning on behalf of members.

#### **SECURITY INDUSTRY**

The security industry remains a high priority organising area for GMB with massive potential for membership growth. As such, much work has been done over the last few months to identify key objectives, target companies and to develop a strategic approach, to ensure that a robust organising and negotiating agenda is delivered for GMB members.

To that end the Commercial Services National Committee agreed a detailed strategic report at its January meeting to:

- Further develop collective bargaining structures
- Undertake membership mapping
- Build a sustainable shop stewards network
- Develop a robust industrial agenda
- Begin a campaign around standards and training
- Identify target companies for medium and long term development.

#### **i. Cash and Valuables in Transit**

A key area of our work continues to be our attacks campaign. Following pressure and lobbying from GMB, the Home Office convened a conference on the issue of CVIT attacks. This involved major stakeholders including senior police officers, the banking industry association, local government, CVIT employers and GMB. Following on from this conference, a Government Minister now chairs a regular round table of all the stakeholders on the issue of CVIT attacks. As a result of our work we have seen increased police activity in high attack areas. This has had a positive impact on the number of attacks. However, the overall levels of attacks still remain too high.

GMB has also influenced the debate on parking restrictions for CVIT vehicles. There has been a reduction in the number of parking penalties issued to CVIT vehicles and in many areas it is becoming easier for our members to park closer to the establishments they are servicing.

In April there will be a GMB CVIT Conference; this will be attended by around 70 delegates. Vernon Coaker, Under Secretary of State at the Home Office, has agreed to speak.

In the Spring GMB will do a presentation to the European Commission on Third Party Violence. This will specifically focus on CVIT Attacks.

## **ii. G4S Cash Services**

There has been no pay claim submitted for G4S road crews as they are still covered by a multi year deal. Admin & Clerical Staff settled for 3.5%.

New collective bargaining machinery has been established, after protracted negotiations. The new agreement strengthens the position of GMB and enhances lay member democracy.

Negotiations are ongoing about the establishment of a compensation scheme for G4S workers seriously injured in attacks on them whilst at work. This is in line with Congress 2007 Motion 110.

We are also undertaking negotiations over a job evaluation scheme to ensure that G4S Cash is complying with equalities legislation. This is in line with Congress 2007 Motion 38.

## **iii. G4S Security Services**

Membership within this area continues to grow at a steady pace, with the vast majority of recruitment being done at the induction training sessions. Union density is currently around 50%. A lot of work needs to be done to develop strong shop steward organisation.

As part of our strategy to develop the shop steward structure and improve organisational strength, we have delivered on the implementation of new collective bargaining structures. The new structures will strengthen our members' voice within G4S Security Services. The new structures expand the role of the National Negotiating Committee. A priority for the NNC will be seeking improvements to G4S standard contract, which covers 70% of security officers.

In line with GMB@Work we have also undertaken a mapping exercise of the business. This mapping exercise is essential to building the membership and increasing the number of shop stewards, particularly on the Regional Contracts.

The various negotiating bodies for the strategic accounts have continued to meet over the last year, dealing with a range of issues including pay negotiations. All pay offers have been put to the members via consultation ballots. IBM settled for a two-year deal, giving 3.2% and 2.5% respectively. Prime/ Trillium settled at 3.2% for one year, and at the time of writing Patrol and Response was still in negotiations.

## **iv. G4S Aviation Services**

Responsibility for Aviation Services transferred to National Office in October. This is a growing area of G4S. There has been a mapping exercise undertaken and we are well placed to develop our membership as the business grows.

Bargaining priorities for Aviation Services have been agreed by the shop stewards. It is anticipated that in April 2008 we will see the introduction of a new national sick pay scheme. This will be a significant improvement and could have profound implications for the wider G4S security services business, which tends to operate on statutory minimums. Delivery of the new sick pay arrangements will be thanks to the efforts of the NNC shop steward team and the London representatives who have pushed this agenda.

Discussions are also under way about improving the current collective bargaining arrangements. This would enhance the role of the national shop stewards and perhaps pave the way for national bargaining on pay.

## **v. GSL**

At the time of writing this report GSL is subject to a proposed buy out by G4S. This is being reviewed by the competition authorities. In respect of GSL Court Services an agreement on pay has yet to be finalised. However, there has been progress in securing agreement in respect of protocols on working time and other associated matters. A government review into court service provision in England and Wales could have

significant implications for our members in this sector. Government's proposed cuts in budgets has serious implications for the criminal justice sector as well.

In the past period we have seen damning reports into private sector prisons and detention centres. Such reports will inform our bargaining agenda moving forward. Apart from improving facilities for those who are in the service, it is imperative that the industry addresses the poor pay and conditions of our members in the private sector.

The low pay and long hours culture along with the challenges of working in the criminal justice sector can have a demoralising effect on employees and we will be lobbying Government and employers over these issues. GMB is working with the Prison Officers Association over Section 127 of the Criminal Justice Act. Section 127 continues to prevent our members from taking lawful industrial action. Campaigning to repeal Section 127 will remain a major campaign priority for us.

#### **vi. Securitas**

Securitas are the second largest security company in the UK. Although the relationship with Securitas has not yet matured and our membership remains small, progress has now been made on the development of a national and regional collective bargaining and consultation machinery. We have carried out a mapping exercise in the business and the development of a shop stewards structure to populate the current bargaining machinery is a priority.

Despite the generally positive relations with the Company, in January management tried to impose unilateral changes to terms and conditions of employment and have sought to force employees to meet the cost of the SIA licensing fee. GMB is vigorously opposing management's proposals.

#### **vii. Security Plus**

Recognition at Security Plus was secured by the North West & Irish Region. The members were serviced out of the North West & Irish Region and at present they are in the midst of a two year pay deal. With the Company now expanding into six GMB Regions it has been agreed that responsibility will now transfer to National Office.

Our priority for the coming year will be to expand our membership and shop steward base on the new sites the Company has opened.

#### **viii. Loomis/Brinks**

In August 2007 Loomis acquired Brinks. For a considerable period of time Brinks had struggled to be a financially viable business. Over 300 employees transferred to Loomis under TUPE. In Scotland Brinks employees transferred to G4S. Brinks was previously serviced from our London Region and at the time of writing London Region is pursuing litigation over the mishandling of the TUPE transfer by the companies. The acquisition of Brinks is still subject to a Competition Commission enquiry. Whilst the Brinks NNC remains in place, it will be necessary to put in place a national negotiating machinery for the new business.

The merger process has caused some dislocation in the operating of the Loomis consultation and negotiating arrangements.

#### **ix. Skills For Security**

GMB have now actively taken a seat on the Board of Directors. A new NVQ qualification is now planned for the security sector. It is important that we are engaged in this process as this may become a future requirement for licensing. Our involvement in Skills for Security is enhancing the Union's profile and providing us with the opportunity to link learning to our organising agenda. GMB will play a major part in an industry wide conference on the issue of training in June 2008.

**DHL**

#### **i. DHL Express Domestic & Hubs**

The 2008 element of the pay and conditions package has been introduced. Over 2,500 employees from a bargaining unit of 4,500 have received in excess of a 20% increase in pay during the past 20 month period. The remaining employees received between 14% and 18%. In addition there have been improvements to other allowances.

Over the past period, new bargaining structures have been put in place. We have also successfully negotiated a raft of new policies and procedures, including a no-compulsory redundancy agreement. Trading conditions for the Company remain difficult, not least due to the expansion in internet shopping. There will be ongoing restructuring of the business. This restructuring has impacted on membership levels. However, we are now undertaking a process of mapping in the Company and a GMB@Work training course has been set up for senior shop stewards and this will have a positive impact on membership levels in 2008.

There is currently a review going on regarding managerial/ admin & clerical grades. The aim is to try and agree a single pay spine with a properly defined career structure.

#### **ii. DHL Freight**

In 2007 DHL Freight established a delineated company from DHL Express. This has meant change in our national bargaining structures. The change in the business structure does give us a platform to grow our membership in DHL Freight.

We have now signed a new national framework agreement covering two areas of the ECO international part of the business as well as Containers. We have made progress in developing the membership in these areas. We have 100% density at Heathrow. The site at East Midlands Airport is being organised in the face of local opposition from another trade union.

At the time of compiling this report DHL Freight Eco pay negotiations are underway. A pay and conditions claim is being compiled for DHL Freight Connect.

#### **iii. DHL Express International**

There is no recognition in DHL Express International (except ECO International). But activities across the rest of DHL are raising our profile in DHL Express. We are doing a mapping exercise across the whole of DHL Express. Our resources will be focused on areas of DHL Express where we do have recognition and where there are dual sites between DHL Express Domestic and International.

### **AVIATION**

Whilst the aviation sector continues to grow, the industry is extremely competitive. This presents real challenges in trying to improve terms, conditions and working conditions for our members.

At a strategic level GMB is heavily engaged in debates about the environment and airport expansion. It is difficult to balance environmental considerations, with wider economic considerations and the employment of our members.

GMB is supporting measures to green the industry, arguing for instance, in favour of investment in public transport to get passengers to and from airports. GMB is supporting campaigns calling for investment and expansion at Heathrow and Stansted.

The Union is involved with the TUC in discussions with Government over the future of taxation in aviation.

### **GROUND HANDLING**

Trading conditions in ground handling remain difficult. The growth of low cost airlines continues to exert downward pressure on margins. This is making negotiations with the ground handling companies difficult. The companies continue to engage in cut throat competition and it seems they are currently engaged in a race to the bottom.

However, huge opportunities remain to grow across the aviation sector. We are putting in place a new stronger recognition agreement for Servisair. New access arrangements have been put in place for recruitment in Servisair. Servisair accepted a 2 year pay deal with an increase in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of 4.3%.

In Aviance we are starting talks about the future shape of the business and strengthening the lay member structure.

Responsibility for servicing British Airways has returned to National Office.

### **PRIVATE HIRE, CHAUFFEURS AND HACKNEY CARRIAGE CAMPAIGN**

Lay activists have developed an excellent campaign around private hire, chauffeurs and hackney carriage drivers. Membership in the sector is growing as a result of the campaigning activities such as around health and safety. The activists' work has been supported by the National Organising Department. Recently there have been representations made to Government over Health and Safety and Operating Licences (in line with Congress 2007 Motion 111). Some of GMB activities on Workers' Memorial Day 2008 will focus on the health and safety of drivers.

### **CIU CLUBS/ CORCA AGREEMENT**

The CORCA NJIC has continued to meet on a regular basis and has dealt with a number of issues facing the sector. Pay negotiations were concluded in September, members accepted a 3.5% headline rate with additional improvements in bank holiday payments and lieu time arrangements. A National Working Group is currently reviewing the responsibilities and pay for Club Stewards.

### **JARVIS HOTELS**

This remains a challenging area in which to work. Union density is poor and consideration will need to be given to how we improve our organisation with this employer. Members accepted a 3.5% increase in pay.

### **ROADCHEF**

The last round of pay negotiations raised 400 employees above the National Minimum Wage. There will be ongoing discussions with Roadchef about moving further away from the NMW. Membership and shop steward organisation remains patchy.

### **ASDA**

#### **i. ASDA Distribution**

Over the course of the year we have continued to make progress in growing the membership in Asda Distribution. We have one new collective agreement at Skelmersdale site. Credit goes to the local Officer and activists for the great work they did in securing this agreement. At the time of writing this report we anticipate that there will be more recognition ballots in the early part of 2008. The National Organising Team are supporting this work.

