

GMB ANNUAL CONGRESS 2008

held on:

SUNDAY 8TH JUNE – THURSDAY 12TH JUNE 2008

at:

THE PLYMOUTH PAVILIONS

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

PROCEEDINGS

DAY ONE

(SUNDAY 8TH JUNE 2008)

FIRST DAY'S PROCEEDINGS

SUNDAY, 8TH JUNE 2008

MORNING SESSION

Congress assembled at 9.30 a.m.

OPENING OF CONGRESS

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning, Congress. Welcome to sunny Plymouth. I do hope that you all have a good time and you enjoy the Congress, in particular our visitors. We have a vast number of visitors this year and I am delighted to see you all here. I know I have four visitors from my own branch, including those from Chemilines, Brent and Barnet and I know that Hiten has some visitors from his branch in Wembley. I hope all of you have a good time.

Colleagues, you can see from the slide show that last time the GMB was in Plymouth was 116 years ago in 1892. Some of you will remember it well. *(Applause)*

SAFETY PROCEDURES ANNOUNCEMENT

THE PRESIDENT: Let me advise delegates that there are written details of the fire, safety and evacuation procedures included in the delegates' wallet. Please make sure that you read them. I also advise delegates that if an alarm sounds please leave the building by the nearest fire exit. The assembly point is the Plymouth Pavilions car park. I remind all delegates and visitors to check they have switched off their mobile phones and to make sure that they are on 'silent', otherwise you pay the penalty of £10 to Mary's charity. So that should be a warning.

Colleagues, Congress sessions will be transmitted on the GMB Congress TV. This means that your speech will be transmitted live over the Internet through the GMB National website. Please remember to state your name and Region clearly.

BANNER CEREMONY

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, this year I am going to ask Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region to form the Banner Party. I now ask you to stand to welcome the Banner Party into Congress.

*(The Banner Party entered the Congress hall to the music of **Jerusalem**) (Applause)*

I want to thank the delegates who brought the Banner into Congress. I know they were extremely nervous. Well done to all of you and to the region. Thank you.

WELCOME TO DELEGATES AND GUESTS

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I would like to welcome various guests and visitors who will be attending Congress this week. I welcome the general member auditors who will count any votes this week, should there be any. They are Jim Clarke and Ian Burkett from Midland & East coast Region and Pat Perry from North West & Irish Region. If you have a problem, you can go and see them.

I welcome colleagues of ours who are retired regional secretary. They are John Cope from the London Region; Frank Wilkinson from the Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region, and we also have with us Vic Baines, the Midland & East Coast Regional President. I know that we have Edna Rolph, one of our trustees. Welcome. I can see you at the back of the hall.

On Monday we will be welcoming Anna Lucia Pinzon, leader of the Colombian Public Sector Workers Trade Union FENALTRASE, and on Wednesday we have Michael Mazurek from the Polish Consulate.

We have the Verbatim Shorthandwriters, who are dear friends of ours, who have been coming to Congress for as long as we have, Michael Thear and Phyllis Hilder. I also ask you to welcome the Sign Language Interpreters, Nigel Cleaver, Julie Fletcher, Zane Hema and also Isobel Higgins, who will be joining us on Wednesday. Thank you for the work that you do at Congress.

I now invite Gary Palmer from the GMB Plymouth Branch to the platform to make a presentation of a locally produced crystal ornament to commemorate the GMB's Congress being held here in Plymouth again. Gary, would you come to the rostrum and say a few brief words to welcome delegates.

BRO. G. PALMER (GMB Plymouth Branch): May I, President, on behalf of the combined Plymouth GMB branches, welcome Congress to our city and to mark the occasion offer *this* token from our branches and our members. I also offer our best wishes from Congress and that delegates enjoy our city this week. Please come back but not so long this time. (*Presentation made amidst applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Gary, can I ask you to thank all the branches concerned for that wonderful gift. Thank you.

Colleagues, let me make an extra safety announcement. I would not want any of your hurting yourselves this week. Please be careful when you stand up from your chair as the seats, as some have found out to their cost, tend to spring up. Let us hope you will not be needing to use our Ambulance Service members yet. Please be careful. It is a serious issue.

CONGRESS PROGRAMME:

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to the Congress Programme. For the first-time delegates, this is the order of business for the week, though changes may be necessary from time to time. Where changes are expected, I will try to give delegates advance warning. This also includes details of fringe meetings and exhibitions. Also new for this year, the Programme shows the agenda for all Section Conferences for Tuesday and Wednesday. Due to a number of guest speakers having to return to Parliament for the Three Line Whip, the programme for Congress and some Section Conferences have been changed. You should have a copy of the amended Congress Programme on your tables.

The Final Agenda includes all motions and rule amendments remaining on the agenda, all composite motions, Standing Orders Committee Report No. 1, SOC guidelines for Congress business, including time limits for speakers, representation statements for Congress and Section Conferences. This year the Final Agenda also includes Section Conference motions at the back and a section on existing Policy motions.

Congress, please make sure that you have all your documents in the wallet. Just check to make sure.

There are recycling bins in the Hall for glass, paper and plastic. Also, all the Congress printed reports have been printed on recycled paper and carry the FSC logo. All GMB carrier bags are biodegradable.

ROLL CALL

THE PRESIDENT: I now ask the Vice President, Malcolm Sage, to call the roll. Malcolm.

The VICE PRESIDENT called the roll.

APPOINTMENT OF TELLERS

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Let me report that the following tellers for this year have been appointed:

Birmingham

No. 1 – Martin Schuck to count North West & Irish Region

London

No. 2 – Barbara Benham to count GMB Scotland

Midland

No. 3 – Rob Whilding to count Southern Region

Northern

No. 4 – George Murray to count South Western Region

North West & Irish Region

No. 5 – Bill Goulding to count Yorkshire Region

GMB Scotland

No. 6 – Jackie Faulds to count Birmingham Region

Southern

No. 7 – Douglas Barr to count London Region

South Western Region

No. 8 – Craig Jones to count Midland & East Coast Region

Yorkshire

No. 9 – Colin Gill to count Northern Region

I ask Tellers if they will remain in the Congress Hall whilst Congress is in session and to remind delegates that they must be in their allotted seats when a vote is being taken. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: I now ask Paul Kenny to give a practical demonstration on eligibility for voting.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: There seemed to be some confusion last year about who was entitled to participate on certain votes. So we thought we would just make it easy for everybody. I would like everyone in the hall to stand up, please. Would all full-time officials please sit down. Would all the visitors please sit down. Would all the guests please sit down. Would all the CEC please sit down. Those of you who are still standing, apart from me, are the only ones who should have their hands up when it comes to voting at Congress. Is that all right? *(Agreed)* Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: What a practical demonstration that was. Wait until we come to reality.

STANDING ORDERS REPORT NO. 1

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I ask the Chair of the Standing Orders Committee, Helen Johnson, to give Report No. 1. Congress, this is the first time that we have had a woman as Chair of the Standing Orders Committee in the history of the union. Welcome, Helen. *(Applause)*

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO 1

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

Times for Congress

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

Sunday 8 June	9.30 am - 12.30 pm 2.00 pm – 5.00 pm
Monday 9 June	9.30 am - 12.30 pm 2.00 pm – 5.00 pm

(Section Conferences will take place between 9.30 am on Tuesday 10 June and 12.30 pm on Wednesday 11 June)

Wednesday 11 June 2.00 pm – 5.00 pm

Thursday 12 June 9.30 am – 12.30 pm
2.00 pm – 5.00 pm

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

Times for Speakers

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

General Motions and Rule Amendments:

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

Officers' Reports:

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

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

Special Reports and CEC Statements:

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

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

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

Questions on Balance Sheet and Auditors' Report

Questions on the Balance Sheet and Auditors' Report must be submitted in writing to the Congress Office no later than 5 pm on Tuesday 10 June.

Congress Motions transferred to Section Conferences

In accordance with Recommendation 14 of the “Framework for the Future of GMB: Moving Forward” CEC Special Report endorsed by Congress 2007, the Standing Orders Committee is recommending that the following Motions which were submitted as Congress Motions should be dealt with by the relevant Section Conferences (*the Motions are listed as they appear in the relevant Section Conference Agendas*):

Commercial Services

CS7	Energy Crisis
CS10	Violent Attacks on CVIT Staff
CS11	Health and Safety
CS13	Contract Security

Manufacturing

MF1	Manufacturing Strategy
MF3	Manufacturing
MF5	UK Manufacturing Procurement
MF8	Aircraft Carriers
MF9	Remploy
MF10	Remploy Closures
MF18	Scotch Whisky Bottled in Scotland Our Heritage
MF21*	35 Hour Week
MF22*	Sickness Pay
MF23*	Suing in the American Courts

(Note these Motions appeared in the Preliminary Agenda as Congress Motions. The SOC is recommending that they are dealt with by the Manufacturing Section Conference).*

Public Services

PS1	Public Services
PS2	Public Sector Pay
PS6	Public Sector Pay
PS8	Public Sector Pay
PS13	Public Services
PS22	Privatisation of Care for the Elderly
	<i>(Note: PS 22 appears as part of the Section Composite Motion “Against the Privatisation of Care for the Elderly”)</i>
PS25	Hospital Chaplaincy
PS39	Code of Practice on Workforce Matters in Local Authority Contracts

PS40	Two Tier Workforce
PS48	Seeking Recognition Agreement with Sodexo Defence (Unfair Treatment of Cleaners)
PS50	Local Government Pension Scheme
PS51	Pensions

(Note: PS51 appears as part of the Section Composite "LGPS Admitted Body Status")

Section Conference Motions transferred to Congress

In accordance with Recommendation 14 of the "Framework for the Future of GMB: Moving Forward" CEC Special Report endorsed by Congress 2007, the Standing Orders Committee is also recommending that the following Motions which were submitted as Section Conference Motions should be dealt with by Congress *(the Motions are listed as they appear in the Final Congress Agenda)*:

Congress

- 5. Congress
- 13. Olympic Games
- 58. Government Legislation
- 60. New Legislation Plural Plaque & Pleural Thickening
- 69. Pensions
- 76. Protection of Company Pensions
- 88. Annual Holiday Entitlement
- 97. Working Time Directive 2003 Transport Regulations
- 102. The National Minimum Wage Helpline
- 140. Armed Forces Health and Safety
- 169. Financial Services Institutions
- 178. Housing
- 193. Carers Allowance
- 215. GMB Global Support

Motions Out of Order

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

Motion 16: Pay Negotiations

The Motion calls for negotiated improvements on pay and conditions once agreed to only be given to GMB members in the workplace. This would require an amendment to Rule 2 to give effect to its provisions. Congress 2008 is not a rules revision year, so the Motion is out of order at this year's Congress.

Motion 19: The election of Regional Secretary's

The Motion calls on the CEC to initiate rule changes to ensure that Regional Secretaries stand for election of the entire Regional Membership, with proposals being brought to Congress 2009. This would require amendments to Rule 17 D to give effect to its provisions. Congress 2008 is not a rules revision year, so the Motion is out of order for debate at this year's Congress.

Motion 21: Election of Organisers

The Motion calls on the CEC to bring forward rule changes to eliminate the requirement of Regional Organisers to stand for elections within 5 years of their appointment. This would require amendments to Rule 17G to give effect to its provisions. Congress 2008 is not a rules revision year, so the Motion is out of order for debate at this year's Congress.

Motion 37: Contribution Increase

The Motion calls for contribution rate changes. This would require amendments to Rule 47 to give effect to its provisions. Congress 2008 is not a rules revision year, so is out of order for debate at this year's Congress.

Motion 38: Contributions & Benefits

The Motion calls for the CEC to bring amendments to rules to the next appropriate Congress concerning the contributions and benefits that apply to part-time workers. This would require amendments to Rule 47 to give effect to its provisions. Congress 2008 is not a rules revision year, so is out of order for debate at this year's Congress.

Motion 40: Increase in Benefits

The Motion calls for benefits to be increased in line with contributions. This would require amendments to Rules 47, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 59, 60, and 61 to give effect to its provisions. Congress 2008 is not a rules revision year, so the Motion is out of order for debate at this year's Congress.

Motion 43: Funeral Benefit

The Motion calls for an increase in Funeral Benefit. This would require amendments to Rule 56. Congress 2008 is not a rules revision year, so the Motion is out of order for debate at this year's Congress.

Motion 126: Labour Party Affiliation and Use of the Political Fund

The Motion calls for the Union to end its affiliation to the Labour Party. This would require amendments to Rules 2.10, 10.7, 20.10, and 66. Congress 2008 is not a rules revision year, so the Motion is out of order for debate at this year's Congress.

Motions in line with Existing Policy

In accordance with Recommendation 14 of the "Framework for the Future of GMB: Moving Forward" CEC Special Report endorsed by Congress 2007, the CEC has advised the Standing Orders

Committee about those Motions which are in line with existing GMB policy. The CEC report on “Existing Policy Motions” printed in the Final Agenda explains when and how existing policy was established in each case. The Standing Orders Committee has accepted the advice and is therefore recommending to Congress that the following motions be put to Congress for endorsement without the need for debate:

55. Health & Safety Executive Funding
63. Introduction of the Roving Safety Representative
64. Roving Reps
67. Provisional Improvement Notices (PIN)
73. Campaign for Removal of Fixed Retirement Age
75. Pensions
76. Protection of Company Pensions
77. Protection of Pensions
78. Company Pensions
80. Trade Union Freedom Bill
81. Trade Union Freedom Bill
83. Union Legislation
84. Simplification of the Legislation on ‘the right to take industrial action’
88. Annual Holiday Entitlement
89. Extra Bank Holiday
90. Bank Holidays
91. Bank Holidays
95. The Removal of the UK’s Opt-Out Clause of the Working Time Directive
104. Minimum Wage
105. Minimum Wage
108. Redundancy Pay
109. TUPE Regulations 2006 Statutory Instrument 2006 No. 246
110. Equal Treatment for Agency Workers in the United Kingdom
111. Protection of Vulnerable GMB Members
112. Agency Workers
113. Temporary and Agency Workers
115. Temp Agency Regulations
117. Temporary Agency Workers
133. The Labour Party
141. ID cards
151. Education
168. Abortion Rights
178. Housing

- 180. National Health Service
- 181. National Health Service Campaign
- 182. Health Policy
- 183. The Decline of NHS Dentists
- 188. Free Personal Care
- 190. Care of the elderly
- 212. Palastinian Solidarity Campaign

Composite Motions

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

Mobile Phones

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

Film Cameras

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

DVDs, Videos etc

Requests to play DVDs, videos, etc should be submitted to the Standing Orders Committee for approval prior to being shown at Congress, and a copy provided to the Standing Orders Committee.

Bucket Collections

Requests for permission to hold Bucket Collections should be submitted in writing to the Committee by 11 am on the first Sunday morning session of Congress. (It is a term of Exhibitors' agreements with GMB that they will not request permission to hold a collection.) Requests must be submitted in writing by the Regional Secretary, and must have the support of the Regional Delegation. Priority will be given to requests for bucket collections which concern trade union or related issues. Where permission is granted, those requesting the collection must organise, count and bank the collection, if necessary liaising with the Congress office for support from Congress Stewards. They must then notify the Congress office of the amount collected, so that the President can inform Congress.

In the normal course of events the total number of bucket collections to be authorised by the SOC will be limited to a maximum of 3, except in exceptional and unforeseen circumstances at the discretion of the President. The SOC will limit consideration of requests for bucket collections to a maximum of 1 per Region, except in exceptional and unforeseen circumstances.

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

SIS. H. JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): President and Congress, I formally move SOC Report No. 1. Colleagues, you will find SOC No. 1 in your copy of the Final Agenda, starting at page 21.

Before I refer to the Report of the SOC, I would wish to extend best wishes to one of its longest standing members, namely, John Onslow, from London Region. John has been ill recently and he is not able to attend Congress this year but we hope to see him fit, well and back with us very soon. The SOC would also like to thank Joe Isaacs from London Region who stepped in at such short notice to cover for John, and thank the London Region for assisting the SOC and Congress in this matter.

I now move on to SOC Report No. 1. I formally move adoption of that report and, in doing so the SOC would like to thank delegates and their regional secretaries for agreeing the 12 composite motions which also appear in your final agenda starting at page 76.

Will colleagues also please note the long-standing Guidelines for Congress Business on page 14 of the Final Agenda. This will help all of you, particularly new delegates, in understanding the procedures and the guidelines that the President and the SOC work to. On the subject of withdrawn motions, the SOC has been informed that one motion at this stage has been withdrawn, which is Motion 40: Increasing Benefits, from Midland & East Coast Region.

Would delegates please note that if any further Congress motions are to be withdrawn during the week the procedure outlined in the Final Agenda at page 17 should be adhered to.

Would colleagues please also note the new developments which will arise at this Congress. These arise as a result of recommendation 14 in the CEC Special Report: *A Framework for the Future of the GMB Moving Forward*, which was carried by Congress 2007. Firstly, that Congress will break at the close of the Afternoon Session on Monday, 9th June to allow the Section Conferences to take place. Congress will resume on Wednesday, 11th June at 2 p.m.

Secondly, that regions submitted motions this year for both Congress and the Section Conferences. The SOC has recommended that some of these motions are transferred to Congress or to Section Conferences as appropriate. Delegates should also note that the motions which SOC has recommended are transferred are set out in Report No. 1, pages 22 to 23 of the Final Agenda. They are also listed in the relevant part of the Final Agenda or in the relevant parts of the agendas for the Section Conferences.

Thirdly, would delegates please note that Congress motions which are existing policy will be put to Congress to be endorsed without the need for debate. The Central Executive Council has advised the SOC which Congress motions are in line with existing policy and the SOC has accepted this advice. Delegates should also note that existing policy motions are listed in the SOC Report No. 1 at page 25 in the Final Agenda. They are also marked in the Final Agenda with the lettering "EP" by the side.

Delegates may also find it helpful to refer to the detailed report from the CEC on existing policy motions which is at page 84 in the Final Agenda. This explains when the policy in question was reached. I repeat that the SOC is recommending that existing policy motions are put to Congress for endorsement without the need for debate.

Now we come to Motions Out of Order. The Standing Orders Committee has ruled that the following motions are out of order because they require an explicit rule amendment or because they require a consequential rule amendment to give effect to their provisions in a non-rules revision year. The motions are listed in SOC Report No. 1 with the reasons specified at page 24 of the Final Agenda and they are as follows – Motion 16: Pay Negotiations; Motion 19: The election of Regional Secretaries; Motion 21: Election of Organisers; Motion 37: Contribution Increase; Motion 38: Contributions & Benefits; Motion 43: Funeral Benefit; Motion 126: Labour Party Affiliation and Use of the Political Fund. I repeat, these motions are nos. 16, 19, 21, 37, 38, 43 and no. 126.

On the subject of emergency motions, the SOC has accepted two emergency motions as being in order for debate. Emergency Motion No. 1: Stop Privatising the NHS Now, stands in the name of the Central Executive Council. Congress will be advised in due course of when this motion will be heard. Emergency Motion no. 2: Fenland Foods Closure, standing in the name of Midland & East Coast Region. The SOC is recommending this motion be heard by Congress and will be heard during the Monday Morning session. The SOC is still considering three other possible emergency motions and will report back to Congress on these.

President and Congress, Congress 2008 involves new procedures which we are all learning and working our way through. The SOC would like to thank delegates for all the co-operation they have shown as we move forward for the benefit of the members and the union.

President and Congress, I formally move adoption of SOC Report No. 1.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Helen, very much. It was a long report but well done. (*Applause*) Does any delegate wish to speak on the recommendations of the Standing Orders Committee? You may come to the rostrum. Please give your region and name and exactly what you are referring to. I do not want a speech or a composite. I want the points.

SIS. D. PETERSON (London): I move reference back on SOC Report No. 1 on Motion 38 with the support of the London Region. Had the SOC read and fully understood Motion 38, it clearly states: “We are instructing the CEC to review in consultation with branches rule 47 with a view to bringing back the proposed amendments at the next appropriate Congress”; i.e. next year. The SOC state that they have ruled this motion out of order because 2008 is not a rules revision year. The words here are “consultation with the branches” and “next year”. We are giving the CEC 12 months to look into this amending of the rule and we have never mentioned changing the rule this year. In the

light of this, we ask the SOC to look again at this motion, to reconsider their decision and rule the motion back in order. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dot.

BRO. S. McKENZIE (London): I move reference back for very much the similar reason as Dot has just given to her motion. This is on Motion 19 that I would have been moving on the election of regional secretaries without the support of the London Region. It is the same thing. It has been ruled out of order by the Standing Orders Committee because it says that they require a rule change. It does not actually say that. It says that we want the CEC to look into it and come back with their suggestions next year so it does not require a rule change. I move reference back.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Steve.

BRO. K. BARKER (London): I am speaking without the support of my region. Please indulge a first time delegate. I would like to know why Rules 2.10, 10.7, 20.10 and 66 are being quoted as reasons for Motion 126 being ruled out of order? Specifically, rule 10 does refer to the bones of the old Labour Party Clause IV, which New Labour effectively repudiated and does not mention affiliation to the Labour Party. No rule change needed. Rule 10.7 does not mention affiliation to the Labour Party. The CEC's duty is "to perform all such acts, duties and obligations as may be necessary to attain or are incidental to or conducive to the attainment of the objects and general interest of the union". The objects and general interest of the union could be interpreted to refer to the need to distance the union from a Labour Party that does not support the objectives and general interests. No rule change needed.

Rule 20.10: Elections from regional councils for delegates to the Labour Party Conference would simply not be necessary if the union were not affiliated to the Labour Party. Delegates to the Labour Party Conference could still be GMB members paying individual membership to the Labour Party nominated by their Labour branch parties. No rule change needed. Once again, there is no -----

THE PRESIDENT: Colleague, you are giving me a speech and I just need the points.

BRO. BARKER: Basically, we feel there is no mention in the rules which says that this would be a rule change.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Anyone else. *(No response)* Helen.

SIS. H. JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): In response to the delegates who have just spoken from the rostrum, the SOC's position as printed in your Final Agenda, is as follows. Motion 38 calls for the CEC to bring amendments to rules to the next appropriate Congress concerning contributions and benefits that apply to part-time workers. This would require amendments to rule 47 to give effect to its provisions.

Congress 2008 is not a rules revision year and is out of order for debate at this year's Congress.

Motion 19 – The Election of Regional Secretaries. This motion calls on the CEC to initiate rule changes to ensure that all Regional Secretaries stand for election of the entire Regional Membership with proposals being brought to Congress 2009. This would require amendments to Rule 17(d) to give effect to its provisions. As Congress 2008 is not a rules revision year, this motion is out of order for debate at this year's Congress.

Finally, in response to Motion 126 – Labour Party Affiliation and the use of the Political Fund, this motion calls for the union to end its affiliation to the Labour Party. This would require amendments to rules 2.10, 10.7, 20.10 and 66. Congress 2008 is not a rules revision year, so the motion is out of order for debate at this year's Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Helen.

Colleagues, I now ask, after hearing that reply, if the London Region will accept the reply? *(No response)* I am going to move to the vote. Does Congress accept London Region's move on Motions 126, 19 and 38 to be amended or do you accept Standing Orders? All those in favour, please show? Those against? That is lost. *(Lost)* I now put Standing Orders Report to the vote. Those in favour, please show?

The Standing Orders Committee Report was adopted.

Colleagues, the person with Helen is Barry Smith, our legal adviser, plus he is the secretary to the Standing Orders Committee.

Colleagues, before I move on, and please do not be frightened to put your hands up, I will be calling motions en block where I can but I will be giving Congress full warning of your motion coming up. When I do, I will be asking you to come forward to the front of the hall to move the motion. Last year we timed the time it took for people in lost time to walk from the back to the front of the hall and we lost 1 hour, 40 minutes in debating time. That is very important time to delegates. I do not want to get to Thursday, and I do not intend to, and have to ask delegates to formally move and formally second their motions. They have been preparing those motions, probably, for months and it is not right or fair. So there will be no 'formally seconding' on this last day. Every resolution will be moved at this Congress. I can only do that with your support. When I call your motions, chairs are placed at the front of the hall where you can sit just before you move your resolution. Is that clear, colleagues? *(Agreed)*

(A delegate from the floor complained that some delegates could not hear the proceedings. The General Secretary informed the Congress that the sound engineers have been informed of the situation)

THE PRESIDENT: Please, delegates, remember that we have two rostrums, one each side of the hall, so please use them both. Malcolm.

CONFIRMATION OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, President. Congress, this year's Standing Orders Committee are as follows:

BIRMINGHAM	Elizabeth Corbett
LONDON	Joe Isaacs
MIDLAND	Helen Johnson (SOC Chair)
NORTHERN	George Emmerson
NORTH WEST & IRISH	Bob Welham
SCOTLAND	Mary Finn
SOUTHERN	Alan Durrant
SOUTH WESTERN	Gareth Lewis
YORKSHIRE	Peter Bagnell

The CEC Observers on the SOC are: Lena Sharp, Commercial Services Section; Mick Widdison, Public Services Section, and Andy McGivern, Manufacturing Section. Thank you, President.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS TO GMB CONFERENCE 2008

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

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, let me say a few words just before I do make my speech. Could I thank my Region for re-electing me this year onto the CEC and I am very grateful. This year I do have a special visitor with me. He is always saying he should get the Gold Badge. Well, he has got one this year but it was bronze. That is my husband, who is in the hall today. None of us in this hall can do the work unless we have the support of our families and partners. So, Denny, thank you. He is now hidden on the floor. *(Applause)*

Colleagues, welcome to sunny Plymouth. Plymouth is a city with a rich and varied history. It is famous for its links with seafaring and many images spring to mind, including: the Mayflower setting sail for the New World in 1620; and Sir Francis Drake playing bowls on the Hoe before going to defeat the Spanish Armada in 1666. Drake was not a GMB member, although worthy President, Billy Hughes, from the Northern Region, swears he signed him up when they were building Drake's ship, the Golden Hind! Colleagues, Billy is not with us this week. He has had an operation but I understand that he is on the road to recovery. Billy, if you are watching, we will miss you, worthy President, but we wish you well in getting back to good health very soon. Colleagues, for us trade unionists the most striking image is of the landing here on 18th March 1839 of James Loveless, James Brine, and Thomas and John Stanfield, four of the Tolpuddle Martyrs, poor Dorset farm workers convicted for daring to form a trade union and deported to Australia where they had to work in chains for seven years.

After a great deal of public protest and a lengthy legal battle, the six were pardoned and returned home. I hope many of you will find the time this week to visit the

commemorative plaque on the Barbican, where they landed, which ends with the words “Freedom and Justice”.

One hundred and seventy years later we trade unionists still fight for freedom and justice; Justice for our Cammell Laird brothers; justice for our Remploy workers; justice for the Co-op Funeralcare workers; justice for our trade union family across the world and justice for our public service members.

We continue to support our colleagues in Zimbabwe, Colombia and those oppressed around the world. Later this week we will hear from Ana Lucia Pinzon, our brave sister trade unionist from Colombia, where 26 trade unionists have been murdered this year. Other guest speakers this week at Congress include Dave Prentice, TUC President, and General Secretary of Unison, who we will now work with in a number of common policy areas affecting our members in public services; Phil Woolas, the Environment Minister, an old friend and colleague from his days as head of the GMB Communications Department, and Vice Consul, Michael Mazurek from the Polish Consulate, who is working with us in our campaign to win trade union rights for migrant workers here in the UK.

Congress, I was proud to second the Temporary Agency Workers motion at the Labour NEC.

We have an interesting and busy week ahead of us. This is the first Congress to integrate the Section Conferences into the programme, as agreed by Congress last year. Now we are putting the policy into practice.

I know a great deal of work has gone into the planning, but undoubtedly there will be a few hiccups, but I am sure that with your commitment, support and traditional good humour we will have a successful week.

Congress, the GMB has been to Plymouth before, in the summer of 1892. The National Union of General and Municipal Workers held its Congress here in Plymouth. I am far too young to have been around then, but Mr. Toomey – John – may have been, because I have read a very old newspaper report about the “Edmonds Menagerie” circus act that used to come to the town every year. In 1869 the whole circus missed the road into town and arrived three hours late. Perhaps Mr. Toomey turned the signs around. Well, Kenny’s menagerie is here now and we know where we are going. In 1892 a loaf of bread cost a farthing – some of you will remember that -- and a pint of beer less than a penny (in old money). Times are better now, but it’s still a struggle for working people to feed their families, and we still fight for decent wages and conditions. In public services, where 96% of our NHS members have rejected a three year pay deal. In the private sector, where private equity bloodsuckers exploit and sack our members while they shore up their tax free profits.

Congress, we did not expect to have to do battle with our own family in the Labour Party but we have had our struggles there too. Last year at Congress we welcomed the

incoming Prime Minister, and we had great hopes for a renewed period of fairness and justice. But the terrible betrayal over the Remploy factories, where promises were broken – promises made to thousands of disabled people about their independence and choice – was perhaps the first of many misjudgements.

Remember the promise made at the Labour Party Conference that no factories would close without full consultation and agreement with the unions and the Ministers. Well, we now know that that was lies.

Congress, I went with Tracey and her father from Remploy in York to see the Prime Minister and they pleaded with him to stop the closure of York and St. Helens. He had the power to do so. Well, he said he would get back to us. I am still holding my breath, Gordon. We are still waiting, while Tracey is now working in a charity shop in York. The Party said it wants to listen and learn. Well, Gordon, try listening to the voice of the working people who voted for you, supported you through thick and thin and who knocked on doors and delivered leaflets in the rain and the cold to put you in power and keep you there – not fair-weather friends like the CBI chief who won't even vote for you. Congress, the GMB will criticise the Government, and rightly so, when and where it fails working people, but we do have many good hard working MPs and MEPs who give us great support and they deserve our thanks.

While I am talking about the Labour Party, I must pay tribute to my colleague on the NEC, Debbie Coulter. As you are aware, Debbie leaves us soon. Debbie is moving on now and we wish her all the very best for the future. I think her greatest legacy will be the new Equalities structure. It is all set to take off and deliver an ambitious equality programme that will set a benchmark for equality and inclusion across the trade union Movement. Debbie's work with the Retired Members' Association has also been commendable, and I am sure that Monica Smith will be touching on this in her address later this morning. Debbie, this Congress does wish you well in whatever future road you decide to go down. Good luck to you.

Which reminds me, Monica, clearly, has clairvoyant skills. Guess what name she gave the bear last year in last years's "Name the Bear" prize? She called it...Boris! Monica, you should have called it Ken! But, seriously, Congress, I woke up on 2nd May thinking I had had a nightmare where Boris Johnson was getting ready to move his cronies into City Hall; decent Labour councillors across the country had lost their seats, but then I turned on the radio and realised it was not a nightmare but a tragic reality. These results must serve as a stark warning that the Government is out of touch, and increasingly so. Colleagues, the National Health Service is 60 on 5th July, and what present is it getting? Privatised, that's what! This week 20 NHS trusts were identified as being considered for running by private companies. Well, if the Government think they created a problem with the removal of the 10 pence tax band, they must have a death wish if they think they can franchise out the Health Service like Kentucky Fried Chicken or a McDonald's! Colleagues, I have a copy of the 60 year old leaflet *here* and it says: "It will provide you with all medical, dental and nursing care. Everyone – rich or poor, man, woman or child – can use it or any part of it. There are no charges, no insurance qualifications. But it is

not a 'charity'. You are all paying for it, mainly as taxpayers, and it will relieve your money worries in times of illness."

Congress, it is our Health Service and we will protect it with every sinew of our bodies. As your President, I am honoured to continue to serve you and your fight for justice and fairness and to represent the GMB at home and abroad. Let me give you just two examples. Last Autumn I led a GMB delegation to Cuba on a fact-finding tour, looking at all aspects of Cuban life, including visits to workplaces, schools, hospitals, environmental projects, a Committee for the Defence of the Revolution and the Cuban Women's Federation.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the visit was seeing at first hand the tremendous achievements of the Cuban people against the obstacles presented by the United States' blockade, particularly in healthcare and education. I hope you take time to visit the display of the GMB's international work in the Exhibition Hall, where you can see a photographic record of the GMB's international solidarity work with our brothers and sisters throughout the developing world, including the Cuba Study Tour.

Last month I had the privilege of addressing the Prison Officers' Association Conference for the first time. I offered them the full support of the GMB in the fight against the notorious Section 127, which not only takes away the right to strike for all officers across the Prison Service, including our members in the privately managed prisons, but their right to take any form of industrial action. I gave the GMB's pledge to work with them to rid ourselves of the Tory anti-trade union laws and support the fight for the Trade Union Freedom Bill. (*Applause*) Congress, it should be the right of every worker to withdraw their labour. Slavery was abolished two hundred years ago, or was it?

Last year I ended my address, Congress, by looking forward to the future with pride in our campaigning, organising and growing union. I can think of no better way of ending my address this year or any other year than to say to our members that they belong to a union that campaigns for justice and equality, fairness in the workplace, rights for our members, and is organising, growing and going from strength to strength.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the activists, officers and staff for their hard work in achieving this. Thank you, Congress. I commend my Report. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Congress, I would now like to call on Mary Hutchinson, Northern Region, to give a Vote of Thanks to the President.

VOTE OF THANKS TO THE PRESIDENT

SIS. M. HUTCHINSON (CEC, Manufacturing): I move the Vote of Thanks on behalf of the CEC. Congress, it gives me great pleasure to be moving this Vote of Thanks from one northern woman to another because, although Mary is a very proud member of London Region, she has very strong connections with the north-east and is still a strong supporter of St. Joseph's Boxing Club in Whitley Bay, where she still has relatives.

Mary has been on the CEC for a quarter of a century and has been President since 1997. That, in itself, colleagues, is some achievement. She celebrates with her husband, Denny, in August of this year fifty years of marriage. They have together two children, five grandchildren and two great grandchildren. Their youngest great grandchild, Milly-Jo, is definitely a chip off the old block, I hear. Denny often jokes that his Gold Badge for unofficial service to the GMB is long overdue.

Mary is a very strong woman and a very strong President. She represents the GMB on the NEC of the Labour Party and is always fighting our corner. She is never afraid to say what she thinks and always stands up for the GMB. Her work outside the GMB also shows off her qualities of caring and strength in what she believes in. She fed the *March for Jobs* marchers from her school kitchen when they came through Brent. She arranged for hundreds of turkeys to be sent to striking miners in Christmas 1984. In fact, she was so busy arranging this task that she forgot to buy her own turkey.

Mary is held in high regard and only last week she was given a standing ovation after addressing ASLEF's Conference, a first for a guest speaker. She has also been invited to campaign for the Maltese Labour Party later this year. Through all of this, she has battled to overcome ill-health and has bounced back stronger than ever.

Congress, we are lucky to have Mary. She stands tall as the President of our great union. Congress, I move this vote of thanks. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Mary, thank you for that. You make me feel very humble. Thank you, Congress, for your support.

OBITUARY

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, we now move on to the sad task which is to ask Congress to stand. You have your Obituary list. I have an amendment to make to that Obituary list, and is that Robert McGregor and Peter Neilson died in service. They were officers in the Union. A colleague of ours, Terry Whitehurst, from Yorkshire Region, who is not on the list. For all those colleagues who we cannot mention, please could we stand for one minute's silence.

(*Congress stood in silent tribute*)

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, let me mention a few names. They are Eddie Livsey from North West & Irish Region; Daisy Prescott from Yorkshire, and Billy Kelvitt and John Bennett from Clause IV. These were names that were given to us late. Let me say few words about Tom Burlison who died on May 20th. Tom was the first DGS of GMB and was elected in 1991. After his retirement, as Lord Tom Burlison of Rowlands Gill, he continued to serve working people until his sad death last month. Tom is remembered with great warmth and affection by GMB members, officers and staff. Our sincere condolences go to his family, and I know the Northern Region will make sure that they receive those words. Thank you, colleagues.

PRESENTATION OF GMB GOLD BADGES

THE PRESIDENT: We now, colleagues, come to the presentation of the GMB Gold Badges. The Women's Gold Badge Award for 2008 goes to Audrey Harry MBE, from Midland & East Coast Region. I ask Audrey to come forward. Audrey joined the union in 1970 and has been an activist for 30 years. She sits on the CEC and is a member of the Regional Council. Even though she is retired, she is always available to help and support shop stewards and promote the GMB in her community. A key role for Audrey is to encourage women in the union and their workplace. Her proudest moment was being honoured by the Queen when she received her MBE for her work in the trade union movement. She enjoys working with ethnic minority groups of all ages and is chairperson of the Caribbean Millennium Centre where she raises money for a variety of good causes. She is totally dedicated to the GMB and for Audrey her duties to the union and its members come before anything else. Colleagues, it gives me great pleasure to present you with the GMB's Gold Badge. *(Applause)*

The presentation was then made.

SIS. A. HARRY (Midland & East Coast): President and Congress, I am Audrey Harry MBE, Midland & East Coast Region. I don't know what to say. This is the first time I have been lost for words since I became a shop steward. Anyhow, I have not written a speech out but what I am going to say is coming straight from the heart because I remembered first become a shop steward ever so well. This was in 1970 when I worked for Hotpoint. After I had worked there for two years, straightaway, I went into troublemaking in the factory by telling the workers what they should and shouldn't do. I got into a lot of trouble and bother but it did not worry me because I knew I had got the GMB, one of the greatest unions, behind me.

When I became the deputy convenor, I was making so much trouble that the convenor said, "Yes, you can have my bloody job, if you want it", and I took it. *(Applause)* When I was introduced to the managing director, he looked at me and his impression was "A black woman convenor?" He said, "My name is Mr. David Gledhill, managing director." I looked at him and he said, "You must be Audrey Harry", to which I said "No". He said, "Well, what then?" I said, "I am Mistress Audrey Harry, GMB works convenor", and he said, "I'm going to have trouble with you". I said to him, "I don't make trouble, but I'm not going to run away from trouble. I am a trade unionist and a strong one, too".

Congress, it was not long before we were arguing and I was telling him what I wanted him to do. He was not going to tell me to jump and neither would I say "How high?" If you ask my husband, who is my other half in the balcony, he will tell you that I live for the GMB. If you ask him the question, "What are the three main things in her life?", he would say that the GMB is no. 1. He comes second and fish and chips come third.

I am honoured – I work very hard – to have received my MBE from the Queen, and that it was because of my trade union work. That shows you how important the GMB is to me and so it should be to all of us who are activists. We should put all of our strength

into the union because unity is strength, and that is what we need so that we can grow our union stronger and stronger. Wait for it. When all that was said and done, the same managing director came one day and he said to me, "I had two women in my life giving me problems. Now I've got three". I said, "What?" He said, "My wife is always having a go at me when I come home from work. My mother is saying that the grass on her lawn reaches the top of her head, and now you are telling me that I have to do as you tell me. I have never been so frightened in having women telling me what to do, but I think I'll have to compromise." I said, "I don't compromise. I want action. Stop the compromising and do as you are told." We became a, kind of, working together unit for the workforce and for the factory because we set up a working group to discuss how we could move on and we did. I am telling you that my members were so proud of me that they nominated me for the Gold Badge. I will wear it with honour and pride, but it is just not for me but it is for the Midland & East Coast Region, because if it was not for the people who are behind me when I had a problem and when I did not know what to do, who advised me, the Educational Department that the union put out, it is magic. All you have to do is to be determined and truthful because our union is a considerate union, a caring union and it is the best. Thank you. God bless you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: That managing director was a wise man, wasn't he. Well done, Audrey. Thank you very much, indeed, and good luck, and thanks to your husband as well.

Colleagues, it gives me great pleasure to invite Alistair McLean from the London Region to accept his Gold Badge. Colleagues, Alistair has been a GMB member since 1945. His first post was as a branch check steward for the Boilermakers Society in 1957. At the age of 17 he joined the Boilermakers Society as an apprentice. Apprentices were not allowed to strike or take part in disputes then but Alistair became their elected spokesperson. He progressed to being a branch secretary, General Council member and a Chairman of the East Anglia Committee. He is currently a London Regional Council member and a regular delegate at GMB Congress and Sectional Conferences. He has been a shop steward in all the companies he has worked in. He retired in 1993 as a site convenor in Sizewell B Nuclear Power Station but has not stopped being an activist and supporting GMB members. He has gone from strength to strength and is even more involved in the trade union movement in his retirement.

Alistair has lived in Lowestoft for more than 50 years and also finds time to play an active part in the local community. He is a tribunal member for the local Health Authority and a member of his local Labour Party Executive Committee. He is a prominent fundraiser for the local women's refuge. Few people can boast 63 years of continuous membership of a trade union and even fewer can say they have been active members for all that time. Congress, it gives me great pleasure to award both a friend and a colleague the Gold Badge. *(Applause)*
The presentation was then made.

BRO. A. McLEAN (London): I have not prepared a long speech. However, for many years I have been involved with this trade union. I have many colleagues and friends in

this Congress hall. I am a branch secretary and was a shop steward. When you see the injustices being done, you have got to do something about them. That is what we all do. To a certain degree, I am extremely honoured to have been nominated for this award but I take it as a recognition of the role that I have played within the GMB union and the wider trade union movement. I can say, in all honesty, that I have thoroughly enjoyed myself and I have never looked upon my role as a chore. I must say that my activities have been made easier by the fact that I have always felt that I had a strong supporting network in the form of the union's structure and the membership.

I would like to convey my thanks to my regional committee for nominating me and also I have to support the other people in the branches who also nominated me for this award. When you are involved in everyday struggles, you must have the support of your wife and family. So I would like to take this opportunity to give special thanks to my wife, Thelma, and my family for their tolerance and support over the years.

Once again, it gives me great pleasure to accept this award. Thank you all very much.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Alistair, very much. I know that Thelma is here. I know Thelma and the family. Thelma, our congratulations and our support goes to you, too. Thank you.

BRANCH SECRETARY HONORARY AWARD

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, this part of the agenda is not in your book, so here we go. I call on Paul Kenny.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Colleagues, one of the things which strikes you when you visit various parts of the country is, when you meet different members in different workplaces, the incredible amount of effort that just goes on every single day of the week. People do not even think about it. You heard what Alistair said his work for the union not being a particular chore but it is just what people do naturally. Sometimes we have to remind ourselves upon what the union is built. It is not built effectively on general secretaries, although someone quipped that they could build a few on me but I am not going to have that, but it is built effectively on the efforts of lay members doing their job day in, day out, week in, week out and sometimes under the most incredibly difficult conditions. Sometimes if we at one level of the union get a bit of an ear-bashing, I know, effectively, that in many instances the people who have to sort out the problems on a day-to-day basis are our shop stewards and our branch secretaries. I said many years ago in one of my speeches to Congress that I knew where the real power of the union lies and where it should always be vested, and that is within the lay membership and the lay membership structures.

What we are going to do, hopefully, during the next couple of years at each Congress is to pay tribute and honour to a lay member, be it a branch secretary or someone who does not figure always in the great roll calls of Gold Badge awards. In this case, we have chosen Dave Dennis from the London Region. Dave has been a branch secretary in

Kings Lynn for quite some time. There is something peculiar about East Anglia and the eastern counties. We have with us as a delegate Jan Smith, who won the Gold Badge a few years ago, and today we saw Alistair receive his Gold Badge, who comes from Lowestoft. There is something, perhaps, in the water or there is something in the spirit in that area, because during the difficult times, particularly during the '80s and the '90s, these people – I mean individuals – kept the union alive in rural areas, in cities and towns where we were getting a bashing during those Thatcher years. They were in many cases the beacon of light where people could go to. They were the people who made the branch meetings happen. They were the people who went round and looked after the retired members. They were the ones who went to visit people in hospital. They are the ones who did all of the great things that the Union's founding principles are based on. They are the people who care about other people in a society where we are taught that the more money you have, the better off you are, the more important you are and the more successful you are. These are the people who actually remind us about our creed, our code and the things that we should live by to be important, which is care for one another. Dave is getting this award. I know how much he has put into the struggle during those Thatcher years. I know the importance of those branch meetings. I went to a fair number of them. Some of them were pretty funny, but they were not easy places for full-time officials to visit. They got a bit of a grilling, I can tell you. But they were good. People came, they sorted out problems. It was a community at work, doing good stuff.

So for Dave and for Joy – Mary made the point, which is absolutely right, that so many of us rely on our partners. I am just glad that my wife, Pat, rates me above fish and chips as well, otherwise I would be in trouble – and for all those people, this is the first symbolic award. Dave thoroughly deserves it. He has been a credit to the branch, he has been a credit to the region, he has been a stalwart at Regional Council and he has been to Congress. He has absolutely epitomised keeping the union alive and doing things that, mostly, 99.9% of the time people just do, get on with and never even expect a “thank you” for, but without which there would not be a union. We might as well call ourselves Woolworth Plc. We are a union because we are about people who care about people. These are the people who make the difference. So, Dave, if you would step forward.

THE PRESIDENT: Dave, it gives me great pleasure to present you with this award.

The President and General Secretary presented a Certificate of Merit and Silver Badge to Dave Dennis, Kings Lynn Branch Secretary amidst applause.

BRO. D. DENNIS (London): What can I say? Sometimes I feel a bit of a fraud. It is not me who has done it. It is all my members in my branch. My wife has supported me. Most of all, Paul Kenny has supported me. I think he should be the one who receives a special award today. I want to say that Paul mentioned that the union went through some tough years. I will mention the name: Thatcher! We went through those years almost based as an illegal organisation. We have got Gordon Brown now. He is not the flash Harry like his predecessor, but he is all we have got. The alternative is a hooray Henry. The message is: take that back to your branches and make sure that our alliance with the Labour Party stays. We must work hard at it in order to get the benefits that our members

deserve. I cannot say much more than that, other than thank all the people who have made receiving this award possible for me today. I will take this award back to Kings Lynn with a huge amount of pride. I feel so very privileged. Thank you very much, colleagues. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dave. I know that Joy is somewhere in the hall. Joy and I met on the train coming to Plymouth. Joy, good luck and thank you as well. Let me say that I have been at Dave's branch on many occasions and he has a great Christmas function. We have already received the invitation.

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

To save time, I will take motions in groups, as I explained to you earlier, and ask the CEC speaker to reply in groups rather than deal with each motion individually. The Congress Programme shows the groups.

I remind delegates that there are two rostrums. Please make use of them. I remind Congress delegates that a large "X" is not a kiss in front of a motion in the Programme. That means that the SOC has ruled the motion "Out of Order". I remind Congress that existing policy motions are marked in the Final Agenda with a large "EP" against them. These, as outlined by the Standing Orders Report No. 1, are not listed in the Programme as they will not be debated.

THE PRESIDENT: I now ask Paul Kenny to move Rule 9 and Rule A3. The CEC are supporting.

CEC RULE AMENDMENTS

CECRA1

RULE 9 BUSINESS OF THE CONGRESS

Clause 3, Lines 4 & 5

Delete ".....held in 2006 and thereafter to every third Ordinary Congress"

Insert ".....held in 2009 and thereafter to every second Ordinary Congress"

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

(Carried)

CECRA2

RULE A3 SECTION NATIONAL CONFERENCES

Insert new clause A3. 3

- 3 A Section National President shall be elected in 2008 and at every second Section Conference from amongst members of the Conference elected in accordance with rule A3.2 and from members of the Section National Committee. S/he shall hold office for four years, shall preside at the Section Conference succeeding that at which s/he is elected and shall be eligible for nomination and re-election at the expiration of his/her term of office. During his/her term of office s/he shall preside at all meetings of the Section National Committee.

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

(Carried)

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: I hope this rule amendment will be very quick. It does not seem very contentious, so we included it early. These are two rule amendments from the CEC. You will find them on page 83 of your Final Agenda. I know you have all got it open in front of you, but just in case. Basically, they are two very simple rule amendments. As to the first one, Rule Amendment 1, the current situation is that rules revision Congresses, which are the Congresses where branches and lay members can effectively put forward rule amendments, currently take place every three years. We think that is too long. I am sure that will go down well with some of our colleagues in the London Region who were talking earlier. We are suggesting that we change that position so that every second Congress becomes a rules revision Congress. I think that is a fairly hefty extension of the rights of access to rule changes to lay members and branches. I think it is a very positive move to strengthen lay democracy and control.

The second rule amendment, RA2, relates to the election procedure for sectional presidents and, basically, sets out how it should be done, where it should be done and their duration. It lays the position out more clearly. We had some transition rules and we moved from seven sections to three. We almost ran into a problem this year when trying to sort that out. We have brought forward this rule change to make the position explicitly clear, to bring the cycle of elections and how people are elected exactly in line with the other procedures in the Rule Book. So I hope that is fairly straightforward. I hope they are not contentious. I think a move to a rules revision Congress every two years will be seen as a real strengthening of the lay democracy and accountability in the union. Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Does anyone wish to speak on them? *(No response)* Does Congress agree to accept? All those in favour, please show? Anyone against?

(Carried)

I will now be calling Motion 4, Motion 6, Motion 8 and Motion 17. I ask all movers and seconders, please, to come to the front of the hall. I will then be asking Paul Kenny to reply.

UNION ORGANISATION

MOTION 4

LAY DEMOCRACY

4. LAY DEMOCRACY

This Congress is concerned about the ever reducing influence and involvement of lay members in GMB democracy and decision making.

The GMB believes that active lay member involvement in the GMB democratic structure is essential for the future success of the GMB and maintenance of our ethos of lay activity which this Congress recognises has been the foundation of our great union.

This Congress therefore, instructs the CEC to take action to prevent the erosion of lay members' involvement and the increasing move to centralising decision making.

ASHTON 8 BRANCH
North West and Irish Region

(Lost)

SIS. Y. CARTEY (North West & Irish): I am starting off the day with a bang because I am moving this motion without the support of my region. So let's see how we get on. The motion, as you will see, is about lay democracy. I was pleased to hear what Paul has just said because, when I look around me, I see a group of really quite ordinary people, aren't we? But we do extraordinary things and we do extraordinary things for other people, basically, as well. Our union could not function without its volunteer officials and its members, and we deserve to be fully consulted at all times on all decisions. I think no one would disagree with that. Our trade union movement is admired all over the world because it is based on lay membership and volunteers. Paul mentioned this morning how important our branch secretaries and branch structures are to us. Why? Because we discovered early on in the trade union Movement that we did not reach our goals by doing what our 'betters' told us. We've got what we have because we went out and got it for ourselves! Nobody ever gave it to us. If you need an example of how such an approach can work against the movement, you need look only at our Labour Party. Mary mentioned it this morning. It seems to have lost it way and has become out of touch with its members and even its own Back Benchers, let alone us in the wider movement. It has been centralised, we have had focus groups and not real lay democracy and input into the policy. Now they are trying to rebuild the membership base, and personally I think that we may be just a bit too late for that. So I am just concerned now that the GMB is in danger of doing something similar. A symptom of this is that we are intending to take chunks of our local branches and put them into large regional branches, like Wilkinsons, the gas workers and so on.

Since we in the Lancashire Region were subsumed into the North West & Irish Region, these meetings now, for our members in places like Greater Manchester and where I am based in Ashton-Under-Lyme, take place in Liverpool or Preston, which is at least an hour's drive from where some of the members live. Basically, our local shop stewards will not attend those meetings. That situation concerns me greatly because our branch is

suffering. Our branch is strong, it has a great mixture of members and we enjoy the debating and we gain great strength from that. So we were already feeling a bit sore in the Lancashire Region, anyway, because I expect you know that we woke up one morning last year to find we no longer had a Lancashire Region. It was gone as if it never existed. It was an ex-region. We had no discussion, no consultation, nothing. Why? Because our branch secretary messed up big style – you all know the story – and it is still under a police investigation. So the North West & Irish Region got us, and I am sure they were as pleased to get us as we were to go there.

So, brothers and sisters, please, I ask you to put your stamp on our deliberations today at this Congress and make it clear where the decisions in our union should be. They should be taken here. Please support this motion. Thank you.

(Formally seconded)

FUTURE OF THE GMB – A WAY FORWARD MOTION 6

6. FUTURE OF THE GMB – A WAY FORWARD

This Congress supports the proposal that the GMB in the long term works to facilitate the merger of the GMB and Unite (formerly AMICUS and T &G) for the future benefits of our wider membership and a stronger voice in collective bargaining.

CAMBORNE C21 BRANCH
Southern Region

(Fell)

THE PRESIDENT: I call Motion 6: Future of the GMB – A Way Forward. To be moved by Southern Region. Is there a mover? *(No response)* Is no one here to move the motion? *(No response)* In that case the motion falls.

GEOGRAPHICAL BOUNDARIES OF THE GMB MOTION 8

8. GEOGRAPHICAL BOUNDARIES OF THE GMB

This Congress instructs the CEC to address the issue of regional boundaries forthwith.

The current situation of boundaries dividing cities, such as in the case of London, is plainly ridiculous. Therefore the CEC must present to Congress 2009 a plan for re-drawing the Regional Boundaries eradicating this ridiculous situation.

GMB PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS BRANCH
London Region

(Lost)

BRO. T. FLANAGAN (London): I move this motion without – let me make this clear – the support of the London Region delegation. As most of you know, I am fairly new to this union, only four or five years. This is a great union, it is well organised and I love it. This union gets stuck in and it doesn't back down. However, when I look at the boundaries, they seem a bit strange to me. London produces 80% of the nation's wealth,

so you have cut it in half. Funnily enough, it doesn't apply to my branch but it applies to most other branches.

When you look around the other areas of the country – I go around other parts of the country trying to get people into Hackney Carriage, private hire and whatever – it cuts across strange boundaries. I am no expert of anywhere north of Watford. I have got to tell you that I know as much about it as I know about the dark side of the Moon. But when you look at the situation on a map, it looks very strange. Someone said to me, “Don't move this motion because you will upset the Regional Secretaries”. Ah, poor dears. I am sure they can take care of themselves. I do not think, looking at the map, that the regions operate in the best interests of the union. All we are saying to the CEC is have a look at it and see if you think we need more regions, less regions, whether some of the boundaries need to be moved, do we need the South-East Region or do we need X region? I do not know. I think we need to look at the situation and examine it in detail because it seems to me that we are probably not giving our members the best possible service we could because of the ambiguity of some of the regions.

I visited the Midland & East Coast Region a couple of years ago in Bridlington. That region stretches down to Hull. It is the same unitary authority dealing with Hackney Carriage but the issues within the boundaries are so different that there must be a reason as to why those boundaries were drawn up. I know it is complicated. I am not making a big issue of it. I seek Congress's support to say to the CEC, “Have a look at these boundaries and see if we can improve the service to our membership”. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Is there a seconder?

BRO. S. MCKENZIE (London) in seconding the motion said: Comrades, brothers and sisters, it is funny how some resolutions calling for the CEC to look at things and then report to us next year get ruled out and some do not. I do not understand that myself. I am seconding this motion and it is almost embarrassing because it is so moderate. All it is asking Congress to do is to mandate our CEC to have a look at the current geographical boundaries, which, as Terry has said, are clearly a nonsense in some areas. I do not know what it is, whether there is a lack of trust in the CEC or that some people do not even want to have a look at this and report back, but if it does actually go down I want to reassure you that you do not have to worry. It will get heard at the Rules Revision next year because the drivers in the Solo branch will put resolutions up so that it can be debated. Please support this resolution.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Steve. Motion 17, London Region.

GMB ELECTIONS

Motion 17

17. GMB ELECTIONS

Congress calls on the CEC to bring forward rule changes and by laws to allow candidates to produce short statements in support of their candidature in any election within the Union.

(Referred)

BRO. V. WEST (London): President, Congress, we live in the 21st century but we have a rule book that sometimes reflects 1892 when we were last here in Plymouth. In an age of instant communication we continue to ask our membership to vote in GMB Union elections in the darkness without knowledge or information about who they are voting for, what the candidates stand for, and what programmes they are going to put in place if they get elected. This leads to, as we know, extremely poor turnouts that reflect badly on us as a union and our democracy. We need an electoral system in the future that encourages full participation, increases turnout, and increases democracy within the GMB. It cannot be beyond our combined skills and wisdoms to devise a system that not only increases participation, increases knowledge of candidates, but also is fair and equitable and does not lead to some of the issues that we as a union faced a few years ago. In effect, what we are asking for is to allow people to put their point of view across and to allow the membership to vote in union elections in the full knowledge of what they are voting for. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Vaughan. Secunder?

BRO. M. FOSTER (London): President, Congress, the last time GMB held its Congress in Plymouth was in the 19th century. We are back again in the 21st century and what we need is a rule book that reflects today's world and not yesterday's. Having the ability to explain your reasons for seeking election will give members a better and clearer understanding of who they are actually voting for. I second.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Does anyone wish to come in on the debate for all the resolutions that I have just called. No? I call Paul Kenny.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Congress, Paul Kenny speaking on behalf of the CEC recommending opposition to Motions 4 and 8. I was recommending opposition to Motion 6, Mary, but I am not sure if it is still on the agenda. I am recommending that Motion 17, the one that Vaughan just moved, is referred to the CEC. We think there is considerable merit in the text of the resolution itself.

First of all, Motion 4, Yvonne, I understand but, you know, there is not a scrap of evidence, there really is not, that the union is actually moving to have less control from lay members. It is actually going the other way and has been going the other way for the last few years. Lay democracy is not being eroded, it really is not. There are two classic instances which I am going to touch on and which I hope answer one of the points you raised directly.

Firstly, the ending, basically, of the old-style fulltime branch secretary regime, and you mentioned the Lancashire Region so we might as well have it out on the carpet. The realities of life in the Lancashire Region were that something like eight or nine branch

secretaries, and the branches that they had control or influence over, were responsible for something like 65% or 70% of the delegates at a Regional Council. That is not democracy. That is a system, frankly, that I do not want to harp back to and I guess if you asked quite a lot of people who got knocked out of that system, who were victims of that system, under the old slate system they used to operate in Lancashire, they would tell you they would not want to return to it either.

I do not believe that the changes that have been made, and will continue to be made, are actually weakening lay democracy; they are actually converting to it. The intention over a period of time is as we convert those old-style fulltime branch secretaries, who came to this rostrum as lay members and then wanted to be employees, they will erode over a period of time, quite frankly, and either become officers or retire, and those branches will return to lay member control.

I understand the point you make about the travel but I will tell you now that I know lay members in Lancashire turned up at branch meetings when their branch secretary retired to discover that a branch secretary had been put in place who lived 80 or 100 miles away, and the branch meetings were suddenly switched. So, the idea that everything was wonderful in the garden and suddenly now... Well, it just is not right, Yvonne; it just is not right.

One of the things I am proudest about in the last few months, and there is quite a lot to be proud of, is that we now have a new CEC, effectively, and with the exception of the General Secretary who has to be elected in that process by law the only voting members in this union now on the Executive are lay members. By the way, that was not in 1892, nor any year since, until we did it last year. This Union moved to an all lay member CEC.

Now, I think that is something we should be pretty proud about so I do not see that that is actually taking rights away from lay members. I think it is enhancing and empowering them. I do not think it is right that we should be thinking of going back to systems where too few people control too many block votes at elections and that you got in if your face fitted, and did not, if it did not. One of the things we are looking at is whether we can unify and standardise the internal election process so that there is an even playing field. For that reason, and I understand where you are coming from, I think Motion 4 is frankly ill-conceived and I think it should be opposed on the grounds that I have set out.

Motion 6, I do not think I need touch on it, Mary, because it has fallen. Basically, the strategy that we should pass a resolution which commits us to merge with anybody in an open forum like this before you had even discussed the merits would frankly be a suicide note. You would not say to somebody, "Our Congress has said we are going to merge with you. What terms are you going to give us?" You just would not do it, would you? We are speaking to a number of organisations about working together better. Mary has addressed two conferences of unions recently, the POA and Aslef. We have had discussions with the NUM, and in fact we have made some progress in terms of sharing some of their resources, particularly in residential training which will come up later in the

week. We are having much closer talks with Unison about not duplicating our efforts on things like pensions and the care sector, actually where it makes sense for us to provide a united front both to the Government and, frankly, to other organisations who might try and muscle in on us.

There is a lot of logic about some of the discussions we are having with unions but they are based on a simple principle, the GMB is a growing, financially sound, independent trade union and I have not heard an argument yet that said we should change that.

In terms of Motion 8, Terry and Steve, I understand what you are saying. I thought you put it very eloquently. I think it is well-meaning. The problem we have is that boundary changes are not straightforward. The idea that you can go and tell the CEC to come back with some proposals is just very, very difficult indeed, it really is. It would be much more preferable if proposals came from regions themselves.

Now, we do have a system and we currently set up a process where some of the old problems between regions, and some of it does not make sense, the regional secretaries can discuss and if they can get an agreement then they can come to the CEC and we can make relevant changes.

Coming back to Yvonne's point, there are lay member issues involved here. You cannot just decide simply for no good reason other than trading membership that it will be good idea if there are people in particular positions. London is divided by the Thames so the first question will come up, who would get London, would it be London or Southern? Well, I think I have two answers to that question, at least, maybe more. Where would East Anglia go? Would East Anglia leave the London Region? You can see how complicated it begins to get just looking at one small part. Where would the South West area go? If Southern Region had London, would you still leave them with this part of the country? It does need a fundamental approach.

The final thing about this, Mary, is that frankly we just do not think it is good use of our time and our energy to spend the next year, or even 18 months, looking inwards on boundary reorganisation. I make the point to you, Steve, when you said, don't worry, you will be back here next year moving the rules revision, if you want a debate, well, you are getting a debate at the moment and I do not doubt for one moment that you will be back here next year moving that, and every two years after that, I suppose.

Mary, because of that I say oppose 4 and 8, and on Motion 17 we think there is considerable merit in what has been said, it does need some sorting out about the actual posts. I think there is a lot of important stuff in the resolution and the CEC would like to have a look at it, Vaughan, and I think we can guarantee there will be some considerable action on that. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Paul. Does the mover of Motion 4, North West and Irish Region, wish the right to reply? No? Thank you. Can I put Motion 4 to the vote; the CEC are opposing.

Motion 4 was lost.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 6, it was not moved by Southern Region, not even formally. Would Congress agree that that falls? (*Agreed*)

Motion 6 fell.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Can I ask Terry, do you wish the right to reply? I do not know why I bothered!

BRO. T. FLANAGAN (London): Of course I will take the right to reply. I have been put down politely in my time and that was a nice one, Paul. I thought that was quite sweet. What we have achieved is that we have had the debate, which is what we wanted. We have discussed it. You have thought about it. You have looked at it. It will come up again in the future. We do not want to move people and deprive them of their rights, things about East Anglia or wherever, I understand it is very difficult. All we are saying is be aware that there are problems out there and they are going to bite you on the bum one day. It is best to be aware of them. Whether you vote for the motion is not important, really.

THE PRESIDENT: You mean I am wasting my time? Thank you. Colleagues, the CEC are opposing this.

Motion 8 was lost.

THE PRESIDENT: Vaughan, do you wish the right to reply? You accept reference? Thank you.

Motion 17 was referred

REGIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT: YORKSHIRE & NORTH DERBYSHIRE REGION (pages 142-157)
YORKSHIRE AND NORTH DERBYSHIRE REGION

1. MEMBERSHIP AND RECRUITMENT

FINANCIAL MEMBERSHIP	
Section Financial Membership (by each Section):	
COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION	14,892
MANUFACTURING SECTION	13,421
PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION	27,328
Grade 1 members	33,433
Grade 2 members	14,548
Retired, Reduced Rate & Others	7,660
Male Membership	29,118
Female Membership	26,523

Total number recruited 1.1.2007 – 31.12.2007	6,175
Decrease 1.1.2007 – 31.12.2007	3,653
Membership on Check-off	6,881
Membership on Direct Debit	11,222

THE REGION

It is fair to say that 2007 was a difficult year for the region and not a particularly proud one. However, we all got through it and our negative experiences have allowed us to totally focus on a positive agenda with accountability openness, transparency and of course GMB@Work at its heart.

We now have a Regional Management Team in place who rather than carrying a servicing worksheet, focus entirely on managing teams of officers, staff, branches and activists to ensure first class delivery and support for our members.

A Regional Organising Team based in our regional office in Wakefield has been in operation since September and already we are seeing the positive effects with the growth in the average recruited members per month.

Servicing officers have been trained on the role of the branch and working with the branch officers and activists, and for the first time in many years they have each been given responsibility for a group of branches. This has been communicated out with the clear intention to ensure the effective and democratic operation of branches across the region that supports entirely the GMB@Work agenda. Tangible results in recruitment terms will take time to filter through, but at least we are now “work in progress!”

Clear, concise and effective communications are crucial to buy people into our agenda, and to this end we launched our new look magazine called “The Pulse”, launched our own regional website and have started to collate up to date mailing lists for representatives and members by both email and mobile phone for text messaging. This now enables us to communicate quicker, cleaner and cheaper than ever before and our lists are growing at an encouraging rate. You will never replace the most effective communication of all which is face to face with members, which will always be best delivered by competent and committed activists in the workplace, supported by organisers on the occasion that they request it.

We are encouraging the production of workplace and branch newsletters and have offered to assist in their production at any office in the region. They are then distributed from our post and print room that is now fully functional and has assisted immeasurably with our communications agenda. Likewise, is our new low cost central call number for all members so that when they ring 0845 they go straight through to our regional switchboard and signposted from there.

Our training programme has radically changed and now insists on effective and comprehensive support for new representatives from day 1 and has the clear focus of GMB@Work as its start point, not to mention running throughout its heart.

Some of these changes have been missed by our existing army of trained representatives and we are finalising a programme to take this training to them. We are now able to provide merchandise and freebies to our members whether it is pens, and keyrings or GMB regional holdalls as an aide and a thank you to our activists and, in line with Congress policy they are supplied wherever possible from fair trade and sustainable sources.

Our internal training agenda has already covered GMB@Work, branches and handling the media for officers in addition to bullying and harassment and the use of new technology for all. We now have a staff best practice document that all are bought into that sets expectations and minimum standards on secretarial and admin. duties, diary management, computer usage and assisting members with their enquiries.

We are even attempting to do our bit on the green agenda and are keen to reduce our carbon footprint across the region with such simple initiatives as switching off lights where they are on unnecessarily, car sharing and of course recycling.

Our regional agenda has been set and it is here to stay. We will not entertain comments or “another GMB flash in the pan” and will not be blown off course, whatever confronts us. We held 3 activists’ open evenings which took place across the region before Christmas, at which we received numerous positive comments on how things have improved. This will not make us complacent but instead simply reinforces that our regional agenda is right and that our statement to manage with “clarity consistency and compassion” is our only way forward.

ECONOMIC & EMPLOYMENT SITUATION

COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION

Business faces a difficult year in 2008 which is little changed from the period 1st January to 31st December 2007. The outlook was and remains uncertain following the twin shocks of rising commodity prices and the credit crunch.

The structure of the global economy faces another bumpy ride with the economic balance continuing to shift to China and India although there were a few signs that some of the call centre work might transfer back to the UK following customer complaints. Business leaders forecast that despite the challenges ahead, for most people there should be a soft landing due to the equity locked away in their homes and because of, “... a reasonably fair jobs outlook.” (CBI) The third reason being that the Bank of England was thought to be doing a reasonable job in managing inflation although that view would not find favour in many sectors of the economy where the government are intent on keeping the lid firmly on pay rises, with the notable exception of their own naturally. However, with increasing agitation amongst the workforce affected and the rapid acceleration in the costs of energy, food and other commodities, there remain fears of rising inflation.

Settlements

Settlement levels in the electricity, gas and water sector seem to have outstripped the wider economy with the median award being 4.1% up from 3% in 2006, one reason being the high number of longer term settlements.

Within the food, drink and tobacco sectors however, the median award is 3%, the same as the previous year. Finance, retail and wholesale were slightly higher than 2006 with a median of 3.6% and 3% respectively.

Voluntary sector workers also received a slightly higher median award of 3% from the previous year.

Employers

The majority of employers managed to keep their workforce numbers consistent throughout the year with a few notable exceptions such as Cadbury Trebor Basset in Sheffield and Wilkinson Stores.

Although CTB suffered a large number of redundancies they ironically later benefited from increased investment and insurance payouts resulting from the devastating floods in late June 2007 which helped

bring about some welcome stability. Wilkinson Stores on the other hand go from strength to strength and are at the time of writing looking at 'community stores' with a pilot scheme in operation.

If this is successful, over the next few years there could be another 1000 stores nationally along with the present 286.

Coal appears to be enjoying something of a revival within the region, Hatfield colliery was mothballed in 2004 but is set to reopen with plans by R J Budge to construct a power station alongside. Our members at Monckton Coke enjoyed some long awaited stability after being taken over by Hargreaves who also bought Maltby pit thus ensuring security of coal supply. UK Coal on the other hand continued to sell off their property portfolio to maintain profits which are forecast to increase four fold in 2008.

The majority of the membership within security work for G4S, GSL, Securitas, Loomis and Security+ Ltd, who are covered by National Agreements. The industry has seen a number of changes over 2007, significantly the acquisition of Brinks by Loomis and GSL UK Ltd (Court Services) by G4S.

G4S

Membership growth within G4S Guarding continues and remains a key priority, nationally, within Security Services. Inductions sessions are covered at the training centre in Warrington.

National Officer, Jude Brimble has submitted proposals regarding regional/strategic bargaining structures which will be discussed with the company in January 2008.

Securitas

Meetings have taken place at national level regarding the recognition agreement and bargaining structure.

All induction sessions continue to be covered by the region in Wakefield.

Securitas employ some 3,500 people within Security Services which potentially could be a key target for recruitment given current membership levels.

GSL UK (Court Services)

On 18th December 2007, G4S announced the acquisition of GSL. The acquisition is subject to approval by the European Commission and South African Competition Authorities. Recruitment is carried out at induction training courses held in Wakefield.

Brinks/Loomis

The acquisition of Brinks by Loomis took place on 6th August 2007. The acquisition had resulted in a restructuring of Loomis and ex-Brinks branches, this has resulted in GMB & T&G Agreements divided which will now have to be reviewed and amended to reflect the changes.

Robin Hood Doncaster Sheffield Airport

A formal recognition agreement was signed to cover all airport workers on 9th October 2007. The airport continues to grow at a steady pace. We are currently in the process of electing shop stewards and safety reps to lay the strong foundation to becoming fully organised.

Penauille Servisair

We have recently elected the first shop steward at Doncaster Airport for Servisair, concluded the wage negotiations achieving 4.2%, additionally we are now 100% organised and have now organised regular monthly meetings between management and the GMB.

G4S Aviation, Doncaster Airport

The annual wage negotiations resulted in a 4% increase on all earnings. Work continues on behalf of our members striving to achieve better terms and conditions as G4S at Doncaster are currently the lowest paid security workers in the aviation division. We have recently elected a further shop steward to ensure that all members have adequate access to a representative on site.

Thompson's Solicitors

A 5% pay increase was agreed.

Whittles Solicitors

A 4% pay increase was agreed.

ASDA Distribution

Since May 2007 ASDA ADC GMB representatives have been negotiating with the company concerning the annual wage negotiations. We have been involved in many meetings with the company who have tried in every way to get members to agree to a low level increase.

Two offers were put to members for ballot and were unanimously rejected. ACAS has been involved in the conciliation process which did not result in an agreement. Members voted to take their case to binding arbitration because we believed we had a very strong case. Full details were collected by the shop stewards and organiser then written submissions were put to the arbitrator. This included the fact that ASDA is the seconded largest supermarket in the UK with pre-tax profit of £388 million in the UK. GMB members at the distribution centres had made this possible and through their efforts the company had increased profit levels.

ASDA put forward their written submission which was full of inaccurate information and misinformation which did not address the terms of reference of the arbitration. The arbitrators took all the information into consideration and awarded an increased offer on a two years deal. The offer put forward by the arbitrator was the same one that the GMB had said they were prepared to recommend to members for acceptance before going binding arbitration.

3663 Swithenbank, Bradford

The Swithenbank site at Bradford has only been fully recognised by the GMB over the last two years. Membership has been built up over this period and is still on the increase at this time.

The 2 new elected shop stewards have worked hard to achieve this level of membership. In 2006 a grievance was submitted by the workforce to bring the Swithenbank site into line with other 3663 depots who enjoy 5 days more holiday and full pay when sick.

After many hours of negotiations with the company they agreed to pay full sick pay and increase holiday entitlement by 5 days. Over the next few weeks the full details of the deal will be put to members who will then be balloted on the offer.

ASDA Stores

As part of the campaign against ASDA top rate proposals a large number of grievances were put forward by members. Having been denied access in stores to meet with members, the GMB was forced to arrange off

site meetings in Halifax, York, Pudsey and Glasshoughton. All these meetings were well attended, many colleagues joined the Union for the first time and the GMB has two new shop stewards in stores, flying the flag for GMB in Asda.

The result has been movement from the company on their original proposals by making bank holiday working voluntary and clarifying the supplements to members who transferred to top rate.

The GMB nationally have also raised a national collective grievance with ASDA and are waiting for the outcome of the appeal. The number of shop stewards regionally has been increased as a result of having more engagement with members. The amount of information sent to shop stewards has increased and there is currently a GMB equal pay and bullying questionnaire going to all members employed both in the stores and the distribution centres.

A leaflet has also been circulated titled 'GMB wins £1.8 million personal injury compensation for ASDA workers' which ASDA are objecting to and trying to stop the circulation to employees. Further campaigns are being organised for 2008.

Nestle York

The York factory has seen significant investment following the announcement in September 2005 of 645 job losses. The job losses to date only stand at 200 due to intensive negotiations to retain products and re negotiate staffing levels which had been cut to a minimum as part of the announcement together with introducing more flexible shift rota's and staffing levels. The Victorian part of the site is to be sold off for commercial and private use with the proceeds of the sale being used to invest in new plant and machinery. The new plants which are now under commission are the Aero and Kit Kat plants operating modern high efficiency and output.

The factory in 2005 was running at a loss, this has now been turned around, through partnership working, into a profit. The factory is now a modern operation which will sustain and maintain manufacturing on the York site for years to come.

British Sugar

Following the announcement at the end of 2005 the British Sugar factories at Alscott and York have closed. The Alscott site closed in September 2006 and the York site has closed for production purposes with the loss of 105 jobs.

A small number of people remain on site to deal with finished products and the decommissioning of the site which is likely to last some considerable time. As part of the redundancy package the GMB was able to negotiate unabated pensions for all employees over the age of 50. Whilst this does not replace valuable manufacturing jobs it does provide a security of income.

CE Electric

Second part of their 2 year pay award provided RPI plus 0.75%. Other key developments within the Company concerned "Out of Hour Arrangements" where a Modernisation Joint Working Group consisting of TU & Management have had ongoing meetings.

We are now expecting final proposals from this group which will hopefully meet the approval of membership, putting this long standing problem on a more satisfactory footing for the future.

United Utilities (Northern Gas Network)

The 2nd part of their two year pay award resulted in RPI plus 0.2% in July 2007. There are also ongoing working groups attempting to address long standing dissatisfaction with “Stand By” working arrangements.

Drax Power Station

Members received a ground breaking pay award of 15%.

British Gas

The GMB have successfully arranged to be included in the company induction sessions at their call centres within Leeds. This aligned with the recruitment of new shop stewards will hopefully let our membership in this area go from strength to strength.

Arla Foods

Production workers settled for 3.7% in May 2007 backdated to 1 April. A review of the annual hour's system was also agreed as part of this settlement and the working party is continuing to meet. It is hoped that this system will be amended to ensure that holiday booking becomes easier – colleagues are expected to swap shifts at this moment in time - and that sickness triggers are calculated differently, our members believe the current calculations are unfair.

Arla Foods Transport

Extensive work is being undertaken by a committee of senior stewards and HR with respect to reviewing all terms and conditions given that in recent years Arla merged with Express Dairies and there is inconsistency in pay, holidays, sickness entitlements etc. across the sites. Finally, Arla Amba, the Danish arm of the company, bought up the 49% shares held by Arla UK PLC and subsequently now control all Arla operations in this country.

Membership and Recruitment

Membership within the Section as at January 2008 has increased over the last twelve months.

900 of these members work within the security industry where the companies with recognition agreements are covered by one lead organiser and the smaller unorganised workplaces are covered by the area teams in Wakefield, Sheffield and Brighouse to spread the load.

Our activists and teams of full time organisers across the region continued throughout the year to recruit, represent and retain our membership following the guidelines encompassed within the GMB@Work agenda enthusiastically embraced towards the end of the year. One week per quarter is put aside exclusively for recruitment and organisation purposes with a further one day per fortnight put aside for Organisers responsible primarily for servicing to concentrate on organising the workplaces identified within their areas as fruitful targets to their team leaders who monitor activities and progress monthly on a one to one basis. For activists, the region now puts on a two day course for new representatives and has invited existing reps to attend.

As ever, the security industry continues to grow and with it, membership. Every induction session amongst the major players is visited by GMB recruiters who enjoy a high percentage of successful new recruits also with an eye on potential new activists for the future. The region has completed pro-forma in order to identify key activist and shop stewards by work place to improve levels of communications.

MANUFACTURING

It's been another bad year for manufacturing in the region, there has been a number of redundancies in Distribution.

At Burtons in Leeds there have been significant cut backs in the workforce, the agency staff have been laid off.

The other areas where there has been concern are at Kalon Paints, Birstall where there has been severe disruption due to shift changes where the shift patterns have been altered to a point where the majority of the workforce have now got to work a shift system. This has caused redundancies with people being unable to deal with the shift patterns. However we have not lost membership in this area, in fact we have increased it slightly. Kalon itself is going through a difficult period as it has just been sold to two other American adventure capitalists companies and with the possibility of a recession coming their tonnage of paint has been forecasted to be down this year.

The main point with manufacturing this year has been the dispute with the Government and Remploy. I would like to express a vote of gratitude to James Stribley and all the guys in the region that have fought so hard for the jobs of Remploy in the region. It has been decided that the Pontefract factory is going to remain open for the time being however York is under severe threat and at the moment they are balloting for Industrial Action to try and keep the business open. Members at Remploy have worked tirelessly, the turn out for the Labour Party Conference from the region and nationally was fantastic, it's been a really hard fought campaign. Let's hope we can carry on the fight and save as many jobs in Remploy as we can.

As far as the future of manufacturing in the region is concerned it is a very bleak forecast for 2008. The Clothing and Textile section itself is virtually down to one manufacturing unit, Burberry in Castleford. The rest of the Clothing and Textile companies in the region are purely importers now with the biggest being Arcadia Group formally Burtons in Leeds.

Politically many politicians seem to express support for manufacturing but when it actually comes down to Government policy there is very little help in the short term, and I believe in the long term there is a bleak future for manufacturing in our region.

Remploy

Last year the Board of Remploy announced the closure of 43 factories. This includes the York, Bradford and Pontefract factories in our region.

The Yorkshire & North Derbyshire region have been at the forefront of the Campaign with the Regional Executive donating £10,000 to a "Fighting Fund" against the closures.

The campaign has included lobbying at the Labour Party Deputy Leadership Hustings and demonstrations outside the Department of Work & Pensions in Sheffield, a march and lobby of City Hall in Bradford, the lobbying of Councillors and street campaigns in York and Pontefract, the lobbying of MP's throughout the region and a social event in Bradford.

The region also sent representatives to lobby both the Houses of Parliament and the Labour Party Conference in Bournemouth.

In December 2007 a revised plan was proposed by the Remploy Board which still included the closure and merger of 28 factories.

This means that the GMB Pontefract Factory will now remain open and members employed at the Bradford factory will have the opportunity to be transferred to the Leeds factory.

The York Factory is currently being balloted for Industrial action to fight against the proposed closure of their Factory.

We are also due to meet with reps from York CC and BMDC to see if they can assist in the ongoing campaigns to keep both sites open.

Dorlux 2005

The Company went into Administration in June 2007, resulting in over 20 employees being dismissed on the grounds of redundancy.

The regional legal team has lodged a claim for a protective award. The company is now out of administration and trading under Dorlux Beds UK Ltd.

Denso Marston

Recruitment and consolidation continues.

Symphony

Recruitment and consolidation continues at both Leeds and Rotherham sites.

Competition within the Industry continues to put pressure on the job security of our members. It appears that the use of agency and fixed term contract workers is on the increase which can potentially weaken our collective strength.

Robert McBrides

There was an increase on hourly rates of 3.5% with effect from 2nd July 2007. "One off" one day/shift off. Blow moulding sick pay entitlement will be aligned with other hourly paid employees with immediate effect. A new productivity bonus scheme was introduced with effect from 1st September 2007. Recruitment will be a priority in 2008.

PUBLIC SERVICES

The regional membership in the Public Services stands at 28961.

Local Government

Once again the past 12 months have been dominated by the campaign to see the introduction of single status through the pursuit of a new pay and grading system based on job evaluation and the pursuit of equal pay.

Within the Yorkshire region local Councils engaged with GMB negotiators in a variety of ways to 'address' these issues. In the majority of local Councils GMB members have been offered a compensation package designed to deal with the historical unequal pay suffered by women workers. By and large the GMB has advised members to reject these offers as they have been much less than members deserve and the Union has felt more was achievable through legal action.

Only two local councils in the region have completed the pay and grading process and introduced a new pay structure – Rotherham and Chesterfield. In both areas GMB negotiators have criticised the Councils proposals and consulted members on the package put forward.

In every other local authority negotiations continue at varying rates of progress and with varying degrees of success.

It has been another difficult and frustrating year for GMB negotiators; councils have approached harmonisation and the introduction of equal pay in the predictable way. That is the wrong way by trying to level the pay of men down instead of levelling the pay of women up.

This has created dispute situations particularly in Rotherham MBC, Sheffield CC and Leeds CC.

In all areas GMB members have been kept fully informed of progress or lack of it. In all areas GMB members have been advised of their legal rights and encouraged to exercise them through equal pay claims.

Equal Pay Campaigns

Every GMB member in Local Government and the NHS has received at least one direct mailed equal pay questionnaire alongside appropriate guidance. Our twin track approach to deliver equal pay – negotiation alongside litigation has seen claims lodged in ET's across the region in the following

Local Authorities:

Barnsley	Doncaster	Rotherham
Bradford	Kirklees/Jarvis	Sheffield
Calderdale	Leeds	York

Court proceedings are ongoing in Sheffield CC. Settlements have been reached via litigation in Leeds CC and Kirklees MDC.

In every workplace we have sought to organise and recruit on the back of our Equal Pay campaign.

Equal Pay Strategy Meetings

Throughout the year we have held regular equal pay strategy meetings involving officers and activists. These have been designed to share experiences, discuss negotiations and legal problems and to provide guidance to negotiators on these complex issues.

Particular thanks must go to our regional lawyers Whittles who have attended each meeting and to Mick Hubbard of National Office Productivity Services/Research Department who has attended every meeting and provided invaluable advice and guidance on job evaluation and the complexities of pay and grading systems.

Local Government Core Group

The region's Core Group of local government convenors and senior representatives has continued to meet to plan GMB activities across Councils in Yorkshire and North Derbyshire. This forum provides an invaluable opportunity for representatives to discuss issues, share problems and solutions and promote successes.

Our representatives have, through this forum, arranged exchange visits with Local Authorities and across regions to see first hand how different GMB teams are handling issues in their local authority.

Local Government Pay Campaign

GMB members in Yorkshire and North Derbyshire were rightly offended by the paltry 2007 pay offer from the Government. Campaign meetings/consultation meetings were held in every local Council within the region.

NHS

I have to report that industrial relations in the NHS have been problematic - at Barnsley Hospital, senior nursing and recovery nurses were offered the opportunity to take a reduction in pay in the form of down grading, which would mean a loss of approximately £2000 per annum.

Following a ballot for industrial action, which resulted in an overwhelming vote in favour, a one day of strike action, including a demonstration outside of the hospital gates, which was supported by a continuous work to contract (work to rule) was implemented.

The day of action was very successful. Members of staff who were on duty came out to the gate to offer support during their lunch breaks. The media coverage ensured that the GMB profile across South Yorkshire remained prominent as we were the only NHS union to ballot members. There were other successes. Firstly was the fact that following long discussion, management conceded and our members have since been returned to their original pay band with any monies lost reinstated. Our profile within the trust has been raised to the point where most people employed at Barnsley Hospital know that GMB is the best union for them; this is clearly evidenced by the sustained and continued increase in members. The hard work and commitment of the branch officers is commendable. Their dedication to the GMB and our members is unquestionable and is also very much appreciated.

At York Hospital we have also balloted for industrial action. Following the implementation of Agenda for Change (job evaluation) scheme, the Medical Secretaries submitted their information for evaluation. However, it was returned to them with sections 'factored out' which were described as factual changes. In other words, to ensure that they remain at a pay band below their required band, the sections were removed. Grievances were submitted on behalf of GMB members, which the trust decided would not be heard. Once again we were left with no alternative other than to ballot our members. The returned papers were 96% in favour of industrial action including strike & 82% in favour of action short of strike. Once again the media coverage was excellent and all of the medical secretaries are now GMB members. The grievance was eventually heard in December. It was agreed that jobs would once again be evaluated – without any changes and a guaranteed band 4 would be given.

However, simultaneously, we received notification that the trust had decided that following discussion with staff side reps (Unison) they would de-recognise GMB. Our organiser has had discussions with full time officers from other NHS trade unions and it is hoped that this will be resolved soon, although we believe this will be resisted.

Yorkshire Ambulance Service

Prior to Christmas 2006 the Yorkshire Ambulance Service, without any consultation with the recognised Trade Unions, announced potential redundancies of hundreds of staff. Our GMB senior representative over the next few weeks campaigned against these redundancies.