Pay Settlements are negotiated at a local level and trade union sites continue to have higher levels of settlement than non-unionised sites. The Company constantly pushes the issue of pick rates and productivity. The National Health & Safety Department have been supporting lay activists and the National Secretary in working through ergonomic surveys. Campaigning on ergonomics, pick rates and safety generally will continue to be a major piece of our work. We are currently undertaking a health and safety survey of our members in Distribution.

Proposals to strengthen the current National Shop Stewards Forum and National Joint Council have been tabled by the Trade Union Side and we hope that we will be entering into meaningful negotiation over a new collective bargaining machinery.

The Union is now taking a very robust agenda in Distribution.

## **ii. ASDA Stores**

For the first time in many years the membership is growing in ASDA Stores. Following on from the previous dispute with ASDA we did gain access to new store inductions. However, management continues to try and make recruitment difficult. Credit goes to those activists and Officers who are growing the Union despite ASDA continuing to be such a challenging environment. The organising activity is supported by the National Organising Team.

Last year we were involved in difficult discussions (in line with Congress 2007 Emergency Motion 1) over new contracts of employment. These contracts are known as "Top Rate". Top Rate is a complicated issue and it impacted on individuals in different ways, with many losing but some apparently gaining. Ultimately the Company imposed Top Rate in August 2007. Although the Trade Union won some concessions through the discussions over Top Rate, the Company rejected the main points raised by the Union in a national grievance.

Again, we are going to develop an assertive agenda for Asda Stores, this will focus upon ensuring that Asda Store workers are not denied the right to collective bargaining through an independent trade union; that the Company adheres to its obligations under equalities law; (in line with Congress 2007 Motions 38 and 141); the rights of GMB Safety Representatives are respected and that there are proper family friendly policies in place. This is in line with Congress 2007 Motions 122 and 123. There will also be a major health and safety survey of ASDA store members.

## **ENERGY**

The issue of energy has again dominated headlines over the past year. Rising fuel and energy prices have had profound implications for all the industries we deal with. The impact has also been felt by our members more generally. GMB has been at the fore in the debate about energy policy. The Union has argued that liberalisation of the UK's energy markets has been a failure and the Government's policy on fuel poverty is in tatters as a result.

GMB has advocated and supported the development of a balanced energy policy which would include clean coal, renewables and nuclear new build. This is in line with Congress 2007 Motions C10, 115 and 119.

Along with colleagues in the Manufacturing Section we are trying to ensure that the implementation of a new energy policy maximises opportunities for employment in UK manufacturing and fabrication.

## **OFGEM**

GMB has campaigned hard against the Gas Distribution Price Review which is overseen by OFGEM. This Review effectively determines budgets for the gas distribution companies for the next five years. Through the consultation OFGEM did raise questions about future pension provision in the gas distribution industry. We made direct representations to OFGEM with the thinly veiled threat of industrial action if they attacked our members' pensions. This combined with our political lobbying has forced OFGEM to back off on their pension plans. This in line with Congress 2007 Emergency Motion 5.

GMB's campaign around the Gas Distribution Price Review was supported by senior shop stewards from National Grid, Wales & West Utilities and Scottish & Southern Energy. Our pressure resulted in significant gains in the money allowed for new apprenticeships and training. OFGEM had originally proposed no money to be allowed for apprenticeship and training. After intense lobbying of MPs and Ministers, £80m will be made available for training and apprenticeships.

Whilst we secured some concessions over funding for operating expenditure, the settlement from OFGEM was tough. As a result there will be job losses in gas distribution this year.

The inability of the industry to find a common position in their negotiations with OFGEM hindered our lobbying. If the employers could have presented a truly united front with the Union more could have been achieved.

## **NATIONAL GRID**

### **i. National Grid Industrials**

There have been no pay negotiations for National Grid Industrial Staff as we are still covered by a three year deal. We are continuing to bid in the new agreement for National Grid Industrials, known as GO21. The introduction of the GO21 Agreement has been hugely challenging. We are currently undertaking a review of GO21 and there are clearly areas of the agreement that will have to be renegotiated. As part of GO21 there was a commitment to a direct labour force. At the time of writing this report recruitment has begun for new direct labour employees. This is a reversal in trends over recent years to use contract labour. As a result of GO21 there are 2 new training centres under construction. These training centres will be vital to developing the apprenticeship base.

### **ii. National Grid Staff**

The new deal for National Grid Staff was successfully implemented. Our members employed in the PMC part of National Grid have also voted in favour of the Staff terms and conditions of employment. A pay claim has been drafted for the Staff Side in 2008. We are currently involved in negotiations over redundancies and restructuring amongst Gas Staff. This is a direct result of the cuts in budgets imposed by OFGEM.

## **BRITISH GAS**

### **i. British Gas Industrials**

Our British Gas Industrial membership continues to be an example of excellent Trade Union organisation. A new set of terms and conditions have been agreed for the Service Force employees (SFL). This has successfully brought them in to the core British Gas Services Business. The British Gas Industrials settled on 4.13% on pensionable pay. In addition there were some significant improvements to other payments.

### **ii. British Gas Staff**

We are still in discussions with the Company about the constitutional arrangements for new Staff bargaining structures in British Gas Energy and Services.

We have been heavily critical of the huge profits made by British Gas at a time when the Company continues to attack staff terms and conditions of employment. In particular the Company has sought to make wholesale changes to pension provision for staff. This has involved weakening protections for pension scheme members in the Centrica Pension Scheme. They are also trying to close the Centrica Income Retirement Section to new employees and introduce a very poor money purchase scheme for new starters.

We have linked the huge profits being made by British Gas and the hikes in price rises to the Company's attack on workers' pensions. This has resulted in a number of employees in the Staff Pension Schemes being transferred over to the Industrial Pension Schemes, where we believe they will be better protected. A case in point is the GMB members employed at the National Distribution Centre.

## **NUCLEAR INDUSTRY**

The break up and sell off of the British Nuclear Industry continues. A contract to run the Sellafield site for the next 17 years will be awarded in summer 2008. GMB locally, regionally and nationally have been heavily engaged with the companies and consortiums bidding for this contract. There has also been a series of meetings with Government Ministers and special advisors over the future of Sellafield. We meet regularly with the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) about the issue of Sellafield and the wider socio-economic implications from the transferring of the site to a private sector company. GMB has led the fight to ensure that the Sellafield site does have a viable future. We have argued strongly that the Plutonium and Uranium, which could be used to make fissile material stored on the site, should be transformed from its current highly hazardous state into socially useful nuclear fuel.

Despite the success the GMB had in lobbying Government over NDA funding, there remain tight budgetary constraints. The NDA is putting a significant amount of money aside to cover contingencies at Sellafield. The NDA claim this is impacting on the funding for the Magnox sites, Dounreay and other parts of the nuclear estate. At present there are redundancy consultations under way on the Magnox sites.

GMB has supported a major event, held next to the Scottish Parliament, about the future of the Caithness economy and the opportunities in developing renewable energy sources. GMB is backing plans for the development of a major tidal power project in the Caithness area. This project could provide much needed quality employment in the area as decommissioning work at Dounreay gathers pace.

We have established a National Nuclear Shop Stewards Forum to ensure that we have a consistent position across the Nuclear Industry. The Union nationally is also supporting lobbying on behalf of URENCO, where we have members. Like much of the British nuclear industry URENCO could potentially benefit from a renaissance in the industry globally.

Our members at Sellafield settled for 4.85%. The UKAEA settlement involved a basic increase of 2%, together with further performance related increases and performance related pay progression. These three elements will result in an average "Increase for Staff in Post" of 3.99%. Magnox Electric settled for an increase on salary scales and allowances of 4.5%.

*(Adopted)*

**BRO. G. SMITH (National Secretary, Commercial Services):** I move pages 54-61 of the General Secretary's Report, which was ably and well discussed at the recent Commercial Services Conference.

Congress, 94 delegates were in attendance at the Commercial Services Conference during the past day-and-a-half. We had arranged facilities for 122 attendees. In fact, we ended up with a situation of standing room only. I think that is great credit to the delegates and visitors here who showed their great determination or desire to attend the section conference to participate and listen to the debate.

President, 17 motions were passed and I was particularly pleased with the fact that we had some 50 speakers who came to the rostrum and we had seven guest speakers who attended the Commercial Services Conference. It is not possible for me to deal with all the issues that we have been tackling during the past year within Commercial Services, because it is the most diverse section in the union. We have water, energy, logistics, security, CVIT, aviation, trade union staff and, very significantly, Asda which has been at the top of the trade union's agenda for the past number of years. I was pleased that the head of personnel in Asda attended the Congress. I think that is hugely significant. I think David Smith left here under no illusions that trade union rights at Asda and the implementation of full trade union rights in stores and distribution will remain an absolute top priority for the section going forward.

Congress, the Commercial Services Section operates in areas of the economy which are often very tough to work in with low margins. We have to say that many of the companies and organisations which we deal with will not and do not have the same opportunities as we see in other industries to export jobs to China, and that gives us a great opportunity in the year ahead to continue to build the section in terms of numbers

and, very importantly, develop the shop stewards' structures open which we are building the union.

I have tried to impress upon the Commercial Services Conference that we do listen to the delegates and we do try to act on the motions which are passed at Congress and at the Commercial Services Conference.

Briefly, last year we were asked to challenge the Energy Regulator, OFGEM, over the gas distribution price review and a potential attack on our members' pensions within the gas industry. We did that, we did it successfully and we saw the Regulator off.

In relation to the security industry we were charged to engage with the Security Industry Association on licensing and training and we are continuing to do that.

In aviation we have led some terrific campaigns to ensure that our members working in the aviation sector do have businesses in which they can be employed going forward. I am very pleased to say that in the cash and transit sector, because of the hard work by the activists, because of the pressure we have brought to bear on Government, we have seen police action in that sector and something like a 40% decline in the level of attacks against our members in cash and transit, and I want to pay credit to the shop stewards in the industry who have been doing a terrific job in the past period.

We have heard this week about the environment, Congress, and how significant the environment is to this trade union. Many of our members work in areas of the economy which impact upon the environment and that will be a huge challenge to us going forward, on the one hand protecting the planet and, on the other, ensuring that our members work in viable industries. When the attack comes, as it will, upon the gas industry, because gas has an impact in terms of carbon emissions and in terms of methane, the GMB will be engaged, we will fight to defend the industry but we will be supporting the greening of the gas industry, too.

In closing, President, let me say on behalf of the team and all the staff at head office, we take great pride in what we do. It is a huge privilege to represent the section and I want to thank all the representatives within the section for the great work they do on behalf of the members. Thank you, Congress, I move.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does anyone want to come in on Gary's report?

BRO. G. HARVEY (Birmingham & West Midlands): Gary, while it was a really good conference, it is a lay delegates' conference and we had seven speakers, who were very good, but it was too much. We need to ensure that the lay delegates' have more input into it. I know that 50 of us spoke but we could have spoken a lot more. Thank you.

BRO. SMITH: Congress, that was useful and interesting feedback. I would make the point that the regions of the union do have an opportunity to submit motions. We took the 17 motions that were submitted by the regions. I think there was good input from the

lay delegates who attended. The section committee clearly did sign off the agenda that we put forward. It is like all of these things, Congress. At times you are concerned about having big gaps within the Conference and you are worried about having to fill time and space and, invariably, you end up with an agenda which is really compressed and tight. It was useful feedback. I will certainly pick that up and your National Committee will as well. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Pages 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60 and 61. Do you agree that report?

*The Commercial Services Section Report was adopted.*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, there is, roughly, around about 45 minutes of business left. Would you like to break now for lunch or continue through?

*(Calls of "Continue")* Thank you, colleagues.

## **MANUFACTURING SECTION REPORT**

### **MANUFACTURING SECTION**

#### **INTRODUCTION (Phil Davies, National Secretary)**

The CFTA, Engineering, Process, Clothing & Textiles Sections and a large part of the Food & Leisure Section have now merged to form the new Manufacturing Section. When the transfer of members into the new Section is complete the Manufacturing Section will have over 150,000 members. The new Section Committee is made up of members who work or have worked in all the major industries that the Section covers.

The decline in manufacturing has continued but today UK manufacturing is still an important part of the economy and employs just under 3m people directly and a similar number in the supply chain. It accounts for 14.5% of the economy measured by gross added value and consists of 154,925 different enterprises ranging from SMEs to large multinational conglomerates with a combined turnover of £465bn.

The manufacturing sector also spends more on R&D than any other sector of the economy and exports account for just over a third of manufacturing sales, this ranges from between 5% in building materials to over 50% in the case of aerospace.

However manufacturing employment has continued to fall with 1.147m job losses in the 9 years from 1997 to 2006 equating to a reduction of a third of all manufacturing jobs in this 9 year period. The UK Government has been slow to respond to this situation. The previous Tory administration took the view that the market would prevail and that manufacturing was a thing of the past and the future of the UK was in a financial and service sector economy. The incoming Labour administration of 1997 seemed to take a similar view. Only belatedly after pressure from the trade union movement and a number of large manufacturing employers did they start to take notice.

As a result the DTI (now BERR) has set up a Manufacturing Advisory Service and a Manufacturing Forum was formed. This consists of DTI, CBI and some employers, TUC, Unite and GMB trade unions along with some University Academics. This has established the "Seven Pillars" necessary to build "a successful knowledge intensive, highly skilled, manufacturing sector". These are:

- Macro Economic stability

- Investment
- Science and innovation
- Best Practice
- Skills and Education
- Modern Infrastructure
- Market Framework

The GMB is concerned that BERR is more interested in the higher tech side of manufacturing which includes aerospace, electronics and pharmaceuticals rather than the lower skilled widget, nuts and bolts end of manufacturing where a lot of the ordinary jobs are. The trade unions have expressed concern that these jobs in manufacturing are often better paid than similar jobs in the service sector. The majority of the jobs are semi-skilled where alternatives in the service sector are either very skilled or basic skilled, the loss of these types of job cause problems for the redundant workforce. It is often these semi-skilled workers who do not find new jobs and this can lead to political unrest such as the Bradford riots or support for fringe parties such as UKIP and the BNP in post industrial areas of Britain.

The GMB has expressed concern that reliance on the high tech top end of manufacturing may be building problems in the future. Although the UK is one of the world leading countries for pharmaceutical research, development and production any global consolidation in the sector could quickly move this work out of the UK. Again in aerospace although the UK has a strong aerospace sector it no longer has a controlling stake in Airbus since the sale of the BAE Systems 20% stake to the Franco German EADS which means the UK no longer has a financial interest or hold over future investment or production plans.

The Government has secured short term commitments over existing production, but Airbus are already expanding production of components for older models to China. The one remaining UK plane manufacturing plant owned by BAE Systems at Brough in Humberside is still building the Hawk jet, but has no more work after 2012 while Bombardier have orders of 15 of the Q400 regional aircraft from Flybe which is part built in the Belfast plant.

Charles King who is now the Research and Policy Officer for the Section has been working with the sector Skills Councils covering the manufacturing sector to raise the profile and promote the GMB's agenda on training and apprenticeships.

He has also represented the GMB at the European Commission's and responded to their consultation on ship recycling, encouraging safe ship recycling in the UK. The GMB has also been heavily involved with the TUC and BERR in linking investment and energy policy to UK manufacturing policy.

The section have also responded to the DWP consultation on Specialist disability Employment Services making the case for trade union involvement and that Remploy must remain part of the solution of providing employment for disabled people.

Finally I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Section's PAs: Marilene Smith and Auriol Ware who have worked tremendously hard. The amount of work generated by the Remploy dispute has been dealt with effectively and efficiently and always with a smile.

## **REMPLOY LTD**

We were once proud in this country to be able to say that over 10,000 disabled workers had meaningful employment in 98 factory sites from Aberdeen to Penzance. Communities where those less fortunate individuals could be given dignified jobs and also where our servicemen and women could be brought back into society. There was a place for the injured miners and steelworkers and those with mental health issues could be cared for and supported to enable all, whatever their disability, to earn a decent living without exploitation and without discrimination.

Well that was the reality in 1999 but unfortunately by 2006 the Secretary of State, John Hutton ably assisted by Anne McGuire, Minister for the Disabled had hatched a devious plan – a new conspiracy to fail plan.

First the report from the National Audit Committee was used to cast doubts about the viability for Remploy to continue with factory employment. The next stage was for John Hutton to commission the PricewaterhouseCooper report at a cost of over £800,000. The conclusions of the report gave four options: close all 83 factory sites; do nothing; close 47 factory sites or close 54 factory sites. The company was given the green light by Anne McGuire and the new Secretary of State, Peter Hain to put forward a so called modernisation plan. At the same time a new Remploy Chairman was appointed; Ian Russell, the ex Chair of Scottish Power who according to the Financial Times failed at Scottish Power but nevertheless received a golden handshake of nearly £9m. It could be thought that Mr Russell had friends in very high places but when he visited me in my office at Wimbledon he was keen to point out that he was not going to take the £58,000 per year salary – is this a pointer to a Knighthood!

A six month period of so called consultation was conducted by the management but on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2007 the Remploy Consortium was summoned to a meeting to be told that 43 factory sites were to close with the loss of around 2100 jobs. At precisely the same time that this announcement was being made a DVD was being played to Remploy workers informing them that they were to lose their jobs. It was a disgraceful and callous act of industrial sabotage.

Leading up to the 2007 Labour Party Conference in Bournemouth, Peter Hain appointed a retired Unison Officer, Roger Poole to try to bring the unions and the Directors of Remploy closer together. This was to prove a miserable failure.

At the 2007 Labour Party Conference Peter Hain announced that no factory would close unless authorised by Ministers. Every disabled person would be given a choice and there would be no compulsory redundancies. Jobs would be found and trade unions would be consulted.

We did indeed meet with the company and with the help of Grant Thornton the unions produced an alternative business plan. Sadly the plan and our pleas for commonsense all fell on deaf ears.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> November 2008 Peter Hain announced the endorsement of the Remploy company plan to close 28 factory sites, transfer workers to other Remploy sites and allow employees to volunteer for redundancy. What Mr Hain failed to inform the House of Commons was that he and Anne McGuire had given the green light for Remploy senior managers to bully and harass our members into taking voluntary redundancy payments. The whole sordid affair has been aimed at removing thousands of disabled people from supported employment.

Tens of millions of pounds of public money has been wasted in bribing Remploy workers into volunteering for redundancy with the added sweetener of a £5000 bonus if they volunteered by the deadline. Short term greed has replaced long term need.

At the time of writing this report the members at Treforest, York, CCU Birkenhead and Aintree are engaged in strike action. The GMB can hold its head high; what could be done was done and our General Secretary, Paul Kenny worked as hard as he could to bring some dignity back into the whole process. The GMB will continue to fight for people's rights at work even though this may bring us into conflict with a Labour Government.

This year's pay settlement was as follows: With effect from 1 January 2007 all rates of pay and salaries within the bargaining group are increased by 3.5%.

	<u>Weekly Pay Rate</u>
Skill Grade T	£264.30
Skill Grade A	£252.11
Skill Grade B	£244.51
Skill Grade C	£234.27
Skill Grade D	£228.17
Skill Grade E (Introductory rate)	£193.80

The following grade ranges for monthly paid employees will apply:

	<u>Min Annual Salary</u>	<u>Max Annual Salary</u>
Grade 1	£10,113	£14,820
Grade 2	£10,128	£16,791
Grade 3	£11,728	£19,159
Grade 4	£13,327	£20,715
Grade 5	£14,926	£22,784
Grade 6	£16,525	£25,129
Grade 7	£18,125	£27,070
Grade 8	£19,723	£29,576

This also provides Team Leader levels of:

Entry level	£14,884
Trained and Competent	£18,007
Advancing	£21,494
Advanced	£23,807

Section 6 - 2 Service Days of the Accord be amended as follows:

The Standard annual holiday entitlement (less than 2 years service) = total currently 175 hours (equating to 5 standard weeks) and for long serving employees this entitlement is extended as follows:

On completion of 2 years service: add one additional day reflecting the hours worked on that day

On completion of 5 years service: add one further day and reflects the hours worked on that day

Leading Hands Allowance from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007 per standard week increased to £14.27 per standard week.

From April 2008 the Company will increase its contributions to the final salary pension scheme for future benefits by 4.4% to 13%.

## **CO-OP FUNERALCARE**

The non caring, non sharing Co-op derecognised the GMB in March 2007 and since then our members in the London and Southern regions have been under tremendous pressure to leave the GMB and join Usdaw. The company has tried to bully our senior shop stewards and activists and we are now down to under 300 members.

This is a dreadful management and is made worse by the actions of Usdaw. The GMB will not be bullied into submission and our Officers have had a very difficult time trying to hold the membership and supporting them.

The main points of the 2007 increase are:

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

Funeral Directors: A further increase of £250 per annum (pro rata if part time) for all Funeral Directors, Senior Funeral Directors and Principle Funeral Directors within the business with effect from 14<sup>th</sup> January 2007 (with the exception of those employees who are on protected or red-circled rates unless the 4% increase takes the rate for their role above their protected/red-circled rate).

Standby rates: The harmonisation of standby rates across the Funeralcare business to create one rate only of £18 per standby occasion for those participating in standby with effect from 14<sup>th</sup> January 2007.

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

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

### **INSTITUTE OF ORGAN BUILDERS (IBO)**

The organ building industry has gone from strength to strength although some of the employers still cry poverty. There is no doubt that our members are highly skilled woodworkers and the quality of some of the church and cathedral organs speak for themselves. On a recent visit to Manders I was privileged to watch one of our craftspeople work on a small organ (20ft high). He had built the organ from the drawing stage and the quality of his work was outstanding. On the whole the employers are decent people.

The 2008 settlement was as follows:

The Journeyman's minimum hourly rate will be increased to £7.00 (from the former £6.70) a rise of 4.5%.

#### **Minimum hourly rates:**

Group	Age	Hourly rate		
		Year one	Year two	Year three
1	16-17	£3.40	£4.00	£4.60
2	18-21	£4.60	£5.80	*
3	22 and over	£5.52	£6.25	*

### **BRITISH SAWMILLING INDUSTRY**

The industry continues to have worldwide problems and for the first time sawmills in Canada are being closed. Timber is now a worldwide commodity and is traded as such. The whole of the world's environment is governed not only by the emissions that industrialised economies make but how we take care of the woodlands and forests will determine if the air we all breath is clean. Timber has been the main sustainable material for over 3,000 years and will continue to be used for the next 3,000 years if we take the care needed for sustainable farming of the forests.