At one meeting in order to discuss the potential job losses it was alleged that a senior representative made some disparaging comments about the chief executive of the service, as a consequence our senior representative was suspended and the Yorkshire Ambulance Service suspended recognition of the GMB with effect from February 2007. Since then the GMB has been working to restore Trade Union rights and to defend the interests of GMB members and the position of our senior representative John Durkin.

Equal Pay

Every NHS member has received an equal pay questionnaire and appropriate guidance. Equal pay claims have been lodged by our regional solicitors against a number of trusts. Legal proceedings are ongoing.

2. GENERAL ORGANISATION

Regional Senior Organisers	3
Membership Development Officers	0
Regional Organisers	16
Organising Officers	2
No. of Branches	122
New Branches	0
Branch Equality Officers	23
Branch Youth Officers	4

3. BENEFITS

Dispute	421.93
Total Disablement	0.00
Working Accident	4,969.80
Occupational Fatal Accident	8,000.00
Non-occupational Fatal Accident	0.00
Funeral	20,942.00

4 JOURNALS & PUBLICITY

The GMB nationally will be producing journals three times per year which will include national and regional news and articles. The region continued to sponsor many charities and organisations during 2007 and these were:

- Children's Heart Federation
- South Yorkshire Festival
- Children with Leukaemia
- Aire Valley District Scouts
- Bosom Friends & Bradford Cancer Support Fashion Show
- Wakefield Pride NOT Prejudice
- The World at your Doorstep
- Action for Sick Children
- Bluebell Wood Children's Hospice
- 3 Peaks Challenge
- Castleford High School
- Circus Starr – Sue Ryder Care
- Genesis Appeal
- The Rotherham Hospice
- World Rugby
- Castleford Tigers
- Sheffield & Rotherham Asbestos Group
- Light up a Life – St Gemma's Hospice
- Remploy Fighting Fund
- East Leeds ARLFC

5. LEGAL SERVICES

(a) OCCUPATIONAL ACCIDENTS AND DISEASES (including criminal injuries)

Applications for Legal Assistance	Legal Assistance Granted
916	916

Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Court	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
877	342	4	526 £1,461,420.67	5 £2,521,179.90	£3,982,600.57
Cases outstanding at 31.12.2007			2731		

(b) INDUSTRIAL TRIBUNALS (notified to Legal Department)

Claims supported by Union	154
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Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Rejected	Withdrawn	Lost in Tribunal	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
180	36	28	5	100 £258,112.12	11 £197,884.33	£455,996.45
Cases outstanding at 31.12.2007			132			

(c) OTHER EMPLOYMENT LAW CASES

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

(d) SOCIAL SECURITY CASES

Supported by Union	Successful	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2007
40	8	48

The regional legal department is responsible for overseeing the legal services provided through the region's solicitors, Whittles. Although the biggest requirement for legal assistance continues to be in the area of personal injury and disease members can access an initial free legal consultation on most legal issues. A criminal law advice line is included in the service.

Most of the region's employment law work is conducted by the legal department with referrals to the region's solicitors as required, for example public sector equal pay cases. A professional and efficient system of employment tribunal casework management is in place which provides a first class successful service to members. 'In-house' knowledge and practical experience of handling employment tribunal cases is utilised

to provide regular employment law training courses as an integral part of the region's training agenda. Organisers are also kept abreast of new developments in employment law through the use of regular bulletins and e-mailed briefings. The department runs a monthly introduction to GMB legal services and a basic employment rights course as part of the induction of new workplace representatives.

Training is also provided to the region's workplace representatives in, for example, the statutory disputes procedures and age discrimination legislation

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

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

6. REGIONAL EQUALITY & RACE REPORT

At the time of writing no advisory committee meetings have taken place. In the first instance, where meetings have been arranged we have had little or no attendance, therefore there has been no opportunity to discuss the CEC special report or formulate a plan of work.

A report with findings and recommendations has been submitted to the regional secretary, which will be discussed in two weeks time.

At the time of writing the Champions Diversity and Equality training has just been completed and I will be having a meeting with the Regional Secretary and also with the new Head of Equality & Diversity in the near future.

7. YOUNG MEMBERS' REPORT

In February 2007, a meeting of young members took place; the first in a very long time. Despite broad publicity for this event, only five attended, but this included two new activists who had responded to the invite that featured in the regional magazine. Lively discussion ensued with respect to developing recruitment materials targeting young workers and students, recruitment activity around careers fairs and campaigning in the local elections against BNP candidates.

In terms of delivery, a number of our young members participated extensively in the Hope Not Hate Campaign in the run up to the election and some work commenced on the creation of recruitment materials.

In June 2007 Lucinda Yeadon of Leeds General branch was presented with the GMB Youth Award at Congress. This was highly deserved recognition of Lucinda's commitment to GMB and the important work she undertakes on a daily basis.

Over the summer a number of young activists volunteered their time and energy to work behind Workers' Beer Company bars at both the Glastonbury and Leeds Festival. As a result of such dedication we were able to raise in excess of £3,500 for future events, campaigns and materials.

In October the Regional Young Members Advisory Committee was re launched. Following a communication to branches and again extensive publicity in the regional magazine, a number of young members came forward and consequently our database has grown considerably.

The first new look RYMAC was well attended with only one member, Lucinda, having been involved in the past. At the meeting a new secretary and chair were elected, Daniel Randall of Club Stewards and Bar Staff branch and David Grant of Sheffield Municipal and Light respectively. In just a short period of time, under Daniel and David's drive and leadership, the committee has gone from strength to strength. Initially meetings have been scheduled on a six weekly basis, until action plans are well under way. Valuable work is also being undertaken in between meetings via frequent email circulation among the group, to ensure that sufficient preparation is undertaken prior to the committee convening.

The impact of this new grouping in such a tight time frame is evident in that we were in a position to field six delegates to the National Young Members' Conference which was scheduled for November 2007. Whilst the conference unfortunately was cancelled, the pre organisation undertaken has given us a tremendous foundation on which to build further.

Already recruitment materials have been devised by the group, led and motivated by both Daniel and David. The young members' page for our regional website is not far off completion and concrete steps with respect to adopting, interacting and leading a number of campaigns have been taken. The 'Supersize My Pay' campaign is one that the committee has endorsed along with all anti racist activity.

In addition, GMB is actively participating in and steering the Regional TUC Young Members' Forum. Whilst Lucinda has played an active role within Youth TUC on the National Stage, both Daniel and Lydia Wilkinson of Leeds General branch have been involved regionally since late 2007. RYMAC has meetings scheduled for January and February and are in the process of organising a meeting on the Supersize My Pay Campaign, addressed by Mike Treen from the New Zealand Union, Unite, as part of the third annual week of action organised by the anti-exploitation campaign No Sweat.

Not for what seems like an age has Yorkshire and North Derbyshire been in such a position of strength in terms of the ideas, dynamism and commitment of our young activists. Special thanks to all those involved in RYMAC and to both Leeds General branch and Sheffield Municipal and Light branch for their tremendous support and encouragement. These are exciting times of which I am confident, will bear considerable fruit in 2008.

8. TRAINING

(a) GMB Courses Basic Training					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Introduction to GMB (2 days)inc on site 2 day	11	81	23	104	208
GMB/TUC Induction (5 days)	6	n/a	n/a	64	320
Branch Officers (please specify subject)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

(b) On Site Courses (please specify subjects)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Disability Awareness	2	13	2	15	30
Risk Assessment	4	28	3	31	124
TUPE	2	13	2	15	30

Age Discrimination	2	16	2	18	36
ULR	1	7	1	8	8
Grievance	4	32	7	39	156
Disciplinary	4	21	11	32	128
Statutory Disputes	3	14	2	16	48
H&S Inspection	4	25	4	29	116
Dealing With Life Changes	1	13		13	13
Staff Training Best Practise	1		20	20	20

(c) Health & Safety Courses (please specify subjects)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
H&S 3day	7	n/a	n/a	69	483
H&S Welfare at Work	1	8	7	15	15

(d) Other Courses (please specify subjects / weekdays/ weekends)					
GFTU weekends	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Dealing with Bullying (3 days)	1	4		4	12
Stress (3 days)	1	1		1	3
(3 days) Workplace Conflict	1	1		1	3
(3 days) Deaf Awareness	1	1	1	2	6
Trade Union & the Environments (3 days)	1	1		1	3
Intro to Web Design(3 days)	1	1		1	3
Basic Health & Safety (3 days)	1	1		1	3
Project Management (3 days)	1	1		1	3
Assertiveness for Women Trade Unionist (3 days)	1		1	1	3
Public Speaking (3 days)	1	1		1	3
Intro to Microsoft PowerPoint (3 days)	1	1		1	3
Risk Assessment (3 days)	1	1		1	3
Leadership Skills (3 days)	1	1		1	3
Preparing for Retirement (3 days)	1		1	1	3
Trade Union Democracy (3 days)	1	1		1	3
Dealing With Bullying & Harassment (3 days)	1	4	1	5	15

Recruitment Procedures (3 days)	1	1		1	3
Redundancy (3 days)	1	2		2	3
Advocacy (3 days)	1	2		2	6
Diversity Awareness (3 days)	1	1		1	3
Tackling Workplace Issues (3 days)	1	1		1	3
Advanced Course Senior Reps (3 days)	1	3		3	9
Organisational Behaviour (3 days)	1	1		1	3
Northern College					
Advanced Health & Safety (4 day)	1 (4days)	3		3	12
Negotiating for Training	1(4 days)	5		5	20
Industrial Relations	1(5days)	1		1	1
Understanding Pensions	1(3day)	1		1	3
Understanding DDA	1(3days)	4		4	12
Employment Law	1(4 days)	4	1	5	20
Focus On Local Authority	1 (4 days)	2		2	8
Industrial Relations	1(4 days)	1		1	4
Advanced Health & Safety	1 (4days)	2	1	3	12
Regional ULF Project					
NVQ Level 1					70
NVQ Level 2					167
NVQ Level 3					8

(e) TUC (STUC & ICTU) Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Union Reps Stage 1	2(12 days)	4		4	48
Union Rep Stage 2	2(12 days)	1		1	24
Learner Rep	1	1		1	1
Occupational Health & safety Certificate	1(36 days)	2		2	72
Next steps for Safety Reps	1(10 days)	3		3	30
Disability Champions	1(5days)	3		3	15
Certificate of Employment Law	1(36 days)	3	2	1	108
H&S Stage 2	1(10 days)	1		1	10
H&S Stage1	1(12 days)	2		2	24

The education department in 2007 had a very successful period; we have increased our programme and learning pathway to benefit both our existing and new activists.

The Disability Route which involves activists following our progressional path directs them to the Disability Champion status. As a region we currently have a number of individuals who have completed this pathway.

We have worked closely with the Conversion to Learning project that has provided a continuity and link with colleges and providers for the sport section. Also through the ULRs network within the region we intend to expand this link into all GMB recognised workplaces.

The department has worked hard to maintain the quality of the courses as well as increasing the courses we provide as a region. The information we receive from the evaluation sheets has been implemented into the curriculum to improve the knowledge and skills of our activists.

The GMB@Work 2 day course is co-tutored with officers who are often at the frontline of disputes, therefore they bring to the course knowledge of past and on going situations that are beneficial in supporting new activists.

The above tables are a guidance of what we have achieved as a department and a region in 2007.

9. HEALTH & SAFETY

The exercise of raising the profile of the health and safety resource in the region continues. Efforts are currently being made to increase the number of health and safety contacts on the regional health and safety database so that information can be sent out directly to as many of the activists as possible.

Support and guidance is provided to activists and organisers in addition to responding to health and safety related telephone enquiries received on a daily basis. Attendance at workplaces to conduct inspections, sit in on health and safety committee meetings, and provide further support in an advisory capacity is now a regular occurrence for the health and safety officer, proving an effective means of highlighting and gaining recognition of workplace health and safety issues.

Throughout 2007, the regional health and safety officer delivered two, one day, bi-monthly courses aimed at bolstering the core knowledge and supporting the activities of the region's health and safety representatives; these are 'Workplace Inspections' and 'Understanding Risk Assessment and the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations'. Additionally from May 2008, there will be a one day course on COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health). The department also provides tailor-made training in specific areas, or on specific topics upon request, which has been effectively used in securing recognition deals and will be offered to activists to aid them in campaigning for their members' safety and welfare at work more effectively.

Given that workplace health and safety remains one of the foremost concerns amongst members, and is given as one of the main considerations by those who join, or remain members of a trade union, an ongoing commitment is made to be actively involved in organising campaigns and promoting the GMB. Assisted by the use of GMB published information tailored to the workplace, and working with the region's teams, the health and safety officer will support our organisers and workplace representatives in the consolidation and retention of existing members, and recruitment of new members and in securing recognition at target companies.

10. POLITICAL

The political situation in the region is mixed the 2007 local elections were generally poor in South Yorkshire and in the far West of Yorkshire; Halifax, Kirklees and Calderdale with a few Labour Councillors being re-elected. The situation in Leeds however was slightly more optimistic. The GMB backed candidate Mark Dobson, he has achieved the second best local result in the country by overturning a Tory majority of 1,700 and giving Labour a lead of 300. This was great for all the people involved and the GMB worked really hard

in this war. In the rest of Leeds where the GMB influential opposition Tory and Liberal majorities were cut back and we are probably in a position to win the Council back this year, 2008.

The GMB were involved with the Hope not Hate campaign, the bus arrived in several areas in our region Sheffield, Leeds and in the Calderdale where they had significant BNP presence. This was a very successful campaign and we feel that we've got the BNP on the back foot in this part of the region but we are not complacent and we need to be vigilant in the future to make sure that this threat is constantly looked at and wherever we can defeat the BNP we will be there doing our best to do so.

The significant changes on the Parliamentary scene are that following the Boundary Commission the Normanton CLP seat has now been put into Castleford and Pontefract and the new constituency involving Rothwell and Outwood has informed Colin Challen the former GMB backed MP has decided to call it a day and the Government Minister, Ed Balls has taken his place who will be a candidate in the next election.

This situation regarding the phoney election has done quite a lot of damage. As far as we were concerned we had got everything ready for the election coming just before the Labour Party Conference. I think that it was a wrong decision not to go forward for a General Election and since then Gordon Brown has lost a great deal of credibility. However the alternative, Dave Cameron is just too scary to worry about. In our region we have recovered somewhat from that and the complaints that people made about Gordon dithering have generally now gone away and we are looking forward to showing up the leadership and making sure that we move forward and we have a realistic chance of winning the next General Election.

I would like to express thanks to the MP's who supported us in the Remploy campaign; Colin Burgon, Jon Trickett need a mention and quite a few other people across the region. The campaign has been partially successful however we feel that the Government could have done more to support Remploy and that's left a nasty taste in the mouth of many members in our region.

Finally, I would like to welcome Steve Kemp to the region. Steve is from National Office and is going to be involved in trying to reinvigorate politics in the Yorkshire & North Derbyshire region. I will look forward to working with Steve and let's hope that we can change things round and get the GMB presence back where it should be across the region.

(Adopted)

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now move to item 16 and ask Tim Roache to move his report, pages 142-157. Tim?

BRO. TIM ROACHE: Formally moved.

THE PRESIDENT: 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157. Thank you. Does Congress agree to accept that part of the report?
(Agreed) Thank you.

Regional Secretary's Report: Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region (Pages 142-157) was adopted.

THE POST OF DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY: REPORT TO CONGRESS

The Post of Deputy General Secretary

Report to Congress 2008

1. Introduction

At the CEC meeting held on 4 December 2007, the Deputy General Secretary reported that she felt it appropriate at the outset of the election process to advise the CEC that she will not be seeking re-election as Deputy General Secretary. In light of this announcement it was agreed by the CEC to review and examine the role and post of Deputy General Secretary and the incumbent post-holder was asked to carry out the review and to submit her findings to the 12 February 2008 CEC meeting.

2. Deputy General Secretary Background

The post of Deputy General Secretary is a relatively recent innovation for the GMB. It was introduced at Congress 1990 because it was felt that there needed to be a post which formally assumed the duties of the General Secretary in the event of his or her absence and that the number of public appearances required of the General Secretary was such that a substitute of suitable status was needed.

The first person to hold the office was Tom Burlinson, the Northern Regional Secretary, elected in early 1991. Tom was already the Union's representative on the Labour Party National Executive Committee, so it became the custom that the post-holder took the NEC seat (subsequently joined by the President when the Union became entitled to two seats).

3. Deputy General Secretary Roles and Responsibilities

There is no official job description for the post of Deputy General Secretary and no clearly defined records of expected responsibilities save for that contained within Rule 14A (1) of the GMB Rulebook which states that:

The Deputy General Secretary shall be subject to the authority of, and shall carry out all duties required of him/her by the General Secretary and the Central Executive Council.

In the absence of a clearly define set of duties the post has evolved over time but in the main the workload and content has largely been determined by the General Secretary.

4. Current Arrangements

The current Deputy General Secretary spends the bulk of her time working with the Labour Party in her capacity as NEC member, NEC Officer, Joint Policy Committee Co-convenor and Britain in the World Commission member. The duties of NEC Officer have become particularly onerous of late given the devolved responsibilities conveyed by the NEC to Officers in the wake of the Party's financial difficulties and there is an obligation to attend weekly meetings

and/or telephone conferences. However, the GMB replacement representative on the NEC would be unlikely to inherit these roles in the short to medium term.

In addition the Deputy General Secretary performs a number of duties which are listed below

Attends and reports to CEC

Attends and reports to SMT

Attends and represents the General Secretary at CEC Sub-Committees (NB the number of Committees that report to the Deputy General Secretary has recently been reduced from 4 to 2)

Has strategic oversight for the Union's work on equalities (NB the Union have recently appointed a National Equality and Inclusion Officer to be responsible for this agenda)

Has responsibility for the authorisation of industrial action ballots and for repudiation of unlawful industrial action. Reports to the CEC Finance & General Purposes Committee

Represents the Union on various employment related commissions such as Women and Work Commission and Commission on Vulnerable Employment

A member of ACAS General Council – independent appointment.

Chairs the quarterly joint NSRC/management meetings (under review)

Chairs the 1961 GMB Pension Scheme Trustee Board

GMB Trustee

Chairs the Congress Working Party

Authorises National Secretaries Expenditure (previously all National Officials)

Member of the CEC Appeals Committee Panel

Attends and supports National Retired Members Association activity

Addresses conferences, lectures, rallies and seminars on behalf of the GMB

Deputises for the General Secretary when requested

Carries out any other duties required by the General Secretary

5. Senior Management Structure

The role of the Senior Management Team has developed since 2004/5 when the Regional Secretaries and Senior Managers successfully worked collectively to resolve the Union's burgeoning financial difficulties. The current General Secretary expanded the Senior Management Team role further by devolving managerial responsibility and decentralising a number of key tasks that would have hitherto been considered to be within the exclusive domain of the General Secretary/Deputy General Secretary's Office.

In a similar vein, greater responsibility has been conferred on National Secretaries who have a clearly defined managerial role with direct responsibility for National Officers within their respective Sections reporting directly to the General Secretary.

The establishment of the National Organising Team has also been an example of how authority and responsibility has shifted from the General Secretary/Deputy General Secretary's Office to a team, headed up by a National Official reporting directly to the General Secretary.

The net effect of this shift in the balance of responsibilities/authority has been to create a more collegiate, accountable and inclusive Senior Management Team – akin to a Board of Directors where responsibility for the management and the governance of the Union is shared for the collective good of the Union. This policy has also empowered National Secretaries and the NOT Team to manage officers and staff and greater authority in the pursuance of GMB policy.

These distributive measures are to be welcomed and are already proving to have a positive impact but they have also resulted in a diminution of the authority of the Deputy General Secretary office in the process and are therefore significant in relation to the review of the Deputy General Secretary post.

6. Other Considerations

As the GMB rulebook states at Rule 10.2:

"The General Secretary and Treasurer, and the Deputy General Secretary shall also be voting members of the Central Executive Council"

This means that the Deputy General Secretary position must be an elected position under Section 46 (2) (a) and (b) of the TULR(C) Act 1992. (The relevant Sections of the 1992 Act are attached in **Appendix 1**)

The ongoing cost of running this ballot is approximately £250,000.

7. Options for the Future.

Over the past 5 years the roles and responsibilities of the Deputy General Secretary have changed in response to the changing environment in which we operate – both internally and externally and it is therefore appropriate that the CEC reflect on these changes and question whether there is a continuing need for this post.

The CEC could decide to:

A) Continue with the current arrangements and proceed with Deputy General Secretary Election 2008.

If this was the preferred option I would recommend that the role becomes more clearly defined with the production of a more formal job description.

B) Consider an alternative leadership structure that could involve the appointment of an executive or Assistant General Secretary post(s) with clearly defined roles that support the General Secretary and are able to deputise and assist if and when required.

I would recommend if this proved to be the favoured option then clearly defined roles should be attached to this post/these posts. Duties could include specific responsibility for the Management of National Office functions, industrial and policy oversight and political and external relations.

C) Abolish the post. Any residual roles of the Deputy General Secretary to be covered by the Senior Management structure.

In the event of either option B) or C) being favoured, effective rule amendments would need to be presented to Congress 2008 with specific reference to Rules 10, 14A and 15.

8. Feedback from Regional consultation

Following Regional consultation responses were brought to the Central Executive Council meeting on 22 April 2008. Following discussion the Central Executive Council **AGREED** to recommend to Congress that option C is adopted by Congress.

The Central Executive Council therefore asks Congress to adopt Option C.

9. Rule Amendments

As stated in Paragraph 7 above, the Central Executive Council recommendation of option C to Congress will require Congress, if they agree to adopt the recommendation, to also adopt relevant Rule Amendments to give effect to

option C. The Central Executive Council therefore also recommends to Congress the adoption of the following Rule Amendments:

**GMB CONGRESS 2008
RULE AMENDMENTS
PROPOSED BY THE CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
To be submitted to Congress, Plymouth, June 2008**

**Rule 8 Clause 5
Line 4: Delete “the Deputy General Secretary”**

**Rule 10 Clause 2
Line 8 & 9: Delete “The General Secretary and Treasurer, and the Deputy General Secretary shall also be voting members of the Central Executive Council”**

Insert: “The General Secretary and Treasurer shall also be a voting member of the Central Executive Council”

**Rule 14A
Delete entire Rule**

**Rule 15
Title of Rule
Delete “, and of Deputy General Secretary”**

**Rule 15 Clause 1
Delete entire clause**

**Insert:
“1 This rule shall apply to the election of the General Secretary and Treasurer, who shall hold office for a period of five years from taking up office”**

**Rule 17A Clause A3
Line 4 Delete “, Deputy General Secretary”**

**Rule 17E Clause E1
Line 3 Delete “or Rule 14A”
Line 3 & 4 Delete “, Deputy General Secretary”**

**Rule 18 Clause 2
Line 6 Delete “, Deputy General Secretary”**

Rule 18 Clause 3

Line 6 Delete “ or Deputy General Secretary”

Rule 62 Clause 1

Line 4 & 5 Delete “and the election of the Deputy General Secretary”

Rule 63 Clause 1

Line 3 Delete “or Deputy General Secretary”

Rule 64 Clause 1

Line 3 & 4 Delete “Deputy General Secretary,”

(Carried and adopted)

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now ask Malcolm Sage to move the report on the post of Deputy General Secretary and the rule amendments.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Speaking on behalf of the CEC and seeking your support for rule amendments to rules 8, 10, 14a, 15, 17, 18, 62, 63, 64, which all relate to the post of Deputy General Secretary. Congress, the post of Deputy General Secretary was introduced at Congress in 1990 and the GMB has been very fortunate with the people who have held that post. The first was the late Tom Burlinson, who is remembered with great warmth and affection by many GMB members, officers, and staff. Back then in 1990 it was felt there was a need to formally assume the duties of the General Secretary in his or her absence with a substitute of suitable status and because the Union was experimenting with a more centralised system of control. However, the job description simply required the post-holder to carry out all the duties required by the General Secretary and the Central Executive Council. As the post evolved over the years it has been very much what the post-holder has made it and what duties the incumbent General Secretary decided to allocate.

Much of the focus of Debbie Coulter’s work as GMB Deputy General Secretary has been related to the Labour Party and her role on the NEC. She also reported to the CEC, represented the General Secretary at CEC sub committees, and the Union on employment-related commissions such as the Women at Work Commission, the Commission on Vulnerable Employment. She supported the National Retired Members Association and had a strategic responsibility for the equalities work of the Union. She was the architect of our groundbreaking new equality structure.

When the Deputy General Secretary reported in December 2007 that she was not seeking re-election to the post the CEC decided that the role and the post itself should be examined. The reason was twofold: firstly, the GMB is now a very different organisation to back in 1990 when the post was created. It is now a cohesive organisation with a senior management team working collectively in an accountable and inclusive structure. Secondly, we would be losing the highly individual talents, personal skills, and style that Debbie used to shape the post. The CEC entrusted Debbie Coulter, the incumbent Deputy

General Secretary, to carry out a full review of the post. Following a full consultation process the Deputy General Secretary presented her findings to the April 2008 CEC. The CEC after full consideration of the report is recommending the following to Congress: that the post of Deputy General Secretary be abolished and that any residual roles to be covered by the senior management structure.

Congress, you will shortly have an opportunity to debate and vote on the CEC's recommendation. All the rule amendments before you now will effectively terminate the rule book position of GMB Deputy General Secretary.

I am sure that there will be many warm words regarding Debbie in the debate which follows. I would like to take this opportunity to express my admiration for Debbie and the dignity that she brought to a sometimes difficult job. I know this was not a decision taken lightly. She has been a good companion and colleague and has my highest respect and admiration. She enjoys great respect throughout the Trades Union Movement and the Labour Party, and I am sure she will go on to great things with our best wishes. I move the rule amendments.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Malcolm. Colleagues, before I call Elaine Daley on the report I will be going round the regions, so will they be prepared to come to the front. I will be calling Northern Region first, Birmingham, South Western, and London.

SIS. E. DALEY (CEC, Commercial Services) speaking on behalf of the CEC and seconding the rule amendments to rules 8, 10, 14a, 15, 17, 18, 62, 63, and 64, relating to the abolition of the post of Deputy General Secretary. Congress, you have paid tribute to Debbie Coulter who held the post of Deputy General Secretary from 2004 to 2008. It is typical of Debbie that following her decision not to seek re-election she undertook a full and objective review of the post at the request of the CEC. It was courageous of Debbie to forensically examine the history and development of the post and ask the crucial question whether it was any longer necessary in the new inclusive and cohesive structure which is now the backbone of the GMB. This report influenced the CEC to reach our decision to recommend the abolition of the post of Deputy General Secretary.

Congress, we have heard many warm words about Debbie today and I am sure there will be many more in the days to come. Debbie will be long remembered for the professional and dignified way she carried out her duties. She is leaving a lot of good friends throughout the Union and many good memories. She is also leaving us with a lasting legacy of a new equalities structure fit for purpose and reflecting the rich diversity of our GMB members.

The rule amendments before you now will remove the rule book position of GMB Deputy General Secretary and leave the new lay member Executive with one elected full time paid official with clearly defined role and responsibilities and having voting rights. I move the rule amendments.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Elaine. Congress, I know I called regions to come in on the report and I know you may not have had speakers, so if there is a burning desire for anyone, please come up. Does anyone wish to oppose the report? (*No response*) Anyone who wishes to speak on the rule amendments and the report? (*No response*) Thank you. Can I put the rule amendments and the report to Congress?

Amendments to Rules 8, 10, 14a, 15, 17, 18, 62, 63 and 64 carried, and report adopted.

ADDRESS TO CONGRESS: MONICA SMITH, RETIRED MEMBERS ASSOCIATION

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, we move on to item 18 and it gives me great pleasure to welcome, and to see her back on her feet and looking very healthy, Monica Smith, National Secretary of the GMB Retired Members Association to address Congress. After Monica has made her address to Congress I will be calling Motion 47, South Western - London Region 47 (I just moved the boundary lines, Terry), Age Discrimination, South Western to move 49, and Southern Region to move 51. Will the movers and seconders please come to the front? Thank you. Monica?

SIS. M. SMITH (Retired Members Association): President, Congress, in my address to the 2006 Congress I expressed my pride and commitment to the GMB and how proud I was to be addressing Congress as the National Secretary of the Retired Members. At that time I said I recalled my mother telling me that pride was a sin. Well, colleagues, here standing before you today is an unrepentant sinner who has been committed to this Union of ours for over half a century and I would like to tell you something about myself.

I left school in 1944. Let me tell you something of the changes I have seen. The Second World War did not end until 1945. My first job was in Woolworths where I earned £1.4s.8d, about £1.30 today, and I received 1s.6d spending money, 7.1/2 pence today. Food, petrol, and clothing had to be bought with coupons from a ration book. It was 1950 before you could buy petrol without coupons at less than one shilling a gallon, 5 pence today.

In 1954 I married Bernard and bread by that time had come off the ration. It cost 7.1/2d a loaf, less than 5 pence today. I had already moved on from Woolworths and went into textiles where I became a shop steward and loved being part of the Union and meeting so many wonderful people.

I lived through the 1960s. I wore mini-skirts but I did not take drugs. I have added to the population by having three children and in turn they have given me seven grandchildren, and seven great grandchildren.

Now I would like to convey to you what has been happening in the Retired Members Section this year. First of all, a big thank you to the Deputy General Secretary, Debbie Coulter, for her commitment and encouragement to the GMB RMA for the last few years.

The National Committee continued to meet four times a year with Regional Committees meeting regularly, and who bring their reports to the National Committee. We do have an annual conference. The date and venue for this year's conference will be decided next week. I can tell you, colleagues, the quality and commitment of the delegates is second to none. In 2007 the RMA conference was held in the Birmingham and West Midlands Region and I would like to pay tribute to Joe Morgan and his team for assisting in making the conference flow so smoothly. At the conference we debated the decline in the value of our pensions due to the increase in local taxes and above-inflation rises in fuel costs. If that sounds familiar it is probably likely to be part of your pay claim. All increases affect us all.

The campaign for the end of mixed sex wards: I am pleased to report that it has been announced by the Government that this should now cease, but do not hold your breath. Out-of-hours GP service: many pensioners feel these changes could have serious repercussions for the health of vulnerable people.

Adequate training given to staff looking after the elderly: far too many times we hear or read in the papers of the lack of treatment given to those most vulnerable in our society. Colleagues, you might think these issues have nothing to do with you, that you are a long way from retirement, but it affects many families. We are not just fighting for ourselves but for your tomorrow.

I would like to make a suggestion. When you hold your next branch committee meeting invite a member from your RMA section to talk to the committee.

I applaud the Midlands & East Coast Region who have included a slot on training courses for RMA members. This is a positive step forward. We need to maintain this valuable resource from our retired members. If you were to retire tomorrow think what representatives could learn from you with your experience.

In April this year we saw the introduction of free bus travel for pensioners in England. This does not include National Express bus travel but all trains and trams.

The RMA National Committee elect delegates to attend the National Pensioners Convention. One of our members sits on the Executive Committee and also attends the TUC Pensions Committee.

This year the NPC and the TUC are holding rallies and regional parliaments to mark 100 years since the introduction of the state pension and to campaign on the Pensioners Charter, which is supported by the GMB.

Just prior to this Congress the Pensioners Parliament was held in Blackpool. It was very well supported by pensioner groups from across the whole country. As usual, the GMB RMA banner was flying high with many RMA members proud to walk behind their own banner.

Do you know, colleagues, when I stand here I feel like your great aunt or when I look in the mirror the matriarch of this very big family called the GMB. For the first-time delegates here they are the children of the family at the beginning of their union careers. For those regular delegates to Congress who have been around a bit longer they are the teenagers. Those colleagues a bit older who have grown up with the Union are the adults or commonly known as the stalwarts, not ready to join the Retired Members but waiting in the wings. Then there are the Retired Members. Together this makes the family of a wealth of experience ready to work for the good of others and, Congress, we are the greatest family of all. Have a great Congress. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Monica. It is good to see you running up that hall, and down. Can I ask for the mover of Motion 47, Age Discrimination, and the seconder please?

UNION ORGANISATION: EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

AGE DISCRIMINATION

Motion 47

47. AGE DISCRIMINATION

This GMB Congress welcomes the appointment of the new Diversity and Equality Officer at GMB National office.

This Congress notes the useful briefings available on the GMB National Website but believes representatives would benefit from further assistance in dealing with this area of discrimination and instructs the GMB to introduce its own training for representatives covering understanding age discrimination legislation and tackling age discrimination at the workplace.

GMB@PCS BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. B. SHAW (London): President, Congress, age discrimination legislation has been in place for two years now but employers appear to have ignored the equality strand. The reality of the legislation is one that reps and fulltime officers can use in negotiations and indeed take cases to employment tribunals. Many employers have pay scales that are longer than five years from minimum to maximum, the rate for the job. Age legislation helps push employers to reduce the length of pay scales and where employers will not move we need to take cases to force such a move. The Hayday employment tribunal case over employers still forcing employees to retire at 65 is being considered in Europe at the moment but we still need to lodge cases for members wishing to continue in employment. These members are mainly women unfairly discriminated against having taken time out from work to bring up children.

Training and empowering reps is a central part of trade unionism. Training on age discrimination needs to include how reps can tackle age discrimination in respect of our older members, and younger members, as well as empowering those members to be involved in this Union. We are going to hear a lot about equality and inclusion. Pass this motion, provide extra resources, and deliver that strategy. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder?

BRO. D. PARMENTER (London): President, Congress, the Employment Equality Age Regulations Act came into effect in the year 2006 across the UK. These are just a few of those regulations: pension schemes, contract workers, harassment on grounds of age, duty to consider working beyond retirement, higher education, minimum wage, redundancy payments, employment agencies and career guidance, and assisting persons to obtain employment. They are just a few but in fact there are over 60 regulations in force today on this very important issue. As I am sure you are aware, the GMB has appointed a new diversity and equality officer, which we all welcome. Congress, it is imperative that our representatives gain the right training and understanding of how to tackle age discrimination at their workplace. Congress, I second Motion 147.

CULTURAL AWARENESS

Motion 49

49. CULTURAL AWARENESS

Congress is concerned that some GMB Black and Minority Ethnic members are facing indirect discrimination and often disciplinary action through their employers lack of cultural awareness in relation to cultural and religious differences.

Congress we ask you to endorse a programme of cultural and religious awareness for officers and lay activists in order to understand and identify any potential issues our members may experience in the workplace.

HENGOED ENGINEERING BRANCH
South Western Region

(Referred)

SIS. R. BENNETT (South Western): President Congress, South Western Region delegates have agreed to refer this motion back to the National Equality Forum.

(Referred)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Formally seconded?

The motion was formally seconded.

WIDENING THE SCOPE OF EQUALITY CLAIMS

Motion 51

51. WIDENING THE SCOPE OF EQUALITY CLAIMS

Equalities claims to date have covered gender, race and ethnicity and disability. At present the majority of cases comprises of female workers who are paid less than males for the same or comparable work. This motion proposes that this should only be the beginning of the attempt to bring equality on a basis of equal work. GMB should continue to fight for equal pay regardless of gender or the other key comparators. Women should be able to bring forward equal pay claims on a basis of personal discrimination where other women are paid more for comparable work. We

must now complete the process and allow equality to stand throughout the entire workforce. This motion proposes that legislation should be pursued that would further this on a basis of personal discrimination.

DORSET COUNTY COUNCIL BRANCH
Southern Region

(Referred)

SIS. K. TAYLOR (Southern): President, Congress, Dorset County Council asked the GMB to support widening the scope of equalities claims. Equalities claims to date have covered gender, race, ethnicity, and disability. At present the majority of cases comprise of female workers who are paid less than males for the same or comparable work. This motion proposes that this should only be the beginning of the attempt to bring equality on a basis of equal work. The GMB should continue to fight for equal pay regardless of gender or the other comparators. Women should be able to bring forward equal pay claims on a basis of personal discrimination where other women are paid more for comparable work. We must now complete the process and allow equality to stand throughout the entire workforce. This motion proposes that the legislation should be pursued that would further this on the basis of personal circumstances. This is not about changing, it is about extending the scope of the existing equalities legislation to cover personal discrimination as well as discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, and disability, etc.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague, very much. Can I have the seconder?

The motion was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on the debate, 47, 49, or 51? (*No response*) Is there anyone who wishes to speak against? (*No response*) Can I call Cathy Murphy?

SIS. C. MURPHY (CEC, Commercial Services): speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motions 47, 49, and 51. The CEC is supporting Motion 47 with a qualification and asking you to refer Motions 49 and 51.

Turning, firstly, to Motion 47, the CEC wishes to see a greater awareness of the nature of age discrimination and how this manifests itself in the workplace. The equalities structure is currently changing and I, on behalf of the CEC, would like to take this opportunity to thank all those committees who have played a part in supporting and developing GMB's equalities agenda. You will shortly be hearing from our new National Equality Officer that raising awareness about age discrimination and driving anti-age discrimination as a bargaining issue are key priorities in our equality and inclusion strategy. Information on age discrimination is available on our website and a cycle of training sessions was rolled out in August 2006. Further national guidance and assistance will be provided over time but the qualification is that training for the representatives is and will remain a regional matter.

Motion 49 refers to the lack of awareness of culture and religious differences by employers. This can lead to discrimination and in many cases disciplinary action against members. Congress, this is a serious issue impacting on the daily lives of many of our members. Congress, you are shortly going to be introduced to the new members of the new voluntary member-led National Equalities forum. It will give strategic direction on equality and to help GMB to realise its vision for equality and inclusion. The CEC is advocating that this motion be referred to the forum to recommend the best way to support our members discriminated against through lack of culture awareness.

Finally, turning to Motion 51 on widening the scope of equality claims, this motion appears to relate to circumstances regarding comparators with male employees in other parts of local authority and states to address this issue by advancing some form of personal discrimination which falls out of the current legislation. When circumstances appear to be unique, as in this case, it would be best to ask the region to refer the motion so that concerns can be investigated fully.

Congress, the CEC is asking you to support Motion 47 with the qualification that I have outlined, and refer Motions 49 and 51.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Cathy. Does London Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you.

Motion 47 was carried.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, the mover in South Western has agreed to refer. Does Congress agree? (*Agreed*) Thank you.

Motion 49 was referred.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 51, Southern Region do you accept the reference back? (*Agreed*) Congress agree? (*Agreed*) Thank you.

Motion 51 was referred.

EQUALITIES

Motion 52

52. EQUALITIES

Congress, If we are going to have equality/diversity representatives then we need to campaign to change the law, as at the moment diversity representatives have no legal rights to time off as shop stewards/ safety representatives and union learning representatives.

We need to pressure the Government and the EU to give us these rights and it's the Government who are pushing for a multicultural society and every one treated the same and as equals.

If every one is treated as equals it's the trade union and equality representatives who will change society.

(Carried)

BRO. J. STRIBLEY (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, if we are going to have equality and diversity reps then we need to campaign to change the law as at the moment diversity reps have no legal right to time off as shop stewards and safety reps do. This is an extremely important issue so we have equality for all representatives and the tools to do the job. In Remploy we have the facility time but in the private sector unless it is regulated this will not happen. We need to pressurise the Government and the EU to give us our rights. It is the Government who are pushing for a multicultural society, everyone to be treated the same and as equals. The Government and the DTI need to work with the trade unions to make sure this happens so that everyone is treated as equals. It is the trade union equality reps that will change society for the better. If we are going to have change then it is the trade unions that will make it happen. I move.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Do I have a seconder?

BRO. I. KEMP (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, President, we have come a long way since the 1974 Health & Safety at Work Act, the first piece of legislation to give trade union activists time off to improve the safety of their workplaces. The facts are that health and safety has improved significantly in unionised workplaces as many statistics prove. The introduction of the union learning representatives for the first time has given hope for education and skills enhancement for many workers who did not succeed in the state education system or who did not have the chance to take up education when they were younger. This, like the Health and Safety at Work Act, has given legal status to representatives to have paid time off to support their members in most workplaces. Employees and employers benefit from an educated workforce and the right to paid time off is important to our representatives. However, equality and diversity representatives have no such right. Many employers are still in the Dark Ages regarding equality issues. They may have fantastic policies or mission statements agreed at board level but these do not percolate down to the shop floor. Many managers are only interested in getting the job done and making a profit. People's rights and people's ethnic and gender differences are never taken into consideration. Local representatives in the workplace should have their right to get involved with equality and diversity without the fear of victimisation from their employers. Governments should be put under pressure to give these rights to trade unions. If we can make progress on these issues employers will benefit in the same way as they do from health and safety and union learning reps. The workplace will become less of a battlefield and one where individuals have the right and dignity to carry on their jobs knowing full well that they have somebody to turn to if issues arise. Employers will benefit from less tribunals and legal claims for discrimination in both sex and race, and disability. This must be the way forward. The Government talks about a multicultural society where all should be treated the same. This must apply to all workplaces. It is time for the Labour Government to give us these rights. Mr. Brown, do the right thing, not just talk the talk. Congress, support this motion.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague.

DISABILITY

Motion 53

53. DISABILITY

This Congress has concerns regarding the ever increasing emphasis on profit and 'business case' mentality, with many organisations making direct attacks against disabled employees. This has been the case where an employee has sustained an industrial injury, won a claim against the organisation and then found themselves the subject of a re-structuring and/or re-organisation programme.

Legislation is in place under the DDA, but it appears that there are loopholes that unscrupulous employers can get away with it.

Congress we call upon the CEC to continue to monitor any abuses and campaign for the present legislation to be strengthened to stop any possible attacks on disabled and vulnerable employees and members.

MOTIL PLASTICS BRANCH
South Western Region

(Carried)

SIS. S. PICKSTOCK (South Western): President, Congress, with the ever-increasing emphasis on profit and business case mentality many organisations are making direct attacks against disabled employees. It has become increasingly apparent that employees who have taken up claims for industrial injuries find themselves part of a restructuring and reorganisation programme. There is a high percentage of ex-manual workers who through the years of digging graves, drains, emptying bins, or manually lifting older people in care homes, have developed muscular skeletal problems. Instead of supporting the worker to stay in paid employment employers are now stating they have tried all reasonable adjustments but these are insufficient in order to meet the business case. The employee is then left with little or no option other than to accept ill health retirement and often as in the case of care assistants they probably do not have an occupational pension. Obviously, there is legislation in place under the Disability Discrimination Act but it appears at the moment that employers can just get away with it.

Congress, we must stop this direct attack against disabled employees. As an organisation where our members can find themselves in this unfortunate situation we must do everything we can to protect our members. We should continue to monitor and investigate any evidence of exploitation and coercion and also campaign to strengthen the current legislation. Please support.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Do we have a seconder?

The motion was formally seconded.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Could I now have the mover of Motion 54, please?