The 2008 pay settlement is: With effect from the first full pay week in January 2008:

An increase of 20p per hour for woodcutting machinists making a new national basic minimum rate of £6.44 per hour

An increase of 16p per hour for labourers making a new national basic minimum rate of £5.48 per hour (with the proviso of an agreed minimum earnings level of £5.67 per hour)

An increase for Death in Service payment to a level of £11,000

### **FLAT GLASS (GREEN BOOK) NATIONAL AGREEMENT**

A difficult year for the glass industry with the penetration of cheap glass from all over the world. By and large the industry has remained intact and pay rates are well in advance of those shown in the Green Book. The main players within the industry are decent employers who generally recognise the GMB. A consolidation exercise is required and if undertaken the membership could well double.

The pay settlement for 2008 was:

An increase of 3.5% on the basic hourly rate across the board as follows:

Specialist Advanced Craftsperson and Specialist Processor	£6.94
Advanced Craftsperson and Multi Skilled Processor	£6.49
Craftsperson and Skilled Processor	£6.19
General Operative and General Processor	£5.90

### **Solaglas Manufacturing**

Industrial relations remain very good and while the company has gone through some difficult times increases have been negotiated in a respectable manner.

### **Solaglas Windowcare**

The Windowcare Division appears to be moving into profit and our members have received reasonable increases.

### **Solaglas Contracting**

Solaglas Contracting has continued to improve and a 3.5% increase was agreed for the 2007 pay increase.

### **Pilkington**

Our members continue to lose valuable well paid jobs from the UK into low paid wage economies. The company has entered into discussion with the GMB with a view of improving the downstream pension scheme.

### **FINNFOREST**

This is probably one of the largest timber importers in the UK. While there have been some very difficult issues within the European sector of Finnforest the UK sector seems to be under less stress. Industrial relations remain very good.

This year's increase for our members was as follows:

- 4% on all rates of pay
- £100 increase in the First Aid payments
- 3 extra days sick pay
- 6% increase on supervisor supplement
- Bereavement leave to be paid at average pay including shift allowances

### **BRITISH FURNITURE INDUSTRY**

The move offshore continues with UK manufacturers moving production to China and other low wage economies. We have suffered several closures and some very big household names have virtually ceased production. Nevertheless the industry continues to employ over 100,000 people in manufacturing. The GMB still has around 16,000 members.

Pay remains reasonable with most craftspeople earning from between £8 to £16 per hour. The National Agreement continues to disappoint and very few of our members are paid the national rates. The 2008 agreement introduced a new minimum earnings level for 39 hours of £245 and whilst this is low it is a start with a fallback rate of £6.28. This means that when there is little work to operate the bonus scheme the fallback earning will be at least £245.

The industry is worth over £5.5b per year to the UK economy and the industry must be a prime recruitment area.

The new British Furniture Confederation (BFC) continues to do some very good work in the areas of health and safety and or raising the developing risk of imported furniture that is not compliant with UK flammability regulations. The BFC is made up of employers, academics and the GMB. Its prime function is to increase employment in the British furniture manufacturing industry. The increase for 2008 was 19p per hour.

### **TEXTILES**

Another industry that has moved around the world to find the lowest possible wages. The industry masters have no problems placing orders where there is child labour or slave labour. The BCIA agreement has the dubious record of containing the lowest pay rates within any national agreement, with rates of pay constantly being overtaken by the minimum wage. The only saving grace is the conditions which are as good if not better than most national agreements and are a testament to the negotiating skills of past clothing and textile lay members.

This year's pay settlement was an increase of 2.75% on all rates of pay.

## **INTERNATIONAL**

We continue to be well supported by Kathleen Walker Shaw and our Brussels team. The work that Kathleen has done over the last 14 years on public procurement directives is not only going to be a life saver for supported employment including Remploy but may well have a profound effect on the UK manufacturing industry. We continue to affiliate in the Section to the following European and international trade union organisations:

- International Federation of Metalworkers (**IMF**)
- European Federation of Metalworkers (**EMF**)
- International Chemical & Mining Federation (**ICEM**)
- European Mining & Chemical Federation (**EMCEF**)
- Building & Wood Workers International (**BWI**)
- International Textiles, Garment & Leather Workers' Federation (**ITGLWF**)
- International Union of Foodworkers (**IUF**)
- European Federation of Foodworkers and Allied Trades (**EFFAT**)
- European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (**EFBWW**)

The new Manufacturing Section Committee will make sure that all the international seats are taken up and our members' interests are represented at all levels.

## **ENGINEERING INDUSTRY (Keith Hazlewood – National Secretary)**

As previously reported in past Congress Reports, in general engineering, not a lot has changed with the same sad story of redundancies, pay cuts and pay freezes to save jobs. Which, as a substantial impact on UK Manufacturing, we need to work together with UK Government, Employers and the DTI in an attempt to re-stabilise UK Manufacturing and to formulate a survival strategy.

We are still having to compete on an unlevelled playing field when tendering for some orders, and having to contend with comments like, "it is more economical to import work" or to offshore work to countries like China rather than manufacture in the UK, blaming the strength of the currency. Of course, it is easier and quicker to close UK establishments than in other parts of Europe.

As in all other Engineering and Construction related industries, we are experiencing skill shortages which need addressing, by investment in training and the re introduction of apprenticeships for the engineering related industries to survive. We also have a problem with the age profile with people leaving the Industry or retiring and not being replaced, and an ever increasing use of companies employing non UK labour and in some cases exploiting our European colleagues by paying well under the rate for the job, making them a cheap alternative.

## **THERMAL INSULATION CONTRACTING INDUSTRY (TICA)**

The Thermal Insulation Industry's 2007 pay negotiations resulted in a three year deal of 20.02% increase and five days extra holidays over three years.

The negotiations demonstrated there is a future for the Industry and at last the employers realised that with future work including the current new build and maintenance contracts in the Engineering Construction Industry, Aircraft carrier and Type 45 work for the Royal Navy, and 2012 Olympics to name but a few.

A problem the Industry has is in attracting apprentices which has resulted in company's increasingly having to use non UK labour which in some cases is causing competency issues. The Thermal Insulation Industry has potential for future growth but we need to attract young people to the Industry.

## **SHIPBUILDING**

The Industry is once again an Industry of mixed fortunes. Firstly, the almost demise of commercial shipbuilding in the UK with Ferguson's in Scotland one of only two commercial yards left and they are on the verge of closure; a sad day for commercial shipbuilding with also the recent closure of Swan Hunter on the Tyne. On the other hand we have in the UK Defence shipbuilding industry, the biggest order book ever with the ongoing build of six Type 45 Destroyers, two super Aircraft carriers and beyond that a programme of ships called MARS all for the Royal Navy. These orders will maintain and create jobs in UK shipbuilding for the next decade and beyond.

The Industry is now working under an Alliance between the UK yards in conjunction with the Ministry Of Defence under the UK Defence Industrial Strategy, which will stabilise the Industry and eliminate the cut throat competition between yards which has resulted in too many casualties in the past.

The Industry needs to recruit apprentices to survive. Companies like BAE Systems are setting an example by recruiting 300 apprentices in the last 4 years and they are still recruiting.

The Aircraft Carriers are too big to be built in any one yard so the plans are for them to be built in five blocks in different yards in the UK and then assembled at the Rosyth yard in Scotland. The first one is expected to be completed by 2014 and the second 2016.

## **OFFSHORE INDUSTRY**

I can confirm that the long standing issue regarding the interpretation of the Working Time Directive and holiday entitlement for people working in the Offshore Industry has at last been resolved during the 2007 pay negotiations. This resulted in a one year deal of 3% and four weeks' extra holidays over two years bringing the Industry in line with the EU Working Time Directive.

The offshore Industry like many more industries is feeling the effect of skill shortages and an ageing workforce. In an attempt to address the issue short term, we negotiated an agreement to use Philippino labour on a top-up basis, and not instead of UK labour. The agreement is that the Philipinos are paid the industry rate and allowances; this agreement has worked well so far.

We are running a recruitment campaign offshore which so far has been successful, mainly at the heliports when people are going offshore. We are in the process of starting the 2008 pay negotiations.

## **NATIONAL AGREEMENT FOR THE ENGINEERING CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY (NAECI)**

Throughout 2007 a major review of the Engineering Construction Industry took place because the major clients were questioning the validity of the National Agreement and said what was needed to maintain a future for the Industry was an Agreement that was fit for purpose and that the current agreement was out dated. This process took eleven months to conclude and an agreement was reached and was endorsed by the workforce throughout the Industry. This is the agreement they are now working to (not without teething problems as would be expected after working to the previous agreement for so long).

The 2007 pay negotiations resulted in a three year deal of a 4.4% increase for 2007, 4.4% increase for 2008, and 5.5% increase for 2009, and the implementation of the new National Agreement for the Engineering Construction Industry.

The Industry, like others is suffering with the shortage of skills and is employing a substantial amount of non UK labour. This along with increasing and demanding order books can only be addressed by attracting fresh blood and apprentices to the industry.

## **AEROSPACE**

Since the last Congress Report there has been very little change with an Industry that has mixed fortunes with some factory's closing with work being sent to other locations in the UK and some being sent outside the UK. Companies like BAE Systems, Airbus and Bombardier all have to fight hard to maintain current work

and equally as difficult, trying to get new work. The Aerospace Industry is a global Industry and all we want is a level playing field when competing for orders, which isn't happening. We are constantly lobbying the UK Government to try and save the Aerospace industry by giving it a level playing field and we will continue the lobbying to save jobs across the Aerospace related industries.

## **STEEL**

In my last Congress Report, CSN from Brazil and TATA of India were bidding for Corus. I can now confirm that TATA was the successful bidder.

The fierce competition between the bidders cause us concern as to the future investment in the UK, future bargaining and pension arrangements.

When we met with TATA they said they had not yet made any decisions or intended changes to existing arrangements at the time of the meeting, so we are watching the situation very closely.

Pay negotiations with Corus Strip Products and Long Products are in the process of starting.

## **UK CAR MANUFACTURING**

Since my last Report to Congress about the car industry that is serviced by the Birmingham Region, very little has changed. We have heard of factory closures of MG Rover, Jaguar and Peugeot all in the West Midlands. These are very worrying times within the UK car industry, along with the supply chain industry which employs thousands of British workers.

It is important that companies like Ford, Honda, Toyota, Nissan and BMW Mini keep a presence in the UK. The manufacture of cars and their components in this country is an industry of long significance and remains vital for UK Manufacturing.

## **INTERNATIONAL AND EUROPEAN**

It is imperative that we keep a presence internationally and in Europe because in the main we deal with Multi National companies and more and more legislation is coming from Europe in industries like Ship breaking. It is important we have International standards across the world when we see countries like India running ships upon the beach to strip them; we do need to work together and formulate ILO working standards.

In the last twelve months I have visited the ship breaking yards in India as part of a project with the TUC and International Metalworkers Federation and GMB.

## **EMF**

The GMB Brussels office keeps us updated on issues raised at the EMF and keeps our input on issues like the EU Green paper on Ship breaking. Kathleen Walker Shaw and Sarah King work very hard on all EU issues on behalf of the GMB.

## **INTRODUCTION (Allan Black – National Officer)**

The internal re-organisation of the Union into three new Sections has left me with a diverse industrial sheet embracing manufacturing companies from the Food, Chemicals, Paper and Building Materials Sectors of the economy.