**RE-RUN OF TOXIC SHOCK SYNDROME CAMPAIGN
Motion 54**

54. RE-RUN OF TOXIC SHOCK SYNDROME CAMPAIGN

Congress is appalled that in this day and age women are still suffering the effects of Toxic Shock Syndrome. The successful campaign that ran in the early 90's helped prevent many women from contracting this disease. We therefore call on the CEC to re-run this important and beneficial campaign.

BURNLEY 22 BRANCH
North West and Irish Region

(Carried)

SIS. L. HOLMES (North West & Irish Region): Toxic Shock Syndrome although it is not always fatal can leave women badly disfigured or without vital limbs. Health officials do not always pick up on the symptoms that can easily be mistaken for flu. It is therefore essential when being admitted to hospital that nursing staff are alerted to the fact that the patient is having a period. Symptoms often can come on very suddenly and death has been known to occur in less than 24-hour periods. In the 1990s the Lancashire Region Equal Rights Committee made a decision to take on board the campaign to inform women of the dangers. Members of the committee designed their own leaflet which was distributed to schools, libraries, and medical centres. It also bombarded the makers of Tampax to urge them to put warnings on their packets, urging women not to use tampons at night. Women from the committee stood in shopping centres giving out information and asking women if they knew what toxic shock syndrome was. Out of 141 women questioned in one centre alone only 27 women knew about it.

There must still be some leaflets in the Cheadle Hulme office in Lancashire. Now that another generation of young women have grown up the North West & Irish Region think that now would be a good time to re-run this campaign. The leaflets could be reprinted and again distributed. Toxic shock syndrome is not just a woman's issue. Men have daughters, sisters, nieces, who could all contract it. If by campaigning one life is saved, then it will be well worth the effort.

I actually went on the website last week and it actually frightened me as a woman. Alice was 15 years old and she died on 26.11.91. Fenola from Preston died three weeks before her 16th birthday. Britain's youngest person was a 13-year old girl from Middlesbrough. Please support this motion. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. A seconder of Motion 54?

BRO. J. McDERMOTT (North West & Irish Region) seconding Motion 54 said: President, Congress, as a father I never realised or in fact had heard of toxic shock syndrome. However, on talking to my colleague, Lynn Holmes, I now realise how

important it is to talk to our children and to pass on any information that makes them aware of this and hopefully save young women's lives and also give those young women fortunate enough to receive education on toxic shock syndrome a better quality of life. Please support this motion. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? (*No response*) The CEC are supporting 52, 53, and 54. Can we vote en bloc?

Motion 52 was carried.

Motion 53 was carried.

Motion 54 was carried.

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I understand that some of you at the back are having problems with hearing, and also upstairs. Can I tell you that we will try and do something about it during the lunch break. Thank you.

I now move to item 20, Political: Racism & Fascism, Motion 143, to be moved by London Region, and I will be calling Mick Rix to speak on behalf of the CEC.

POLITICAL: RACISM & FASCISM

UNITE AGAINST FASCISM

Motion 143

143. UNITE AGAINST FASCISM

Congress applauds GMB's anti racist and anti fascist activity at National and Branch level over the recent years and recognises this is an on going campaign.

It believes this activity should be pursued at every possible opportunity and supports GMB's affiliation to Unite Against Fascism as part of this and calls on the Union to encourage GMB branches to affiliate and participate in Unite against Fascism's activities.

NORTH WEST LONDON BRANCH

London Region

(Lost)

BRO. R. POLE (London): Moving Motion 143, Unite Against Fascism, with the support of the region. Comrades, we do not need to argue today why we need to fight the BNP and the extreme Right. We have done that in the past and the recent election results show that we must continue this fight and extend it. My branch has recognised the excellent work undertaken by the GMB. I spoke on this last year and this is reflected in the terms of this resolution. However, when I reported back to my branch on last year's congress the branch were appalled to learn that the GMB were not affiliated to UAF as we assumed we were. I have to admit my branch have been since day one, especially considering nearly all TUC-affiliated unions support it. It is supported by the TUC and countless other bodies and Labour figures, Brendan Barber spoke at its annual conference, and history has shown that to defeat the fascists unity is required on all fronts. This was proved in the 1930s at Cable Street, in the 1970s against the National

Front, and countless other examples. The only people benefiting from disunity are the Far Right themselves. UAF and my branch believe that the current dangerous situation requires a united response from all those dedicated to freedom and democracy. Now is the time for all of us to unite to combine our forces and unite in a broad and common front against the BNP. UAF have not stopped since the elections. Already in conjunction with *Love Music Hate Racism* they are organising a massive demonstration on 21st June in Central London against the BNP which has already attracted considerable widespread trade union and community support, and indeed I learnt from the website on Friday that Dawn Butler, MP, a favourite guest of ours at Congress has pledged her support for this as well. We need to be part of this, Congress. We cannot rest on our laurels however satisfied we may be with ourselves. If we wish to be a major player in the anti-racist movement, if we want to influence we need to be part of it, and supporting UAF and affiliating to it would be a sure way to ensure GMB's views are represented. Congress, let's not delay this. Affiliation will not cost the earth. Support this resolution and let's get GMB fighting fascism and racism on all fronts.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dick. Secunder?

SIS. P. ROBINSON (London): President, Congress, the BNP is an evil in our midst. It is a cancer on our society and values. The GMB can be proud of its efforts to exorcise its vile doctrine. However, colleagues, as commendable as our efforts are they are patently not enough. The BNP gained 10 seats in May's local government elections. They gained a seat on the Greater London Assembly and they increased their share of the vote nationally by 44% since 2004.

I am a branch secretary in Barking & Dagenham where the BNP have 12 councillors. I take that as a personal kick in the teeth because both my branch and the London Region put in a lot of effort against them in Barking & Dagenham. My local MPs have different views on how to tackle the BNP. Margaret Hodge says ignore them and promote Labour policy. John Crudder says take them on, head-on. Excuse me, Margaret, wake up and smell the opinion polls.

If the GMB cannot prevent the rise of the BNP on its own then let's do it with another organisation. Let's not throw out this motion because there is an assumption that Unite Against Fascism is a Socialist Worker Party organisation. Let's support this motion because we are human beings who want to rid this country of the BNP, but we cannot do it on our own. Congress, I urge you to support this motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Does anyone wish to come in on the debate before I call Mick Rix? Anyone to speak against? (*No response*) Mick?

BRO. M. RIX (National Officer): President, Congress, during 2007/2008 very many GMB members and activists have played a key and crucial part in campaigning and organising against the BNP up and down the country. In many cases we have been the sole driving force in some communities against the BNP; in fact, we have either stopped the BNP or we have helped make a huge dent in their progress. Thanks should go to our

members and activists for their efforts. In accordance with the TUC policy adopted in 2006 we have worked closely with affiliated trade unions, regional TUCs, and Searchlight, in developing the *Hope not Hate* organising message, direct to the doorsteps of local communities and constituencies who are under the daily threat of the BNP message of hatred. On numerous occasions we have invited local UAF groups to join with us on action days in the inflicted communities. Unfortunately, on many occasions the UAF either went their own way with their own type of action day duplicating much needed resources. The UAF, despite what they say publicly, do not work within the disciplines of the official Trades Union Movement. They just want our brand and our money and they want to be in sole charge, calling the shots, rather than accepting the discipline and the direction of the official Trades Union Movement.

Whilst the GMB is prepared to work on anti-fascist work with all those that are committed to opposing fascism and the BNP, we do not need to affiliate or donate to organisations where the GMB are at the forefront, or where those groupings have a sectarian attitude and believe that they have the sole monopoly in fighting fascism. If we put this in its historical context, no one needs to tell the GMB how to fight fascism. We were there in the 1930s in Cable Street, our members fought in Spain against Franco's fascists in 1936, and our members were at the forefront of defeating Moseley's Black Shirts and the notorious National Front. We have a proud and long history of organising to defeat fascism which we will maintain and grow wherever the threat is, be it in our communities, our workplaces, or in our very own union. We will continue our two-year programme adopted at the 2007 GMB Congress of working with the TUC and affiliated trade unions, along with Searchlight, and our joint organising initiatives in the workplace and in the community based around *Hope for the Future*, and against the politics of hatred of the BNP.

The CEC stance is to oppose Motion 143.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mick, very much. Dick, do you wish the right to reply?

BRO. R. POLE (London): I do not wish to repeat the points that I made in respect of the GMB's excellent work. That is reflected in the resolutions. I have spoken on it in the past. The point I am trying to make is that we do need to continue it and try and expand it. I think that by affiliating to the UAF the GMB are able to exercise their voice within that. Whilst listening to Mick I understand some of the points that he is making but it is a fact that 19 other trade unions are affiliated to *United against Fascism* and they do not seem to have the problems that we seem to be having ourselves. Therefore, I would suggest that we do continue our own excellent work and get involved in UAF.

I am just going to end with one thing, a poem by a victim of the Nazi holocaust because I think that speaks volumes and much more than I can say, and why we need to be part and parcel of the anti-racist movement. It will be familiar to many of you, I expect:
*First they came for the Jews and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew.
Then they came for the Communists and I did not speak out because I was not a Communist.*

Next they came for the trade unionists and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for me and there was no one left to speak out for me.

The British National Party is a Nazi party. Support this resolution.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dick. Colleagues, the CEC are opposing.

Motion 143 was lost.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, could I pay tribute to all the regions during the local elections that worked so hard to rid and make people aware of the dangers of the BNP. Thank you for what you have done and I know it was a hard job in many areas. I move to item 21 and would like to introduce to you Kamaljeet Jandu, the National Equality & Inclusion Officer, who will address Congress. Colleagues, during the presentation Kamaljeet will ask the new Equalities Forum to come and join him on the stage and introduce them to you and to Congress. At the end of his presentation Kamaljeet will ask Regional Secretaries and National Officers to come and stand on the stage while Paul, myself, and Malcolm sign the Pledge Board. Others have signed it. Colleagues, in the Exhibition Area outside you can get your own pledge card. Kamaljeet?

ADDRESS TO CONGRESS: KAMALJEET JANDU, NATIONAL EQUALITY & INCLUSION OFFICER

(Report on National Equality & Inclusion adopted)

Equality through Inclusion – The GMB Strategy.

Introduction

“The GMB exists to recruit, organise and represent all workers to improve wages and conditions at work while challenging, through collective action and solidarity, all forms of discrimination and poverty. Below is our strategy to deliver equality in the workplace, in society and in the GMB. At the heart of this strategy is a focus on organising, bargaining and membership participation. It is based on the principle of ‘inclusivity’ - everyone has a role in delivering equality.”- Paul Kenny General Secretary. (Photo)

Background

Today, the British economy is dominated by the service sector, with increasing penetration of the private sector in the delivery of public services. The labour market is characterised by greater work place insecurity, increasing participation of women, migrant workers and an aging pool of labour.

The Vision

“We want the GMB to be recognised as the lead trade union in driving *equality* at work and in our society, while reflecting the make up of our members and potential members at all levels of the GMB and unleashing their potential.”

Strategic Priorities

This strategy builds on the GMB successes in the past of driving equality.

The key to success will be in aligning equality to the core aims of the GMB and moving equality from the margins to the centre of all the GMB activities. In order to deliver the GMB vision for equality, there are five strategic priorities that have been adopted:

1. Increase membership
2. Drive the Equality and inclusion bargaining agenda
3. Campaign on Equality and inclusion
4. Enhance Profile
5. Drive organisational Equality and inclusion I

GMB Implementation Strategy

All the strategic priorities are interlinked and supported by key projects. These projects include:-

1. Increase membership.

- In addition to the traditional recruitment methods there will be :-
 - Community based campaigns e.g. targeting places of worship to make links with specific communities
 - Targeting workplaces with specific groups of workers and ‘recruiting the recruiters’.
- Focus groups to identify what actually works in recruitment
- Recruitment training will be reviewed to ensure equality matters are integrated.
- Link to bargaining and campaigning agenda

2. Drive Equality and inclusion bargaining agenda.

Continue negotiations with employers for

- Equal pay audits
- Flexible working initiatives
- Respect at Work policies
- Anti age discrimination
- impact assessments on the Public Duty to promote equality

We believe that equality is an area where a joint approach with employers could be fruitful and we will advocate the model used for implementing Health & Safety at work as a template for making equality a reality in the workplace.

All these projects will be linked to recruitment of potential members

3. Campaigning on Equality and inclusion

We will campaign and lobby appropriate institutions for:-

- Mandatory Equal Pay Audits
- Right to Flexible Working
- New Deal for Agency Workers
- Minimum Social Wage

We will continue our work to ensure a future for people with disabilities at Remploy and drive the GMB's Migrant Workers Project.

We will engage with the new Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to have a greater focus on employment matters.

4. Enhance Profile.

Internal

- Regular Equality and inclusion publication in existing magazines.
- Revamp website
- Launch the 'Presidents Leadership Awards for Equality (PLAE)'
- Developing and cascading an accessible case for Equality and inclusion

External

- Adopt Regional media strategies
- Sponsors events such as - Breast Cancer Campaign, Rise Festival, Asian Melas, Pride
- Make links with local community campaigns

5. Drive organisational Equality and inclusion

Projects

- To ensure lay member representation and participation, establish and ensure the proper functioning of the National Equality Forum (NEF) – see below
- Work closely with National Organising Team; the Sectors (Public Services; Commercial; and Manufacturing).

- Design & implement a new monitoring system for GMB employees and members.
- Develop and implement an agreed method of measuring how we are doing on equality and ensure widespread ownership.
- Define a membership development strategy for example to enhance the skills women activists
- Implement Employee Development Programme
- Review existing training

Governance Structures

National Equality Forum (NEF)

The new voluntary, member led National Equality Forum (NEF) will replace the various equality committees. This twelve member forum will give strategic direction on equality and help the GMB to realise its vision for equality and inclusion. NEF members will bring experience of recruiting potential members into the GMB, driving equality in the work place and knowledge of GMB policy and processes. Each member will represent the National union and there will be have subject matter expertise in the following equality strands:- gender based equality issues, race, Lesbian, Gay, Bi and transsexual issues, disability and migrant worker issues.

NEF will establish outcome focused project teams to engage on the delivery key tasks.

This structure will be reflected in the Regions as well.

GMB Equality Champions Network

A new network of staff and officers a responsibility for equality will be established to act as a channel for communication, implementation of policy and drive for results in the regions and the sectors.

Representation on Central Executive Committee (CEC)

To ensure representation on the CEC, the equality based reserved seats will continue.

BRO. K. JANDU (National Office): Thank you, President. Sisters, brothers, colleagues, I am very, very honoured to have this opportunity to address you for the first time, particularly following on from some of the people earlier, like Audrey. I feel very

humble to have the opportunity to speak following people like Audrey Harris from the Midlands Region.

As the President said, I am Kamaljeet Jandu. Before coming to the GMB I worked at the TUC and at the Ford Motor Company as a National Diversity Manager working with GMB colleagues from the London Region. Let me just share my experience of the first day working for Ford. As you do when you start a new job you introduce yourself to your new colleagues and people that you meet. It was really quite interesting how they responded to me in terms of my name. I mean, my name is not that difficult – *Kamaljeet* – quite simple. It was interesting when you met somebody and they would say, “Oh, who are you?” I said, “Oh, I’m Kamaljeet.” “Oh, OK.” Some would say, “Oh, welcome Ranjeet,” you know, fair enough, that was the stereotype probably at that time in terms of people of Asian origin. Others would go something like, “Oh, hello, err...” and mumble something. I remember seeing the Managing Director in the lift at Ford and he said, “Oh, and who are you?” I said, “Oh I’m Kamaljeet.” He said, “Oh, OK. Do you have a nickname?” I said, “No, I’m sorry, I don’t have a nickname.” He goes, “OK, we’ll call you Kenneth.” I said, “Oh, that’s fine, you can call me whatever you like as long as I can call you Habuchensingh Bundawalla, you know, that’s fine.” (*Laughter*) He got the message and he understood.

Congress, the workforce in Britain today is made up of over 50% women, migrant workers, and an ageing workforce. Despite the National Minimum Wage, improved maternity rights, and family rights, and public sector duty to promote equality, there is still much to be done to tackle poverty and discrimination. Yes, poverty and discrimination because discrimination fuels poverty. Equality is not about political correctness, tokenism, or giving favourable treatment to women or ethnic minorities. Let me give you an example of Mrs. Koor, a mother of two young children, who wakes up at 4 a.m. each day, gets herself ready for work, prepares the family’s food for the day, gets her children’s clothes together so they can get themselves ready and go to school. She leaves home at 5 a.m., she gets to her place of work at 6 a.m. and starts to clean the office of a local firm of solicitors. Having done three hours of cleaning she goes to her next job, packing food for a company supplying High Street supermarkets. She does a regular 14-hour day. There have been times when her wages have been delayed or not paid, the excuse being there were deductions for her overhaul. Out work there is no sick pay, holiday pay, or health and safety advice. She has to take sexual innuendo, abuse, and aggression, from her supervisors and the owner of the factory, which leaves her feeling belittled, humiliated, and worthless.

If our work on equality can improve the working life of Mrs. Koor and the life chances of her young family, then, Congress, you, I, and we, will have succeeded. She depicts everything that our equality agenda needs to address. Firstly, to become a member of the GMB and enjoy the benefits of collective action, solidarity, and support. This means putting in place agreements that address the issues of unfair dismissal, unequal pay, low pay, or no pay in some cases, excessive deductions, denial of maternity, discrimination, harassment, and bullying. This is what we are about. This is what equality means in the GMB.

In your wallets, Congress, you will have seen our new strategy for equality and inclusion. It incorporates the word “inclusion”. What does this mean? If equality is our aim, inclusion is the way we get there and that means each and every one of you has a role in moving forward on this agenda. Success in delivering equality can only be achieved if everyone is included, everyone has a role. My job is to define what that role should be. Make no mistake, from lay members to officers, to staff, you all have a role. Equality has to be at the centre of everything we do; for example, the GMB at work organising projects, the regions, the industrial sectors, and of course workplace and branches.

Our strategy is not only for the workplace but the GMB and society. For example, there is a big debate at the moment around knife crime. Yesterday I saw a big poster outside a newsagents here in Plymouth which said, *14-year old girl stopped for carrying a knife*. This impacts on our members as parents, as workers, and members of local communities. Congress, I would advocate that it is time to engage in a discussion about these issues. In the long run it is about challenging popular youth culture that sustains and supports the carrying of knives, and the fashion of knives, and music fashion and computer games that sustain it. In the short term the enforcement agencies, intelligence-led, in specific areas need to search and disarm the youths whilst guarding against wholesale criminalisation of any particular community.

Looking forward in the GMB I will give you some highlights of what we are doing, and how. The details are in the document that is in your Congress pack. There are five strategic priorities that will be supported by a number of projects and I will highlight a couple of them. To reinforce the inclusion element of our strategy there are two projects which we will start. First, as the motion earlier on emphasised there is the work on anti-discrimination because age defines each and every one of us in this room - we are young, middle-aged, or old - and thereby getting your buy-in on anti-age discrimination and therefore participation in the broader equality agenda: again, equality through inclusion. Other projects that I want to deliver work on are around respect at work. These are agreements which will define acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in any place of work. Many of our members regularly complain that supervisors and managers regularly shout, demean, and make them feel like second-class citizens. I believe no working person should ever be made to feel like a second-class citizen, and that is what we are about. We have a right as people to be treated with basic dignity. That is what equality means in the GMB. You do not have to be black, gay, a woman, or disabled, be young or elderly, or be a migrant worker, to want to be treated with some basic respect.

Our work on equal pay with migrants, on disability, standing up to fascists, challenging racism and homophobia, supporting young people, will continue but with a clear link to recruitment and bargaining.

Chair, President, this is a long journey and it will take some time, without a doubt. So, in order to give leadership focus and direction to delivery of this work I would like to ask the 12 new members of the new Equality Forum to come up here and join me. They are Paul Day, Tony Hughes, Sharon Harding, Harpal Jandu (he is not related), Sharon

Hewitt, Duke, Lorraine Parker, Gill Richards, Emma Rich, Brian Shaw, Alex Sobel, and Grace Swan. Those that are in the auditorium please come up and join me on the stage. (*Applause*) Thank you.

Congress, we will campaign for jobs, not just any jobs but quality jobs, represent our members to have a decent income and a route out of poverty and therefore enjoy the fruits of life that you and I enjoy. To paraphrase Martin Luther King when he said, when a person is judged not by the colour of their skin, gender, disability, age, or their sexuality, but the content of their heart, that is the important thing.

Congress, unashamedly we will strive for justice and equality because it is the right thing to do. I desperately believe that.

The slide on the screen at the moment is our vision for equality. Let me just highlight a couple of points on there. It means we want the GMB to be recognised as the lead trade union - yes, the lead trade union - in driving equality at work and in our society while reflecting the make-up of our members and potential members at all levels of the GMB, and unleashing their potential once they are on board.

As the President mentioned, all the Regional Secretaries and the National Officers have signed up to this vision. Could I ask you all to come on board and join us on stage here and witness the signing by the General Secretary, the President, and Vice President, Regional Secretaries, and Officers. Thank you. (*Signatures appended to board*)

Those of you asking have I signed it, yes, I have. I was reminded by my colleague, "Don't forget to sign it." Thank you very much for that. Congress, can I just leave you with the words of Mahatma Gandhi, who said, "*Be the change you want to see in this world.*" Thank you very much for your attention. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Kamaljeet, thank you very much indeed. Thanks to the committee and to all the officers and staff who are playing a big part in our equalities section. Does Congress agree to accept the report? (*Agreed*) Thank you very much.

The report on National Equality & Inclusion was adopted.

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, Malcolm Sage will move Emergency Motion 1 on behalf of the CEC and ask the President, Mary Turner, to move it.

EMERGENCY MOTION 1

STOP PRIVATISING THE NHS NOW!

THIS GMB CONGRESS IS OUTRAGED AT THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL ANNOUNCED ON 4 JUNE THAT FAILING NHS TRUSTS COULD BE HANDED OVER TO PRIVATE FIRMS ON A FRANCHISE BASIS. A FRANCHISE MIGHT WORK FOR McDONALDS BUT IT DIDN'T WORK FOR THE RAILWAYS AND WOULD BE DISASTROUS IN THE NHS. WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT GMB

COMMITTS ITSELF TO OPPOSING THIS POLICY AND WILL DO SO AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY.

THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT PRIVATE SECTOR COMPANIES ARE EITHER BETTER OR MORE EFFICIENT AT RUNNING PUBLIC SERVICES. INDEED OUR ENERGY, TRANSPORTATION AND FINANCE SECTORS ARE LITTERED WITH PRIVATE SECTOR FAILURES LET ALONE WHERE THEY HAVE TRIED TO BRING THE PROFIT MOTIVE INTO THE PUBLIC SECTOR. PUBLIC SERVICES NEED TO BE RUN WELL AND IN THE INTERESTS OF THE USERS OF THOSE SERVICES NOT TO LINE THE POCKETS OF SHAREHOLDERS.

ON THE EVE OF THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE NHS BY LABOUR AND THE TRADE UNIONS WE SHOULD RE-LAUNCH THE ORIGINAL PURPOSE – FREE HEALTH TREATMENT, FREE MEDICINES, FREE DENTAL AND EYE TREATMENT, FREE SOCIAL CARE. AND FREE FROM PRIVATE SECTOR PARIAS.

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

(Carried)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Congress, Mary Turner, President, moving Emergency Motion 1, *Stop Privatising the NHS Now!*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, Mary Turner, President, moving Emergency Motion, *Stop Privatising the NHS Now!* Congress, this time last year Gordon Brown told us he would be leading a listening government. He was going to be different to the previous bloke who lived in Number 10. Well, to be honest, he could not even be bothered to come to this year's Congress so I do not know whether he is listening or not, but some of his ministers clearly are not.

The GMB has been telling this government to stop the privatisation of the NHS and the public sector. I think we have been saying that ever since May 1997 and when they were getting elected in 1997 we had been saying it for 18 years before that because a Tory government privatised it.

Have they listened? Maybe. Have they paid any heed to us? Not much. Only last week we had barmy Ben Bradshaw, Junior Health Minister, outlining his whacky idea to bring in private sector business on a franchise basis to run so-called failing NHS hospitals and ambulance trusts. My first reaction was he must be having a laugh. The idea of a brand new Ronald McDonald Children's Hospital seemed like a joke, as did a quick hit-fit NHS Trust. No, Ben was not joking, he was being very serious but did he know franchising was not a new idea at all? It had been floated some seven years ago when Alan Milburn was Secretary of State.

Congress, what can I tell you about privatisation and privateers that you do not already know? Like leeches they suck off the scarce financial resources which should properly be used on high-quality public services delivered by accountable public servants, and these franchising types are the worst of the lot. They are often the same private equity speculators who are relentlessly asset-stripping the UK economy before our very eyes. The GMB says get rid of failing managers but not with a franchise operation, with decent people who care about patients before profits. Sadly, the Government is fixated by the private sector. It is fixated by wealth creation. It panders too readily to the multimillionaires elite while the income gap widens and poverty abounds. As the emergency motion correctly states, the private sector track record is littered with failure. Congress, we only need to look at the current mess of our financial system - ordinary working people did not create this mess. No, that was a spectacular private sector own goal but as taxpayers we are paying £50bn to get us out of the hole, to bail out the greedy bankers.

Congress, GMB's patience with this Labour Government is wearing very thin. Despite the suggestion of a different path, our loyalty is once more being tested like never before. Congress, make no mistake, GMB is committed to resisting further involvement of the private sector in the NHS. We have made plain to the Government that we will fight this proposal tooth and nail. I move and I ask Congress to support. (*Applause*) Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mary. I ask Sharon Holder to second, please.

SIS. S. HOLDER (National Officer): Congress, next month the NHS celebrates its Diamond Anniversary. It will be 60 years old on July 5th. It is our nation's and Labour's greatest achievement. The NHS was introduced in 1948 after a long war when Britain was almost bankrupt but full credit must be given to the Atlee government for both its vision and ambition. Today we live in a world far removed from 1948. The information given out at the time about the *new* National Health Service shows us how far we have come.

Only the other day I was reading a copy of the original government leaflet which said that everyone could use the new NHS, rich or poor, man or woman, or child. It explained that people were entitled to choose their doctor, who would be paid by the government. To me it seemed an age of innocence. The NHS was free at the point of delivery based on need, not ability to pay. Working people were proud of it then, as they should be today. The Labour and Trades Union Movement are proud of the NHS. It is our baby. While it belongs to the nation it owes its existence to us. In a sense, we are its parents and as parents we need to be alert to dangers and defend the NHS to the hilt. We need to be alert because not everyone shares the NHS values. Just as in 1948 when there was widespread opposition by many on the right, today there are large multinational organisations, mainly from the USA but many home-grown too, who are relentlessly lobbying to get access and control of NHS organisations and budgets. These guys are greedy. They demand more and more. Far too often they cannot deliver to the high standards expected of the NHS and when it suits they walk away leaving us to clear up afterwards.

Congress, in the NHS there is a long history of private sector failure. It is all documented, the PFI scams, dirty hospitals, increases in hospital-acquired infections, and a scandalous waste of money in projects to make those problems right. Ironically, following Ben Bradshaw's announcement, David Walshcote, a spokesman for the private healthcare sector, showed little enthusiasm for taking over failing NHS bodies. He was not too sure about the idea. His main concern was to protect shareholders' interests. Oh, dear. Well, that is exactly what GMB have been saying for years but maybe this is news to Ben Bradshaw.

Congress, GMB is committed to stopping any private sector franchising our cherished health service. Support this motion.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sharon. Is there anyone who would like to come in on the debate?

BRO. H. RAJCH (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I just want to add two things. The Government are looking for ideas for an additional bank holiday. I think we should have a national NHS day, a day when we celebrate the NHS. The fact is that millions of people, the majority of people in this country do want to see a free health service and they do not want privatisation, they do not want private companies running hospitals, or any services in it. It is something that there is massive public support for.

The other thing is the TUC and the trades unions fully back the NHS. Again, it is something we have massive support for across the Trades Union Movement. What we need is a national demonstration with huge numbers of people showing the Government that people are prepared to stand up and defend the NHS. It is something that is so important to millions of people, not just trade union members. People know what the alternative is. It is massive bills. It is a situation they have in America paying out a massive amount of money in health insurance. That is not what people want in this country. If they are asked, people will support and people will fight to defend the NHS.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague.

BRO. J. FAULDS (GMB Scotland): This is a very interesting emergency motion. I would like to take it a bit further and talk about privatisation. Even in England, and even in Scotland in some of the cancer hospitals, if they buy one drug they drop another drug for other patients. Where is this going to stop? It is okay saying if they cannot make money they are going to privatise it, but it is not just the National Health Service, a lot of people out here need drugs. Some of our hospitals will not buy them. That is a fact. Thank you. I hope you back this motion.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jackie.

BRO. D. HENRY (North West & Irish Region): It seems like 12 months ago I addressed this Congress when the Prime Minister came in, actually. He was not Prime Minister, it

was five days later. We had a Health Service Minister called Mrs. Hewitt who was a total disaster and it was pointed out to her, and you, that you are the NHS, you pay the £90bn a bloody year. That is one thing people are saying in support. The other thing is, has anybody been to the doctor lately like I have been? They are trying to privatise the doctors' surgeries now. That is the latest one, "Will you sign a petition?" I said, "What's this for?" He said, "Well, they're going to make companies come in and you'd have to pay to go to the company." That is because they will not agree to the extended hours so they are trying to privatise the GPs as well. Enough is enough. We want a national demonstration and everybody will come out, not just trade unionists. The NHS belongs to us.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dougie. Nobody else? Right, colleagues, we will now go to the vote.

Emergency Motion 1 was carried.

DEBBIT COULTER TO MOVE THE DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

I am conscious as I am writing my report that by Congress 2008 I will no longer hold the post of Deputy General Secretary. As delegates will be aware I announced to the Central Executive Committee in December 2007 that it was not my intention to seek nominations for the DGS position. I did not reach this decision lightly but am convinced that it is the right decision. I have been privileged to have held this post for the past 5 years and am honoured to have been able to represent my union in a leadership role.

A significant proportion of my time this past year has been centred on my role as a Labour Party National Executive Committee Officer. Even the most casual political observer will be aware that the Party has been beset by problems in relation to party funding and at the time of writing this report there are a number of external and internal reviews and inquiries which will address how these difficulties arose and determine what measures will be undertaken to ensure that there is no repeat of past mistakes. In addition, the NEC are to receive reports on the fund-raising efforts by Deputy Leadership candidates with a view to capping spending limits and installing additional guidelines to avoid a repeat of the arms-race spending witnessed during the 2007 campaign which I know many delegates have expressed concern about.

Myself and Mary Turner continue to represent GMB interests on the NEC as well as participating in a number of NEC sub-committees and I continue to co-convene the Joint Policy Commission and Mary co-convenes the Health Policy Commission.

The National Policy Forum on 24-27 July 2008 will consider six policy documents produced by Labour's policy commissions and the NPF, setting out the key challenges in our next manifesto for a fourth term Labour government. The six second year documents are:

- Prosperity and Work
- Britain in the World.
- Creating Sustainable Communities

- Crime, Justice, Citizenship and Equalities
- Education and Skills
- Health

GMB representatives on the NPF are Paul Kenny, Mary Turner, Debbie Coulter, Joe Morgan, Jean Chaplow and Linda Clarke. Your NPF representatives have throughout 2007 contributed to the policy documents via the NPF Conferences and policy commissions and GMB will be submitting final comments to be considered at the July NPF.

Throughout the past year I have been working with the TUC Commission on Vulnerable Employment (CoVE). As one of 16 Commission members drawn from employer, academic, trade union and civil society backgrounds, we have been meeting with people who are in vulnerable work, running a public consultation and undertaking new research into the issues surrounding vulnerable employment. The Commission will be producing its final report during 2008 and its recommendations will consider how government, civil society organisations, employers and trade unions can work together to improve the lives of Britain's most vulnerable workers. This body of work will hopefully compliment the work of the DTI established Vulnerable Worker Enforcement Forum who is tasked with exploring how enforcement of employment rights and safety standards, in particular for vulnerable workers, can be improved.

Congress 2007 accepted the following recommendations contained in my report *Progressing Equalities Issues in the GMB*:

1. The current separate equality bodies be replaced by a single equality body which will bring together GMB equality experts and act as a single source of information, advice and guidance, a single point of contact for all stakeholders
2. The newly-formed GMB National Equalities Forum will be responsible for driving the union's equality and diversity agenda and providing a powerful vision and a strategic direction to our organization.
3. The National Equalities Forum will comprise of:-
 - 2 representatives specialising on gender based equality issues
 - 2 representatives specialising in race based issues
 - 2 representatives specialising in LGBT issues
 - 2 representatives specialising in young member issues
 - 2 representatives specialising in disability issues
 - 2 representatives specialising in migrant worker issues
 - 1 National Officer specialising in Equality and Diversity
4. Regions to organize an annual Equalities event to profile the equalities work of the GMB and to elect representatives to attend National Conferences for each of the separate equality strands.
5. National Conferences for each equalities strand will be held annually and will aim to be proactive and inclusive of a broad range of members. The National Conferences will be advisory but they will have the ability to submit one motion to GMB Annual Congress.
6. The post of National Equality & Diversity officer is established to develop the function of the National Equalities Forum and to mainstream equalities throughout all sections of the GMB.
7. A working group consisting of Representatives from the CEC Organisation Sub-Committee, SMT, Equalities National Officer and lay officers from the respective Equality Committees meet at the earliest opportunity to progress these proposals and agree a more detailed workable equalities framework.

Discussions with all stakeholder groups have continued throughout the year to ensure that there is clear understanding of our objectives and I can confirm that the working group identified in paragraph 7 met in July 2007 to begin the process of implementing the recommendations. However, it soon became clear to the working group that the prerequisite to developing this new agenda was the appointment of a National Equality and Diversity Officer. In December 2007, we appointed Kamaljeet Jandu to this post and he has subsequently presented his Equality and Inclusion Strategy to the Senior Management Team and the CEC for endorsement.

I am convinced that the new equalities structure will allow for genuine involvement and engagement of activists on equality related issues that will be linked to our campaigning and organising agenda and the real life experiences of our membership. Our equalities work will be the envy of other trade unions and I have every confidence in Kamaljeet's ability to drive the campaign for equal rights for workers and ensure that GMB is at the forefront in the field of equalities.

Each year I commend the work of the RMA who are largely self-organising but lead admirably by Monica Smith as National Secretary. The RMA have had another successful year, buoyed by their new-found financial independence they continue to play a pivotal role within the National Pensioners Convention, hold regular, well-attended regional and national meetings as well as a lively national conference, which was this year attended by fraternal delegates from ASLEF.

2008 will witness the Centenary of the Old Age Pension and our founders were key players in the movement that secured the pension 100 years ago. The RMA are preparing to play a major role in the centenary celebrations which will involve a national and regional rallies and a parliamentary lobby.

Congress 2008 will discuss my report to the CEC which set out to examine the role and responsibilities of the DGS within a revised management structure. Regions are currently consulting on this document and the three options which I have proposed. It is my sincere hope that whatever the outcome of this debate that the Union continues to prosper and maintains the spirit of cooperation and shared sense of purpose that has developed under Paul Kenny's leadership.

(Adopted)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Congress. Can I now move back to the agenda and call Debbie Coulter to move Deputy General Secretary's Report (pages 52-54). Debbie?

SIS. D. COULTER (National Office): Thanks, Mary. Congress, it gives me great pleasure to move the DGS report. As you know, this is the last time that I will address this Congress and I take the opportunity to thank the GMB for the tremendous honour that it has been to serve this Union and our members for the past 21 years. Just to point out I did start when I was 16, mind. *(Applause)*

It was in fact as a young woman in my 20s that I was appointed by the National Union of Tailors & Garment Workers as an Area Officer in Yorkshire & Humberside Division (as it was then) and from my very first day I could hardly believe that I was being paid to fulfil a dream of working for a trade union. It was an honour and a privilege then and an opportunity that I have treasured every day since.

These past five years have included some of the most trying and challenging episodes of my life and there have been times when I have longed for the days when I was back in the field representing members. The counterbalance has been the invaluable experience I

have gained from the good fortune of holding a senior position within this Union; as part of a management team that has led from the front in transforming the fortunes of this Union from decline to growth, from deficit to surplus; as chair of the Pension Trustee Board, a trustee team that has worked tirelessly to protect and secure one of the best pension schemes in the UK; as chair of the management side of the negotiating bodies I have had to balance their desire to reward our staff and officers for the tremendous work that they do whilst also recognising the need to professionalize our industrial relations processes and to protect the Union's assets; and as an ambassador on behalf of this Union on bodies such as the Women at Work Commission, the Commission on Vulnerable Employment, and the ACAS council; and of course as a representative and an officer of the Labour Party National Executive Committee serving during a turbulent period that has on the one hand witnessed some tremendous gains for trade unions but on the other presented us with huge challenges which we will be discussing during tomorrow's political debate.

But no matter how difficult things got personally, politically, industrially, I was throughout my period of office given timely reminders from the trade union activists I met in Colombia, in the Middle East, in Kosovo, and the countless other brave and inspirational comrades I have met in Zimbabwe, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, India, right across the globe, reminders that no matter how tough we think we have it here, we have brothers and sisters around the world who literally risk life and limb in an effort to secure the most basic human and trade union rights that we take for granted.

Closer to home there have been so many sources of inspiration within our own ranks of volunteer reps who give up their precious time and energy to help their fellow workers and enrich this organisation.

In terms of sheer energy, commitment, and dedication, two individuals always come to the forefront of my mind, two individuals from opposite ends of the age spectrum. The first is a woman who won our Young Member Award last year and chairs our Young Members Forum, Lucinda Yeadon. I do not think she is with us in the hall but she will be joining us this week. Lucinda works for an organisation that does not recognise the GMB but despite this and despite her disability she has represented this Union on the TUC Young Members Forum, the TUC Women's Committee, the GMB Young Members Forum, and got herself elected as a Labour councillor on Leeds City Council. She does not get paid commission, she does not even get paid release from work, she uses all her holidays to carry out her trade union political duties: real credit, real inspiration.

I hope that Lucinda carries on for as long as Monica Smith, who is another tower of strength within this Movement, as we have heard this morning. Monica is Secretary of the RMA, travels the length and breadth of this country campaigning on behalf of fellow pensioners and promoting this Union with such affection and pride, but she does this with huge personal sacrifice as she is the primary carer for her dependent husband.

If we could just bottle an ounce of their zeal, their dedication, their loyalty, we would have the secret recipe of assured success. Having said that, under Paul's unfaltering

leadership this Union has gone from strength to strength and I know that that success will continue. There must be a million books written by management gurus on how to be a successful leader but I have not yet seen any reference to the *Kenny approach*, so that might be a literary challenge for me in the months ahead. Seriously, working with Paul has been a fascinating experience and very personal thanks from me to you, Paul. Thank you for that.

So, Congress, I take away with me a life experience that is humbling and enduring. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for making this journey possible. I look forward to a nice long break to contemplate my future, or my navel, but wherever I may end up you can be sure that I will always be part of the GMB and the GMB will always be part of me. Thank you. (*Applause/Standing Ovation*)

THE PRESIDENT: Debbie, thank you for your report from pages 52-54. Does Congress agree them? (*Agreed*)

Deputy General Secretary's Report adopted.

THE PRESIDENT: Debbie, in my address I did wish you well. This Congress wishes you well and this Union wishes you well. Debbie, could I ask you, please, to accept the Gold Badge of Congress as our gift to you.

(Presentation made amid applause)

SIS. D. COULTER: Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, Congress is adjourned until 2 o'clock. Thank you.

Congress adjourned for lunch.

AFTERNOON SESSION

Congress reassembled at 2.00 p.m.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I ask Leroy Clark, the leader of the Estover Community College Steel Band to come forward to the rostrum, please. Less speeches more music. Leroy, it gives us great pleasure to say thank you for playing at our Congress. A lot is said about young people, not all is good, but I can tell you *these* young people are a prime example of what is good in youngsters. (*Applause*) Can I present you with this cheque for £500 from the GMB for your steel band and your Community College. We also have presents for all of the band from the GMB. When you start work, remember the union you join.

Presentation made amidst applause

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, that was lovely. Now we start Congress. I am sorry that the music is over.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE PRESIDENT: It now gives me great pleasure to welcome Dave Prentis, who most of you know in this hall. He is the General Secretary of UNISON and this year's President of the TUC. Please welcome him to the platform. (*Applause*)

Colleagues, we are aware of the problems with the chairs and the Centre staff will pin them down ready for the start of tomorrow's session. In the meantime, please take extra care. There are some fixed based chairs available at the side of the hall.

Let me now announce that there is free Fair Trade tea and coffee throughout Congress for all credential holders. This is available from the Signatures Café in the foyer part of the Exhibition Area. Remember to show your credential badge. Tea and coffee has been sponsored again by Liverpool Victoria and we would like to say a special thank you to them. (*Applause*)

Tickets for the RMA raffle are on sale from the RMA Stall and the GMB Shop. Please give generously.

I advise delegates that Congress delegates' gift is a GMB@WORK T-shirt with an image from the Marx Memorial Library on the front. You can pick this up from the Marx Memorial Library Stand and again you need to show your credential badge.

REGIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT GMB SCOTLAND

1. MEMBERSHIP AND RECRUITMENT

FINANCIAL MEMBERSHIP	
Section Financial Membership (by each Section):	

COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION	13,922
MANUFACTURING SECTION	10,467
PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION	35,242
Grade 1 members	41,779
Grade 2 members	13,225
Retired, Reduced Rate & Others	4,627
Male Membership	32,743
Female Membership	26,888
Total number recruited 1.1.2007 – 31.12.2007	5,716
Increase/Decrease 1.1.2007 – 31.12.2007	(2,440)
Membership on Check-off	48,744
Membership on Direct Debit	6,469

Response to the organising agenda

GMB Scotland has in response to the new agenda, GMB@Work been driving the agenda in the delivery of our year on year improvement in growth however, following significant successes in our Public Services Campaigns in regard to pensions we have seen a slow decline in recruitment which has been disappointing. Constant reviews have been undertaken throughout 2007 involving staff, officers and raised at Regional Council level.

Reorganisation and restructuring have now been undertaken and this is having a marked difference in the Region's performance by ensuring a successful strategy execution in January and February 2008 with everything we do being integrated into the overarching organising agenda with Regional Campaigning being heightened.

New Stewards Training – workplace organisation combined with officer support.

Working closely with Martin Smith and the National Organisation Team we have, as indicated earlier in this report, been able to drive our growth agenda forward.

Reorganising the Region into an Organising Team Structure will assist in ensuring that we successfully embed GMB@Work linking strategy to our daily operating principles through directing resources to successfully deliver. Planning being aligned with resource capacity will deliver the step change needed within the Region.

Recruitment targets and campaigns

The National Targets overseen by the National Organisation Team continue to be the key sectors within the Region. Southern Cross has been well established within GMB Scotland with growth continuing across existing and new Southern Cross Care Homes.

Key to continuing its growth was the early decision to create a Southern Cross Branch with post holders in place, communications and home visits are key in ensuring our organisation becomes embedded ensuring the longer term sustainability and self sufficiency of the structures we have set up.

Given the geography of Scotland we still have a lot of work to do to ensure we secure a membership base and representatives in every home.

Migrant Workers

Following on from the successes in other Regions in recruiting migrant workers we are focusing on Southern Cross Homes particularly within the Aberdeen area and across the North East within Food Manufacturing.

We have been successfully recruiting small groups of migrant workers however we need to establish larger groups across the Region.

Given the increase of Polish and Lithuanian workers into Scotland over the past few years this poses an area of potential growth which will be built into our plan for 2008.

The Security Industry continues to be targeted at Regional level outwith of the induction meetings held nationally.

Airport Security offers opportunity across Scotlands Airports and is currently being developed.

Also areas of opportunity are now opening up within the HBOS group and Shopping Malls.

Schools within the Public Sector still continue to be one of the mainstays of Recruitment within Public Services where catering and cleaning staff continue to be recruited on an ongoing basis.

However, our attention has now turned to targeting School Support Staff/Classroom Assistants with our campaigning materials "Valuable Assets". This is the report of these posts within the Scottish Schools System which was commissioned through the then EOC and again which GMB played a significant role within the Working Group.

This group of workers are clearly underpaid and undervalued and will form a key platform in GMB Scotland's return to growth.

Following a year of underperformance and with the support of the Senior Management Team GMB Scotland has embarked on transforming our strategy and converting the Regions collective efforts into growing our membership base.

This approach has been supported and assisted by Officers from other Regions being seconded to work within GMB Scotland sharing in their expertise, knowledge and skills in developing our strategy.

This has resulted in the implementation of new structures and systems being applied to achieve growth. Early signs are significantly encouraging with growth figures significantly up on the same period in 2007 and continues to be the case at the time of writing this report. This approach has also seen significant support from the National Organising Team and in particular Martin Smith.

Asda still remains a major National and Regional Target which is clearly a long term project but is one which with determination and commitment we will continue to grow.

The new approach focuses on delivery in full of the GMB@Work Agenda and will also bring about organic growth from within existing industries as we consolidate across the Region.

This combined with Positive Campaigning will increase our workplace profile within a newly restructured way of organising involving clear monitoring measurement and evaluation processes. 2008 within GMB Scotland will be one of continual change and improvement.

The delivery of the new approach to Initial Support Training combined with Workplace Organising Training for New Stewards and the supporting Shop Stewards Toolkit will be fundamental to delivering part of GMB Scotlands Strategy for Growth in 2008 and beyond.

GMB Scotland is well placed to take advantage of Climate Change Opportunities within Scotland where we will be at the forefront of the growth in Renewables and diversification within this sector due to the unique opportunities Scotland provides in terms of wind, wave and tidal power.

The Scottish Government is still opposed to No New Nuclear Sites in Scotland which will drive growth in renewables to replace the loss of Nuclear Power through the decommissioning process.

Overview of Region's economic and employment situation

GMB Scotland continues to set a year on year loss in total financial members. A number of factors impact on these figures significantly as we have continued to ensure our membership figures more accurately reflect our financial membership.

The Region's Asda membership has been significantly adjusted downward, this combined with a loss of seasonal employment within the Scottish Whisky Sector has impacted.

Scotland however has changed as a result of the election of a minority Scottish Nationalist Party whose purpose is to bring about independence from the rest of the UK. This, coupled with a period of difficulty within the Scottish Labour Party has led to a less than effective level of political opposition with the media continually chasing stories on the leadership donations for the Scottish Leadership Election, very similar to the problems experienced in England as a result of the Deputy Leadership Elections.

The Scottish Economy is still performing relatively slower at present with the Public Sector still being a major stimulant to growth in the economy and jobs through procurement.

However the recent Budget Settlement between Government and the Confederation of Scottish Local Authorities is causing ourselves some concerns as to how local authorities will respond in terms of possible job cuts.

The new SNP Government has of course moved speedily to supporting business through the Small Business Rule Cuts and was a concession to the Scottish Tories and key to having them vote with the SNP in getting their budget through the Scottish Parliament.

The setting up of a Scottish Constitutional Commission looks certain as the parties move to reviewing Devolved Government and what if any additional powers could be devolved to Scotland.

If Scottish Labour doesn't break out of their current situation they will commit mass political suicide and allow Scotland to sleep walk into independence.

Scotlands manufacturing industry still accounts for 15.1% of Gross Value Add, 10% of total Scottish employment and around 70% of total exports. Globalisation has been significant in a declining manufacturing base but signs are starting to show a fight back within Manufacturing. Scotland still faces a productivity challenge and significant Skills Shortages – Public Procurement in Scotland amounts for some £8 billion of spending. This, GMB says, must play a pivotal role in securing the future of Scottish Manufacturing and for procurement to be used to drive up standards in the industry in better employment standards, training provision and health and safety and play a major role in safeguarding jobs in Remploy.

British Airways - Last year the company announced that it was to pull all its ground handling requirements out of the Regions, ie, Inverness, Aberdeen, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Manchester and Birmingham. This amounted to a loss of over 1000 jobs across the 6 stations. As this decision affected the three regions within GMB Scotland suffering the highest amount of casualties, it was decided that Ian King, Senior Organiser, would lead the negotiations on behalf of our members with BA. Eddie Parker, North West & Irish Region and Bert Hill, Birmingham Region were part of the negotiating team along with our stewards from all the 6 bases. Whilst we campaigned hard to overturn BA's decision to pull out of the Regions and we believe we had a justifiable case, the company still went ahead and contracted its ground handling requirement out to Aviance. When the negotiating team realised that it was a fruitless exercise in continuing trying to save the 6 bases it was decided that we would have to go for the best possible deal for our members affected by the closures. The negotiations were quite protracted and took nearly 6 months to conclude. It was a very satisfactory outcome in respect of the base closure package which I believe will be a template that will be used should British Airways further try to reduce its workforce. It was down to the hard work and dedication of the officers and stewards that we achieved such a remarkable settlement.

Aviance – As a result of BA's decision to pull out of Scotland and hand the ground handling requirement to Aviance, we have been making quite serious efforts to recruit in the Airports that Aviance have a presence. We still have Aviance members who serve other contracts but it is of the belief that there is a huge potential due to the recruitment of new employees to service the BA contract.

Servisair – Servisair have had their ups and downs winning contracts and losing contracts and as a result we have seen some job losses across the region. The Company have been quite helpful when it has had to shed jobs by letting its temporary workforce go first. There are still possibilities for recruitment within Servisair in Scotland.

Security Industry – The Security Industry remains reasonably stable although there have been some consolidation exercises between various companies across the UK. Scotland has been well represented at any TUPE transfers that may have taken place which have affected our members. We hope to see growth within the Security Industry in particular, G4S. Securitas is another area where we believe there could be sustainable growth as a result of the company's decision to ask individuals to pay for their own licences. This could be a good recruitment tool for us to get into various sites and recruit nons.

Asda Distribution – The Company and the GMB went to Arbitration last year to determine what this year's wage award was going to be. The GMB put forward a case for a 4% pay increase to the Arbiter and believed that we had made a significant impact on the Arbiters decision. The company were looking to pay 2.8% over a one year deal. The Arbiters decision found in part the GMB's case and awarded 3.2% over a 12 month periods.

Asda Retail - Retail continues to be a huge target for GMB and recruitment drives will be inevitable over the next 12 months. Given the fact that we have now got access to new stores and have made presentations to employees, we have to keep the momentum up and continue to visit stores and show a presence as much as we possibly can. It is going to be a very difficult task as Asda will put hurdles in our way in order to stop us recruiting heavily within the Stores.

Leisure – There still is a huge potential within the Leisure Industry with new leisure and fitness centres springing up all over the place. It would be appropriate for us to look at a possible plan of action to try and determine a way of targeting leisure centres and fitness centres where we could possibly recruit new members.

Whisky - The Whisky Industry is quite settled at the moment with no immediate major hick ups or no particular problems on the horizon. The Industry is doing reasonably well and hopefully they will continue to expand by taking on core workers as opposed to temporary and agency.

British Energy - GMB Scotland with over 60,000 members and one of the largest unions in nuclear, gas, oil and renewables slammed the dismissive approach taken by the Scottish Government over nuclear re-build. "We do not have a clear strategy which is based on confidence of stability and security of supply for our energy needs for our economy and public trust." There are a number of important factors to be considered that will influence the decisions that will shape the emerging energy policy. Arguably, however, two of these factors – climate change and security of supply – are the predominant considerations, and between them they place an unprecedented pressure on Government to make important decisions now that will have a far-reaching impact upon UK energy policy. It is crucial to keep every available option open that could contribute towards the goal of maintaining an economic energy supply that doesn't exacerbate the threat posed by climate change. Expressing positive support for nuclear new build would be incomplete if reference was not made to the benefits for employment and the economy that would result from approving a construction programme of new nuclear power stations. The potential for creating employment, both directly in their construction and throughout the supply chain, is obvious. The employment position of the employees at Torness and Hunterston Power Stations are being completely overlooked and undermined and these workers in the nuclear industry will bear the brunt of the plant closures due to take place when the lifecycle of the Power Stations ends.

Scottish & Southern Energy, Pay 2008 – JNC Agreement. The proposed settlement will guarantee an above inflation (as measured by the RPI) pay rise for the next three years and there is a guaranteed minimum increase in years 2 and 3 should the RPI fall dramatically. In the first year there is also a one-off lump sum payment of £500 for all staff, payable in March.

Additionally the proposed deal includes improvements to the standby and other pay related allowances. There is a one off payment designed to reduce accrued TOIL balances under the "preferred working option" and there will be further talks at the JNCC on this issue. The JNCC will also have further talks on the company's "family friendly" provisions. Finally we have secured an improved wording to the temporary increase in responsibilities clause (D9) which we hope will resolve long standing dissatisfaction with this provision. Inevitably we did not achieve everything we sought in our claim: the company rejected outright our claims on annual; leave and the working week. We were disappointed by the company's rejection of our proposal for a company wide bonus scheme to replace the piecemeal provision that currently exists in some business areas. However we also successfully resisted proposals by the employers which would have been detrimental to your interests.

Centrica – The Company has announced proposals to change the pension scheme. Members of the Centrica Retirement Income Section (CRIS) which is available to those in the service and trading section could see some substantial changes. The CRIS is a career average pension scheme. This is a defined benefit scheme which means the pension is based on years of service, an accrual rate and the salary earned throughout a member's career. Each year a member's salary is recorded and then averaged throughout the course of the individual's working life at Centrica. The company have proposed to close the CRIS scheme and future employees will be given an alternative pension scheme. This means that current members will continue to build up their pension benefits in CRIS. In addition, current employees who have chosen not to join the pension scheme will be given an opportunity to join CRIS before it closes. GMB is totally opposed to the proposal to close the pension scheme. We do not accept Centrica's justifications for the closure. One of management's key claims is that current employees are failing to join the pension scheme. Centrica is claiming that the complex nature of the pension scheme and the work patterns of the workforce discourage individuals from signing up. GMB disagrees as we believe that if auto-enrolment is implemented the problem would be solved. Employees would be automatically placed in the pension

scheme unless they opted out and this would mean that the take up of the pension scheme would radically improve. In addition, the costs of a closed pension scheme are higher. This is because as individuals get older and draw their benefits, there are no younger members subsidising the scheme. In the experience of the GMB's pension department, the closure of a pension scheme often leads to benefit reductions at a later date.

Scottish Power - A meeting of the Core Negotiating Committee took place to continue discussions on the 2008 Pay and Conditions proposals. Following detailed and protracted negotiations agreement was reached to ballot members covered by collective bargaining arrangements on a non-recommended settlement. The key elements of the proposals for both civil employees and employees who TUPE transferred from PowerSystems and are covered by collective bargaining arrangements are detailed below.

Employees who TUPE transferred from PowerSystems in February 2002 only: 1 year settlement from 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2008 and 4% increase to schedule salaries and flow throughs with effect from 1 January 2008. Civil Employees only: 2 year settlement from 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2009; An agreed grading framework for all civil roles; Pay ranges for 2008 for each grade; Increase to annual leave entitlement to 25 days plus 8 statutory days with effect from 1 January 2008. Any employees who currently have an entitlement of less than 25 days will be increased to 25 days with effect from 1 January 2008.

Salary increases, with effect from 1 January 2008, which include an appropriate increase for increases to working hours (details below), ranging from 21.5% to 16.75%. The exact value of an employees salary increase 1 January 2008 will be determined by position of their current salary against the new pay ranges. Increase in working week from 40 to 45 hours / week from 1 January 2008. Employees 2008 salary increase includes an appropriate increase to reflect the increase in working hours.

In addition it is proposed to make improvements to maternity, adoption and paternity provisions for all employees covered by collective bargaining arrangements with effect from 1 January 2008. There will be two ballot processes, one for civil trade union members and one for members who TUPE transferred from PowerSystems in February 2002. The business will also hold briefing sessions for all civil employees to explain the proposals and next steps.

Gas Distribution Price Control Review 2008-2013 - Ofgem, the regulator for the gas and electricity industries, is currently finalising the Gas Distribution Price Control Review 2008-13. In December 2007, Ofgem's final proposals will be published, which will set out the allowances for operating expenditure that the Gas Distribution Networks (GDNs), the companies that are responsible for maintaining the supply of gas throughout the UK, will need to adhere to for the next five years. GMB has very serious concerns, which are shared by the Networks and other trade unions with members employed in the industry, about the long-term implications of Ofgem's proposals for the way that the GDNs will operate. These proposals are deeply flawed and will threaten security of supply and public safety. A flexible, skilled and motivated workforce with the ability to react to unexpected events quickly and effectively e.g. the recent floods, where the GDNs' workforce went well beyond the 'call of duty' and the responsibilities of their licences to assist people in difficulty. Allocating resource to tackling fuel poverty and extending the networks to those areas without gas and typically in fuel poverty. Playing a full role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions from their networks.

Renewable energy sources / nuclear new build - In relation to the first report on renewables, the political exchange may be significant, but what seems to have brought the debate to the fore is the apparent leaked reports which seem to suggest that the Government does recognise that there are significant problems with renewables, not least on cost. GMB has consistently supported a balanced energy policy including renewables. In our submission to Government on nuclear new build we re-emphasised this point. Nevertheless, the arguments in favour of renewables are sometimes over-simplified. There are practical and

economic constraints that need to be considered carefully when considering the nation's future energy needs. If reports on the leaked documents are correct it would seem to reinforce the argument for nuclear new build being part of a balanced energy policy.

British Energy - The Company and Trades Unions concluded the 2007 pay talks at a meeting of the Negotiating Team held on 9 July 2007. The proposals were as follows; 12 months duration covering the period 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008; No strings; 5.2% pay rise on basic salaries and flowthroughs, backdated to 1 July 2007. The joint Trade Unions are unanimously recommending acceptance of these proposals. GMB will ballot its members with a closing date of the 3rd August 2007. The result of the GMB ballot was as follows: to accept 235 votes, to reject 43 votes. The Joint Trade Union Side has now been advised of the GMB's results and as soon as we have the joint position this will be communicated to all colleagues.

Scottish Power - As part of the Integrated Approach to Pay Negotiations (2005), it was agreed to develop the new Energy Retail Single Agreement, explaining the Terms & Conditions of employment for all of our collectively bargained employees. This document has now been agreed. Another significant development arising from the integrated Approach to Pay Negotiations was the agreement to create a new Energy Retail Consultation & Negotiation Framework. This new Framework will establish a number of new Forums to cover all parts of the Energy Retail business, and which will replace all of the previous Energy Retail Business Councils. The new arrangements have also been extended to include consultation for employees on personal contracts. They include the appointment of Employee Representatives who will work alongside Management and Trade Union Representatives to represent those employees who are not members of a Trade Union.

Bi Fab, Burntisland - Agreement was reached for recognition with GMB and UNITE. Sign up meeting to be held shortly and a meeting with the members will be held thereafter.

Walker Timber , Bo'ness - Pay and Conditions Package. The membership accepted a 3.2% increase from April 2007 to January 2008 where they will then come under the English Sawmills Association with representation on the Negotiating Committee covered by Phil Davies.

Faslane/Coulport – Following detailed negotiations the CSEU has now been given Collective Bargaining rights within the respective MOD Bases. This is a fundamental change from the previous arrangements where each prospective Union dealt with their own business. With the growing work programme at the sites and the employment prospects this should give an opportunity of consolidation and recruitment aims.

BAE Systems – CVF Carrier Announcement Clinches Future for the Next Decade and Beyond -The announcement by the Government to place the multi billion pound order for 2 Aircraft Carriers finally ended speculation and rumour about delays. The announcement was excellent news for Scotland's Manufacturing Industry as Clydeside and Rosyth Dockyard will have major parts to play in the Contract. This news finally supports the financial investment that BAE Systems have placed in the Skills and Training at the Clydeside Yard with Apprenticeships and Design Staff. Over the last 5 years approximately 500 young individuals have been recruited into Apprenticeships and Technical Staff areas. This creates the foundation for Shipbuilding for future years. The workforce on the Clydeside should be congratulated for adapting to the changing face of Shipbuilding within the UK. Their commitment over the last 10 years in which the future of shipbuilding was in doubt should not be forgotten. This news will not only stabilise thousands of jobs on Clydeside, but will also create in time many opportunities for hundreds more. The supply chain involving contractors will also benefit and help protect jobs. Investment in skills being complimented by the capital investment in the infrastructure by the Company is the final link in the long term future of any Business Organisation. The Government are now obliged to ensure that the timing of the Programme is adhered to

and we do not have any delays which could adversely affect the very positive situation which is present on Clydeside.

Henry Technology - After lengthy negotiations and a strong industrial ballot in favour of industrial action the Company returned to the negotiating table with an improved Offer. This was accepted by our members. 3% increase in salary (and all allowances holiday pay and shift payments). An agreed Bonus Scheme which guarantees 1.5% payment every week. This payment was based on the average weekly production output over the 3 months prior to the agreement. Since the agreement the weekly payment has been in the region of 2.5% and 3% weekly. This payment is also included for the calculation of all allowances and pension.

Clyde Naval Base – Babcock - A gap in demand for submarine maintenance work at HM Naval Base, Clyde will result in the loss of some 225 jobs over the next 18 months. The workforce reduction is a consequence of a work-flow dip between the decommissioning of Swiftsure Class nuclear submarines and the start of major activity on the new Astute Class submarines. Babcock Naval Services, which manages the Clyde Naval Base, through a long term partnering agreement with the Ministry of Defence (MoD), said that it hoped the reduction could be achieved by not filling vacant posts, natural circumstances and through voluntary redundancy. It has been known about the shortfall in workload for some time, but despite considerable efforts, the Employer has been unable to find sufficient appropriate work to cover the period until they undertake mainstream work on the new Astute Class submarines. The Company have been reluctant to reduce their workforce, because they understand the impact on individuals and their families and on the local communities in general. The Company hope that compulsory redundancies will not be necessary and they have advised that they will continue to work closely with Trade Unions to protect key skills and to redeploy people wherever possible. They have also intimated that they will help employees to find alternative work, if they wish that. The Company, Trade Unions and the MoD have been trying to fill the workload gap for some two years and our joint efforts resulted in the award of a major maintenance package for HMS Torbay, a nuclear-powered hunter/killer submarine based at Devonport. The company also secured a contract to service small vessels for the MoD. These contracts had some positive effect in reducing the total number of job losses. The award of HMS Torbay's major maintenance package was a welcome addition to the workload and delayed the need to reduce the workforce to match the level of work we can anticipate over the next five years or so. The Company will discuss and agree the process and timetable for the reductions with the Trade Unions. Over 1700 people are employed, directly and indirectly, at Faslane and Coulport, on submarine and surface ship maintenance as well as in logistics planning and facilities management.

Longannet Project Joint Council – Longannet Power Station - Members took Unofficial Industrial Action over the second tier payments in the form of stoppages and strike action. Unions were requested to repudiate the action under the NAECI procedures. Eventually a deal was struck which was agreed by members.

Reids Furniture - Wage Claim - There has been a pay freeze implemented by the Company since January 2007 due to lack of orders. This was reviewed in June 2007 and the Company indicated that they had no financial means of putting an Offer on the table to the employees. The Company have stated that they will not be in a position to discuss wages until January 2008; however, they do expect full cooperation due to an upturn in the order book through October to December 2007. They have been requested to put an incentive on the table of a lump sum payment which would allow the employees to continue their cooperation. The Company are reflecting their position.

Clydeview Prevision Engineering - Parity with the Engineers. The Engineers are paid approximately £1.50 more per hour than the Boilermakers on Site. It has been made abundantly clear to management that this issue is creating an environment of hostility and that they have to address the imbalance between the different Trade Groups.

Public Services - The last 12 months have been a busy time for the Public Services Section in Scotland. We have dealt with some major issues that affect our members pay and terms and conditions of employment.

Our work on Equal pay continues in the year and as a result of our original grievances, the only ones lodged by a Trade Union in the majority of Scotland's Councils has resulted in thousands of women receiving tens of thousands of pounds in settlement for past pay inequality.

Not content with that, GMB Scotland have lodged second equal pay grievances in those councils who have allowed a gap in time to develop between the payment of settlement figure until the introduction of non-discriminatory pay systems.

GMB Scotland also extended its equal pay campaign to our members employed in NHS Scotland and have progressed many hundreds of equal pay claims to Employment Tribunals.

Negotiations on Single Status have been at the heart of our work since the last Congress report. New pay structures have been developed and imposed in many councils. Similarly many councils have reviewed their terms and conditions packages under single status and similarly many of these packages have been implemented with our agreement or imposed by those less enlightened councils. The work on the full introduction of the single status agreement should be completed by the end of 2008.

GMB Scotland was also heavily involved in the development of new pension schemes for both NHS Scotland and for Scottish Local Government. The Pension Scheme in the health service reflected the scheme in other parts of the UK and will have been implemented in April 2008. At the time of writing this report two issues remain to be resolved; ill-health retirement and the timescale for opting to move from the existing scheme to the new scheme that was developed primarily for new employees.

The Local Government Scheme is a more independent scheme than the other parts of the UK and GMB Scotland believes is a good outcome for Local Government employees in Scotland.

The different treatment of Rule of 85, Ill-health provisions and cost sharing makes the scheme a distinctively Scottish Scheme.

Public sector pay in Scotland was also treated differently than other parts of the UK with NHS workers receiving the full 2.5% increase from April 2007 as opposed to the staged offer in other parts of the country. Similarly in Local Government we saw a slightly better increase at 2.5% than our colleagues in England and Wales. Although this was an improvement for GMB members in Scotland it should be set in the context of the RPI running at 4% resulting for the first time in many years a settlement that was below the level of inflation and we need to come out of this cycle as quickly as we can and return to wage increases moving ahead of inflation.

The Public Services Section continues to concentrate on organisation and recruitment and we have been successful in seeing a growth in our membership levels through the year. We will continue working to achieve growth in the section using our good work in national and local issues as the catalyst for growth.

This is achieved by the commitment of our Organisers, Branch Secretaries, Conveners, Shop Stewards and Health & Safety representatives and with their continued commitment and teamwork further growth will be achievable in the years ahead.

2. GENERAL ORGANISATION

Regional Senior Organisers	3
Membership Development Officers	-
Regional Organisers	19
Organising Officers	1
No. of Branches	174
New Branches	1
Branch Equality Officers	28
Branch Youth Officers	0

We are currently embarking on a review of Branches across Scotland as an integral part of GMB@Work in ensuring that they have developed recruitment/organising plans developing representation skills to assist in providing an additional resource supporting our members in grievances and disciplinaries and freeing up the officers to concentrate on organising, recruitment, servicing and retention all key issues in delivering growth.

We are currently in the process of recruiting two new Organisation Officers which will continue to embed the changes.

3. BENEFITS

Dispute	0
Total Disablement	0
Working Accident	5,132
Occupational Fatal Accident	7,933
Non-occupational Fatal Accident	0
Funeral	22,818

4. JOURNAL AND PUBLICITY

2007 saw the re-launch of GMB Scotland's Insight Magazine which was mailed directly to all members.

The message was clear to all member "That growing our membership base is about ensuring that we can campaign more, speak on behalf of more people and that we can together change the working lives for and on behalf of our members on a range of issues from Equal Pay to Health and Safety".

Special Asda mailings have taken place across the Region on a number of key issues such as the imposition of Top Rate – Asda Law Club – Personal Injury Successes and General Information.

Mailings across our Public Service membership on Pensions – Equal Pay Updates has been significant in our Communications programme.

Light weight pull-up displays are used during our campaigns highlighting our three Sections and GMB@Work.

GMB Scotland advertises in the Morning Star which will be seeing its re-launch in 2008 for same day delivery in Scotland.

We hold the Chairmanship of the Scottish Modern Apprenticeship Awards and sit on the National Training Awards Panel (Scotland) both providing publicity.

The Region continues to sponsor Local and National Charities and through our fundraising efforts we have been able to make a difference.

5. LEGAL SERVICES

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

Applications for Legal Assistance	Legal Assistance Granted
478	478

Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Court	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
579	164	3	408 £3,576.383	4 £56,161	£3,632.544
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2007			976		

(b) Employment Tribunals (notified to Legal Department)

Claims supported by Union	
	1,873

Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Tribunal	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
179	82	6	77 £379,776	13 £253,406.45	£633,182.45
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2007					

(c) Other Employment Law Cases

Supported by Union	Unsuccessful	Damages/ Compensation	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2007
1**	1	N/A	

**This was the joint GMB/UNISON Judicial Review Petition in Court of Session against Falkirk Council which was unsuccessful.

(d) Social Security Cases

Supported by Union	Successful	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2007
17	5	8

Throughout 2007 Equal Pay has been the dominant issue for the Region's Legal Service. The Regional Legal Department, Regional Solicitors and Organisers have continued to actively promote the Equal Pay Campaign both in terms of mass litigation and recruitment.

Indeed GMB Scotland is in the forefront of litigating Equal Pay claims in Scotland.

At December 2007 GMB Scotland had 1,783 Equal Pay claims registered with the Employment Tribunal Service against 24 local authorities and related respondents against 8 NHS Boards, GMB Scotland have registered 672 claims. These are first wave Equal pay claims.

Using the latest computer technology, the Regional Solicitors Digby Brown have devised an innovative program for processing claims and relevant data. This program allowed for the efficient processing of such a large volume of claims.

To date offers of settlement in litigated first wave claims have been made by Glasgow City Council the biggest Local Authority in Scotland and it is hoped that other Local Authorities will follow with offers in 2008.

In addition to first wave claims, GMB Scotland has also lodged Residual claims for Equal Pay against 7 respondents. These Residual claims are for the period from the date of signature of a Cot 3/Compromise Agreement up until the date of Single Status implementation.

GMB Scotland is the only Union in Scotland that has lodged Residual claims for Equal Pay.

Furthermore, with the assistance of Regional Solicitors we have also designed an advert and survey form promoting Residual Equal Pay claims.

The advert will be placed in the GMB Scotland magazine to be distributed to members in early 2008.

Members with potential claims will be advised to complete an online survey form which they can access on the GMB Website. Completed survey forms will then be exported to Digby Brown for investigation and processing if applicable. This is a new approach to identifying potential Residual claims for Equal Pay and is in keeping with our desire to use the latest technology in the provision of GMB Scotland Legal Services.

Other provisions of the Region's Legal Service continued to be actively promoted in 2007.

In 2008 we will be reviewing new ways of promoting and improving the scope of GMB Scotland's Legal Services, to encourage greater take up by existing and new members.

6. EQUAL RIGHTS

The Regional Equal Rights Committee continued to meet during 2007/08 however the members attending were steadily falling.

Branches have been written to seeking a much wider engagement in the process as has the Race LGBT.

The STUC Black Workers Committee is chaired by our GMB member giving a high profile to the GMB.

Tackling the growing inequality and diversity across the Region has been one of the key issues.

Meetings of the Committee have discussed and debated the proposals being discussed at National level involving all of the bodies involved in the equality agenda and were supportive of moving to a Single Body Structure with key skilled lay activists to create a National Equalities Forum of skilled knowledgeable and expert individuals driving the Equalities and Inclusion Agenda.

These Regional discussions created a lively and robust debate with the view emerging that it was time for change engaging our members on the whole concept of embracing diversity.

Cathy Murphy, member and Chair of NERAC has played a key role in assisting these debates as she has been involved in the National Working Group debating the transition from current structures to a new Single Body.

Our NERAC and RERAC members continue to play a key role in promoting Equality and Inclusion within the workplace and the GMB.

The Region has been advising in two areas we know to have high levels of Polish Migrant Workers. We have sponsored activities in the Aberdeen area jointly with Frank Doran, MEP, involving our local official and senior stewards.

Meetings with the Regional Secretary and Senior Lay Activists have focused on recruiting migrant workers into employment to ensure their rights are represented within the workplace and the community.

A similar event was supported within Falkirk where again we have a significant group of migrant workers which is not surprising given that there is a vibrant polish community who settled there following the second World War.

7. YOUTH

For GMB Scotland this has been an area where more work needs to be done to ensure the engagement and participation of our young members in the mainstream activity of the Region.

We do however have active young members limited though they are who play a full role within the STUC Youth Committee making a significant contribution.

One of our most active youth representatives works in the Scottish Parliament for one of our GMB sponsored MSPs and is both vocal and active ensuring the GMB's voice of youth is heard.

2008 needs to see the Region extending out to more of our young members improving our communications and networking.

Age discrimination in respect of the level of discrimination and abuse against young workers and the levels of payment for young workers has been high on their agenda.

Training for young workers again has been a key agenda issue along with pay and the issue of binge drinking which is not just a Scottish phenomenon. These are all areas we need to be involved in and we are currently involved with the Sports Industry in Scotland reviewing what can be done to encourage responsible drinking again not just within Scotland's youth but across all ages within Scottish Civic Society.

8. TRAINING

(a) GMB Courses Basic Training					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Introduction to GMB (2 days)	9	63	27	90	180
GMB Induction (5 days)	5	48	20	68	340

GMB Induction (Risk assessment) (3 days)	4	32	15	47	141
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(b) On Site Courses (please specify subjects)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Basic Pension Training	1	13	-	13	26

(c) Health & Safety Courses (please specify subjects) TUC					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Health & Safety Stage 1 (10 days)	12	33	6	39	390
Next Steps for Safety Reps H & S Stage 2 (10 days)	9	24	5	29	290
TUC Certificate in Occupational Health & Safety (36 days)	2	1	1	2	72
Risk Assessment (3 days)	1	2	0	2	6
COSHH (3 days)	1	1	0	1	3

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

(e) TUC (STUC & ICTU) Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Union Reps Stage 1 (10 days)	1	2	0	2	20
Stepping Up: Advanced Course For Union reps (10 days)	3	4	0	4	40
Union Learning Reps (5 days)	1	1	1	2	10
Employment Law Update (3 days)	2	1	1	2	6
Handling Stress at Work (5 days)	1	0	1	1	5
Digital Photography (10 days)	1	1	0	1	10

9. HEALTH & SAFETY

Regrettably our Regional Health & Safety Officer, Robert McGregor, tragically lost his battle for life against cancer just after the New Year.

In real terms Health & Safety within the Region during 2007 has not had the programme it should have due to Robert's long term absence.

This has meant that we have not been as pro-active in this front on an ongoing daily basis as would have been possible.

Mesothelioma and Pleural Plaque however has been a significant agenda item within Scotland with the GMB playing a positive role through Tommy Gorman and other key activists playing a leading role at Regional level both industrially and politically in highlighting our ongoing campaign and maintaining a high media profile for GMB Scotland.

We continue to play a significant role as one of the major affiliates to the STUC in the delivery of Health & Safety in its wider context and integrating our approach to the delivery of the Organising Agenda through our Workplace Safety Representatives and through our Training Delivery.

(Carried)

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I call on the GMB Regional Secretary from GMB Scotland to move his report, pages 115-127. Harry Donaldson, would you please move your report.

BRO. H. DONALDSON (Regional Secretary, GMB Scotland): I formally move my report.

(The Report was formally seconded)

THE PRESIDENT: I will now go through the pages of the report. Pages 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126 and 127. Are there no questions? *(No response)* Does Congress agree to accept the report? *(Agreed)*

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to Social Policy: Welfare Rights and Services. I call the mover of Composite 11: Winter Fuel Allowance, to be moved by Birmingham & West Midlands. Then I will be calling Motion 202: Winter Fuel Allowance, to be moved by Southern Region. I will be calling Evelyn Martin to reply on Motion 202.

SOCIAL POLICY: Welfare Rights and Services

WINTER FUEL ALLOWANCE

COMPOSITE MOTION 11

199 – Winter Fuel Allowances *(Birmingham & West Midlands Region)*

201 – Winter Fuel Allowance *(London Region)*

WINTER FUEL ALLOWANCE

Congress, in view of the ever increasing cost of fuel let us agree to demand that the Government looks at this allowance annually and increases it accordingly.

Congress agrees that Winter Fuel Allowances are index linked to future fuel price increases.

(Carried)

BRO. D. KEMPSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): I move Composite 11, Winter Fuel Allowance. Congress, we have had a Labour Government for eleven years. For the last five years we have seen gas and electricity costs more than double. The forecast for 2009 is worse than ever. In the last five years we have seen State pensions increase anything from 1.9% to 2.9%. That is nowhere near enough, even with the extra £50 fuel allowance increase.

Congress, in the UK we have, in the main, six companies controlling our energy – gas, electricity, etc. Out of those six companies controlling our energy, four are French and German owned. These companies decided, for example, to attach the price of gas to oil prices resulting in their massive profits. The Energy Regulator, OFGEN, is totally ineffective. Composite 11 is saying that whatever the energy increases are in the future, they are automatically index linked to the Allowance. Congress, the obvious answer is to take back control of UK energy, like the Government did with Northern Rock.

SIS. L. GASPER (London): I second Composite Motion 11. Our pensioners deserve more than just idle gestures. This is simply not good enough for older people struggling with soaring bills for fuel. This year the Government has increased the Allowance by £50 to £250 for the over 60s, and by £100 to £400 for the over 80s. Do not be fooled by this gesture. These increases are a one-off unless the Chancellor can find more money next year.

Currently, there is an estimated £200 million left unclaimed in the winter fuel budget. This is not right. Our elderly are dying due to hypothermia because they cannot put the heating on. The Government needs to cut the red tape and make it easier for the elderly to claim what they need, what they have earned and what they surely deserve. I second this motion.

WINTER FUEL ALLOWANCE MOTION 202

202. WINTER FUEL ALLOWANCE

Congress calls on this Government to increase the winter fuel allowance to £300 per year for pensioners and increase it in line with inflation each year.

NORTH KENT ENG. Z39 BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. B. BURTON (Southern): President, this Congress calls on this Government to increase the winter fuel allowance to £300 per person in line with inflation each year. I know the Government this year has given us a one-off payment of £50. In fact, one-off payments in my experience are patronising and only give our enemies ammunition, who

call them bribes. In fact, £50 is less than £1 a week. I know it might warm a few of my bones but it is less than the price of a loaf of bread. Pensioners today live on less than the minimum wage and our benefits are taxed. It was the wealth of our fathers, under the first Labour Government, which formed the Welfare State. The saying then was “From the cradle to the grave”. Today, it seems that they cannot get us in the grave quick enough! We don’t want bread. We want a decent slice of the cake. I move.

BRO. B. HULLEY (Southern): I second Motion 202. Colleagues, the problem is quite clear. Many pensioners are living on the poverty line, fuel prices are rocketing out of control whilst their incomes are remaining almost static. Is it any wonder they feel strongly about these issues? We are all going to get old. I ask for your support.

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, before I call Evelyn, does anyone wish to come in on the debate?

BRO. J. TOOMEY (North West & Irish): Let me tell you that 20,000 – 25,000 pensioners die every winter in this country. When we see the MPs’ expenses, both Labour, Tory and that bloody Speaker, it makes you sick! When you think of the overseas aid we give, let’s begin charity at home and look after our aged pensioners. When that is done right, we will see the rest of the world right. Thank you. (*Applause and cheers*)

BRO. D. RIGBY (London): President, I am speaking on behalf of Composite 11. The Winter Fuel Allowance. Congress, the GMB must put more pressure on the Government to pay pensioners more money when it is cold in winter. Winters are normally cold, yet many pensioners are afraid to turn on the heating because they do not have enough money to pay the bills. Winter is not about if you are 65, 70 or 80. It does not discriminate. If you’re bloody cold, your cold. As we know, the prices of oil, gas and electricity have rocketed. If last year we would have paid £100 or £200 for one month, then for this year that is only give you half. Congress, please support this motion. Pensioners should have more money. Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I call now Evelyn Martin. The CEC support with a qualification to Motion 202.

SIS. E. MARTIN (CEC, Public Services): Conference and President, the CEC is supporting Motion 202 but with the qualification that I am about to give. Motion 202 calls for an increase in the Winter Fuel Allowance to £300 and indexation to inflation.

Events since the motion was submitted have overtaken this objective to some degree. We support a cash injection to the Winter Fuel Allowance in contrast to the one-off increase announced in this year’s Budget. However, some pensioners, the over-80s, are already said to receive £300 but will next year receive £400 as a result of the Chancellor’s announcement. For the younger pensioners, the Winter Fuel Allowance is to be increased to £250 for the next year. Given inflation busting increases in the fuel price, calling for a direct link with inflation, is likely to result in the allowance losing real

value over time as the fuel price continues to outpace general price increases. Committing the campaign to a link with inflation will mean that it has the opposite effect to that intended and pensioners will become less able to pay their fuel bill over time. This is why the CEC support the call in Motion 201, echoed in Motion 199, to annually review the value of the Winter Fuel Allowances in line with the increase in the cost of fuel.

The GMB knows how hard it is for those on low incomes, like most pensioners, to meet the escalating cost of meeting basic needs of heating their home. When energy companies are making vast profits and their bosses are lining their pockets, it is obscene that many of those who have worked for more than 40 years are frightened to turn their heating on in the depths of winter. The GMB will do all it can to ensure that no one is left in the cold as a result of fuel cost rises. Please support Motion 202 subject to the qualification I have outlined. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: I now put Composite 11 to the vote. All those in favour, please show? All those against?

Composite 11 was Carried

I now ask Southern Region if they will accept the qualification? (*Agreed*)
All those in favour of Motion 202, please show? Anyone against?

Motion 202 was Carried

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, before I ask our next guest speaker to come to the rostrum, I inform you that after the speaker has finished, I will be calling Motions 68, to be moved by Southern Region; Composite 2 on Pensions, South Western Region to move, Birmingham & West Midlands Region to second; Motion 71, Pensions, Birmingham & West Midlands Region to move, and the CEC Support that with a qualification. I will then be calling June Minnery to speak on Motion 71.

ADDRESS BY DAVE PRENTIS, TUC PRESIDENT & GENERAL SECRETARY, UNISON

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, it gives me great pleasure to introduce our next guest speaker, who is Dave Prentis, TUC President & General Secretary of UNISON. I am going to ask Dave to address the Congress. Dave is a comrade and colleague who stands with us for fairness in Public Services and campaigns alongside the GMB on pensions, health and safety, low paid workers and equal pay.

The strength of the GMB and Unison was a decisive factor in delivering the recent achievement on agency workers' protection. For too long, unions in a number of sectors have squabbled and let employers off the hook. There are a number of areas where we can work better together to our mutual benefit: refuse, care sector, equal pay and pensions. There will continue to be some areas where we have our differences but

Unison and GMB, with our combined strength, are a powerful voting force at Labour Party and the TUC. Colleagues, please show your appreciation. I ask Dave Prentis to address us. *(Applause)*

BRO. D. PRENTIS: Good afternoon everyone, and thank you for that introduction. It is a great honour to address your Congress, the GMB, a great union with a great history. It is a union that everybody can be proud of, a union with a single-minded determination to secure fairness and justice for working people, leading the way in its campaigns, campaigns for decent job opportunities for people with disabilities, for decent affordable housing, including council housing, exposing the scandal of private equity, and how many people know in this hall that the GMB and Unison have a common heritage? Believe it or not, we are children of the same parents. Paul and me, brothers; the Little and Large of the trade union Movement.

Both the GMB and Unison came from the Municipal Employees' Association, an association founded in 1899, but it is no surprise, colleagues, that we did separate at birth, in 1907, only a hundred years ago. The GMWU went one way and NUPE went another way. Since 1907, for only one hundred years, we have competed. We have argued, bickered and disagreed. If one accepts a pay offer, the other opposes it. It has been a way of life and it still is, but at least, brothers and sisters, the situation is not as bad as when John Edmonds and Rodney Bickerstaffe were general secretaries at the same time. John Edmonds was once asked, "What would you do if you saw Rodney Bickerstaffe staggering down the street?", and John replied, "I would reload". *(Laughter)* I like that one. Like all families we might bicker a bit, but we both know that we are never stronger than when we come together and stand up for our people, as your President has just said, as we did in local government as far back as 1970 and again in 1979. Unfortunately, Unison still gets the blame for bringing out the grave diggers in Liverpool in 1979. Do you remember? We still carry the burden. What no one seems to remember is that all those grave diggers in Liverpool were GMB members.

When we are talking about being stronger together, it is not just in local government. What about the Water Service in 1983 when we stood up for our water members? What about the pensions dispute across the public services in 2005? It was GMB and Unison working together – inseparable – that got those agreements on behalf of our members.

On a personal note, I really do want to pay tribute to Paul Kenny, a man of rare charm, wit and charisma. With Paul, what you see is what you get. He has no hidden agenda or talking in code. When he talks to Ministers or to employers, he tells it as it is. I have seen him do it. There is no different private face to his public face. I have no doubt whatsoever that it was because of Paul's strength that we got John Hutton and Gordon Brown to bring in the rights for agency workers, when Unite were doing their Two Ronnies' act on the one hand and on the other. It was Paul who stood firm and got the agreement that we had been seeking for more than five years. *(Applause)*

As trade unions we have common values and common goals, working together. As the President has said, we are the biggest block in the trade union Movement. When we

work together, we stand up for nearly 1 in 3 trade unionists in the United Kingdom. That is an enormous number and a powerful force for good in our society, working through the Labour Party to hold our politicians to account, working in Brussels to protect hard won social rights, working in communities up and down the country to face down the racists of the BNP and counter their poisonous propaganda. The truth is that great trade unions are not made by their general secretaries. They are made by people like you, working day in and day out, mainly on a voluntary basis, often getting little thanks, working to win a hearing and a better deal for our members. We have Mary Turner, a strident trade unionist, standing up for everything that is right; Sheila Bearcroft, the next President of the TUC, and I really would like to wish Debbie farewell and thank her for everything that she has done for our trade union movement.