Each of these 'sectors' presents different key characteristics and challenges for the Union, for our officers and for our activists. There are however, some common characteristics across the sheet:-

- soaring energy costs are a key concern for all the Employers in manufacturing
- the huge pressure to minimise environmental impact, particularly in the chemicals and building materials sector is a common thread

- the temptation for the Employers to relocate production to areas of cheap labour or minimum legislation or both remains a threat to UK (and Western European) manufacturing jobs.
- the still strong (although somewhat stalled) growth of equity capital investment in the sector will be an issue for the foreseeable future.

My Report to Congress, Conference is deliberately brief and is probably best expanded upon verbally at the revamped Section Conference.

## **BUILDING MATERIALS**

The established liking on the part of both the Employers and our members for long term pay and conditions settlements in these basic industries has continued.

### **LAFARGE CEMENT**

We have at the time of Congress a further 18 months to run on a 3 year settlement for our process worker members in Lafarge Cement. The second year with effect from 1st January 2008, produced inflation related increases (RPI+0.25%) of 4.38% on basic rates of pay. In the winter of 2007, the company made the welcome announcement that it was their intention to move along the construction of the long talked about new cement works in North Kent. If built – and it looks much more likely than before – this will represent a welcome capital investment of more than £80 million in UK manufacturing industry. The plant would not come on stream until 2011 and therefore, offers no help in the short terms as the Lafarge Northfleet plant (also in North Kent/Essex) closes with significant job loss. This is due to the exhaustion of natural resources and has been planned for several years. It will be handled under the unique Lafarge agreement without compulsory redundancies.

### **LAFARGE LORRY DRIVERS**

Lafarge Cement has its own in-house LGV fleet and the drivers have a separate agreement which is signed by the GMB. Again a long term deal is in place and we are currently in the second year (wef 01.01.08) of a two year deal. A Delegate Conference will be held jointly with the TGWU Section of Unite to draw up a drivers pay claim for 2009.

### **CASTLE CEMENT**

A two year RPI related settlement with effect from 1st January 2008 is in place. Castle Cement is in fact a subsidiary of the German multi-national Heidelberg. This group has just increased its UK presence massively by acquiring the Hanson Group (see below).

### **AGGREGATE INDUSTRIES (QUARRIES)**

This is again a UK subsidiary of a European (Swiss) multi national. After negotiating difficulties, I am pleased to report that a two year deal running from 1st April 2007 was concluded covering all 19 sites in England and Wales. This was accepted following a ballot of GMB members concerned.

### **AGGREGATE INDUSTRIES (CONCRETE)**

The 2007/08 pay round was conducted in a thoroughly unsatisfactory way and to avoid any repetition of this in the future, a very early Delegate Conference was convened in the Autumn of 2007. This allowed us to prepare a joint pay claim in good time and submit it to the Company. At the time of writing, the first meeting on the 2008/09 pay round is a week ahead.

### **HANSON AGGREGATES**

We have just come out of a two year RPI based deal with Hanson Aggregates (ended 31.2.07) and at the time of writing, a new two year deal has gone out to ballot with a recommendation to accept. The offer in the first year equates to 3.65% on basic rates with an RPI trigger in year two. We have also set up a working party to update the 2001 agreement.

### **HANSON BUILDING PRODUCTS (BRICK)**

This national agreement continues to cause difficulties. The GMB is the smaller of the two recognised unions and this year, like last has proved difficult in negotiating terms.

It now seems that the British Division of Hanson is about to improve a 3% increase in basic rates with effect from 1st January 2008. The Company is emboldened in this high handed approach as the largest site, Stewartby in Bedfordshire, is due to close at the end of February 2008.

### **HANSON BUILDING PRODUCTS (CONCRETE)**

This small division of the Hanson Group sustains a separate national agreement. At the time of writing a Joint Delegate Conference is being arranged to prepare a pay claim for implementation with effect from 1st April 2008.

### **HEIDELBERG ACQUISITION OF HANSON**

One of the biggest changes in the building materials sector since last GMB Congress has been the purchase (at a premium) of the whole of the Hanson Group by the giant Heidelberg multi national from Germany. The long term future for some plants may be up for debate but thus far there is no sign of any real threat to the job of GMB members. One of the changes that we may be able to promote with the new owners is an agreement incorporating common conditions of employment across the Group. The continuation of three entirely separating bargaining groups does not make sense from the point of view of the GMB and should not make sense from the point of the Company.

On a different point a joint meeting of GMB shop stewards from Hanson and Caste Cement (also owned by Heidelberg) is planned to decide tactics for the Heidelberg European Works Councils amongst other things.

### **BUILDING BRICK NC**

A one year deal on pay and conditions was implemented from May 2007 and at the time of writing a Delegate Conference is being convened to draw up a claim for 2008/09.

### **PRE-CAST CONCRETE NJC**

We are due to come to the end of a two year deal on 31st March 2008 and a claim has been drawn up following consideration at a Delegate Conference for submission to the Employers. However, a decision has been taken by Tarmac the largest employer covered by the agreement, to withdraw from with effect from March. This casts very serious doubt as to the viability of the NJC going forward and urgent talks are being sought with the Employers side to discuss the future.

I now want to turn briefly to the Process industries and Companies on my sheet.

### **ASTRA ZENECA**

We have a large membership in AZ primarily in the North West Region. Our dealings with the Company since the last Congress included a two year pay settlement running from the middle of last year and involving increases in the basic rates of 6%. This rather unusual deal, which was accepted after a ballot of our members, was prompted by the fact that everything else in the Company is overshadowed by a huge job loss centred on the Macclesfield site and due to come into effect over the next eighteen months or so. The Company is fully consulting the recognised Unions, primarily GMB and in concert with Neil Holden our local Officer and the excellent and experienced AZ Shop Stewards, we are determined that the painful headcount reduction will be achieved on a voluntary basis.

### **CHEMICAL INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION (CIA) NATIONAL AGREEMENT**

We continue to maintain our National Agreement with the CIA. This includes a National level disputes resolution mechanism and since last Congress this has been used on three occasions to help resolve disputes.

## **CORRUGATED PAPER AND BOARD AGREEMENT**

A pay settlement was concluded in the autumn of last year to take this particular section of our members through to beyond Congress. In the consultations on these negotiations with our members, it became clear that our internal mechanisms for communication needed radical overhaul and the necessary steps have been taken to ensure proper membership involvement in the future.

## **PAPER INDUSTRY AGREEMENT**

A new and radical Partnership Agreement for the paper industry was concluded between the Unions (including the GMB) and the Employers in the autumn of last year. This meant that the 2008/09 pay negotiations were centred exclusively on the basic rates of pay. An increase of 3.65% was secured with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2008 after endorsement by our members in a consultative ballot.

Finally by way of industrial report I turn to the Food Manufacturing sector

## **UNITED BISCUITS**

Much of my time in the latter half of last year was spent in discussions with UB in an attempt to protect the key aspects of the final salary pension scheme which covers about 40% of the Company's workforce in its 11 UK factories. The GMB is the largest Union in the Company and hence it fell to us to lead the negotiations. The Company equity capital owners were determined to cut the cost of the pension scheme to them as employers and to pass on future risk to the employees. With a large amount of assistance and expertise from Naomi Cooke from the National Pensions Department, we were able to see off the worst intentions of the Company and go a long way to safeguard our members' position.

At the time of writing this Report pay negotiations covering four of UB's factories which negotiate jointly at National level are underway with the full involvement of our Shop Stewards.

## **NESTLE**

I have continued to be involved with Nestle UK at National level, but not for pay bargaining purposes as negotiations are decentralised. The debate we are having with the Company centres around protecting UK jobs and securing a commitment to sustaining the current plant configuration. The large capital investment currently being undertaken at the York plant gives us some cause for optimism for the future.

## **PREMIER FOODS**

Last autumn I was involved, with the other recognised Unions in discussions with the Company concerning their decision to close six UK plants formerly operated by RHM now part of Premier. These discussions were difficult and ultimately unsuccessful and we saw the plants close with the loss of GMB members jobs in three of them.

## **OTHER FOOD COMPANIES**

I have also had some involvement from national level with Unilever, Northern Foods and at the margins with other parts of the sector where we have members.

## **INTERNATIONAL INVOLVEMENT**

As a consequence, of the wide areas of the economy covered by the Manufacturing Section, we are responsible for the GMB affiliations to a large numbers of European and world Trade Union federations. Without going into detail I am the GMB contact point for those in the chemicals and food sectors. I was privileged to attend in the autumn of 2007, the Congress of the International Chemical Workers in Thailand with Bob Welham who was at that time a CEC member. The Conference was interesting and wide ranging and a full report was submitted to the CEC. I would like to record my thanks to the Union for this opportunity.

## **CONCLUSION**

At the time of writing this Report it is very early days for the new Manufacturing Section but in my view we have made a promising start. I believe that over the next period we can focus on growth areas in

manufacturing -they do exist- and with the commitment of a little resource and the enthusiasm of our Officers and activists, we can grow our membership in the Section.

#### **RESPONSE TO 2007 CONGRESS MOTIONS:**

##### **Motion 129 – Defence Investment**

Regular meetings with the MOD who argue that the placing of orders for the Royal Navy of seven Type 45 Destroyers, two Aircraft carriers and the MARS programme, the biggest shipbuilding orders ever, helps to alleviate any fears of investment cutbacks.

##### **Motion 130 – Royal Navy Downsizing**

Under the auspices of the CSEU, we have had regular meetings with the MOD and can confirm that some of the old Naval Ships are getting ready for Replacement; the current orders for the build of seven Type 45 Destroyers is well under way, and the order for two super Aircraft Carriers has now been placed. A follow up programme called MARS is in the system.

##### **Motion 131 – Shipbuilding**

We have a commitment from the MOD that all ships that are deemed warlike will be built in the UK yards, but with work on the Type 45 Destroyers, the Aircraft carriers and MARS, there could be a skills issue.

##### **Motion 132 – Cammell Laird 1984**

Ongoing discussions by the GMB General Secretary and Minister are still taking place.

##### **Motion 169 – Trident Missile System**

The UK Government has made the decision to go ahead with Trident. This decision was made between the time of publishing the final agenda and Congress. As the decision has been made by the Government to pursue Trident we are no longer in a position to pursue motion 169, but can make sure consideration of this motion's sentiments are still raised at every opportunity.

##### **Composite 11 (Motions 127 & 128) – Remploy**

The actions called upon in the Composite have been fully carried out by the GMB and in fact the campaign by the GMB and affiliated unions has gone beyond the Composite.

##### **Composite 12 (Motions 133 & 134) – Manufacturing/Public Procurement**

We have been very active with regard to public procurement with meetings with the Minister and government departments. There has been some success with the shipbuilding industry where regional meetings with the Ministry of Defence Procurement Minister have taken place on a regular basis. As a result an alliance of shipbuilding yards has been formed securing the UK shipbuilding industry. A further report on public procurement within Remploy will be given at Congress.

##### **Composite 13 (Motions 135 & 136) – Manufacturing**

The union has carried out the sentiments of the Composite when it has been drawn to our attention that British manufacturers have closed down UK manufacturing and move offshore, namely Burberry, Remploy and Christie Tyler and we have publicly condemned these companies for closing down production.

*(Adopted)*

**THE PRESIDENT:** We now move on to the Manufacturing Section. I ask Phil Davies to move his report, pages 61-72.

**BRO. P. DAVIES (National Secretary, Manufacturing Section):** I move the Manufacturing Section Report contained on pages 61-72 of the General Secretary's

Report, this having been fully discussed and agreed at the Manufacturing Section Conference on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The Manufacturing Section Conference was, in our view, a huge success and we can rightfully say that the decision to have it during Congress week was a good one involving all of our lay members. The Conference comprised of a vast array of people representing our great manufacturing industries across the UK. We had representatives from shipbuilding, clothing manufacturers, food manufacturers and, of course, our Remploy people. We had 23 motions covering skills, procurement and Government support for manufacturing. The importance of manufacturing to the UK with its skills, jobs and apprentices, covers, to name a few, nuclear power and shipbuilding. We had industrial motions on pay, sickness, Remploy closures and the CCU 35 hour week and the Campaign Fund. Out of the 23 motions, 18 were carried, two were withdrawn and two were referred back for further consideration.

Brenda Fraser was our Chair of Conference, our President, for that short time and she did an absolutely tremendous job, and I would like to thank Brenda for all the support that she has given. (*Applause*)

We had a ballot for the President and Vice President which the tellers conducted in well and orderly fashion. The new President is Ronnie Waugh from the North West & Irish Region and the Vice President is Brian Burton from the Southern Region.

I also have to mention Sheila Bearcroft, who we are so proud of in the section because she will be this year's TUC President.

We had 11 speakers and presentations ranging from the General Secretary to Arthur Scargill, and anybody who was in our Conference when Arthur was speaking could not help but go away having been inspired. For a man of 79 coming to the Conference and telling us some of the funnier side of the Miners' Strike but also making a serious political point was brilliant.

Yesterday we heard from Tim Payes from the TUC who up-dated us on Government thinking on manufacturing. We were addressed by our President, Mary Turner, and in her usual way she made an emotive speech on Remploy. We had two important international guests, namely, Rob Johnson, from the IMF and Bob Ramsey from the SWI, both of whom stressed the need to maintain our international connections and to assist trade unions in their fights in other parts of the world, especially in the developing world. They also raised issues and the problems facing migrant workers in the UK and around the world.

We had a number of speakers from National Office departments, such as Martin Smith, Naomi and Kathleen who all made tremendous contributions. Andy Worth gave us an update on the Fenland Foods closure and dispute. We thank Andy for that. We can assure Andy that you will get the full support of everybody in the Manufacturing Section.

Yesterday BAE Systems made an announcement that they had signed an agreement stating that the two new aircraft carriers will be made in the UK and that this contract will protect more than 10,000 jobs and it will also make sure that the apprentices will come through that company. I would like to thank Keith Hazlewood for all the work that he has done.

The dispute with Co-op Funeral Care was also given discussion and the disgraceful manner in which this company has acted against our members by bullying our shop stewards, dismissing our shop stewards, and if the Co-op thinks that we are going to stand for that they had better watch this space.

Congress, all in all, it was a successful Manufacturing Conference. We are proud to be in the manufacturing business. We are proud of our members who make the clothes, who build the ships and who build the kidney machines that we use in this country. For too long have we talked down manufacturing. For too long has the UK Government talked down manufacturing. We are going to start talking it up.

Congress, thank you for listening.

THE PRESIDENT: Pages 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71 and 72. Are there any questions? *(No response)* Do you accept the Report.

*The Manufacturing Section Report was adopted.*

### **TRACY'S STORY: DVD FROM REMPLOY YORK**

THE PRESIDENT: We will now show Congress a DVD from Remploy York on the closure of the Remploy York factory.

*(The DVD entitled: Tracy's Story: DVD from Remploy York was shown to Congress)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Congress. Thank you, Phil. I have seen that video on many occasions, and when I went with Tracey, her dad, the stewards from Remploy and the officers, we made sure that Gordon Brown and the Ministers received one of *those* as well. However, we are still waiting to hear a reply. Could I pay tribute to Tracey, her dad, all her family, all the people of York, our shop stewards at Remploy and particularly our officers because I believe that Phil Davies is committed to saving Remploy and he has shown that in every action he has taken. This Congress is committed to making sure that the Traceys of this world do get full employment and proper employment, not filling shelves if they do not want to do that but real work with real pay, real terms and real conditions.

I know I have hammered the Government and I will go on doing it, but forgiving them on this issue, no. We have had some excellent help from MPs, MEPs and councillors throughout this country on Remploy. We have also had Ministers who have helped us but whose hands have been tied in the same way as ours were. It needed a political decision.

We did not get that, but we will keep reminding wherever we stand that “You let these people down”. Thank you, Congress. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I ask Phil Davies to move the CEC Statement on Remplo. This statement will be seconded by Audrey Harry.

## **CEC STATEMENT ON REMPLOY**

### **GMB CONGRESS 2008** **CEC STATEMENT ON REMPLOY**

The 2007 GMB Congress held in Brighton unanimously carried motions opposing any closure of Remplo factory sites. Despite assurances given by the then Secretary of State at last year’s Labour Party Conference from 6<sup>th</sup> March 2008 29 Remplo factory sites were closed and well over 2,300 employees, most of them severely disabled working people, were made redundant.

Instead of the dignity and personal pride that comes from skilled and worthwhile work, Remplo workers are offered the option of either of joining those abandoned disabled people already on the benefits scrap heap, or taking up the offers of mainly low paid, part time, unskilled work.

This is a company that has failed to consult with the trade unions. Instead, it has used Charities to undermine factory based employment, demonstrating precious little idea of the reality of the limited choices and opportunities for severely disabled people; or the discrimination they face in their day to day lives.

The GMB hopes the Charities who came out in support of the factory closures: Mencap, Leonard Cheshire, Mind, Radar, Scope and the RNID can explain how they think unemployment empowers disabled people. They should be ashamed at the way they have helped to sell the jobs of thousands of disabled people - and the job prospects of future generations of disabled people.

The government has failed disabled people in Remplo; and taken their independence and choice away. The GMB has been let down by a Labour Government.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2007 it was announced that approx 2,400 people were targeted for dismissal and 43 factory sites were to close. After strong campaigning by the GMB and Remplo consortium unions, the company reduced this to 29 factory sites but then increased the figure of 2,400 dismissals to over 2,500. All but 5 factory sites have been subjected to brutal redundancy dismissals.

The GMB has led the campaign throughout – and without this the other sites would have closed. There are serious political consequences; relationships with

this Government have been severely damaged and large numbers of Remploy Labour voters and their families are disillusioned.

The sour taste of unfairness and hypocrisy fills the Remploy 2007 story.

However as always the GMB fight goes on:

- Litigation is being prepared against Remploy for individual cases and for a collective complaint for non consultation.
- The CEC will continue to call for public procurement contracts to be allocated to Remploy and to campaign for a new Remploy management fit for purpose in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.
- The CEC will monitor Remploy very closely and how its senior management perform.
- GMB will also follow closely what happens to our members when they leave Remploy.
- The CEC are still committed to supporting the Remploy network, including York and CCU in Birkenhead and the CEC will strongly oppose any further closures of Remploy factory sites.
- The CEC will continue to pursue rights for disabled people to have real choice in employment through the GMB's democratic structure, and the labour movement.

The CEC would like to thank the Officers, Shop Stewards and Activists for all their hard work during what have been one of the hardest fought disputes in the history of the GMB.

*(Carried)*

BRO. P. DAVIES (National Secretary, Manufacturing Section): Thanks, Mary. I move the CEC Statement on Remploy, proud and privileged to do so.

First of all, I would like to pass on to every single person in this hall today the thanks of the 2,500 dismissed disabled workers, the thanks of the 3,200 people still in the factories not knowing what is going to happen from day to day, from week to week and the thanks of the 270 people who are still on the terms and conditions of Remploy but do not know what jobs they are going to do this week, next week or the week after. Thanks, Conference, for the support which you give them and which you have shown over a long, long period.

Conference, I would like to stand here and apologise, apologise because I was not able to stop these factory closures. I was not able to stop the carnage which this management has done. I am not going to tell you today what you already know. I am not going to go back on all the dates and all the times that we were misled. I am not going to do that. I am not going to tell you about the lies and deceit that Brown and Anne McGuire have done to us.

What I am going to do today is to try and tell you what the consequences are of losing your job when you are disabled. Our members now are languishing at home, some of them living with elderly parents not knowing what to do or how to cope. They have been given golden handshakes of many thousands of pounds but no financial support. In fact, there has been no support whatsoever for the 2,500 people who have left. There has also been very little support for those who remain in the factories. The workers cannot understand what has happened to them. They can't understand that under a Labour Government they have been thrown on the scrapheap. Sue, at York, telephoned me and said, "Phil, I don't know what to do. Our lives have been taken apart. I can't cope any more. I've lost my friends and my job. No one has been near me. I feel like committing suicide." It was only the GMB who could stop her from harming herself. What a disgrace that it is trade union people who have to resort to giving advice when it should have been professional people working with them.

They have committed these crimes against our people, and they are crimes -- make no bones about that -- with not even a thought to the consequences. Our people have not only lost their jobs but they have lost contact with the outside world in some cases. They are isolated and their dignity has been taken away.

What is the brave new world which our people have been offered? Let me give you a roll call of some of the jobs. Tracey, who have seen on the video, was an inspector. She was skilled at Remploy at what she did. Where is she now? She is working in a charity shop sorting through old and dirty clothes. What sort of a job is that for someone? Let me tell you that the charity shop does not pay her wages. It is Remploy. So we now know why the charities supported Remploy. They did it because they are going to get cheap and free labour. What hypocrisy. (*Applause*) Dave, who comes from another part of the country, is stacking shelves. That seems to be one of the better jobs. Claire is another one put into a charity shop. Mike is sticking labels on baked beans. What a job for a skilled sowing machinist to be doing now!

In Remploy the Minister, Anne McGuire, and the new Secretary of State, are called 'the new Bonnie and Clyde of the disability movement'. They may not be robbing banks but they are certainly robbing our members of dignity, robbing our members of their jobs, and what a disgrace that McGuire is still supported by this union. It is time that we withdrew our support for McGuire. Make no bones about that. (*Cheers and applause*)

Litigation is going on and it is thanks to our General Secretary. He has put the union's funds where they should be -- supporting our members. By taking litigation, last week we recovered £120,000 in compensation because they did it wrong. Next week we will

recover another £500,000 for another set of our members who have been made redundant, and there are three more cases coming through the courts. They are very large cases which will say that this company conspired with MPs in 2005 and they conspired in 2006 well before they started talking to the unions and the consultation was an absolute sham.

Comrades, what's next? Well, we are not defeated. That's for sure. We are going to rebuild Remploy and we are going to rebuild our shop stewards' organisation. People like James Stribley will be the new Remploy senior stewards. We are going to fight and fight to make sure that we will have a Remploy fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. If this Government can put £50 billion into Northern Rock, they can put another £25 million a year into Remploy and make it a proper place for our people to work. *(Applause)*

"Sack the board" has been one of the songs that our members have been singing, and it is true. We do not want a millionaire chairman appointed by Gordon Brown who made a mess up at Scottish Power. We want an ordinary, hardworking chief executive for this company. We are not going to accept somebody who wants to become the chairman so that he can get a knighthood. That's for sure.

Many quotes by famous people have been made this week. I would like to give a quote on finishing. "If we believe our society should be just and fair, then the more able should be responsible for those who are less able. Some mother's or father's son or daughter will need a Remploy factory. We owe it to those who built up Remploy. We owe it to those who work in Remploy, and we certainly owe it to those people who have yet to come into Remploy". That quote is not by anybody famous, but it was by Byron Winters, one of our shop stewards in Porth, South Wales.

Congress, the fight still goes on. It is right and just that our disabled people are given every opportunity to look at their ability and not just shun them into employment which is not suitable.