More than that, it is not just about individuals. More than ever, we need to keep fighting, not with each other but together. It is a hundred years since we separated; a hundred years since the *Ragged Trousered Philanthropist* was written, highlighting the plight of British workers at the beginning of the 20th Century. But, for me, we still live in a divided society. Class still matters. Geography still matters. It really is immoral that MPs and MEPs can earn more in expenses in one month than our members can earn in a year. (*Applause*) Furthermore, our imbalanced economy is now in danger of falling. It is paying the price of many years of deregulation; manufacturing jobs going out of the window and now derailed by greedy speculators in the City. In an economic crisis, whatever may be said, it is still the working poor who get hit the hardest. We are told not to strike to protect our rights, but company bosses can threaten to leave the country. Prices and bills are going up. People are feeling the pinch. But the Government says that there is no more money in the bank for the public services that people need, or even the decent pay increases that public services need to get them through the future months.

Then we see the rise of the Blue Tongue disease – David Cameron, the new workers' friend, strutting his stuff, his confidence growing that he can pull off the greatest confidence trick of all time.

This is where I do get a little bit controversial. What about the Labour leadership past and present? I think we have to be honest, Congress. It does not look good when the very people who told our members to be loyal, not to rock the boat, to be grateful for what we could get, are now destroying the chances of a fourth term, which is what really is at stake. We see them rushing out their memoirs to line their own pockets, to settle their scores, spinning their stories to the press, protecting their backs, passing the buck and positioning themselves for their next career moves. It does not look good when Ministers have to be dragged kicking and screaming into delivering on Labour Party policies, policies which we have all argued for, campaigned for and voted for. New council housing building turns out to be a drop in the ocean. It does not look good when we still have to battle through the courts to win equal pay for our women members, taking on no win/no fee solicitors, making vast profits, peeling off our members, urging members to take their own unions to court. Then, when we finally make progress in securing minimal rights to protect hundreds of thousands of agency workers, we are told the following week by John Hutton that there is to be a moratorium on improving

employment rights, because employment rights stop people getting jobs! It is a moratorium we do not accept. John Hutton came out with the same lie that was being used against every single measure this Movement has won for working people since the 19th Century, from limits to the working day to basic health and safety regulations and to the National Minimum Wage. They were all going to cost jobs. It does not look good when Ministers seem to be more concerned about appeasing the City financiers and big business lobbies than with understanding what ordinary working people are going through today, celebrating the super rich, when even the Bank of England sounds a warning about City bonuses; inviting the private sector into the heart of our National Health Service, siphoning off the taxpayers' money – something that even Margaret Thatcher would not have dared to do. It makes no sense whatsoever for public services to be out-sourced. It makes no sense whatsoever that public services are controlled by unaccountable private healthcare companies. It does not look good putting up taxes on workers, earning a couple of hundred pounds a week, while corporations and wealthy individuals are avoiding paying tax to the tune of £25 billion a year. (*Applause*) It is no wonder that our members are asking whose side is our Government really on. It is no wonder that some are saying that our Labour Government needs to remember who their friends are and remember what Labour is for. I think we all know and accept that when economic times are hard and resources are stretched, we cannot always have everything that we want at once, but it is at times like this, when times are hard, that fairness really does count. Simply driving on with the political agenda opposed by Labour supporters, trade unionists and public service workers will not win us a fourth term. Millions of people voted Labour because they believe in a fair society, redistributing income and wealth, helping those who are less well-off than themselves. What is so wrong – going back to the previous debate – in raising the basic State Pension, restoring the earnings link now rather than in 2012, helping families cope with rising prices, giving local authorities and the power to build decent council homes, better care for the elderly and decent school meals. What is so wrong with the Government moving away from the rip-off of the Private Finance Initiative, giving British workers the same rights as our European counterparts, and Labour marking itself out again as the party of working people, of social justice, the party standing up for those who live in vulnerable circumstances in our society, the party of high quality public services. If belts have to be tightened and plans have to be put on hold, people want to know that everyone is doing their bit, but do not ask working people, low paid people, vulnerable people in need of services and support to take the pain while others make the killing. It is not too late. This Government has got two years yet left to govern. It has got a solid majority in Parliament and it could win back the support of working people. Yes, we will use everything in our means, everything in our power, including our formal links with the Party to get this Government back on track and back in touch with the millions of people who we represent. But we, the trade union Movement, we Unison and GMB, have to do much more. Whichever government is in power, it will always be down to us, the trade unions, to make the case for social justice, to make the fight for fairness in the workplace, to give everyone a chance in a better society. It is the work that you do that makes the difference.

We do not know what the future is going to bring but what we do know is that our two unions will be on the side of working people, defending their rights, protecting their services, creating new opportunities and building a better society. Maybe we will still be bickering a little.

To Brother Paul and to all of you, have a great Congress. Thank you for the work that you do. Thank you for the honour you have given me in addressing your Congress and, hopefully, together representing one in three of trade unionists across the UK, we will make a difference, not just in this year but in the next decade and in the next century. Trade unions are here to stay. We will grow in strength and we will grow in our ability to get a fairer society for our people. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Dave, as an appreciation – it is not a wedding gift as some might be portraying tomorrow in the press. The marriage is not quite there ----

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: It is an engagement present.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes; it's an engagement present.

BRO. PRENTIS: I am already wearing the GMB ring.

THE PRESIDENT: I would like you to accept this token of glasses made by our members and accept that with our gratitude for addressing our Congress. I also have something to go in it. It is GMB whisky, made by our members, drunk by our members and passed by our members. Thank you, Dave, very much indeed. (*Applause*)

Congress, we now move to Motion 68, to be moved by Southern Region. Will the seconders come to the front. On Composite 2, South Western are to move, with Birmingham & West Midlands to second and Motion 71.

**EMPLOYMENT POLICY
PENSIONS & RETIREMENT
BASIC STATE PENSION
MOTION 68**

68. BASIC STATE PENSION

This Congress pays tribute to those Trade Unions who started the campaign in 1908 for a State Pension; congratulates the National Pensions Convention (NPC) for highlighting the centenary of the first Old Age Pension in 2008 and gives full support, through whatever appropriate means, to the NPC's demand that the Government raise the basic State Pension as a matter of urgency to at least £134 a week (the official poverty level) for all pensioners and increase it annually in line with earnings or prices (whichever is the greater).

WEYMOUTH W27 BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. A. GOODFELLOW (Southern): I am speaking on Motion 68. You may notice that I am wearing an armband as a steward of the National Pensioners' Convention. It is not mine but my father's. I am wearing it as a mark of respect for the work that he did and for those out *there* today who are still working for their pensions and our pensions. This campaign demands that the Government raise the basic State Pension as a matter of urgency to at least £134 a week (the official poverty level) for all pensions and increase it annually in line with earnings or prices (whichever is the greater).

Let me give you some history. Before the introduction of the first State Pension in 1908 old people who were no longer able to work depended on charity to survive. For working people on low factory wages, it was impossible to save for anything, never mind old age. Industrialisation had uprooted their rural population and the traditional, domestic, working and family stability suffered, leaving thousands of old people without any support. Their last resort was the workhouse.

The most striking similarity with a hundred years ago is the presence of means testing. More pensioners are means tested now than at any previous time. Even in its modern guises, it remains unpopular, demeaning and ineffectual at getting help to those who need it most. As with a century ago, the poorest of today's pensioners are also women, the vast majority of whom receive less than a full State Pension. Many were badly advised about paying for their pension. They either paid a small 'stamp' or were even unable to pay their National Insurance contributions because of having to care for families or being on low pay or part-time employment. However, the struggle for a decent pension should not be something simply of concern affecting pensioners. It should also interest the pensioners of the future. With decent occupational pensions under increasing attack and in decline, many of today's workers will face an uncertain retirement unless the State Pension is substantially improved and made fully inclusive.

In 1908 the Pensions Act signalled the State's first step for providing an old age pension. It was a non-means tested, non-contributory State Pension of five shillings a week for men aged over 70. But the Victorians believed that the old age pension should be for the deserving poor, which is an idea which still exists today.

Let me give you some facts. The State Pension's link with earnings has been broken since 1980. Had the link remained, today's State Pension for an individual would be worth £145.15 a week rather than £90.70 a week.

Congress, it is said that taxation is the price we pay for living in a civilised society. If that is true, then a State Pension of £135 a week should be the statutory responsibility of a government and a debt of gratitude to those people who have maintained that civilised society for generations in the past and generations in the future. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Let me tell those new delegates in Congress who never had the pleasure of hearing George Goodfellow speak, he was a very proud member of the GMB and somebody who will always be in the history of the GMB. The only trouble we had was that George was in the London Region and his son was in Southern Region so the

battle began. He was a fine man and we were proud to know him. I am glad to see that you respected him today. *(Applause)*

BRO. T. TRIM (Southern): Congress, I second Motion 68. The early pioneers won the battle to force the state to accept its responsibility of providing a minimum income for elderly people who could no longer work but their ultimate aim was to secure a non-means tested pension that would provide a decent life in retirement was not achieved. Today the National Pensions Convention and the trade union Movement are continuing that campaign for an adequate State Pension for all men and women. Working together we will succeed. Please support this motion wholeheartedly. Thank you.

PENSIONS

COMPOSITE MOTION 2

(Covering Motions 70 and 72)

70 – Pensions (*Birmingham & West Midlands Region*)

72 – Pensions (*South Western Region*)

PENSIONS

Congress will be aware that there is still a significant pension contribution gap between today's men and women of working age, both in numbers making contributions and the size of the contributions. We still have the issue that pensions do not always figure high among women's priorities and often do not think about pensions when making child-related employment choices.

Congress deplores the decision by this Labour Government to reject a plan to let women boost their state pensions by buying back up to nine years worth of extra N.I. contributions. This could have a major impact on one section of our union; female membership

Therefore Congress calls on the CEC to embark on a programme of raising awareness amongst all our women members on the issue of accrual of pensions and also continue to lobby government for pension reform for women.

(Carried)

SIS. R. BENNETT (South Western): I move Composite 2. President and Congress, we are all aware that there is a significant pension contribution gap between today's men and women of working age, both in numbers making contributions and the size of contributions. We still have the issue that pensions do not always figure highly in women's priorities and very often they do not think about pensions when making child-related employment choices. One-in-five women pensioners still risk poverty in retirement. This is nothing more than a national scandal. Research by the Department of Work & Pensions shows that breaks in the labour market mean that women cannot build up retirement income under the current rules and qualifying conditions. Some 2.2 million women are not incurring rights to even the basic State Pension. Historically, the lack of provision for women in retirement contributed to the decision to tackle Pension Credit in 2003. Two-thirds of people in receipt of Pension Credit are women. Half of these are aged 75 or over with payments now made into their bank accounts. Women could,

potentially, suffer further financial loss in bank charges incurred. Therefore, this Congress calls upon the CEC to embark on a programme of raising awareness amongst all our women members on this issue and also continue to lobby the Government for pension reform for women. I move.

SIS. S. TANNER (Birmingham & West Midlands): I second Composite Motion 2. President and Congress, women in their mid-50s and older who gave up their careers to raise children or care for elderly relatives are the forgotten generation, who now find themselves on the pensions scrapheap. The Government recently reneged on a pledge to allow women to boost their pensions by paying extra National Insurance contributions. This, I might add, has resulted in much anger from all areas of society. Their sacrifices have been largely ignored by a government which would rather force them on to means tested benefits than give them a fair chance to buy enough pension to stand on their own two feet financially. The complexities of the State Pension means that women from all walks of life now face retirement with little or no pension. Reforms promised for 2010 should alleviate the position for younger women but they will create a new pension divide which could see two women who have paid the same contributions receiving a £28,000 difference in State Pension during their lives. Congress, many of these women should be or have been GMB members, so we have a moral duty to fight for justice and equality on this issue on their behalf. Ultimately, colleagues, we should want the 2010 pension reforms to be retrospective to help those who have already retired. Women should not be penalised for having cared for children and relatives. Congress, now is the time to act. Equality is what we preach. It is time that this Government started to act the same on this pension issue. This Congress asks our union to intervene in the debate on the 2010 Pensions Bill so that justice is not only seen to be done but is done. I second.

PENSIONS MOTION 71

71. PENSIONS

Congress believes that as a progressive step to alleviating the poverty and hardship endured by many pensioners in this country, particularly those who over their working life have managed to accumulate small savings and or have a small private pension, that the starting rate taxable band allowance of ten percent should be abolished. Also that the basic rate of twenty two percent should only start to apply to annual earnings over ten thousand pounds and will lobby the Government of the day to bring about such a change.

B41 - BIRMINGHAM RUBBER BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

BRO. M. AMIN (Birmingham & West Midlands): I move Motion 71. President and Congress, in moving this motion and asking Congress to support it, it is hoped it will do something to address the problem of pension poverty in this country. While the Government has, during the past ten years, taken some action to try and deal with the problem, there is no doubt it is still a major problem. In fact, anyone would be hard put

to argue that it is nothing short of a national disgrace. The Government has tried to deal with the problem by introducing benefits and grants which are subjected to means testing, and there lies the flaw in the attempt to deal with pension poverty. Working people who for all their working lives have paid their taxes and National Insurance contributions, perhaps paying into a work's pension scheme, with the expectation that they would be able to enjoy a comfortable retirement, find themselves struggling to make ends meet and then, in order to receive any help, have to subject themselves to means testing. Many, quite simply, will not do it. Rightly or wrongly, they find it degrading. I have no doubt that many of us, if we found ourselves in the same position, would feel the same. Recent data shows that there is a clear evidence that people are living longer, but what quality of life will they have in their retirement when you take into consideration the current and projected increases in fuel, energy and food prices. The items I have listed are, in the main, essential to living so we have to think how we assist the most vulnerable in our society, and I would put pensions in this group. A progressive tax system would be a way to help many pensioners out of poverty without the need for complicated means testing schemes.

Remember, this is a Government which, when it was in Opposition, promised that when it got back into power it would restore the link between pensions and wage inflation. It has reneged on its promise, leaving many pensioners worse off than they should be. Congress, I ask you to support the motion.

BRO. B. JACKSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): In seconding Motion 71, it does appear that the Prime Minister second guessed us on this particular motion because he actually did go and remove the 10 per cent taxable band allowance, but it does seem to me that this motion is addressing what the Prime Minister actually said he was trying to do, which was to simplify the way that we actually tax people. I cannot really think of a better reason or a better solution than to raise the amount that people actually start to pay tax. The motion is actually saying that that should start at around about 10 grand. Well, that seems a pretty good starting rate to me. Please support the motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on the debate before I call the CEC speaker?

SIS. A. MURPHY (North West & Irish): I am speaking on the basic State Pension. While agreeing with the sentiments of the motion to increase pensions to £134 a week, what is the use of this if the Government then take tax out of such a meagre amount? Pensioners who claim their pensions, only get the £5,600 tax allowance. This means that a great chunk of money is lost. That means losing £760 a year to tax this year. Such a sum of money would help a lot to paying council tax and fuel costs. So let us get the allowance for the over 60s pensioners raised so that pensioners can hold on to more of their pensions to pay their way in life and hold their heads up high. We do not want handouts. We want what is ours, nothing else. Is that too much to ask?

SIS. G. BAILLIE (Northern): I am speaking in support of Composite Motion 2 – Pensions. Colleagues, as the composite points out there is a significant gap between the

pension contributions of today's men and women. Raising awareness of this situation to our members is paramount. But I also want to raise awareness of an issue which, when I read about it recently in the media, worried me immensely. This is that scores of company directors are trying to rid themselves of their final salary pension commitments. Okay, that's not recent news, but what is new is that they have come up with an additional method. They are selling them, and to the highest bidder! It's a new market. It is called the 'pensions buyout market'. During the first quarter of this year, around £2.6 billion was traded. The market is in its infancy and for our members there could be good and bad news. One worrying aspect, especially for part-time female workers with a number of possible small pension pots is that these can be compulsorily brought out but the terms are at the buyer's discretion. So raw deals could be the dish of the day. The market is still at its fledging stage, so now is the time for us, as a union, to make sure that it does not turn into a breeding ground for scandals in years to come.

Congress, let us make ourselves aware of this potential threat and act accordingly. Pensions are being transformed to just another commodity to be traded, and members do not even get a vote. Let us make ourselves aware. Please support the motions.

THE PRESIDENT: Before I call June Minnery, does anyone wish to speak against the motions? (*No response*)

SIS. J. MINNERY (CEC, Public Services): President and Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC. The CEC is supporting Motion 71 but with a qualification. Motion 71 calls on Congress to lobby the Government to abolish the 10 per cent starting rate tax band allowance and to apply the 22 per cent basic rate of tax only to earnings over £10,000. The CEC supports the intention of this motion to reduce the tax burden on pensioners as a means to alleviate pensioner poverty but believes this should be done as part of a co-ordinated approach to improving pensioners' conditions rather than the specific raise highlighted in this motion. I should also mention that some of the specific points raised in Motion 71 have been overtaken by events as we are, I am sure, all too aware that the 10% tax rate has been abolished and of the losses felt by many GMB members, until the Chancellor announced an increase in the tax threshold.

The 22% basic rate of tax is now a 20% rate and tax allowances have increased to over £9,000 for low to medium income pensioners, meaning that 600,000 few pensioners are paying Income Tax, which is a step in the right direction.

Tax allowances for those of working age now stand at over £6,000 as a result of the Chancellor's statement a few weeks ago, but there is more the Government needs to do to address pensioner poverty. They must abolish means testing for Pension Credit; increase the value of the basic State Pension and make it genuinely universal; reinstate the indexation of the State Pension to the higher of earnings or inflation; address the fuel poverty that particular affects pensioners, and reform the National Insurance and local taxation systems. Congress, these are not small changes but are fundamental to achieving GMB's goal of ensuring that all pensioners in the UK can live with dignity in retirement.

Congress, please support Motion 71 subject to the qualification I have just outlined. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, June. Can I put Motion 68 and Composite Motion 2 to the vote, please. All those in favour? Anyone against?

Motion 68 was carried.

Composite Motion 2 was carried.

Does Birmingham & West Midlands Region accept the qualification?

BRO. J. MORGAN (Regional Secretary, Birmingham & West Midlands): Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: I will put Motion 71 to the vote. All those in favour? Anyone against?

Motion 71 was carried.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 2

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I now call Helen Johnson, Chair of Standings Orders, to give Report No. 2.

SIS. H. JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): Good afternoon, President and Congress. I am moving SOC Report No. 2. Colleagues, we have been notified of two withdrawn motions. They are Motion 74 – Final Salary Schemes – from North West & Irish Region, and Motion 165 – Alcohol Drinking – from Birmingham & West Midlands Region. I repeat that Motions 74 and 165 have been withdrawn.

The Standing Orders Committee would like to remind regions, please, if they wish to withdraw motions please do so following the instructions in your Final Agenda.

On the subject of emergency motions, the Standings Orders Committee has agreed to a third emergency motion – this will be EM3 – entitled: “Thompsons Solicitors” standing in the name of North West & Irish Region. The SOC is recommending that this emergency motion will be heard on Thursday.

On the subject of bucket collections, SOC has given permission for three bucket collections. The first one is a collection for a cancer-related charity, Heaven Can Wait, by Midland & East Coast Region. SOC recommends that this collection takes place at the end of this afternoon’s session. Secondly, a collection for SITRAP, the banana workers’ trade union in Costa Rica by London Region. SOC recommends that this collection takes place at the close of the Monday morning session. Thirdly, a collection for the Windmill Gateway Club, a charity for young people with special needs based in Lambeth by Southern Region. SOC recommends that this collection takes place at the close of the afternoon session on Wednesday.

Finally, SOC has considered five DVDs and given permission for these to be played at Congress. Firstly, a DVD from the GMB MEPs Groups, which will be shown this afternoon; secondly, a DVD on Mesothelioma, to be shown this afternoon; thirdly, a DVD on Cammell Laird, which will be shown first thing on Monday morning; fourthly, a DVD on Fenland Foods, to be shown on Monday morning; and, fifthly, a DVD on Justice for Colombia, to be shown on Monday afternoon.

President and Congress, I move SOC Report no. 2.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Helen. Does anyone wish to speak on the SOC Report? *(No response)* Does everyone accept the report? All those in favour, please show? Anyone against?

Standing Orders Report No. 2 was carried.

EUROPEAN REPORT EUROPEAN OFFICE

1. INTRODUCTION

The GMB European Office continues to develop GMB's ability to influence EU and International policy and initiatives, and to support campaigning activities at European and International level to protect and promote the rights and interests of GMB members and their families. We continue to work in solidarity with our trade union colleagues across Europe and the world to promote labour rights, decent work, conditions and pay, and to strengthen trade union recognition and organisation.

CEC European & International Committee – following CEC consideration and agreement, the CEC European & International Committee has been combined with the CEC Political Committee with effect of January 2008. This will provide positive opportunities to improve our ability to influence Government and Parliamentary scrutiny committee views on EU legislative proposals and policy development in parallel at national and European level.

2. PERSONNEL

European Officer, Kathleen Walker Shaw and European Research and Policy Officer, Sarah King, represent the GMB's interests in Europe. Both are based in the GMB Brussels Office located at the centre of the EU decision making institutions.

3. GMB MEP GROUP

GMB has a strong and committed group of MEP's in the European Parliament including Stephen Hughes (North East – Group convener), Richard Corbett (Yorkshire and Humberside – Chair), Robert Evans (London), Neena Gill (West Midlands), Glenys Kinnock (Wales), David Martin (Scotland) and Glenis Willmott (East Midlands). Gary Titley (North West) resigned from the group at the end of 2007. Our group provides considerable support to GMB both at regional and European level. Our GMB MEP's have been particularly active in their support for the Remploy campaign, which has been much appreciated by our members and officers. Considerable support has also been forthcoming from a number of non-GMB Labour MEP's, and we are grateful for their commitment and solidarity. The selection process for the 2009 European elections commenced at the end of 2007, and we are committed to supporting our group members through this process. Glenys Kinnock and Gary Titley have announced that they will not be seeking re-election at the next election. We look forward to continuing to work with Glenys for the remainder of her term, and thank

her for her wealth of support and commitment to the GMB over the years. We thank Gary for his past support and wish him well for the future.

4. SUPPORT FOR RECRUITMENT AND ORGANISATION

The GMB Brussels office supports the European and International aspects of National secretaries' and officers' organising work in liaison with the European and International trade union sector federations, ETUC, direct contacts with other European trade union colleagues, and with the EU institutions as required.

Migrant workers - Organising an increasing number of EU migrant workers moving to the UK is an important challenge for GMB, and the European Office has been working with GMB Regions and the National Organising Team in support of this work. Contacts have been developed with new Member State trade unions as well as continuing our links with Solidarność Śląsko-Dąbrowski Region established through an EU funded project involving GMB South Western Region. Funded by the European Socialist Group of the European Parliament, GMB officers and members from Poland and Lithuania were involved in two events held in the European Parliament in April and October 2007 to raise awareness of the unacceptable exploitation of too many migrant workers coming to the UK, and the need to ensure that they receive the same rights, pay and conditions as their equivalent colleagues. GMB provided positive examples of where it had been successful in organising migrant workers, and appealed to MEP's from new Member States to encourage workers planning to move to another country to join trade unions in the host country before they leave their home country as the most effective way of protecting their interests and avoiding social dumping. Failure to tackle exploitation of migrant workers will threaten collective agreements and pay and conditions for all, which will benefit no-one.

European Works Councils - The European Officer continues to provide support and advice to the development of European Works' Councils (EWCs). With the announcement at the end of 2007 of a pending Revision of the EWC Directive, it is hoped that there will be an opportunity to improve the provisions of the law to strengthen information and consultation rights and our ability to organise in multinational companies.

Comparing terms and conditions - The office continues to receive regular requests to compare rights, conditions and redundancy terms across multinational companies operating in other EU Member States, to support our bargaining agenda. Support and solidarity from trade union counterparts in other countries in providing information on their social plans and access to their works councils has proved very helpful, as was seen recently in the Burberry campaign with our French CFDT colleagues and in Staedtler, with colleagues from IG Metall.

Information on EU policy, employment and social rights - The European Office provides regular briefings and a monthly EU bulletin, updating members, officers and organisers on developments in EU legislation and rights such as Working Time and Health and Safety to assist them in their roles and support the bargaining agenda.

5. RECOGNITION

The GMB European Office continues to provide support in comparing recognition across key target multinational companies, which has proved valuable in supporting GMB bids for recognition. European trade union colleagues have shown solidarity in offering support to our members and raising the issue with management in their national works councils or committees.

6. EU POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND CAMPAIGNS

Europe has been a key focus for GMB in 2007, with GMB's motion on the EU Reform Treaty to TUC Congress being one of the major debates of the week and receiving much media attention. GMB has been

active in raising our members' concerns and influencing a large number of other specific EU policy and legislative issues both within the EU institutions and at the highest level of UK Government:

EU Reform Treaty - EU Governments wrestled in 2007 with the aftermath of the failed EU Constitutional Treaty and sealed agreement on the EU Reform Treaty (now called the Lisbon Treaty). Shamefully, our UK Government negotiated a protocol opting British workers out of the full scope of the Charter of Fundamental Rights as part of the negotiations, showing a clear and worrying lack of commitment to balancing the social and economic dimensions of European development. GMB challenged this failure to represent the interests of British workers in Europe in a motion to TUC Congress, calling on the Government to honour its manifesto commitment at the last election to hold a referendum on the EU Constitutional Treaty and to support a strong social Europe, which was overwhelmingly carried. The Government has refused to hold a referendum and placed the European Union (Amendment) Bill before Parliament at the end of 2007, anticipating ratification by summer 2008.

EU Labour Law – In spring 2007, GMB submitted a comprehensive response to the EU Commission Green Paper consultation on Labour Law, raising concerns about the focus on individual rights, ignoring the major role of collective bargaining, the emphasis on the need for flexibility over security in employment, the failure to address the threat of the increasing levels of precarious work and vulnerable workers in Europe, with the risk of atypical work becoming the typical form of employment. GMB emphasised the importance of quality of jobs and secure employment. GMB submitted its views in the process towards the European Parliament opinion on the consultation, where most of our concerns were reflected.

Flexicurity – the combination of flexibility and security measures in employment - was the key focus of debate on Europe's employment strategy. The model originated in Scandinavia, where it is supported with high levels of security, social support, trade union involvement and social dialogue, and continuous training, including between jobs. Beyond Scandinavia, there is generally flexibility but without matching security. The Green Paper on Labour law included the model, and in the summer 2007 the EU Commission brought forward a Communication on flexicurity. Though this was not a consultative text, GMB wrote formally to the EU Commissioner for Employment and Social policy, raising our concerns about the model, and circulated this to colleagues in the European Parliament. The European Socialist Group of the European Parliament produced a response to the proposals for flexicurity highlighting the pre-conditions and principles required to provide necessary security and enable the system to work. A flexicurity strategy was adopted at the European Summit of Heads of State and Government in December 2007. GMB has concerns about the UK Government's commitment to delivering a balanced flexicurity model in the UK. We are already one of the most flexible labour markets in Europe, but doubt that the ingredients to ensure security, social support, training and protections will be delivered.

Viking and Laval European court cases – The European Court of Justice delivered its decisions on two very important trade union cases - Viking and Laval - relating to the rights of collective action and ability to enforce collective agreements in December 2007, which were disappointing from the trade union side, but with some positive aspects which need to be maximised. GMB has been in discussions with ETUC, TUC and other trade union and legal colleagues on the implications of these judgments. An initial briefing has been prepared, and further analysis of the judgments is ongoing.

Services in the Internal Market Directive –The UK Government launched its consultation on the implementation of the Services Directive in the UK in November 2007 with a deadline in February 2008. GMB has been involved in a series of meetings with the Government department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR), responsible for implementing the provisions, as well as with TUC. GMB plans to submit a response in co-operation with TUC, raising concerns about the Government's "light touch" approach in areas, and ensuring that trade union rights and collective agreements are not undermined. The Laval and Viking judgments indicate we will have to be particularly vigilant in this area.

Working Time Directive Revision – remains unfinished business at EU level, despite attempts by the Portuguese Presidency of the EU to get agreement in December 2007, by grouping this Directive with the proposals for Temporary agency Workers Directive in an attempt to get a compromise agreement across the two texts. GMB and our European trade union colleagues remain concerned about the attempts of some Member State governments (our own proving to be the ringleader) to undermine key protections of the Directive. Major concerns remain: protections for on-call workers, with established European Court Judgments, which clearly confirm on-call time at the workplace as working time, being challenged, with attempts to introduce a new category of “inactive on-call time”. Worryingly, a majority of Governments support this development as they claim to face staffing problems, particularly in their healthcare sectors. The opt-out continues to be a thorny issue. It is clear that some governments across Europe are intent on watering down our working time protections in the name of flexibility, and GMB continues to work with TUC and our European trade union colleagues in defence of workers rights in this area. The European Office provides regular updates on the position, and, supported by our GMB MEP’s, we continue to urge the EU institutions and our Government to change their positions on this issue. A letter was sent from the GMB General Secretary to the Prime Minister prior to the December Council, urging the Government not to threaten workers’ protections in a poor compromise on two such important areas of workplace rights.

Temporary Agency Workers Directive – now grouped together with the Working Time Directive revision in Council discussions as mentioned above, this issue also remains unresolved. However, it appears that the blocking minority of governments that the UK Government has worked so hard to maintain has now evaporated, though the Presidency and Commission did not want to isolate the UK and Germany by pushing a vote in the December 2007 Council meeting. Despite assurances we were given by the Government at Warwick, our Government remains the least flexible in the EU Council on finding a positive solution to this issue, insisting that temporary agency workers should be subject to long qualifying periods before they are entitled to equal treatment rights. GMB continues to campaign at European and National level to seek progress on this issue. This issue was covered in the GMB General Secretary’s letter to the Prime Minister mentioned above sent in advance of the EU Council meeting. There are indications that the UK Government may consider domestic legislation in the absence of agreement at EU level, but in view of the fact that they are the main sticking block at this level, we have little hope that this route will deliver the level of protections we have been seeking at EU level. Meanwhile, the vulnerability of such workers increases, with temporary agency workers who are migrant workers being particularly badly exploited.

Social Europe – the EU Commission launched a wide ranging year-long consultation on *“Europe’s social reality – A stock take”* early in 2007. GMB submitted a detailed response focusing on key issues and areas of concern to our members. The consultation is intended to prepare for the publication of a new EU Social Agenda in the middle of 2008. A key starting point for the Agenda from the GMB’s point of view would be to re-establish a balance between the social and economic/internal market dimensions of Europe, which we consider is weighted far too heavily towards the internal market to the detriment of social considerations and workers’ rights.

EU Health and Safety strategy 2007-2012 – The EU Commission launched its strategy early in 2007, and GMB MEP Glenis Willmott was appointed author of the report for the European Parliament. GMB welcomed the opportunity of co-operating with her on this report. Glenis’ final report was very positive, addressing all of GMB’s concerns in terms of carcinogens, third party violence, vulnerability of disabled workers and of migrant workers.

Public Procurement – continued to be a major issue in the trade union consortium campaign to save the Remploy factories, following the devastating announcements in spring 2007. Already a central part of the consortium alternative plan for Remploy, the European Officer has been working in close co-operation with National Secretary Phil Davies and the Remploy stewards and consortium officers to ensure that the rights

we secured at EU level to reserve contracts for supported employment workplaces for disabled people are implemented and used at all levels of public contracting. This has involved regular meetings with Government Ministers and departments and Members of the Welsh and Scottish Assemblies. Following the commitments given at Labour Party Conference to provide more public contract opportunities to Remploy, there was a clear step change in government departments focusing on providing contracts to Remploy. However, the Minister's announcement to proceed with the closure of 18 factories a month later was seen as a bitter betrayal. GMB and our trade union colleagues continue to work with the Government and local authorities to provide as much public procurement work as possible for Remploy factories as the best hope for sparing them all. The GMB Brussels office has been co-ordinating the support of MEP's for the campaign, which has been very positive with active commitment. A delegation of Remploy stewards, convenors and officers held a series of meetings in Brussels in June 2007 with EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equality, Vladimír Špidla, and with a large number of MEP's, to urge greater use of the reserved contract provisions, and to encourage a more balanced policy for employment for people with disabilities based on real choice. The European Officer and a delegation of GMB Remploy convenors attended a European conference on Social Procurement in Lille in December 2007 to raise awareness and support for contracting to supported employment workplaces for people with disabilities, and were encouraged by the positive response and interest, which has been followed up.

GMB continues to campaign to ensure that wider social, employment, ethical and environmental considerations are included in public contracting. Working in co-operation with our EU Public Sector federation (EPSU), and with the support of Stephen Hughes MEP in the European Parliament in putting forward formal questions, we have put pressure on the EU Commission to come forward with a guide to Social Procurement. A study will be launched early in 2008 and a guide by the end of the year. Meetings have been arranged with the EU Commission to discuss and influence the specific content of the guide.

Decent Work for All – The European Office continues to support the work of our international trade union colleagues in Costa Rica in co-operation with Bananalink in following up on complaints made under the EU's Generalised System of Preferences Plus trade agreements regarding breaches of Labour Standards and freedom of association. The issue was raised again with Commissioner Mandelson at our GMB Congress 2007, and was followed up in further exchanges in the autumn. Specific cases of unfair dismissal and treatment of workers with a banana company supplying Asda were taken up by GMB and Bananalink with the company with a view to seeking their support in resolving the issue with their supplier.

7. SUPPORT FOR TRAINING, EU FUNDED PROJECTS, DELEGATIONS

The European Office continues to work in co-operation with GMB regions in developing training initiatives in the area of EU social and workplace rights and protections. GMB continues to be successful in receiving EU funding to support projects. The European Officer was pleased to support the work of GMB South Western Region in leading a highly successful project on improving information and consultation in the workplace throughout 2007. The project involved trade union partners from Sweden (SIF) and Poland (Solidarność Śląsko-Dąbrowski Region). Links developed with Solidarność through this project have proved valuable in assisting GMB with organisation and recruitment initiatives aimed at Polish migrant workers.

The European Officer was pleased to be involved again in the now well established and successful North West and Irish Regional Womens' Conference, providing a presentation comparing EU Member State rights and policies supporting caring responsibilities.

Cardiff University Business School extends a standing invitation to the European Officer to give an annual lecture on GMB/Trade Unions in Europe, as part of its graduate programme, which provides a valuable opportunity for GMB to raise its profile and an understanding of our campaigning work at EU level as Britain's most pro-active union in this area.

The European Office was pleased to welcome the GMB senior management team to Brussels at the time of the migrant workers event in the European Parliament in April 2007. We have also provided a number of presentations on GMB work and EU activities to large delegations of trade union colleagues from the Danish HK trade union, and other trade union colleagues, as well as to students and lecturers from schools and colleges in the UK.

Ongoing support has also been provided to officers and members in co-ordinating meetings in Brussels as well as meetings and delegations elsewhere in Europe with companies or trade union colleagues.

8. REPORTS ON MOTIONS TO CONGRESS 2006

Motion 82 – Job Security for Ex Pats – the GMB European Office has been supporting the work of colleagues in GMB Southern Region, the region to which the GMB Brussels Branch is attached, in promoting positive contractual conditions and secure legal status and entitlements for our members living and working in Brussels, as well as encouraging good employment practice among MEP's.

(Carried)

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, it gives me great pleasure to ask Kathleen Walker Shaw, our GMB European Officer, to move her report, Pages 27-31 of the General Secretary's Report, and to address Congress.

SIS. K. WALKER SHAW (GMB European Officer): Thank you, President. Congress, I am speaking to the General Secretary's Report, pages 27-31.

The GMB continues to be the leading trade union voice on Europe both within the UK movement and at the European level in protecting and promoting the rights of our workers, our members and their families.

The slide outlines a lot of the key areas that have been keeping us busy since I last addressed Congress last year. Many of them are on-going issues. The GMB challenged the Government's shameful behaviour in negotiating a protocol opting British workers out of the full scope of the Charter of Fundamental Rights as a condition of its agreement for the Lisbon Treaty, which we know as the EU Reform Treaty, thereby showing a clear lack of commitment to a social Europe. We call for the Government to give us opportunity to tell them what we thought about that in a referendum, and our GMB policy became TUC policy in September 2007, though sadly the Government decided to pursue Parliamentary ratification. Ireland, in fact, is the only country out of the 27 Member States which will hold a referendum on the Treaty. That will be held on Thursday, 12th June. Trade union concerns are dominating the negative aspects of this campaign and a "No" vote does not seem unlikely.

GMB has tirelessly campaigned for rights for temporary agency workers, and although the recent breakthrough does not give us everything we want on temporary agency workers, it has called time on the Government's persistent blocking of progress on this very important issue. It will now allow an EU Directive to be agreed, possibly as early as tomorrow. We have also been campaigning to protect and promote working time rights for our members, extended rights under the European Works Council Directive and

challenging the European Court judgments which question the rights of collective bargaining and to take industrial action. I refer to the famous cases which will not be going away tomorrow – Lavall, Viking and Rufort.

We have been loyally supported in our work at European and national level in our campaigns by a strong group of MEPs in the European Parliament, and I pay tribute to their consistent support and practical voting support against often considerable pressure to do otherwise by the Government on key votes such as working time and temporary agency workers.

Many of us currently feel let down by the Labour Government, but our MEPs have supported our line on Europe and I think at the ballot boxes next year, in the European elections, we have to stand by those who have stood up for us. We have worked too long in the European Parliament without a Socialist Group majority and we have seen countless social policy amendments being battered by right wing parties and the Liberals at the European level. We need a strong Socialist Group in our Parliament so that we can start pushing through good amendments for temporary agency workers and all the other social policy issues which remain unfinished business for us.

I would like to introduce a DVD which outlines a lot of the areas of work which we have been doing with our MEPs over the last 12 months and longer. We have worked together hard and we will continue to work together to ensure that workers are protected, respected, informed and consulted, and that the rights and standards that we have will be exported to workers elsewhere in the world.

VIDEO GREETINGS FROM GMB EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

BRO. S. HUGHES MEP: “My name is Steve Hughes. I am the Spokesperson on employment issues for the whole of the Socialist Group in the European Parliament. I co-chair and co-convene the All Party Trade Union Group in the Parliament and, most importantly, I convene the GMB members, so I know the crucial role that unions play at the European level and the crucial role they need to play at every level. I am also delighted that the GMB has been a pioneer in connecting the British trade union Movement to the Brussels institutions and making sure that the GMB has a very powerful voice in deliberations here.

I see our job as GMB members as being twofold: first of all, to pursue a positive social/employment/human rights agenda on your behalf, but equally important is to defend against some of the wilder liberalisation moves which come out of the European Commission nowadays, such as the deeply felt Bolkenstein Services Directive which we, working with the GMB, totally transformed and turned around. We also campaign on issues like the Working Time Directive and temporary agency work because we know that these are crucially important to you and all GMB members and all trade unionists, despite the fact that it has caused some discomfort, shall we say, with the current British Government.

Some of you will be concerned about recent Judgments from the European Court of Justice which seem to suggest that the fundamental right to organise and to strike is somehow less than the economic freedoms to provide services across borders or to establish companies in different European Member States. We think that there is an imbalance there. We have a whole set of policies which we are pursuing with the European Trade Union Confederation to remedy that, to restore the balance. We will pressure, to the greatest possible degree, President Boroso of the Commission, to give clear undertakings on the restoration of that balance and the restoration of that balance will be a centre piece of the Socialist manifesto for the European Parliament elections next year.

My final point is that we realise the anxieties that you have around globalisation, and we see information and consultation as being a crucial response to those anxieties. We are, therefore, delighted that the Commission will very soon now bring forward the long-promised revision of the European Works Council Directive, and we mean to make sure that, once and for all, that Directive will have a real positive impact upon workforces in multi-national companies throughout Britain and through the rest of the European Union. I hope Conference goes well. I am sorry that we cannot be there with you, but I hope that this DVD is the first of many and that we can keep in touch at least in this virtual way.

SIS. G. WILLMOT MEP: “Hello. I am Glenis Willmot, a GMB member and Labour MEP for the East Midlands. Health and safety is an area where we know EU legislation can make a big difference to people in the workplace. As an ex-GMB officer I was fortunate enough to be given the Health and Safety Strategy for the next five years for the EU. This was agreed unanimously by MEPs in the European Parliament and we tried to focus on certain areas. We looked at carcinogens in the workplace and what we did to protect workers against those hazards. We also looked at the scourge of back pain which so many workers suffer from day to day in their working life. We also wanted to help workers who suffered from third party violence, when members of the public are violent or abusive; workers such as security workers, doctors, nurses, housing officers, all sorts of workers who end up being abused by the public and often suffer great stress after they are abused.

Health and safety is unfinished business. We have done a lot of work in the European Parliament but there is still a lot to do. We have got to look at new and emerging technologies, such as nano technologies. We have got to ensure that the laws we already have are enforced properly and are adequate for the purpose they serve. So there is a lot of work still to be done. When I wrote my Health and Safety Report I liaised very carefully with all of the trade unions and, in particular, with the GMB. I worked very closely with GMB health and safety officers and Kathleen Walker Shaw from the Brussels Office, and I am very grateful for all the help and assistance I received. There is a big job still to do and I look forward working with during the next year. I hope you have a great Conference. Thank you.

BRO. R. CORBETT MEP: “We are part of the Socialist Group in the European Parliament. That is very important because the real dividing lines on Europe are not

between countries but they are between political viewpoints. As Socialists we work across the Parliament defending trade union rights, employment law and social legislation against the Christian Democrats, Conservatives and the Liberals who face us across the benches. It is vital in this election that we return a strong Social Group if we want to continue to deliver on those vital pieces of legislation in Europe.

SIS. G. KINNOCK MEP: “This is Glenys Kinnock speaking from Brussels and saying how much I value my membership of the GMB as the union which stands for international solidarity. I have worked very closely with the Office in Brussels, working on issues of aid, human rights, trade and, as the biggest donor of humanitarian aid in the world, the European Union certainly has a very important role to play. Also, of course, when we look at trade issues in particular, we deal with social and economic needs of the people in the countries where we are working. All of these things are, I know, issues very close to the heart of GMB members and to trade unionists in general. This solidarity is valued across the world and I very much appreciate the work which we have done together in ensuring that there can be social justice, freedom and human rights for all citizens of the world.”

BRO. D. MARTIN MEP: “Hi, I hope you are enjoying Conference. I am delighted in the last year to have been involved in so many important GMB campaigns; campaigns which have affected workers across the world, defending core labour standards, making sure that people have the right to join a trade union, whether they are workers in a plantation in Latin America or security workers in Asia or India. I am also pleased that we have put racism in football and sport at the top of the agenda, and GMB MEPs working with GMB members have made this a core issue.