I am proud to move the Statement from the CEC. Thank you. *(Applause and cheers)*

SIS. A HARRY MBE (CEC, Manufacturing): I have been given the honour of seconding the CEC statement on Remploy, an honour but not a pleasure. If the world was perfect, I would not have to be here standing paying tribute to Remploy members who now find themselves without a job. We would be celebrating the jobs that Remploy workers do and the valuable contribution that they make to a fair and just society by undertaking a skilled, and very often highly skilled, job. When you talk to Remploy members they all want the same opportunities that everybody else has - they want no more, no less - the right to a good job with a living wage, most of all they just want respect. We have heard the contributions from the GMB regions and each one has told Congress how the factory closures have affected not only Remploy members and their families but all the GMB members in their region. Our experience from the closure of the Crossfield Disabled Workshop in Croydon in 2006 has shown that it is not that easy to redeploy disabled people. After two years less than 20% of the workforce has found suitable employment.

It is clear that at last year's Congress, and at the TUC and the Labour Party Conferences, we were all misled into thinking that the Government would want to negotiate on closures and changes. Phil Davies and his negotiating team put forward viable alternative plans. However, the management and the Government dismissed them. It was clear that the agenda had already been set to move resources from factory-based employment to employment services and to stop the programmes but the closures must not detract from the tremendous campaign fought by our Remploy members. It highlighted the issue of Remploy across the UK and saved up to 54 other sites. It showed the management and the Government that with the help of trade unions Remploy members could step up for their rights and the right to a job. The campaign also resulted in government, local government, and large companies providing work for Remploy factories. We now just need to get the management to get off their backsides and realise that this is their jobs and futures as well.

The GMB will never give up the fight for our Remploy members. To the management and the Government who failed our members we say, *Every breath you take, Every move you make, Every bond you break, Every step you take, Every single day, Every word you say, We'll be watching you.* (Applause) Please support the CEC statement and please support our members in Remploy and their families. Thank you. (Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Audrey. Colleagues, could I ask all those who are councillors, all those who are senior shop stewards in local government, or in the health service - they have the right now to give a contract to the disabled factories, such as Remploy, without it going in for competition - please put it on your agendas. You can help us come back and promote Remploy. They can make the uniforms for the nurses. They can make the uniforms for public service workers. They can do the printing. They can do any job because they are skilled. They can make the furniture. Please do that when you go back and if they will not award it, then you know what to do when the ballot box comes up.

Phil, you have nothing to apologise to anyone for, believe you me; nothing. (Applause) Oh, Paul said only the bloke who sold you that suit, but... (Laughter) Seriously, they should be apologising to you. Thank you, Congress. I now put the statement to Congress.

*The CEC Statement on Remploy was adopted.*

## **CLOSING PROCEDURE OF CONGRESS**

### **Omnibus Vote of Thanks**

THE PRESIDENT: It has been a very emotional morning. Congress we have just about come to the end of our business. Is there any other Congress business? No? I now ask the closing procedures of Congress and John McDonnell, CEC, to move the Omnibus Vote of Thanks. John?

BRO. J. McDONNELL (CEC, Manufacturing): I do feel very emotional myself, but there we go. President, Congress, moving the vote of thanks on behalf of the CEC. I move this vote of thanks with immense pride and take great delight and privilege in doing so. I can only begin by expressing my personal and sincere thanks of all our Congress to our General Secretary, Paul Kenny. (*Applause*) Who else would have the drive and determination to turn round the fortunes of our union from a point of desperation and disaster to one of true optimism and hope.

I have been a member since 1959 and I have known six General Secretaries in that time. The first was Sir Tom Williamson. Well, that says everything: Sir Tom. The second was a Lord, and I could never get my head round that. Then we come to David Basnett, who was a nice bloke, and we did move then some progress and some democracy but it was not David Basnett, the Regional Secretary, that did it. It is in your final agenda, and it was done in 1974 in Blackpool. It was done by the Perivale Branch and I think the man who moved it is here now, and I have wanted to say thank you because it was a big stride forward for democracy in our union at the time, and the General Secretaries and Regional Secretaries at that time fought like cornered rats to stop it, and that was John Cope. Thank you, John. (*Applause*)

Now I come to John Edmonds who had the bright idea of phone banking, where you could phone up from any part of the country and say you have a problem; that was some progress. If we had been a campaigning union like we are now because you can see the pride on the people's faces as they are marching through the various campaigns we have conducted, then we would have saved thousands of jobs and had thousands more members.

Now I come to my favourite, the Lazarus of the GMB, whose claim to fame was to bring deceased members back to life. (*Laughter*) Imagine, Congress, the recruitment figures if he was still around, and whose idea of democracy was to close all the branches. My god, what a lucky escape we had!

Now I come to Paul Kenny whose first job, in spite of the financial difficulties, was to restore our annual conference and in three years he has given to our union more democracy than in any period since the amalgamation in 1924; and that says a lot. So that deserves a round of applause. (*Applause*) Paul, you have raised the bar, and I hope you do not jump over it, and set standards for the future and for future General Secretaries to follow you. Thank you.

Now, our President, Mary. It has been a difficult Congress but, Mary, in the caring way only you can do you have guided the nervous, given strength to the uncertain, shown compassion to all, and kept excellent order of Congress. I have known Mary as a friend and colleague for a number of years. What you see is what you get, a person dedicated to her job as a shop steward, branch secretary, and President of our union, and what a great union we have now. Mary also fights our corner on the NEC of the Labour Party and at this point in time I would not wish that position on any person, but I know that Mary will

use that position to further the gains not just of the GMB but the whole working class and the Trades Union Movement. Mary, your enthusiasm and strength can be a lesson for us all. Mary, on behalf of Congress, I thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

BRO. J. McDONNELL: Let's not forget the hard work of our Vice President, Malcolm Sage. (*Applause*) I know he has a finger splint with doing the button but he does a great job not only in this Congress but behind the scenes and in the wider Trades Union Movement. Malcolm, thank you. (*Applause*)

And now I get emotional about Remploy but it would be remiss of me not to thank and mention the contribution from the National Secretaries Office, none more so than Phil Davies. We have all seen that video of that young lady, Tracy. Mary asked me once to go to a meeting not so long ago, it was the trade liaison of the Labour Party, and I went there. I had a prepared speech. There was an MP there and I gave him the full blast about Remploy. His comment to me was, "What you getting emotional about?" Now, I know there are people in the Labour Party helping us but to make a comment like that really upset me. But I say this, we have members of the consortium here today, Les Woodward, Brian Davies, Phil Brannan, to name a few, who took part in the struggle. I say to management of Remploy and to this so-called Labour government, the fight goes on, and will continue to go on.

President, we have all witnessed another successful Congress. The contributions given by our delegates, old and new, in the honest and forthright manner have shown a degree of freedom of expression that has grown within our union. There were so many inspirational speeches to name any one the list would be too long but remember this, Congress, you will never be forgotten, all you did this week can never be taken away from you, and you deserve a round of applause for that yourself. (*Applause*)

I would now like to move on to our bounce – I mean, our stewards. I nearly said bouncers there. I do not know why I said that! (*Laughter*) There is Hughie Bruce, the Chief Steward, Gordon Toole from the North West & Irish Region, David Hills from the North West & Irish Region, Raymond Stewart from Southern Region, Dennis Phillips from Southern Region, Jimmy Dent from Southern Region, Keith Millard from Southern Region, and Fred Weeks. The SAS would not have got past them, I can assure you. They did a wonderful job. (*Applause*)

I would also like to thank our signers who do a remarkable job, a first-class job. (*Applause*) Julie Fletcher, Nigel Cleaver, Zane Hema, and Isobel Higgins, thank you very much, signers. (*Applause*)

Now I move over to the Health and Safety Award in the memory of Daniel Dennis, who, let's face it, was killed in tragic circumstances, but the bravery of Mrs. Dennis, who has never spoken before, to get up and speak like she did was a credit to her and it will keep her lad's memory alive. I do get emotional about this. I also thank Sheila Bearcroft and

the South Western Region for the wonderful job they have done for that lad's memory. *(Applause)*

I want to move on to our own Monica Smith, the RMA Secretary, who, despite having personal problems at home, travels up and down the country fighting for retired members. Monica, we missed your song this year but thank you very much. *(Applause)* Here is another emotional part, the part about Anna Lucia Pinzon, the leader of the Colombian People's Sector Workers. Who will ever forget that wonderful, wonderful woman who stood in front of this Congress knowing that if she goes home she could be shot like thousands of trade unionists in that Colombian country. I think we should send a message to her that Mary and our General Secretary will do everything they can within the Labour Party and the powers they have. Thank you very much, Anna Pinzon. *(Applause)*

I would, if I may, now like to just take advantage of a situation and thank Harry Donaldson of GMB Scotland for the whisky and as one delegate said, it is Scotch Whisky with an "I" not a "Y". The resolution was moved and I believe that we can help GMB Scotland and make sure you only drink Scotch whisky and no imitations. There is no imitation for Scotch whisky, it has to be brewed in Scotland and bottled in Scotland by our members. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: And drunk by our members!

BRO. J. McDONNELL: Congress, the many people who work tirelessly behind the scenes, they are the ones who make our Congress actually happen. Too often these unsung heroes go without the accolades they deserve. Where do I begin? Well, I went behind the scenes and saw our verbatim shorthand writers who record every word, with all the different accents. I mean, you can understand me because I come from Merseyside! They work tirelessly and they do a fantastic job, and the Congress office staff and the National Office staff at Congress. Thank you. *(Applause)*

Thanks to our press team who have been exceptional, as usual, in their efforts to make the world outside aware of the debates and decisions of this Congress. Thank you to them, too. Thank you. *(Applause)* Also, our general member auditors and whoever I have not mentioned, I thank you all. *(Applause)*

I would also like to mention Helen Johnson, who is the first woman to chair the Standing Orders Committee. She has done an excellent job. I look forward to the day when they have a woman Regional Secretary, and in time a woman General Secretary. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

Now I move to the Exhibition Hall. There were 26 stalls in all, each and every stall was a credit to the sponsors, and once again Liverpool Victoria for providing the tea and coffee, it was much appreciated by Congress. Thank you to all of them. *(Applause)*

I would also like to thank our solicitors, Simpsons, EAD, Browell Smith, and Thompsons. On behalf of our members, thank you. *(Applause)*

Also, Congress, one of the many exhibitions that inspired me was the Cuban Solidarity Campaign. They allowed us a compelling insight into the hearts and minds of Cuban people and we have seen the tremendous bravery and courage of a small nation and its people who are still enduring United States attacks, like the human exiles in Miami, and of course 3,478 deaths through terrorist bombing, and are still enduring what is in effect a financial siege upon their country, and they have survived and are still surviving the effects of a trade embargo from the United States of America. They have shown in the face of massive financial global restrictions how to succeed in defying the unfair forces of economic sanctions to develop a society of care and hope. We salute you, our brothers from Cuba. Thank you very much.

Now, I would like to move on - he may get embarrassed by this but I am going to say it anyway - and mention the hard work and sheer determination that my Regional Secretary, Paul McCarthy, has shown to undertake to get rid of the sickness that infected the now defunct Lancashire Region. When he took over he found a management structure that was inward looking and thought itself untouchable, a collective corrupt dictatorship at regional level, a senior regional management structure that abused the sacred trust of its members by way of dealing with corrupt solicitors for their personal monetary gain, and in the face of constant resolute and determination, and resistance from some parts of the region even still, he has not floundered or stumbled when people not as resolute as him may have done so. He has breathed new life into a dying region. He has not been afraid to make hard decisions that have no doubt upset some of the old guard in the region, but the same decisions have given hope to those who seek to escape the desperation they have endured in the past. He has supported changes that may have hurt the few but which have benefited the many. The new North West & Irish Region is alive and vibrant with enthusiastic officers and staff who now have a person with the best interests of the members, officers, and staff at its heart. Paul, I thank you. (*Applause/Cheers*)

I also want to thank and remember the members of this Movement who have continued in their struggle against oppressive and often aggressive employers, also against the Labour Government who appear to have lost their political way and in their struggle against injustice have lost their redundancy money, their security, and their liberty, as did our own 37 Cammell Laird workers some years ago, so only they would have the pride and the solemn knowledge of the enduring pain that comes with a struggle and sacrifices they have to make on the altar of freedom for me, and for you. These great trade unionists must never be forgotten and the fight for justice must never cease.

To conclude, President, the sound of confidence and self-belief is echoing through the structures of our union so I congratulate all who took part in the success of this Congress. It only leaves me to say a very, very big thank you to all and I move my vote of thanks with great pride. Thank you. (*Applause/Standing Ovation*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, John. I now ask your General Secretary, Paul Kenny, to make a closing speech.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: It has been quite a week, quite an interesting week. John McDonnell, I think, pointed out some pretty serious moments and I was just going to pick on one or two of them.

The Daniel Dennis Award: I also want to pay public tribute to the South Western Region and Sheila Bearcroft. The union was there when that family needed it, and the courage of Anthea and Peter in the five-year struggle supported by their union. They know that that will not bring their son back but they are taking comfort in the fact that their union was there for them, it fought the case. With our help and support they managed to end up putting a bad rogue employer in gaol where they should have been, and hopefully – and this is the comfort for Anthea, as she said - by the activities of the union, her union, maybe there will not be another set of parents who will get that dreaded knock on the door with someone telling them that their son or their daughter is not coming home. That is the power of the union. That is what we are in business for. I want to pay public tribute to South Western.

What about the Acorns Children's Hospice and the side of the union's work that the politicians never give us any credit for, the papers are not interested in, and we ourselves very rarely actually say much about, that is, all of the fantastic amount of fundraising we do for people in our communities because we care about our communities; and, as John said, what about Anna Lucia Pinzon, there must be very few people in the hall who were not moved by that speech.

We have done some good things in the week. I like the new plain rulebook. I am looking forward to next year when we get loads of rule amendments to the new plain rulebook.

We have had a Unison General Secretary, we have had the HR Director of Asda, we have had the boss of Private Equity, and not one of them was physically assaulted while they were here, and I think that is a credit to you, Congress. (*Laughter/Applause*) In fact, the HR Director of Asda saw the bottles on the table and he had a feel of them to make sure they were plastic in case any of them hit him on the back of the head on the way out!

I want to say personal thanks to the team at National Office, to start with. They are lined up along that wall. In fact, they are lined up in size, have you noticed it? Steve, put your hand up; that is it, Steve, all the way. (*Applause*) Helen, Barbara, Laura, Charlie, Katie, Anita, Kevin, and Steve Short. (*Applause*) If you knew the work these people do in the months leading up to Congress to make it, if you like, so that it works. There is no way on earth that Congress would be able to operate if it was not for them, so my deep thanks. I am not going to embarrass you this year, Kevin, by asking you to come on stage in your shorts. You are all right. Do not worry about it.

To Rose Conroy and Steve Pryle, and Charlotte Gregory, the press and the campaigns team, what a fantastic job! What a fantastic job! (*Applause*)

Barry Smith, our National Legal Officer, who assures me that he does not use Grecian 2000, even though I have given him a few grey hairs over the last few years. Barry, thank you and the Standing Orders Committee for everything that you do. It is greatly appreciated. *(Applause)*

People that sometimes we forget, Bob Robinson, John McCargo, and Kevin Sweeney, who actually look after the IT Departments throughout the union. Thank you, Bob, well done. *(Applause)*

That beloved band, of course, by all and sundry, our National Officials, would you like to stand up so the members can recognise you? *(Laughter)* Cheap shot! Cheap shot! The Head Office staff, I cannot mention, I am sorry, the Pensions Department, our Health & Safety Department, fantastic personnel in there, and our Political Department which has been organised to deal with some of the issues we looked at this week. They have been the people analysing the performance of all the MPs and I know that, Phil, you mentioned one particular person, and no doubt GMB Scotland are scratching through their lists as we speak! *(Applause)*

Kathleen Walker-Shaw from the European Office, what a fantastic job she does for us out there. It is an incredible job. We are the envy of all the other trade unions in relation to that European operation. If ever there was value for money, it is that. Kathleen, thank you very much indeed for your fantastic efforts. *(Applause)*

Robert Badlan - I know you are here, Robert. Put your hand up so they can see you. That is it. Although Robert decided to take early retirement to leave the union to move to this part of the world, actually, he has continued to work for us putting together a lot of the sponsorship for this year's Congress. He has done that from down here. He is not on the payroll or anything; he has done it to help the union. You are not getting paid, son, sorry. Didn't I tell you that bit? *(Laughter)* He raised £65,000 through the stalls and other things. He is the one who created a lot of the free gifts that were turned out, the President's do and so on. Robert, cheers mate. I really appreciate it. You have been a real asset and long may you do it. Well done. Thank you. *(Applause)*

Thank you to Tracy. I know Tracy is here somewhere. Thank you to Tracy for lending him to us. You can have him back now for a few months or so. Well done, Tracy. *(Applause)*

I want to make a few promises. It is always dangerous when you make promises but I would like to make a couple. Forgive me a little bit of indulgence but I want to make a couple of little promises. Firstly, to my grandkids, starting with my eldest grandchild, Magan. Magan, I am sure your Dad is going to run this on the computer so I am talking directly to you: Granddad promises you that I will not embarrass you any more by asking you to kiss me now you are nearly a teenager. Is that all right? *(Laughter)*

To Halley, next in line, I promise you I will listen to you when you tell me to watch out for the cornflake lady.

And to Alex, who is only 6, he is naturally left-footed and he is a fantastic little footballer. So, I do not know what you are going to do in your retirement but I know I shall make a few quid if he is playing for Man United. (*Laughter*)

To Jake, I promise to stop singing to you as soon as you are old enough to tell me to shut up. (*Laughter*)

I will make you a few promises now. I promise you on behalf of the CEC and on behalf of the senior management team, who are totally united, that we will keep the union financially stable and independent until you tell us otherwise.

We promise to encourage passion, commitment, and hard work, throughout the union. We say this to you: put your faith in your union and your trust in your principles, and you will never go far wrong.

This week we have had speakers from all over England, Poland, Zimbabwe, Colombia, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and even from the People's Republic of the Professional Drivers Branch. (*Laughter/Applause*)

I want to say thank you to one or two people: Ida Clemo. Stand up and wave, Ida. Sorry. Stand up and wave. (*Applause*) And to Dolores. (*Applause*) Dolores and Ida absolutely just work flat out the whole year round. If you knew the amount of time they spent at home, at weekends, working to make sure that Congress works, the programmes, the speakers' notes, just all of the bits and pieces. They are absolutely tireless. They are a fantastic pair and I am so grateful that they work for us. When I first went to Head Office a few years ago, Dolores came in to tell me that she was going to retire, which I did not take personally but, you know... I asked her if she would sort of hang on and perhaps give us a bit of help at Congress. You see her up here all week completely unflustered. Yes, we know! She does an incredible job and I have to tell you that in fact it is her and her husband's, Brian, wedding anniversary. Thirty-eight years married, I think. They had planned a nice little weekend together down here after Congress and he hurt his back. He had not even got here and he hurt his back. (*Laughter*) Unfortunately, he is going to have a little surgery, I think. So to you, Dolores, and to Brian, we want to wish you the very, very best, thank you for everything you do, and congratulations on your anniversary, and there is a small bunch of flowers. (*Presentation amid applause*). A real credit, real asset to the union and you can never say thank you enough to people who work for you, you just cannot. It is a trick. If only employers learnt that, if only they actually expressed gratitude for the service that people give, then they would have a lot happier workforce, quite frankly.

Mary, our President, there is nothing I can say that you do not already know about. There is but I am not going to tell you! It involves penicillin – antibiotics, wasn't it, Mary?

THE PRESIDENT: Something like that.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Yes, something like that. Mary also has something to celebrate. We have the celebration that she is our President but it is her birthday tomorrow, I think. Mary, is it tomorrow?

THE PRESIDENT: Something like that.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Yes, something like that! (*Laughter*) To you, Mary, our best wishes and also we would like to give you a small bunch of flowers. (*Presentation amid applause*) (*Congress sang, "Happy Birthday"*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you all. Thank you. Thank you, Kenny, you never fail.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: We have had at Congress and at Sectional Conferences ministers, HR Directors, Private Equity bosses, we are passing new policies, and we have restated our values. We have told the weak we are here to help them and support them and we have told the bullies, the rip-off merchants, the politicians, the bad employers, and, yes, even governments, that we stand up for our members, we stand up for pensioners, for families, for the young, the sick, and we pledge that we will use our power, and we do have some power, to help at home and to help overseas, our own members, our own communities, and our own families, and wherever we find a need for support.

To the new delegates: thanks for dipping your toe in this activity of the GMB. I hope you have enjoyed this week. To the seasoned campaigners, can I just say if it was not for your activities throughout the year and down through the years, there would not be a union for the new delegates to inherit. I pay public tribute to all of the work you have done down through the years. Thank you absolutely on behalf of myself and the Executive, you deserve a round of applause. (*Applause*)

So we finish, Mary, our gathering. We have done some new things this year. We have tried some new things. We hope that we have extended the democracy of the union, that is the intention, and we want to go further. Our purpose in life is really simple, there is nothing fancy about it at all, it is to fight injustice wherever you find it because that is really the GMB at work. You have a great, great year. (*Applause/Standing ovation*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul, very much. Paul, I know you did not forget but you paid tribute to everyone that has participated, the partners and the work they do to support their colleagues, but I would like to pay tribute to your wife, Pat Kenny, who is at the back. Pat, stand up. (*Applause*) She can never be sure what time he gets in or what time he gets up, until she gets that phone call, but, Pat, thank you for giving us Paul Kenny. Thank you. (*Applause*) So that it is no surprise, Pat, and I know you are travelling home or you may be going somewhere else, Congress will be sending you a bouquet direct to your home. Thanks. (*Applause*)

Colleagues, we now come to the closing ceremony which is in two parts. We will have a short slide show with some highlights of Congress. That should be good. The music this

year is a medley of Billy Bragg, *Power in the Union*. Then we will all stand and sing The Red Flag. Can we have the slide show and the music, please?

*Slides shown to Congress.*

THE PRESIDENT: I think Sarah Bright was next on to sing! All right, Dougie. Colleagues, before I just move quickly into the next part of the programme, I forgot to announce that the RMA raffle raised £892 and prizes can be collected from the RMA stall. Can I say thanks to everybody; a fantastic amount of money. Cheers. (*Applause*) I now ask Congress to stand to sing The Red Flag.

*Congress sang The Red Flag.*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, from me, the General Secretary, the Executive, thank you for a wonderful Congress. It would not be a congress without you. I wish you all a safe and pleasant journey home, and to you and your families thank you one and all. (*Applause*)

Congress stands adjourned.