But, perhaps, the issue that I am pleased with and disappointed in at the same time is the way we have worked together, GMB members, GMB MEPs and GMB officials, to campaign to protect the rights of Remploy workers. Here in the European Parliament we have managed to change the law to make sure that contracts could be given on a preferential basis to people working in factories employing the disabled. We need to keep the campaign alive. We need to make sure that contracts and business are given to Remploy companies and we keep as many people as possible working in Remploy in the future. Thank you, Conference, and good luck.

SIS. N. GILL, MEP: “I am Neena Gill. Working together, me, you and the GMB members within the West Midlands and other regions is a vital part of my work here for you. I want to make our links stronger by continuing to develop our relationship in all our mutual interests. We, the European Labour Party, will continue to support your efforts in the workplace whether you work at Land Rover, Jaguar or anyone of the smaller but no less important workplaces, because my job is to help protect and promote job security where restructuring may pose a threat. For me, having regular contact with your regional officers and councils is a real benefit, but we would welcome the opportunity to get more actively involved and particular in what you are doing in any way possible, either by contributing to your magazine or visiting your place of work. What is important to all of us is that we build on our positive work together in increasing

awareness of the relevance of the EU and how its work affects you and your members. I hope that you will organise events and seminars where we can talk about these issues together. Have a good day and know that we are striving to make it a better one. Enjoy Conference. Thank you.

BRO. R. EVANS, MEP: “Hello. I am Robert Evans and I am very pleased to be talking to you from Brussels this afternoon. As trade unionists we do not need any lessons in democracy but, unfortunately, as British electors, we do need to do a great deal at European elections to improve the turnout from our country. By comparison with the other countries, our turnouts in Britain are often pathetically low, and it is, on the left, who suffer when the turnout is very low in elections. It is not just that Labour members do not get elected. We have to take a look at who gets elected when Labour voters and trade unionists perhaps stay at home because they cannot be bothered or they are not happy with this, that or something the Government has done. At the last European elections, as well as Conservatives and Liberal Democrats, there was a huge swathe of ragbag UK Independence Party people who were elected, who offer nothing to us here in the European Parliament and do not actually do the job that they were elected to do.

In London, at the recent London Assembly elections, we had a BNP member elected. My message to you this afternoon at Conference is that we have to do everything we can to get all of our members to go out and vote, all the people to go out and support Labour, not just because we do not want to get people from the far right elected but because it is Labour members in the Socialist Group who can really defend the rights of trade unions, the rights of workers and the rights of those most vulnerable, whether it is in Britain, elsewhere in the European Union or further afield in the wider world. Thank you.”

SIS. WALKER SHAW: Congress, I move pages 27-31 of the General Secretary’s Report.

THE PRESIDENT: First of all, Kathleen, I ask you to thank our MEPs for their reports and for the good work they do. I liked Robert’s “ragbag” description.

I move page 27, 28, 29, 30 and 31 of the General Secretary’s Report. Are there any questions? (*No response*) If not, do you agree to accept the report? (*Agreed*)

POLITICAL EUROPEAN UNION

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, we now move to the Political debate and the European Union and to Motion 144, Social Europe, to be moved by the Southern Region; Motion 145, Referendum on European Constitution, to be moved by Birmingham & West Midlands; Motion 146, Europe, to be moved by the London Region, and I will be calling Richard Ascough to speak on behalf of the CEC.

SOCIAL EUROPE MOTION 144

144. SOCIAL EUROPE

Congress reaffirms that this Union is pro-European and is convinced the European Union has been a positive force in enshrining Trade Union values giving members wide ranging social and employment rights through the Social Chapter.

Congress recognises that once enshrined in EU law, positive social reforms can only be undone with great difficulty by a future Conservative government.

Therefore Congress calls on the CEC to continue its campaign for a strong Social Europe and urges the British Government to take the lead in developing such a Social Europe. Furthermore it is imperative that the British Government rethink its position on the key issues of the Temporary Agency Workers Directive and the Working Time Directive which it is currently blocking in negotiations with other EU Member States.

BRUSSELS B59 BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. C. POLES (Southern): I move Motion 144 on a Social Europe.

Congress, this Autumn's TUC Congress will mark the 20th anniversary of a speech given to it by Jacques Delors, who was the then Commission President. It was an inspired speech where he spoke about solidarity and co-operation existing alongside economic competition and entrepreneurship. The EU has been a positive force in enshrining our trade union values such as social inclusion, solidarity, our public services, worker participation and information and collective bargaining. Indeed, many of the rights we now take for granted were won in Europe, such as maternity pay, parental leave, four weeks' paid holiday, anti-discrimination legislation and higher levels of health and safety at work.

There has, understandably, been disappointment at recent events. However, I feel there is a danger that we can lose sight of the valuable platform that Europe can represent. It is not about constitutions, rules and navel gazing. It is about what positive reforms and legislation we can bring in to help all of our members.

Following Jacques Delors' speech back in 1988, Ron Todd remarked that Europe was the only card game in town, and he was right. He was spot on. This came following ten years of a Thatcher Government. We can all understand why he would say that. But now things are different. We have had more than a decade of a Labour Government and Europe's no longer the only card game in town to secure rights for our workers. However, it remains a key political battleground and the choice is between more or less rights for workers. Very sadly, we now have the real prospect of a Conservative Government in 2010, but whatever David Cameron or the Tory trade union liaison officer may say, the Tories have not changed and I hope that no one will be fooled. A new Tory Government would waste no time in reversing some of the progressive reforms which have been introduced by this Labour Government, but it will find it extremely difficult to reverse the large body which has now been built up of EU social and labour law. To do this, it would need the agreement of other Member States and the European Parliament, which it would not get.

Congress, in conclusion, Europe may soon be the only card game in town – we hope not – but it is looking very likely. If we play, and by “we” I mean the union, a full and positive part we can win that card game or at least stack the odds in our favour. The EU is far from perfect, like most things, but if we do not like it or if we do not like what is currently happening, we must stay there, change it and fight for our social vision of Europe. It should be a Europe where social values take precedent over market freedoms and not the other way round. I think it would be good to have the Labour Government supporting us on this issue as well. We can welcome the recent agreement on temporary agency workers, but there is still a lot more work to do, including on the Working Time Directive. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Chris, can you stay at the rostrum for just one moment. Congress, Chris is the secretary of the Brussels branch of our members, and we have an awful lot of members there. I had the great pleasure of meeting with them last year. Believe you me, they do not get excessive salaries or expenses. They have a very, very, very complicated employment law status. “Am I employed under Brussels’ legislation; am I employed under the UK legislation?” We are trying very hard to work something out. I just want you to say to our members in Brussels that we thank them for what they do. We do understand at times the pressure for the political reasons that we have to say things, but we thank you for the good work that you and everybody else and Jacqui does in Brussels. Thank you from me and Congress. *(Applause)*

BRO. D. BARR (Southern): I am seconding Motion 144. As you now know, thanks to Kathleen and Mary, we have offices in Brussels and a branch in Brussels. Through Kathleen’s team in Brussels, we get emails sent to us on a regular basis. Like all areas and all branches, they need our help. They are asking us for our help. They want us, the GMB, to push for social reform. They want us to push this Government to implement those social reforms, such as the temporary agency workers’ reforms, and one that is very close to all of our hearts which is the Working Time Directive, and especially not the bits that the Government wants to implement. Congress, we need our Executive to put pressure where they can to aid the implementation of these social reforms. Thank you.

REFERENDUM ON EUROPEAN CONSTITUTION

Motion 145

145. REFERENDUM ON EUROPEAN CONSTITUTION

Congress agrees to continue the campaign to seek a Referendum on European Constitution.

B43 - BIRMINGHAM CITY GENERAL BRANCH

Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. KEMPSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, this motion asks the GMB to campaign to seek a referendum on the European Constitution putting the Labour Party credibility to the test. The Prime Minister says there is no need to have a referendum as no red lines have been crossed. What he forgot to mention is that it is a

manifesto pledge and if you want to continue in office then do not brush aside manifesto pledges, especially on a referendum as important as Europe. As we know the Irish nation are due to have their say on this issue in the coming weeks. There is no valid reason why the UK should not follow suit.

Congress, the Labour Party cannot get any lower on the credibility stakes at present. To win the next General Election they need to rebuild the trust with the public. They can do this by carrying out this manifesto pledge. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dave. Secunder?

BRO. B. JACKSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): Colleagues, there has always been a social element to Europe, that is what first got trade unions and other organisations interested; that is why we have always been supportive of European issues. We have to remember that through the 1980s when Margaret Thatcher was in power any social issues that did come to Great Britain were coming from Europe. Now, I was interested to listen to a speech by President Sarkozy of France when he spoke to an audience of invited VIPs and I must confess that I was surprised, I think it was the first time I had ever heard anybody thank Great Britain for their efforts during the last World War in freeing France. What he also said to that invited audience was how he admired Margaret Thatcher and Tony Blair for the innovative policies that had been introduced into Great Britain. I knew what he was talking about, he was talking about the privatisation of our energy companies and he was talking about Tony Blair's obsession with PFI. But there has to be a warning to the people because, as I understand it, the people of France have not had their energy utilities privatised yet.

If they want to look at a model they want to look at Great Britain. If we look at our regulators, they suck not bite. If we look at the reasons that we actually did all these things it was because competition would bring lower prices. It is crap. If you want competition get off to Benidorm where there are 7,500 bars. That is competition. Two years ago there were 18 suppliers in the energy industry; there are six today. There is no risk; not like private enterprise at all, there is absolutely no risk because every time oil prices go up they have a licence to print money.

THE PRESIDENT: Brian, you have a licence to finish.

BRO. B. JACKSON: So I urge Congress to support.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

EUROPE
Motion 146

146. EUROPE

Congress instructs the CEC to launch an unprecedented attack on the Labour government following the decision to sign up fully to the new European Constitution, without accepting the charter of fundamental rights.

Congress also expects from the CEC, that should the Labour Government continue to refuse the charter of fundamental rights, and thereby refusing to allow our members increased protection from bogus employers, then we must put to congress a vote as to whether to withdraw all GMB union funding to the Labour Party with immediate effect.

ISLINGTON 1 BRANCH
London Region

(Withdrawn)

BRO. G. SHARKEY (London): I am moving Motion 146 without the support of the region. Congress, firstly, I would like to make clear that this motion is not an attack on MEPs, nor is it anti-Europe, I fully support being a member of the European States but not at any cost. This motion is about the Labour Government's attack on workers and trade unions in this country, an attack that leaves many workers vulnerable to many employers who exploit workers and destroy many lives. The vulnerability I am talking about comes from a Labour government signing up to the old European Constitution which they conveniently renamed the Lisbon Treaty.

My argument is not around the failure to hold a referendum, nor is it about the many details of the treaty, it is about one in particular, the Labour Government's complete failure to protect work in this country by refusing to agree the inclusion of a Charter of Fundamental Rights, rights that will give security to our members who we need to protect from bad employers and bad governments. By not including the Charter of Fundamental Rights within the treaty the Government has left us even more vulnerable to attacks from previous legislation that has already been secured, and agreed, legislation like the Transfer of Undertakings and Protection of Employment, TUPE. Let's not forget the work of trade unions who gained security for millions of workers by strengthening the TUPE legislation which thanks to Labour ignorance is now weaker than ever.

Colleagues, just imagine a Tory victory like the recent Crewe and Harwich by-election, imagine if this was replicated nationally at the next General Election. Now imagine what Cameron's cronies would do to workers without the security of the Charter of Fundamental Rights. Colleagues, we will be attacked and decimated and who is to blame, a Labour government who we support financially. What is our response? Every year we seem to hand out financial security, hundreds of thousands of pounds to the same Labour government who by their ignorance continue to assist the Tory destruction of trade unions and their members in this country, ignoring the wishes of our members whose money they are more than happy to take every year. So, let's get it right, we pay a government hundreds of thousands of pounds every year basically to stuff us. Does that sound right to you? I know that many speakers in the past have come to the rostrum after motions like this one and I fully expect the same this year. You will hear the words, "It's better to be in the Party than out of it," and I fully expect the CEC to respond in the same way but, colleagues, why do we put up with this? What do we really get out of the

massive annual investment of our members' money? Do you call this value for money? I do not and I am damned sure our members do not.

Colleagues, before I finish the speech just think for a minute, if we are to support political groups, if you want our members' money to be invested wisely, then these political groups need to be made aware that this investment is not to ignore our members' wishes, it is to work together to secure a future for all. We do not expect to hand over shed loads of cash to a sister party and then they ignore the very same security we provide by leaving us on a limb and exposed to bad employers or the union-busting Tories. We need to make the point, what are we getting for our investment and if it is negative then pull out our money and start again. Start again by supporting people who do not take our members' money for granted and then ignore us, support people who continue to support trade unions and our trade union values. Seriously, colleagues, it is time to evaluate what we really get for our investment in the New Labour Party, and should we continue to do this every single year. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, George. Secunder?

BRO. J. HIOM (London): I am seconding Motion 146 without support of my region. Congress, look behind me, these are many photos of bogus employers, private equity, Remploy, and many more. Why are they bogus? Because they want to earn a fast buck or build an empire within their organisation at our members' expense. In 1997 we looked to Labour to protect us from these kinds of employers, in Europe or in this country. What has Labour done? When I accepted the Charter of Fundamental Rights it exposed the very people we look after but, more importantly, help fund them. I ask you, why should we pay a government who fails to protect our members? Should we pay money to the AA or any other employer who leaves our members vulnerable or attacks the legislation that gives us all the protection we need? Congress, this motion is a major threat to Labour but what else can we do?

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jim. Before I call Richard, does anyone wish to get up and speak for or against? (*No response*) Richard?

BRO. R. ASCOUGH (Regional Secretary, Southern Region): The CEC is supporting Motion 145 but with a statement that I am about to give, and recommending congress, not surprisingly perhaps, to oppose 146.

Turning first to Motion 145, the CEC agreed its policy position last summer to seek a referendum on the European Reform Treaty, now called the Lisbon Treaty. GMB's motion to TUC Congress 2007 established this as TUC policy. However, the British Government has pushed on with parliamentary ratification which is now in its final stages. Ireland is the only EU member state to hold a referendum on the treaty, as you heard from Kathleen, and this is taking place on Thursday 12th June. The Irish referendum campaign shows that feelings are running high and key trade union concerns are the protection for temporary agency workers, and recent European Court judgments, which again you heard from Kathleen, threatening our rights to take industrial action and

undermining our ability to negotiate collective agreements, and could well derail support for the Lisbon Treaty. The European Union must re-establish a true balance between its economic and social dimensions and prove its commitment to a strong social Europe with actions, not just words.

Turning secondly to Motion 146, GMB is appalled that when signing up to the Lisbon Treaty the Labour Government opted British workers out of full coverage under the Charter of Fundamental Rights, making us second-class citizens in Europe. If these provisions are good enough for everyone else in Europe then they are good enough for us. The Government's failure to listen strengthened our resolve to ask for a referendum. We continue to push the Government to fully apply this Charter and to stop blocking key European social and employment rights, and protections. However, we do not want to withdraw funding from the Labour Party as this would weaken our bargaining position on other issues and seriously weaken our political voice. For these reasons the CEC is asking Congress to support Motion 145 with this statement and oppose Motion 146. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Richard. Does Birmingham and West Midlands accept the statement? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Can I now put Motion 144 Can I now put Motion 144 and 145 with that statement to the vote, please? The CEC are supporting.

Motion 144 was carried.

Motion 145 was carried.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 146, the CEC are asking you to oppose. Does the mover wish a right to respond? George?

BRO. G. SHARKEY (London): Congress, I understand that Ireland is about to vote on the constitution. I have more faith in them refusing it than the Government. I therefore withdraw the motion with the hope that the Irish people save the day. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, George. Does Congress agree? (*Agreed*) He has had his day in court!

Motion 146 was withdrawn.

**EMPLOYMENT POLICY: RIGHTS AT WORK
TEMPORARY AND AGENCY WORKERS DIRECTIVE
Motion 116**

116. TEMPORARY AND AGENCY WORKERS DIRECTIVE

This Congress condemns the Labour Government for refusing to allow vulnerable workers the same employment rights as permanent workers in this country, by refusing to accept the European temporary and agency workers directive.

This directive was agreed by nearly all-European states, apart from Britain. It is high time that workers in Britain are treated with respect and not like second-class citizens

This congress must now insist that unless the government fully agrees to allow these vulnerable workers their basic rights by signing up to the directive, then we will not assist in any further European elections, either by funding, canvassing, or any other means.

If this fails to have an impact then we should withdraw all funding from the Labour Party.

ISLINGTON 1 BRANCH
London Region

(Withdrawn)

BRO. G. SHARKEY (London): Moving Motion 116 without the support of the region. Colleagues, this motion is somewhat out of date now, thankfully, the trade unions have secured agreement with the TUC and the Labour Government. However, there is still some way to go around sick pay and other finer details. Colleagues, how long have we waited for the security for thousands of our vulnerable temporary and agency members? Four years. It is no wonder support for Labour has dwindled. It is no wonder Labour is losing everything from the Mayor of London election to the seat in Crewe and Harwich. Why did we finally get an agreement with the Labour Government? Was it anything to do with the guilt in ignoring vulnerable workers? Was it because of the increasing poverty by allowing employers to pay hundreds of thousands of workers the minimum wage yet colleagues are paid more money for doing the same job? Was it because agency workers did not get a pension, sick pay, and many other benefits, or was it that the Labour's popularity vote is at an all time low since the election in 1997? I think we all know.

Colleagues, Labour is once again ignoring our wishes for protection of workers and is now paying the price and they should ignore us at their peril. Is it right that we have to wait four years or more to get an agreement? Is it also right that we have poured hundreds of thousands of pounds into a Labour government and then put it on the shelf for four years? Is it right we have to watch our agency workers face poverty and break up homes because Labour refused to give these workers the basic rights that they should have had years ago. Is it right we have to attempt to negotiate and set up commissions when we already have a European Directive sitting on a shelf which many European states do not seem to have a problem with? Once again I think we need to review where our members' money is invested and do we get value for money; if not, stop paying it.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, George. Secunder?

SIS. C. HOLLAND (London): President, Congress, seconding this motion without the support of the region. Temporary workers have always been a cheap alternative for employers but this has to stop. They are entitled and have needs as the rest of us to pay their bills and be treated with respect as other workers in Britain.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Cathy. Dave Clements?

BRO. D. CLEMENTS (CEC, Commercial Services): President, Congress, the CEC is requesting that Congress oppose Motion 116. The Temporary and Agency Workers Directive is a defined issue between GMB, the wider Trades Union Movement, and its relationship with this Labour Government.

For many years GMB along with other unions have campaigned tirelessly to ensure that the issue of temporary and agency workers has remained high on the political agenda. Congress will be aware that the Government has recently announced that it will legislate to protect agency and temporary workers. In doing this the erosion of collective bargaining and the undermining of permanent workers will also be halted. Paul Kenny and the GMB played a pivotal role in negotiations with the Government. This has led to an agreement with the UK ensuring that the European Agency Workers Directive will no longer be blocked and will now be turned into legislation. This is a great step forward as we have been waiting for this legislation for over six years. This, though, could not have been done without the support of Labour MEPs who through their campaigning work and determination on this issue ensured that agency workers were not sold out with minimal protection. This motion has now been overtaken by events but, more importantly, if we follow the wording of this motion and withdraw all funding from the Labour Party we will not be in a position to negotiate on future issues to the same extent. Thus, if we withdraw funding we would weaken our political voice.

For the reasons outlined, the CEC is asking Congress to oppose Motion 116.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dave. I am sorry, I did not ask, does anybody wish to speak to 116?

BRO. C. POLES (Southern): Thank you, President. I would just really like to reiterate what Kathleen mentioned in her European Report that we are hoping there will be an agreement on the European Directive tomorrow. I would like to refer particularly to the part in the motion which states, “we will not assist in any further European elections, either by funding, canvassing, or any other means.” I know it has been mentioned but I would just like to highlight that Labour MEPs have been going against their own Labour Government on the issue of agency workers and working time, separately, and they have been providing a lot of support on this. Additionally, a lot of our members’ jobs depend on support in getting Labour MEPs returned in European elections.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Chris. Do you want the right to reply, George?

BRO. G. SHARKEY (London): I will accept withdrawal on the basis that the agreement is properly negotiated. If not, this motion will come back next year and every year after until Labour listens. We owe it to the members to fully protect them.

Motion 116 was withdrawn

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, George. Congress, Item 9, Social Policy: General, 171, Reform of Honours List, North West and Irish Region, the CEC are supporting, and 172, Proposed cuts within the fire service, Midland & East Coast Region, the CEC are supporting with a qualification, and then I will call Lorraine Parker.

SOCIAL POLICY: GENERAL
REFORM OF HONOURS LIST
Motion 171

171. REFORM OF HONORS LIST

Congress calls on the CEC of the Union to campaign on behalf of those members of the public who have shown outstanding bravery and heroism during events such as the London 2005 bombings and other disasters. However due to the grossly unfair policy of the Downing Street Cabinet office, acts of heroism are currently denied any official civilian recognition and deliberately excluded when drawing up the names of the usual senior civil servants and celebrities who always seem to be included without fail for awards in the Annual New Year and Queen's Birthday Honours list's.

113 MANCHESTER BRANCH
North West and Irish Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. WILSON (North West & Irish Region): President, colleagues, it comes round twice a year, the Queen's New Year and Birthday Honours List, yet another list of gongs for high-ranking judges, generals, admirals, and assorted men from the Ministry, and others who will be expected to receive at the very least an OBE, or an MBE, or whatever else, for simply putting in the time and doing a very well paid job into the bargain. Some people who will not be named or even be considered deserving of receiving any official declaration from Her Majesty are several outstanding citizens, the commuters caught up in the Tube bombings of 7th July 2005. They broke into the most devastated carriages, attended for several hours to the dying and the survivors who had sustained the most terrible injuries before the emergency services could arrive. One of those who helped and showed outstanding courage on that terrible day was a retired teacher, Mr. Tim Coulson. In my opinion, Tim would have definitely been deserving of at the very least an OBE, but instead his family received a rejection in a rather snotty official letter declaring that the Government Cabinet Office does not actually officially recognise individual acts of heroism and selflessness. One only qualifies, apparently, in cases of long service merit and recognition of charitable devotion and fundraising efforts. Basically, it is okay if you are well-known as a celebrity on TV, film actors and personalities, or if you are simply well in with the establishment. That is how it comes across. It is a gross insult to all those who put themselves on the line to find that celebrity status of Kylie Minogue or Bruce Forsyth is held in higher esteem by Downing Street and Buckingham Palace.

On taking office Gordon Brown did promise to take a look at the current honours set-up and generally making it less exclusive. A so-called honours system that seems to be infatuated with celebrity culture and rewards pin-stripe time/service while at the same time denying officially recognised civilian decorations to deserving special cases of those who helped to save lives in the most extraordinary and difficult circumstances is an

honours system that invites derision and contempt. If the official honours system is not to become a total standing joke, then Gordon Brown should hold good on his promise to reform the honours list, and let this Union remind him in no uncertain terms.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder?

The motion was formally seconded.

PROPOSED CUTS WITHIN THE FIRE SERVICE

Motion 172

172. PROPOSED CUTS WITHIN THE FIRE SERVICE

Congress notes with concern that since the removal of the national standards of fire cover and their subsequent replacement with local integrated risk management plans, fire and rescue services up and down the country are reducing levels of service that they provide to the communities and businesses they are there to protect.

Conference therefore demands that the GMB, through the TUC and wider Labour movement lobby the national Government to support a position where the standards of fire cover are once again set nationally and include that, if there are any proposed reductions in the levels of service provided by a fire and rescue service, it must first go through a statutory process, both with the elected members and with the local community.

GOOLE BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Carried)

SIS. C. CLARKSON (Midland & East Coast): Chair, Congress, brothers and sisters, why should areas of Britain afford a generous cover of fire service and other areas being cut to the quick? Fire office chiefs are doing management risk assessments to reduce our fire stations and services. These assessments are based on past records of how we use these services. Surely we cannot say that because we have not used them as much last year we will not need them this year? We have suffered flash floods, large fires in factories, and the threat of terrorism. From one day to the next our fire service does not know what they will face yet the fire chiefs of some areas are using the risk assessment as a cost-cutting exercise. We believe that the Government should intervene with written guidelines to show a minimum basic standard of service across the board. Local areas will then only be able to improve the service and not degrade the service that we rely upon. We understand that the CEC are attaching a qualification and our region accept that qualification but keep our services safe and they will keep us safe. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder?

BRO. S. ALLINSON (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, I support this motion because we shall never know when we will need this vital and essential service. Most of us have insurance policies we pay for but hopefully never use. This is one of those policies. The fire service personnel are our hidden angels. They attend fires,

disasters, road incidents, even make safe buildings after freak weather conditions, which is now happening more and more. Do we have to realise their value after the erosion of this vital service? The answer must be no. Let's stop this madness. Let the Government do a White Paper on what should be a minimum national standard of fire services. Keep the savings madness out of our fire service. Please support. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Does anyone wish to come in on Motions 171 and 172?

BRO. T. FLANAGAN (London): Note the impartiality! Are you going to turn the light on? Thank you. Right, when I picked up the agenda and looked at this motion I had to ring up my relations in Rye. I said, "Is Spike Milligan still down there in that hole?" They said, "Yes." I said, "Well, he's not, he's writing motions out." I have never seen anything so deplorable in my life. That parasite, Her Majesty the parasite, the thing that pounces off us, that steals off of us, the feudal monarch you voted three years ago to get rid of. A system that is corrupt and obscene, a system that panders to the grovellers, the knee-benders, the lickspittle, and god...! Well, you can't go on, can you? We want to have something to do with it? Get down that Palace, get out the bazookas and blow them away. They are scum. (*Laughter*) We want nothing to do with them or this motion. What I want is a workers republic where we can have people getting proper honours from proper people and not get infected with parasites.

THE PRESIDENT: Much appreciated! Steve?

BRO. S. MCKENZIE (London): I cannot stand these namby-pamby speeches that do not say what they actually mean! (*Laughter*) Comrades, I am asking you to oppose Motion 171 because – and please do not take this personally, the delegate that moved it – by supporting it we will be legitimising an anachronistic, archaic, out-of-place, out-of-date abomination known as the monarchy who, along with other feudal relics like the House of Lords, should have been abolished years ago. (*Laughter*) This Union supports the principle of a republic. The resolution was passed at Newcastle a few years ago and I know because I moved it. How can we support anything to do with the monarchy without being hypocritical? The only thing I see wrong with our current policy is that it is too mild. What we should be doing is trying to get something a bit clearer and saying that we are after securing a socialist republic. Reject this motion and if you think that our existing policy is wrong then let's bring a resolution saying that at next year's congress, and have an open and honest debate. Reject the motion that unintentionally makes us hypocrites.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Steve.

SIS. S. MEMMOTT (Southern): In a way I understand how people feel about the monarchy, etc., but being a wife of a police officer on duty on the day that the bombs went off in London, whose own husband missed the bomb by being on the train in front by 15 minutes, who then I did not see for the next 12 hours after he was supposed to have come off duty, I would like to say, yes, okay, the Honours List is archaic but it is all we have at the moment. Surely, we should start a change in that system, even at a small level

for the ordinary people who every day go out and risk their lives to help everyone for the better and the good. I think we should start somewhere. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: While we are supporting, I am going to ask the mover to exercise the right to reply on some of the issues raised by delegates.

BRO. D. WILSON (North West & Irish Region): Obviously, it has touched a raw nerve with some. To be honest, I did expect it. I remembered it from two years ago. Right, I was not going on about the monarchy, supporting the Queen or Prince Charles, or whoever, I was going on about actually getting decent official recognition for people who put their lives on the line helping to save others, or alleviate some distress. It is not being recognised. I think 10 Downing Street actually draws up the list, the Cabinet Office, it is not the Queen as such. Other points have been raised in general. If a kid comes into the GMB with the Duke of Edinburgh Award, what are you going to say, "You can't join." It is ridiculous. I am asking you to vote for the motion. The honours system, I am not calling for it to be totally abolished, it should be reformed and we could call it something else, The Order of People's Merit, or whatever. People still want recognition and it should be done by the government and the current head of state. Until we get the socialist republic, as our colleague just said, we work with what we have and it has to be democratised more and reformed more. That is what the motion is asking for. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Could I ask Lorraine Parker to speak on behalf of the CEC on 172?

SIS. L. PARKER (CEC, Public Services): President, Congress, Motion 172 is asking for the reintroduction of national standards for the fire service. The CEC supports this motion with a qualification. Before the 1930s organised fire protection was a local responsibility left to the discretion of local authorities, private enterprise, and volunteers. The 1938 Fire Brigade Act made fire protection compulsory for every local authority. The effectiveness of this was sorely tested during the wartime blitz bombings of Britain and led to the wartime government nationalising the fire service, and in 1941 introducing national standards. Throughout the remainder of the 20th century these standards remained in place and Britain's fire service was effective, efficient, and greatly admired. Wherever you lived you could be confident that you would get the same standard of response from the fire service, the same response times, and the same number of fire-fighters. In 2005 the Government removed those national standards despite representations, lobbying, and campaigning from the fire service, the unions, the TUC, and would you believe it even the CBI.

Congress, the CEC believes in the old adage, *if it ain't broke, don't fix it*. The risk-based system introduced in place of the national standards is a system geared towards cuts turning one of the UK's finest public services into a fire and rescue service operated by a postcode lottery.

Congress, the CEC supports the reintroduction of national standards. We cannot leave local authorities to make decisions about standards of service. We all know too well that means cuts in services. It is not 1941 but these are still dangerous times. Exeter itself had a close call with a bomb incident only last month. The GMB should and will continue to lobby for the reintroduction of national standards. The qualification is that these standards should not be fixed for all time but changed only after a statutory process involving elected members and local communities. Congress, with that qualification please support Motion 172.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Lorraine. Does Midland & East Coast Region accept that qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you very much. Congress, the CEC are supporting 171 and 172, and the movers accept the qualification.

Motion 171 was carried.

Motion 172 was carried.

THE PRESIDENT: Can we now move to Northern Region and could I ask Tommy Brennan, Northern Regional Secretary, to move his report. Tommy?

REGIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT: NORTHERN REGION NORTHERN REGION

1. MEMBERSHIP AND RECRUITMENT

FINANCIAL MEMBERSHIP	73,495
Section Financial Membership (by each Section):	
COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION	21,759
MANUFACTURING SECTION	25,887
PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION	25,849
Grade 1 members	46,233
Grade 2 members	10,493
Retired, Reduced Rate & Others	16,769
Male Membership	46,567
Female Membership	26,928
Total number recruited 1.1.2007 – 31.12.2007	7,760
Increase/Decrease 1.1.2007 – 31.12.2007	328
Membership on Check-off	41,215
Membership on Direct Debit	13,735

RESPONSE TO THE ORGANISING AGENDA

Our mission is clear and unambiguous. Growth is our target year on year through the provision of first class services to our members, expanding GMB spheres of influence, and extending our territorial boundaries recognising that strong organisation in the workplace is the key to any future success.

We have, therefore, dedicated consolidation days in each week in those companies wherein we have recognition agreements with the aim of increasing the density of members. This system is across the board with all officers with duty sheets participating.

The new organising toolkit and initial support training followed by the two day GMB@Work training course delivered by organisers is proving extremely useful and popular in equipping our workplace representatives with the skills to recruit and represent in the workplace.

To date, 109 new shop stewards have been trained under the new regime in accordance with the organising agenda.

We have also set up the Regional Organising Team headed by the National Organising Team regional representative, to plan, co-ordinate and deliver the National and Regional target objectives.

The spin-off from these initiatives is reflected in the improved performance in new membership income and growth.

RECRUITMENT TARGETS AND CAMPAIGNS

Since all regions have committed to recruit an additional 200 members, steady progress towards that goal within Northern Region having improved recruitment performance from an average of 577 new enrolments per month in 2006 to 647 new enrolments per month in 2007, an increase of 70, so there is some way to go. We have also introduced a retention initiative in an effort to stem the flow of leavers based on direct face-to-face where practicable contact with potential or actual leavers.

Whilst targeting our resources, in the main, at workplace consolidation and retention, we have not neglected exploring the potential of non-union unorganised workplaces and have been particularly successful in securing new recognition agreements through an aggressive approach using the recognition regulations to force employers to concede collective bargaining rights to our organisation.

We continue to work with the National Organising Team on National projects i.e. Southern Cross, School Support Staff, ASDA, G4S Security with good results. Sharing information and developing best practice is producing the goods.

OVERVIEW OF REGION'S ECONOMIC & EMPLOYMENT SITUATION

The Manufacturing sector remains fragile with further closures and redundancies, however this is more than offset by the increase in jobs in the Public and Service Sector.

The main problem is the lack of skills to match the available jobs, there is also in the Service Sector a disproportionate number of jobs that are in the main low paid or minimum wage. This is attracting a high level of immigrant labour from Europe in a volatile job market making it more difficult to recruit and organise.

The challenge therefore going forward is to improve our communicating skills and recruitment techniques in order to engage with immigrant labour and attracting them to the GMB union.

2. GENERAL ORGANISATION

Regional Senior Organisers	5
Membership Development Officers	1

Regional Organisers	15
Organising Officers	4
No. of Branches	132
New Branches	-
Branch Equality Officers	0
Branch Youth Officers	0

Members of staff have been trained and qualified to recruit new members on direct debit over the telephone and to re-enlist lapsed members through the same procedure

3. BENEFITS

Dispute	1678.40
Total Disablement	NIL
Working Accident	2515.65
Occupational Fatal Accident	7816.00
Non-occupational Fatal Accident	970.00
Funeral	41,951.50

4. JOURNALS & PUBLICITY

The media presence of the GMB Northern continues very high. A number of stories that were high profile last year continue to be this year.

Equal Pay continues to be a very important issue gaining significant publicity. The winning of the EAT in the Allen case as well as being an excellent decision for the GMB and our members, created considerable media interest.

The continuing problems within the manufacturing sector have proved to be newsworthy.

The issues on the river Tyne still go on with many stories appearing regarding the use of land on the river Tyne – it is imperative to us that the riverside is retained for industrial use.

The Northern Star magazine went out to all of our members in the region. It was a packed issue featuring articles on Maternity Rights, a visit to Regional Council by Rt Hon Hazel Blears MP, Remploy, Young Members amongst many other things.

As well as visiting Regional Council Hazel Blears visited two very successful companies working in the sub sea sector.

DUCO and Wellstream, both of whom employ many hundreds of GMB members.

The Reps Report continues to be circulated to our reps around the region – around 1,700 people.

5. LEGAL SERVICES

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

Applications for Legal Assistance	Legal Assistance Granted
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924	924
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Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Court	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
1172	390	11	£7,877,421.06		£7,877,421.06
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2007			3010		

(b) Employment Tribunals (notified to Legal Department)

Claims supported by Union	336
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Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Tribunal	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
309	61	5	£402,229.86		£402,229.86
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2007			371		

(c) Other Employment Law Cases

Supported by Union	Unsuccessful	Damages/ Compensation	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2007
NIL	NIL	£NIL	NIL

(d) Social Security Cases

Supported by Union	Successful	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2007
144	54	66

GMB Northern Legal Services – 2007

Protecting members at work and ensuring their employment rights, health, safety and dignity at work has always been a fundamental principle of GMB. Our legal service continues to play an important role in supporting our aims through campaigning, lobbying and fighting claims to secure the best possible terms and working conditions for GMB members.

Throughout 2007, GMB Northern have continued to campaign for fair terms and conditions of employment for all members. We continue to back our campaigns by taking legal action in the best interests of our members as evidenced by the equal pay Employment Appeal Tribunal decision in *Joss* and the test case brought against Northumbrian Water in relation to compensation due on the change of working practices. Throughout 2007, GMB Officers have advised and supported thousands of members on the issue of equal pay and GMB will continue to be at the forefront of the legal and political campaign.

Working with our lawyers, GMB Northern Legal services secured more than £7.5m in compensation for injured members and their families in 2007. In order to raise awareness of the union's legal service, its considerable successes and the perils of using heavily advertised "No win- no fee" lawyers, members receive regular communication on legal issues and many GMB Northern cases have been highlighted in the national and regional media. We have introduced regular legal advice surgeries for members at locations across the region and have distributed thousands of Legal Services cards and workplace posters featuring our Legal Service freephone number. Every branch in the Northern Region now has a dedicated lawyer assigned to it in order to ensure maximum support and the best possible communication.

The dreadful decision of the House of Lords to deny compensation to those who had developed pleural plaques – permanent scarring and damage to the lining of the lung – was an insult to working people and a salutary reminder that the legal establishment has little empathy with working people. It is all too easy for those who never risked their lives in industry to dismiss the suffering and anxiety of so many people who did. The judgment – which is likely to see UK insurers save up to £1.4bn – left thousands of asbestos victims feeling powerless and belittled. There are further legal battles for asbestos victims ahead and GMB will continue to fight for the rights of asbestos victims and their families and will do all it can to lobby, campaign and take legal action on their behalf. In the Northern Region, GMB Officers and activists support, and work closely with, asbestos victim support groups to ensure high quality advice and representation.

To ensure that our full-time and lay Officers have the best possible skills to support our members, regular legal training and updates are provided on employment rights and health & safety issues. GMB are committed to ensuring that our members receive the best possible legal representation and support.

6. EQUAL RIGHTS

The Equal Rights and Race Committees met jointly last year. As previously stated the numbers of people attending the committees continues to decline, so we welcome the proposed changes. We had a very interesting meeting in the summer where Elizabeth Reay Chief Executive Officer of Equality North East Ltd addressed our meeting and answered questions.

This organisation has been in existence in one form or another since 1984. We discussed ways in which GMB members could engage with activities Equality North East are involved in. This was a very worthwhile meeting and we agreed to work with this organisation.

7. YOUTH

Throughout 2007 we continued to develop our Young Members section through holding regular meetings in all areas of the region, and using a broad range of communication materials.

At our first meeting in 2007 our young members indicated they wanted to be involved in both national and international campaigns. Over the course of a number of meetings, and much debate, a final vote was made. It was agreed our young members section would campaign on Rage Over Age Rates (ROAR) and be involved in a Latin American Campaign.

The ROAR campaigns against discrimination created by the National Minimum Wage (NMW) facing workers under the age of 22 years old. At present the NMW is separate into 4 categories, 22 years+ £5.52ph, 18-21 years old £4.60ph, 16-17 years old £3.40ph and those under 16 years old, who are legally allowed to work part time, no minimum hourly rate is in place. Of course our young members section fully supports a national minimum wage; but we believe the Government are discriminating against young workers by allowing employers to pay them less on the grounds of age, we believe there should be one minimum wage for all workers – the higher one!

By choosing a general Latin America campaign allows our young members to be involved in a variety of organisations rather than just supporting one sole cause.

We had another successful festival season with the Workers Beer Company Initiative, eleven young members volunteered to work at Glastonbury and a further eight at Leeds Music Festival. All had a fantastic time as well as raising funds for our region and are going to promote the initiative to more young members and potential members in 2008.

Our young members are also interested in our political work with the Labour Party, we have been lucky enough to have guest speakers on two occasions.

To ensure our printed communication materials are engaging we surveyed young members in a number of recognised workplaces gaining valuable feedback to ensure our 2008 publications are engaging and informative.

Activities in 2007 have been successful; this is because our young members work in a pro-active manor in line with our organising agenda. They have chosen the ROAR campaign as it is the most collective campaign affecting the majority of our young members no matter where they work. The use of various communication methods has ensured maximum engagement to both members and potential members. Our core young activist continuously approach their colleagues (and friends) to become members if they are not already, and existing members to become active members.

Due to the excellent work in 2006 we anticipate continued growth of our young members section in 2008.

8. TRAINING

(a) GMB Courses Basic Training					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Introduction to GMB (2 days)	7	69	15	84	168
GMB 3 Day Introduction (Ceased July)	6	57	19	76	228
GMB 5 Day Follow on Course	10	90	26	116	580

(b) On Site Courses (please specify subjects)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
GMB 5 DAY H&S County Hall Durham	1	11	3	14	70

(c) Health & Safety Courses (please specify subjects)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
GMB 5 Day H&S	9	79	24	103	515

(d) Other Courses (please specify subjects / weekdays/ weekends)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
3 Day Grievance & Disciplinary	2	19	4	23	69
3 Day Communication Skills	1	11	2	13	39
2 Day Pensions	2	21	5	26	52
3 Day Inspection Course	1	8	3	11	33

(e) Northern College					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
5 Day Employment Law	1	8	0	8	40
3 Day Understanding Pensions	2	7	1	8	24
5 Day Industrial Relations	1	3	2	5	25
5 Day Advanced Health & Safety	1	12	1	13	80
3 Day Workforce Development	1	1	0	1	3
5 Day Focus on Local Authority	1	7	1	8	40
3 Day Refresher for Experienced Reps	1	8	3	11	33

9. HEALTH & SAFETY

Health and safety training has been covered in the Education Report. The main issues of concern in 2007 has been, like 2006, the continuing controversy relating to asbestos. A new Tyne and Wear Asbestos Support Group was formed in 2005 and the GMB Regional Health and Safety Officer chaired it. This group has already been successful in a very important campaign on the life prolonging drug, alimta, although this was 'short lived' owing to the interference of NICE.

Mesothelioma, probably the worst type of asbestos cancer continues to be at the forefront of action. We are still campaigning to have Alimta made available in all areas as well as fighting to have the disgraceful House of Lords decision on pleural plaques reversed..

We, along with the National Health and Safety Officer and other groups are continuing to campaign for these decisions to be overturned and hopefully by the time Congress takes place we will have been successful.

In 2007 the Tyne & Wear Asbestos Support Group successfully merged with another group, based in Middlesbrough, to establish one North East Asbestos Support Group. This now gives GMB Northern a bigger sphere of influence in this area. The RHSO now chairs the new group.

The RHSO continues to work closely with the ROT Team where issues of health and safety can be beneficial to their recruitment activities and he has been involved in many workplace interventions. The GMB approach to health and safety in the Region continues to be looked up to and followed by the other

unions. At the TUC annual Regional Conference in April, the RHSO was elected to chair the Regional TUC Health and Safety Forum

(Adopted)

BRO. T. BRENNAN (Northern): Formally moved.

The report was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now go to pages 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106? Do you agree to accept that part of the Report, colleagues? *(Agreed)* Thank you.

Regional Secretary's Report: Northern Region (Pages 100-106) was adopted.

THE PRESIDENT: Before we move to the Health & Safety debate, with us in the hall today are Anthea and Peter Dennis. Those of us at Congress last year will recall the moving tribute to their son Daniel who died tragically and unnecessarily and will be commemorated at every GMB congress through the Daniel Dennis Health & Safety Award. Colleagues, please welcome Peter and Anthea. *(Applause)*

**EMPLOYMENT POLICY: HEALTH & SAFETY AT WORK
CORPORATE MANSLAUGHTER ACT
Motion 56**

56. CORPORATE MANSLAUGHTER ACT

Congress welcomes the introduction by the Labour Government of the new Corporate Manslaughter Act creating a new criminal offence by companies who negligently kill workers during the course of their employment.

However, there is a need for additional legislation which will create a specific legal liability for company directors in respect of health and safety.

Congress resolves to seek, through meetings of the TUC, GMB Labour MPs and the Labour Party Policy Forum, a commitment to new legislation establishing specific, legally binding health and safety duties on directors for which they can be held to account.

CARDIFF AND DISTRICT BRANCH
South Western Region

(Carried)

SIS. P. WILLIAMS (South Western): Around 240 men and women are killed at work each year. Many more are seriously injured. Thousands die each year as a result of long-term exposure to hazardous substances such as asbestos. For years this Union with others has campaigned for a new Corporate Manslaughter Act. This has now been implemented by our Labour Government. I very much welcome this new legislation which will make it much easier to prosecute companies, will result in higher fines, naming and shaming

orders and remedial orders which will give the court virtually unlimited powers to force companies to change the ways in which they operate. We will have to wait to see how effective this new law will be in practice.

However, there is still one glaring gap in the legislation. The company directors are still getting off scot-free. There is no specific legal liability on directors themselves for health and safety and this is something that must change. Until the bosses of companies are themselves held to account for the way they run their companies there will always be a weakness in the chain of responsibility for company safety policies. During the negotiations on the Corporate Manslaughter Act the Government made a concession that it would consider this at a later stage.

This resolution is about us becoming more involved in the Labour Party policy process and using our influence to press for additional laws specifically aimed at holding directors of companies to account for deaths at work. I have no doubt that if directors of companies knew they might end up in the dock and possibly in prison for failing in their health and safety duties, the carnage of death and injuries at work would be significantly reduced. I welcome what the Labour Government has done so far but we now need to take this one last step forward. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder?

The motion was formally seconded.

ASBESTOS PLEURAL PLAQUES & PLEURAL THICKENING COMPOSITE 1

(Covering Motions 57, 58, 59, 60)

57 – Asbestos Pleural Plaques (Southern Region)

58 – Government Legislation (Northern Region)

59 – New Legislation Pleural Plaques & Pleural Thickening (Northern Region)

60 – New Legislation Pleural Plaques & Pleural Thickening (Northern Region)

ASBESTOS PLEURAL PLAQUE & PLEURAL THICKENING

Congress is appalled at the decision of the House of Lords to prevent those suffering from asbestos-related disease to continue to receive their rightful compensation. Congress believes this action again illustrates the Law Lords siding with big business interests against the interests of working people. In the wake of the decision that Plural Plaque & Plural Thickening are not a compensatable disease, Congress instructs our CEC that they make a concerted effort for Government Legislation to compensate our members and others for deterioration in their health.

Congress supports the Scottish Governments decision in December 2007 that it intended to reverse the law lords ruling, where they ruled it was not a compensatable disease, by introducing new legislation, and ask the CEC to press the Government to follow the same lines.

Congress calls upon the National Secretary of the Manufacturing Section, the General Secretary, and the CEC, to mount a vigorous and sustained campaign to not only:

- change the law to provide the sufferers with their just compensation, but also to :
- expose the actions of the big insurance companies, principally Norwich Union, who have brought about this situation and discourage our members and others from using their services.

(Carried)

BRO. T. WINTER (Northern): Honorary President, Billy Hughes filling in for Tony Winter, Northern Region! President, Congress, we all know the devastating effects exposure to asbestos can and does have on our members. The death sentence of asbestosis and Mesothelioma are devastating for members and their families. However, many more of our members are dying with a condition known as pleural plaques. This is a condition that affects many thousands of our members and is caused by exposure to asbestos. The condition itself is not life-threatening but what it does mean is that you have a much greater chance of developing asbestosis or Mesothelioma. It is living with the worry of what might be that causes our members and their families such worry and concern. Living with the stress that a diagnosis of pleural plaques brings is very difficult. This composite motion calls for the law to be changed and to allow pleural plaques to be made a “compensatable” condition. The House of Lords’ decision in the Autumn of last year put an end to the practice of 20 years that pleural plaques be a “compensatable” illness. This is outrageous, Congress. We need to lobby the Government to change the law on this matter and once again make pleural plaques a “compensatable” condition, only then will we get real justice for our members and their families. Congress, I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tony. Secunder?

BRO. B. HULLEY (Southern) seconding Composite 1 said: There has been a lot said about asbestos-related diseases and pleural plaques is one of them. We must challenge the Law Lords decision to side big business against hardworking people. These insurance companies who play on fear to make profits are taking money but do not want to pay out. This decision must be reversed by government. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

ASBESTOS-RELATED DISEASES

Motion 61

61. ASBESTOS RELATED DISEASES

At the last Congress in Brighton, Gordon Brown gave assurance that members suffering from Pleural Plaques and Pleural Thickening would be regarded as eligible for Government backed compensation. To date this has not happened.

We urge this Congress to lobby the Government to address this distressing situation as soon as possible

BURY AND DISTRICT D127 BRANCH
North West and Irish Region

(Carried)

SIS. A. MURPHY (North West & Irish): President, Congress, at Congress 2007 I personally asked Gordon Brown to help sufferers of pleural plaques and pleural thickening claim government-backed compensation. Gordon promised to get back to me about this. To date I have heard absolutely nothing. I bet you are a little surprised at that, aren't you! The insurance industry has been clapping their hands with glee at the thought of saving itself £1.4bn. Sufferers of pleural plaques have no recourse to law until they have developed a disease which may well kill them within months, Mesothelioma. Surely this cannot be right or just. I urge Congress to lobby government to address this distressing situation as soon as possible to give England parity with Scotland and Wales. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Secunder?

The motion was formally seconded.

ASBESTOS Motion 62

62. ASBESTOS

Congress demands equality for families affected by asbestos in England and Wales by ensuring that they are entitled to the same level of compensation for bereavement as a family in Scotland.

CARDIFF AND DISTRICT BRANCH
South Western Region

(Carried)

SIS. P. WILLIAMS (South Western): Mesothelioma is a cancer of the lining of the lung caused by exposure to asbestos. The condition is unique because it is almost always caused by exposure to asbestos and it is always fatal. Death usually occurs within 18 months of diagnosis. Patients who will be worried even before they go in to receive their diagnosis will usually be told by their consultant that they have Mesothelioma and that it is terminal. Victims will suffer breathing difficulties as symptoms develop and pain from the tumour itself. There may be repeated emergency admissions to hospital for intrusive medical interventions such as drainage of the lungs. A significant percentage of victims die in extreme pain and distress. All this is witnessed by traumatised relatives who know that this has been caused by an employer's negligence.

No one can suggest that money can ever compensate these people for what they have suffered. However, there is an inequality within the UK in the level of bereavement awards, and this needs to change. In England and Wales the level of bereavement compensation is set at £11,800 and is only payable to the spouse of the deceased victim. Over the border in Scotland payments up to £30,000 have been made to bereaved widows. In Scotland it is not only spouses that can receive compensation, other relatives can receive compensation of between £10,000 and £15,000 each. An increase in bereavement compensation will not mean more government spending for the taxpayer

because payments will be made by the negligent companies responsible for exposing their employees to asbestos or by their insurers in line with the principle that the polluter should pay. The insurance industry may say that increased awards will lead to higher insurance premiums but there is no reason why it should. Insurers could and should have reserved for this contingency. They could pay for it out of the multimillion profits they make every year. Insurance is about taking out premiums against a risk, premiums which can be invested for years and paying out what is fair if the risk becomes a reality. The Government should act swiftly to ensure that families affected by asbestos-induced Mesothelioma are entitled to the same level of compensation for bereavement no matter where in the UK the exposure occurred. I move.

THIRD PARTY VIOLENCE AT WORK

Motion 65

65. THIRD PARTY VIOLENCE AT WORK

Congress notes with dismay that many GMB members remain at serious risk of violence whilst at work. Congress further notes that in some sectors, third party violence against workers is on the increase, despite the Health and Safety Executive claims that violence at work is decreasing with GMB members affected, including those working in cash handling, security, the criminal justice system, the NHS, local authorities, education, the retail sector and a range of other occupations.

Congress recognises that some employers have taken positive steps to try and reduce the number of attacks on their employees, but Congress believes that many employers and the enforcement agencies can and should do more to protect those at risk from violent attacks, which can result in serious and even life-threatening injuries that have a devastating effect on the victims, as well as their families and loved ones.

Congress believes that the issue of third party violence needs to be higher on the political and bargaining agenda if more progress is to be made towards preventing violence at work and that greater co-operation and co-ordination between key stakeholders in each sector where workers are at risk is necessary. Congress therefore calls upon all employers in these sectors to work in conjunction with the GMB, the Government, the Police, the enforcement agencies and all other relevant stakeholders to identify the action that can be taken to reduce the number of attacks upon our members.

Congress also calls upon the Government to instruct the Health and Safety Executive to prioritise action on the prevention of violence at work. In particular, the HSE should:

- Actively encourage employers in sectors with a high risk of violence to establish joint working groups with trade union safety representatives to carry out risk assessments and implement measures to reduce the likelihood of third party violence;
- Revise and update the HSE website and publications that provide guidance on preventing violence at work;
- Establish a network of sectoral forums for tackling violence at work, consisting of employers, trade unions, the HSE and any other relevant stakeholders to exchange

information and best practice on reducing third party violence, and to monitor and review progress within each sector where workers are at significant risk of violence.

SECURICOR APEX 5 S15 BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. BARR (Southern): Violence at work can and does take place. It takes place in many of our industries. In my own industry, the cash in transit, over the years I have suffered many, many attacks. The GMB has taken up the stick and has been pushing this forward. They have taken it into Europe with the help of our own National Secretary, Barry Smith, one of our NEC reps, Dave Lines, and of course our Brussels office who took it to the National Commission basically to keep this in the forefront because it is such an important issue. From nurses in our hospitals to teachers in our schools, they are being violated. They go to do a day's work, the same as all of us, but they are being violated. You in your jobs could be violated. We have to look at this situation. Some employers have bitten the bullet and taken some action to reduce the risk but they have to bite a bit harder to increase that reduction. Some employers have still not taken steps to reduce the risk; maybe one or two have put in a CCTV monitor but alas sometimes they do not even put a disk in to record the incidents.

We the GMB, we the membership, have to promote and elevate the prevention of violence in our workplace. Congress, we urge you through our Executive Committee, our National Officers, and our regions, to lobby and encourage this government to help us reduce the risk of violence in our workplaces, to put pressure on this government to promote awareness through their agencies, especially the Health & Safety Executive who should have by now prioritised violence at work. No, they have not; they should have but they have not. We need to promote forums actually to tackle this problem. We do not need talking shops, we need positive action forums. This should be led by the HSE in conjunction with other bodies such as the police, the Environmental Health, trade unions, and of course the one group to implement this, the management of our companies. We need to promote this to the general public as well, not just to trade unions who know what it is all about. We need the public to realise that other people are being violated because a lot of them do not really know about it.

Congress, I ask you to help us to help you and to help your colleagues by accepting this motion. I move. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Seconder?

BRO. M. FLAMBARD (Southern): I wonder how many of you in this room actually go to work and think, "Am I going to get attacked today?" I do it every day. When I put on a white shirt and a black tie I expect the public to think, "Oh, well, he's a man of authority." No, I am not. Because I am a security guard they think, "We'll attack him." Yes, we do get attacked. They are threatening us with bibs now, knife bibs. If we have to wear it, we have to wear it. Unfortunately, it is going to happen and that is in the retail

industry, I have to wear a knife jacket so that I am protected from the public, or someone attacking me because I wear collar and tie. Please support this motion. I second.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague.

SERVICE AWARDS

Motion 66

66. SERVICE AWARDS

The Manufacturing Section conference instructs our CEC to open negotiations with the Government for a service award using the principle of the "Ogden Tables" for our members who have been affected by white finger so badly that they are unable to carry out ordinary every day tasks.

SOUTH SHIELDS 1 ENG BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

BRO. M. HUNT (Northern): Congress, let me explain a little about the debilitating effects of vibration white finger. Our members who have suffered from this condition, which is brought about by the tools they have used in their work, are affected in almost every aspect of their lives. If once they enjoyed gardening they now find it very difficult. If they liked doing DIY, they find that almost impossible. Sports like darts and snooker, any pastimes or hobbies, they are totally out of the question. Domestic chores will often be very difficult too, even lifting a cup of tea becomes almost an impossible task.

What we are asking for in this motion is that our members are treated fairly and all these factors are taken into consideration when compensation is being considered. If our members have worked hard and suffered a disability as a result of their work, they must be compensated and they must be compensated fairly. Congress, I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder?

The motion was formally seconded.

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

BRO. T. FLANAGAN (London): There is no hilarity in this one. Recently we had a meeting in the House of Commons with Paul Kenny and Mary Turner on the issue of murdering cab drivers. It is a sport in this country. I have heard people talk about going to work and worried if they are going to get assaulted. My members go to work worried if they are going to get garrotted, stabbed, or shot, and after they have been shot the police ignore them. They will not even respond to calls. We have a case in London where one of our members was pistol-whipped, the pistol was still in the possession of the company three months later and the police refused to investigate the incident. Without any doubt the police force in London are racist.

We had a meeting subsequently with the DFT and the Home Office where we made our allegations quite clear, that the situation within the private hire and hackney industry in this country is absolutely deplorable and unacceptable. Paul Kenny gave a great speech at the House of Commons where Rosie Winterton turned up, and several of our MPs. We are determined that this is going to stop. Quite obviously, this motion is in line with what we are saying. This nation is now degenerating into a situation where drug and drink-fuelled scum will attack anyone, nurses, doctors, cab drivers, coach drivers, security guards, you are all fair game. Why, because the police do not respond and the judiciary, that bastion of democracy, the public schoolboy educated – I have to watch my language here – specimens pass inadequate sentences. Recently someone who attempted to blackmail a member of the Royal Family received five years. In London a guy was almost kicked to death and his attacker received two years. It is a nonsense. Let's get stuck into this issue. Support the motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

BRO. J. FAULDS (GMB Scotland): Mary, I would just like to speak on Motion 65, third party violence at work. I do not know if anybody knows about it but just a couple of months ago there was a doctor, a lady doctor, stabbed in Glasgow, head, back, and face. The person who did it – I am sorry, talking about health and safety – claimed mental disability and he was just sent to a mental hospital for a couple of months. In Scotland there is the possibility of him getting out.

You have heard about the wee thing called the East End of Glasgow on a Friday, Saturday, and Sunday night, where they set places on fire, the fire brigade turn out, and they get shot at with air rifles. Ambulance men in Scotland have been to houses where there have been parties, somebody has fell over, may have been a heart attack, and they are coming back down the stairs, they are in uniforms, and they have actually been stabbed, not actually bodily stabbed but somebody has a knife, a Stanley knife, and has actually cut their uniform. That is actually going on just now. Thank you. I hope everybody backs this motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jackie.

BRO. J. BOYLE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire) supporting Motions C1, 61 and 62, said: President, Congress, I am a volunteer for the Derbyshire Asbestos Support Team that goes out and gives advice to sufferers of asbestos-related diseases. Every week, but not this week, I get called out to go and visit another home where we have been informed that somebody has an asbestos disease. The Derbyshire Asbestos Support Team, along with the other asbestos support groups, in Newcastle, Liverpool, and the North West, has campaigned for a long while for a change in the law regarding pleural plaques. There are not many days or weeks goes by now where the phone does not ring in the DAST office and Joanne is informed that another victim has died from an asbestos-related disease. Pleural plaques can lead to Mesothelioma. These victims need proper compensation. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

BRO. A. GOODFELLOW (Southern) speaking in support of Motion 65 said: A colleague of mine who works for Southampton City Council got me some facts on the banned persons that they have to deal with. I will not give you their names and addresses, obviously. The list includes threatening behaviour, verbally aggressive, verbally aggressive, aggressive behaviour, aggressive threatening behaviour, extreme or violent, aggressive, and threatening behaviour. It goes on, threatening behaviour.... The latest one they had on 2nd June was a general warning to all staff to be aware that on 28/5/08 a refuse truck was shot at by an air rifle using ball-bearing pellets at Blackthorn Road, Merry Oak. Please support Motion 65.

BRO. T. HALL (CEC, Manufacturing): I am speaking on behalf of the CEC supporting Motion 66 but with a qualification. The principle behind the motion is sound but it is not clear what is meant by the term "service award". The CEC presume that this refers to the potential length of time a sufferer from white vibration finger was expected to live with the disability. The Ogden Tables are actuarial tables used to calculate loss of earnings from death and permanent disability and to cover loss of mobility, manual dexterity, physical coordination, and moving, lifting, and carrying ability. It is not clear whether the motion is calling for greater application of the tables or additional payments to be made to vibration white finger sufferers on top of any existing payment calculated by the Ogden Tables. The CEC believes there is real merit in the principle underpinning this motion but seeks clarity on the intentions and actions required. Please support with the qualification that I have outlined.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Tommy. Does Northern Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Can I ask Congress to support Motion 56, Composite 1, Motion 61, Motion 62, Motion 65, and Motion 66 with the qualification?

Motion 56 was carried.

Composition 1 was carried.

Motion 61 was carried.

Motion 62 was carried.

Motion 65 was carried.

Motion 66 was carried.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, can I tell you that I was privileged to move the resolution at the NEC with Dennis Skinner on pleural plaques and Dennis Skinner asked me to pass on this message to the GMB and its safety programme. He was so impressed by the lobby that we held at the House of Commons, and our literature was outstanding. Can I say when we moved that NEC report not one, not one, individual round that table spoke against our programme for making sure that justice is awarded to those suffering from pleural plaques. Support is there, political commitment has to be there to deal with this issue. I thought I would let you know that issue.

Congress, I was joined earlier on the platform, or we have been joined, by a gentleman, and I did not announce him in case we were going to have to go down to the estate agents to look for a house for him. I waited until after the debate. I have been joined on the platform by Lord MacKenzie of Luton, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Department of Work and Pensions, and I am going to ask Bill to address Congress.

Since being appointed in January 2007 as Parliamentary Under Secretary of State in the Department of Work and Pensions Bill has been very active making speeches on Wellbeing at Work, Corporate Manslaughter, and he will be speaking on Safety Reps Rights, and HSE. He has a passion and commitment for Health and Safety. He is well known to GMB members. Bill, I would like you to address Congress. Thank you. (*Applause*)

**ADDRESS TO CONGRESS: LORD McKENZIE OF LUTON,
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE, DWP**

LORD McKENZIE: President, Congress, thank you for the kind welcome and for the opportunity to address congress during the Health & Safety session. It is a particular pleasure to be here today not only as the minister with responsibility for health and safety but also as a fellow GMB member. I know both from my campaigning days to enter what at our end we call “the other place”, a campaign to which I may revert given your earlier discussions, and as leader for a time of Luton Council, the importance of strong proactive trade unions of which the GMB is in my view an exemplar. I have particular reason to be grateful for the GMB’s support and their comradeship.

Let me begin with what I hope you will accept as good news. You will be aware that the HSE’s financial settlement for the next three years has been agreed and I am pleased to say that the settlement was better than many predicted. It represents up to £724m over the next three years, which compares favourably with the £750m that the HSE received for the last three years, especially given that other DWP business allocations were of an order of 5% reduction year on year over the three-year period covered by the settlement. This allocation to the HSE is a mark of how seriously the Government takes the issue of workplace health and safety. In particular, that allocation requires the HSE to maintain its frontline capability at least at March 2008 levels and in fact it is doing better than this with some 44 new trainee inspectors having started in April of this year, but it also requires the HSE to adhere to its enforcement policy and to have continued commitment to revitalising health and safety targets.

Over the past 30 years the HSE has been very successful in helping Britain become one of the safest places to work in Europe. However, in the changing work environment of the 21st century where we face new health and safety challenges this goal can only continue to be achieved by working in partnership, particularly the partnership between government and you and others in the Trades Union Movement, and employers.

It is clear that strong leadership by employers is one of the key elements of this partnership. The Government and the HSE will continue their efforts to ensure that duty holders take their responsibilities seriously and put effective health and safety performance high on their agenda. This involves a mixture of enforcement and guidance. Enforcement or the fear of enforcement is an important tool and an effective lever in securing compliance from duty holders, particularly when used in conjunction with other interventions.

It is also a matter of enabling justice and bringing to justice those who put others at risk. Individual directors can be held to account if a health and safety offence involved their consent, connivance, or was attributable to their neglect, or if their conduct amounted to a serious criminal offence, such as manslaughter. As you have just recognised, the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007 which came into force in April of this year is an important addition to the range of enforcement options. Following a death at work this makes it possible for the police and the Crown Prosecution Service to charge a large organisation whose health and safety management has fallen far below what would be expected with corporate manslaughter. This will focus directors' and board members' attention on the importance of good, sensible, health and safety management and on ensuring the process is properly tied in to overall corporate governance arrangements. Indeed, anecdotal evidence suggests that it is already concentrating minds but not only that, the Health and Safety Offences Bill, a private Member's Bill currently progressing through parliament with government and cross-party support, will if enacted raise the maximum penalties available to the courts in respect of breaches of health and safety. This will give the courts the power to sentence more proportionately and effectively when duty holders do not take their responsibilities seriously. The Bill is due its third reading in the House of Commons next week and I am hopeful that at long last it will be successful.

It is equally important that we also work with employers to establish a supportive environment for cooperation and provide guidance and support. As you will be aware, the HSE and the Institute of Directors have recently published joint guidance for directors and board members on leadership on health and safety, which from the first page identifies worker involvement as an essential principle of leadership. We want to encourage all employers to see the clear link between effective leadership on health and safety and good workforce involvement. The evidence should be clear to businesses that those who have good workforce involvement deliver better performance on health and safety. They also tend to have better productivity and higher levels of workforce motivation, and commitment, and are therefore better performing and more successful businesses.

This guidance and the previously mentioned legislation should benefit workers by strengthening board and director level leadership on health and safety. These will provide an opportunity and incentive for directors to raise their game. The HSE will be assessing the impact of these measures to ensure this process is both transparent and adequate, and is setting up an advisory steering group. I am pleased to say that the TUC have nominated three representatives to this group.

The issue of new legal duties on directors, I should stress, is still on the table and I recognise that you consider there is a strong case for them. The Government is keeping the matter under review and how directors respond to the legal developments and the new guidance will be a crucial consideration. It is overwhelmingly the case that an organisation's greatest asset is its workforce and everybody here knows the importance of consultation and the value of involving employees and trade union health and safety representatives in managing workplace health and safety. You can bring about real improvements through your own actions and provide feedback on the effectiveness of health and safety management.

Trade unions and health and safety representatives are an invaluable resource in securing better workplace health and safety. There is hard evidence that workplaces with union health and safety reps have a lower rate of injuries than those without such reps. They are at their most effective when well trained and with your know-how and excellent organisation trade unions and the TUC have done, in my view, a fantastic job in training health and safety representatives to a very high standard. Better trained representatives can address the issues more effectively and are more confident to deal with newer challenges in the workplace such as tackling sometimes complex occupational health issues. I am also pleased to hear that all the TUC's health and safety courses are now accredited. I want to congratulate you all on what you have achieved.

Effective workforce involvement cannot be achieved without a relationship based on collaboration and trust between employers and employees. Trade unions, and particularly health and safety representatives, have been playing a vital part in building this relationship. I congratulate the winner and runner-up of the Daniel Dennis Award to be presented shortly. It is important to recognise the efforts of people like Angus, Ellis, and others, and I would like to thank them and all of you here for your contribution towards making workplaces healthier and safer.

To emphasise the importance I place on the role of health and safety representatives I am visiting workplaces and meeting health and safety reps from a variety of sectors throughout this year. These visits are allowing me to both better understand the real issues health and safety reps and workers are facing and to promote worker involvement to employers. For me this is the year of the health and safety rep. It is a priority I intend to continue to maintain as minister responsible for health and safety.

I have talked about partnership before. I fully support and encourage the joint efforts of industry and the HSE to promote the role of health and safety reps and worker involvement. For example, in the offshore industry, the Workforce Involvement Group, a subgroup of HSE's offshore industry advisory committee, recently revised guidance designed to increase workforce involvement offshore to improve safety. The guidance offers advice on implementing management systems that encourage a culture that values constructive workforce engagement that would lead to improvements in everyday safety. In construction we have seen some excellent joint working by HSE and the industry to promote worker consultation which has led to a significant improvement in many

projects. This is proven by a number of case studies published on the HSE's website including the Channel Tunnel railway project which had a reduced accident rate to half the industry's average and has achieved a positive change in safety culture.

Later this year it will be 30 years since the Safety Representatives and Safety Committee Regulations of 1977 came into operation. It is timely that the HSE will renew focus on worker involvement with the publication of new good practice guidance on worker involvement for workplaces which will be launched in October. The HSE has worked with trade unions and a range of stakeholders in developing this guidance. I understand that the guidance, which is built on the principles of trust and joint problem-solving, will focus on how to consult and involve the workforce with case studies illustrating examples of good practice. I hope it will facilitate better dialogue and improve collaboration between employers and the workforce and I look forward to playing a personal role in driving home this message in support of HSE's work.

I know that there was disappointment at the then HSE not being able to recommend even modest changes to the law on rights to be consulted on risk assessment and the employer duty to respond. Frankly, it is a disappointment which I share and an issue I intend to revisit.

Over the next few months HSE, the merged body that is, will be working to develop their new strategy for workplace health and safety in Great Britain. As part of this the views of stakeholders on how to deliver the strategy will be sought. I encourage all of you to consider the role that you will play in turning the strategic aims into better health and safety protection for all. I am sure worker involvement will remain a key element to any new strategy which will reflect new challenges and provide a strong basis for securing further improvements to workplace health and safety management in the years to come. Can I say on the matter of pleural plaques that the Government is fully committed to supporting people suffering from Mesothelioma and other asbestos-related diseases, and to provide a system which enables them to receive appropriate compensation as quickly and as easily as possible. We have demonstrated that commitment by taking forward a range of initiatives in the Compensation Act 2006, the child maintenance & other payments Bills which actually received Royal Assent this very week, and elsewhere. In relation to pleural plaques we have been carefully considering the many representations that we have received and have been actively exploring options on how people who have been exposed to asbestos and developed pleural plaques might be helped. The Prime Minister, as we have heard, has indicated the Government's commitment to consult on this issue and as Bridget Prentis reaffirmed earlier this week we hope to be able to publish a consultation paper in the middle of June. Can I say that it is the GMB's campaign which has helped to keep this issue on the Government's agenda.

Congress, together we still have much work to do to protect people from accidents and ill health at work, and indeed to make workplaces healthier. I can reassure you that I fully support the work of health and safety representatives and trade unions and that the government takes the issue of workplace health and safety very seriously. I know you will continue to play your part to take this work forward while the HSE and government

continue to play our part in protecting people by appropriate enforcement, advice, and guidance. Together we can make Britain's workplaces safer and healthier. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Bill, for addressing our Congress. Colleagues, Bill was going to stay on and he is going to stay for as long as possible, but I am afraid he does have a flight to catch. Could I also on behalf of Congress welcome his wife, Diane, who I know travelled down today to be with him. Thank you for coming and hopefully you have enjoyed the afternoon. It has been eventful if nothing else.

Bill, on behalf of Congress, could I ask you to receive an award, some glasses made by our members in the GMB under strict health and safety guidelines; there is one for Diane and one for you, and a bottle to go with it, GMB special whiskey. Thank you very much indeed. And, Bill, would you like to accept the GMB signed health and safety reps book.

LORD McKENZIE: Thanks very much.

(*Presentation amid applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. I have just said, do not let Edna Rolf near that whiskey!

Colleagues, can we now go back to the agenda and can I ask John McDonnell to move the statement on pleural plaques, and Elizabeth Jeffrey to second.

THE CEC STATEMENT ON PLEURAL PLAQUES. GMB CONGRESS 2008

CEC Statement on Pleural Plaques

Pleural plaques are areas of scarring on the lining of the lung, known as the pleura. They are almost always caused by negligent exposure to asbestos. Pleural plaques are therefore clearly an industrial condition, one that mainly afflicts working people.

There is clear-cut medical evidence that individuals with pleural plaques have an increased risk of developing the work-related cancer mesothelioma. Those unlucky enough to develop mesothelioma are likely to die in less than a year from the initial diagnosis of cancer.

Living with pleural plaques is like living with a ticking time bomb for those who have the condition. You have to live with the stress and uncertainty that you may develop an industrial cancer that will kill you within a year of diagnosis. This is a considerable mental weight for any person to bear. It has led many to depression, alcoholism and often suicide.

It is clear that a diagnosis of pleural plaques is an acknowledgment of physical harm, but also a cause of mental pain.

The diagnosis of pleural plaques also gave a clear marker of exposure to asbestos, which gave the opportunity to submit a compensation claim and establish liability on the part of the employer or their insurance company before the onset of cancer, debilitation and death.

Until 2006, sufferers of pleural plaques received modest compensation for their condition. The insurance industry at that point challenged the arrangements for compensation in court, arguing that no physical harm could be proved, and that the likelihood of developing Mesothelioma was 'small'.

The judiciary agreed with the insurance companies, and the right to compensation was lost. The case was appealed as far as the House of Lords, where the insurance industry was backed at the expense of the working person.

The official judgement of the British judiciary is that Pleural Plaques do not cause sufficient harm to warrant compensation, in spite of the evidence provided above.

GMB do not accept this. We condemn this decision in the strongest possible terms. In one GMB branch, one in three of the members diagnosed with pleural plaques has developed mesothelioma. We believe that is immoral to compensate one person for visible scarring, but not to compensate another for internal scarring that may develop into fatal cancer.

According to official Government estimates, the number of deaths from asbestos-related diseases will not peak until 2015. Thousands of GMB members will develop pleural plaques in this period.

At the same time, the British Insurance industry will save at total of £1.4 Billion in compensation payments as a result of the decision of the Law Lords.

GMB see this as a simple case of vested interests. Big business, in the form of negligent employers and their insurers, has successfully lobbied the executive to avoid paying the compensation they have a moral duty and a responsibility to provide. They have benefited and profited from the labour of workers. This labour now threatens to kill both those workers, and in many cases their family members, yet these wealthy industrialists absolve themselves of any responsibility to act.

Such a stance is a grave insult to the hard working members of the GMB. It is a decision that GMB will not allow to rest lightly.

Since the decision of the House of Lords last October, GMB has campaigned hard to raise awareness, and has lobbied the Government to take whatever steps necessary to reverse the decision and restore compensation.

We have lobbied parliament, with a demonstration in February 2008 that saw over 300 members and 50 MPs demand justice, and resolve to fight until it was gained.

We have organised letter writing campaigns to Jack Straw, The Secretary of State for Justice, demanding that he reinstates the compensation scheme.

We have built a coalition to challenge the vested interests. We are working with our sister unions, with the TUC and legal experts to ensure that the issue is on the agenda of Party Leaders in all legislatures – in Scotland, in Wales, and on the desk of the Prime Minister Gordon Brown.

We have been promised that the British Government will consult on options to resolve the situation. Following pressure from GMB and other trade unions, the government has now confirmed that there will be a consultation document published regarding pleural plaques and compensation. This consultation should begin within the next two weeks.

The intention is that this consultation will look at the history on how the current situation arose, the rationale for the House of Lords decision and the possible options for the future.

GMB will play a full part in this consultation, ensuring that our position, and that of other trade unions involved, takes a consistent approach towards justice for our members.

We know that the insurers and employers are rich enough to provide compensation at levels that were acceptable to all for over 20 years. Yet they are presently attempting to block current claims for compensation, even where mesothelioma has developed and the sufferer has died, by claiming that the compensation claim is triggered when a victim is diagnosed, rather than when they were exposed to asbestos.

This represents a reversal of an industry practice that was accepted as a convention by all parties for more than 20 years, and if successful, will mean that thousands of claimants are denied recompense for their condition as their employers at the time of exposure have ceased trading, and no insurance exists as a result.

This tactic delays and frustrates claims from those who are dying and the families of those who have died. If the judiciary decide it is legally acceptable, it will deprive thousands of mesothelioma victims and their families of compensation, and further enrich insurers. GMB will support legal challenges against these tactics whenever they are used against our members, using expert Solicitors to argue the righteousness of our case.

There has been much speculation about the development of a voluntary scheme from insurers to avoid the imposition of laws. We will not negotiate for a reduced standard for GMB members. Any voluntary solution must include measures to fund occupational health surveillance for pleural plaques immediately and for mesothelioma as soon as technology makes this possible. In addition, the employers and the insurance industry should fund research into pleural plaques and mesothelioma, as happens in Australia.

We will only accept a compromise that does not disadvantage a single GMB member; a single working person. We have taken on Governments and powerful interests before, and won. The recent conviction under Corporate Manslaughter law secured following the tragic and unnecessary death of Daniel Dennis shows what can be achieved when GMB stands its ground and fights for what is right.

More than 2000 working people will die from asbestos-related diseases in 2008, and many of them will have suffered from pleural plaques. We owe it to them, and to everyone yet to be diagnosed, to continue to campaign and fight until compensation is restored and justice is delivered.

(Adopted)

BRO. J. McDONNELL (CEC, Manufacturing): First of all, President, I think an elected member should take priority over a non-elected member.

THE PRESIDENT: Don't you start, you will be needing more than a statement, I'm telling you!

BRO. J. McDONNELL: Congress, the fight to gain justice for those who suffer from the misery of pleural plaques has taken on increasing urgency since we met in the year 2007. As has been stated, pleural plaques are areas of scarring of the lining of the lung almost always caused by negligent exposure to asbestos. There is clear-cut medical evidence that individuals with pleural plaques have a higher risk of developing the work-related cancer, Mesothelioma. In one GMB branch one in three of the members diagnosed with pleural plaques have developed Mesothelioma. The expert opinion is that the risk is small. That is disgraceful.

Congress, Mesothelioma is only caused by exposure to asbestos, nothing else. There is no cure for this cancer. It is fatal. Living with pleural plaques is living with a ticking time-bomb for those who have the condition. You might not develop cancer, not everyone who has pleural plaques does, but if you do you will die, most likely in less than a year from diagnosis.

For this reason for over 20 years, until 2006, those suffering from pleural plaques were entitled to claim compensation for the anguish caused by the condition. Very importantly, it clearly established liability on the part of employers or their insurance company. Congress, I must tell you that this situation was too much for the greedy British insurance industry, even though the annual payments were modest. They challenged the arrangement in court. Eventually they won. In October 2007 that judgment was upheld in the House of Lords by that unelected body who do not know what a day's work is. Congress, in the learned opinion of our judiciary pleural plaques, scarring of the lining of the lungs, does not cause harm; nonsense.

Congress, your CEC deplores the decision of the House of Lords. We find this untenable that someone can be compensated for scarring to their face or arms but not their lungs. We find it is unacceptable that those who live with the uncertainty of pleural plaques should not be compensated for the mental pain and anguish that the condition caused by their work or the work of their loved one has caused them.

Congress, we know that the British insurance industry is saving £1.4bn blood money as a result of this decision. We know that 2,000 people this year will die from asbestos-related diseases. Many of them will be GMB members or their relatives. Since the decision last October the GMB has campaigned hard to raise awareness and lobby the Government to reverse the decision, and I am proud to say the GMB are at the forefront of this campaign again. We have lobbied parliament with demonstrations in February 2008 that saw over 300 members and 50 MPs resolve to fight for justice. We have organised letter-writing campaigns to Jack Straw, the Secretary of State for Justice, that he reinstates the compensation scheme. We have worked with our sister unions, with the TUC, with legal experts, and with the MPs to ensure that the issue is on the agenda in the House of Commons, in the Scottish Parliament, in the Welsh Assembly, and most importantly of all on the desk of the Prime Minister, Gordon Brown.

Congress, we are told the British government are going to consult on options to resolve the situation. That is not good enough. We do not want options. We want justice for our members and their families. We want laws to restore the right to compensation for pleural plaques sufferers just as they do in Scotland. We believe that the insurers are rich enough to provide compensation at the levels that were acceptable to all for over 20 years. We will not negotiate for reduced standards for our members. Any voluntary solution must include measures to fund occupational health surveillance for Mesothelioma as technology makes this possible. Employers and the insurance industry should fund research into pleural plaques as happens in Australia.

Congress, we know that the number of deaths from asbestos-related disease will not peak until the year 2015. In that time we know that thousands of GMB members will develop pleural plaques. Many of those who develop the cancer will die. They deserve justice. They deserve to be compensated. Allowing the insurance industry to pocket billions of pounds of blood money in savings whilst so many working men and women die is a scandal. To conclude, it would be even more scandalous if our Union did not challenge by every means available and win the best result possible for our members. Your CEC pledges that this Union will do nothing less than to gain justice for the families and our members. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, John. Can I ask Elizabeth Jeffrey from Northern Region to second and, Congress, you will remember last year that Elizabeth won the Daniel Dennis Award on Health & Safety. Elizabeth?

SIS. E. JEFFREY (Northern) speaking on behalf of the CEC and seconding the CEC statement on pleural plaques said: Congress, it is entirely right for the GMB to challenge both the Government and the insurance industry over compensation for pleural plaques

sufferers. I am sure we all have heard of the pain and anguish that a diagnosis of pleural plaques causes. It is like being given a death sentence, never knowing whether or when you might develop cancer.

Congress, the decision that pleural plaques did not constitute harm was a dark day for the British justice system. It overturned a system that had worked for 20 years. At a stroke it removed a fair entitlement to compensation and the establishment beyond doubt of a claim against the employer or their insurers. It enriched the insurance industry at the expense of the worker and sacrificed decency and commonsense at the altar of big business. Congress, members with pleural plaques are not statistics, they are people. They matter. They have the right to be compensated when their health and their life is threatened by the work that they or their loved ones do.

Congress, the CEC is asking that you support the statement on pleural plaques, that you support a policy to challenge this decision and that you support action to restore compensation and provide justice by all available means. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Elizabeth. Colleagues, does anyone wish to speak on the report? *(No response)* Can I ask you to accept the statement? *(Agreed)*

CEC statement on pleural plaques was adopted.

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, it gives me great pleasure to invite Peter and Anthea Dennis to the platform. As you are aware, and this is our second year, we present awards to the Health and Safety of the Year steward. Anthea and Peter, welcome. Could I ask Anthea to address Congress, please?

PRESENTATION OF THE DANIEL DENNIS HEALTH & SAFETY AWARD 2008

ANTHEA DENNIS: Peter and I would like to thank you for giving us this opportunity of expressing our heartfelt gratitude to this great union. We know that without the backing of the GMB we would not have achieved justice for our son Daniel, starting with Sheila Bearcroft, who advised us and contacted the GMB on our behalf which then led us on to Mick Antoniw of Thompsons, solicitors. Mick has been our rock. He campaigned on our behalf tirelessly. The last five years have been harder than I could ever tell you and we will miss Daniel for ever, but when Daniel's employer was sentenced to 10 months' imprisonment on 6th May this year, not a long sentence I know, it did bring us some sense of peace and hopefully sends a message out to other employers that will remind them of the consequences if they kill someone in their employment. Thank you. *(Applause/Standing Ovation)*

THE PRESIDENT: Anthea, thank you very much and I am sorry about the start. I remember so well last year when your courage gave us courage. It was a very emotional debate, and quite rightly so. I thank you for coming here today, you and Peter, to help me present the awards. It gives me great pleasure to announce that the winner of the Daniel

Dennis Safety Representative of the Year is Angus Groat from Southern Region.
(*Applause*)

Angus works at Group 4 Total Security Motorola where he has negotiated many site improvements, including the safe removal of asbestos, welfare facilities for staff, a safe traffic system within the site, and he also re-established electrical portable appliance testing for the first time since 1997. He played a key role in the setting up of the National Negotiating Committee on Health and Safety and is one of the five national reps on this committee. Angus continues to carry out inspections and get involved with risk assessments. He has helped membership grow by approximately 500 new members through using health and safety as part of the Recruitment and Organising Agenda. He is a Shop Steward, Safety Rep, Union Learning Rep, and a Regional Council delegate. Colleagues, I give you Angus Groat.

Presentation made amid applause.

THE PRESIDENT: Would you like to say a few words?

BRO. A. GROAT (Southern): President, Congress, I would just like to say thank you to some very important people that helped me win the award. First of all to Richard in the region for the support and guidance given to me, to my branch officer, Ross, and to Barry my branch secretary, and to John McLean and to Daniel for the help and guidance with the situation but, most importantly, the award actually belongs to my colleagues at the Security Branch G36. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Congress, I would like to announce that we also have a Highly Commended Silver Badge winner for another outstanding Safety Rep, who was a very close second, and this goes to Ellis Parker from the North West & Irish Region. Ellis works for GSL Court Services in Preston. He overturned a potential dismissal of two members for refusing to engage in work they had felt harmful to them through understaffing. This has led to a safer environment for all the members. He refused personally to run escort services with inadequate resources. Ellis established monthly safety meetings with management where issues of bullying and harassment are also addressed. He has raised the profile of GMB within the workplace through the use of Health & Safety issues, and even management encourage new staff to join GMB. With the help of his regional officer membership has increased by 100% over the last five years. Colleagues, could I ask Anthea and Peter, with myself, to present the Silver Badge and a signed copy of the GMB Health & Safety to our member.

Presentation made amid applause.

THE PRESIDENT: Would you like to say a couple of words? I have never known anyone from the North West to be shy!

BRO. E. PARKER (North West & Irish Region): I would like to thank all concerned with the GMB for the kind invitation to Congress and it is a privilege to receive this very

special award. I accept it with great honour and I will always strive to keep my members safe and healthy in the workplace. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Can I thank Anthea and Peter for coming here today. I know it must be very sad but very rewarding to know that health and safety is the top item on our agenda and that we will never allow their son's name to be forgotten. Thank you. (*Applause*) I ask them if they would like to stay with us until we end Congress. Colleagues, can I move on to item 15, where we have a short DVD on Mesothelioma called: *The Human Face of an Asbestos Epidemic*, which is being produced by Thompsons. After that I will close Congress and remind you that some of you are partying tonight, and I will be joining you, but you will be here at 9.30 in the morning sharp! Got it? OK, colleagues, have a great night tonight.

DVD on Mesothelioma – “The Human Face of an Asbestos Epidemic” played to Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, a very sad note to end on but a very realistic one. It is the real life out there and for some of you in this hall, and on this platform, it has brought back some very sad memories of the loss of loved ones very close. That is one of the reasons why the GMB, and I have been in it a long time and we have been fighting this ever since, will not stop until all asbestos, whatever colour it may be, is removed from this country and in other countries where they are telling them it is safe. No, it is not. Thank you.

Congress convenes in the morning at 9.30. (*Applause*)

Congress adjourned.