

**GMB ANNUAL CONGRESS**

held on

**SUNDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> JUNE – WEDNESDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2009**

at

**THE WINTER GARDENS, BLACKPOOL**

.....

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

.....

**PROCEEDINGS**

**DAY ONE**

**(SUNDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2009)**

.....

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## **FIRST DAY'S PROCEEDINGS**

**SUNDAY, 14<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2009**

### **MORNING SESSION**

*Congress assembled at 9.30 a.m.*

### **OPENING OF CONGRESS**

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning, colleagues. Welcome to, and it is, sunny Blackpool this year. Could I remind delegates to check and switch off your mobiles because Mary will be making some claims during this week. The sessions will be transmitted on 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.

### **SAFETY PROCEDURES ANNOUNCEMENT**

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, you will find details of your fire safety evacuation procedures in your delegates' wallet. Please take time to look at these. We are about to hear an announcement about the safety procedures at the Winter Gardens. Please pay attention.

*(Fire procedure announcement)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. That was only Malcolm on the bell! Colleagues, could I just briefly say to all delegates, and in particular new delegates, who are getting up to the platform to speak this week, please relax because I promise you we will not bite you, not yet anyway; we wait for your second Congress to do that. To the visitors who have joined us this week, could I say welcome to all of you. On the platform with me is Kathleen Walker-Shaw, our European Officer who has done a great job for us over there, Malcolm Sage, our Vice President, and of course Paul Kenny, our General Secretary, and Dolores O'Donoghue our CEC Officer. Now you know them all. I have either just promoted or demoted Dolores, I do not know which I have done. All right, Dolores?

### **BANNER CEREMONY**

THE PRESIDENT: Could I call Congress to order for the opening ceremony. We have asked Midland & East Coast Region to form the banner party. Could we please stand?

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

THE PRESIDENT: Can I say thanks to Midland & East Coast Region and the banner party. Some of them were terrified coming along there. You did extremely well. Well done.

## **WELCOME TO DELEGATES AND GUESTS**

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I have some niceties to do and welcome some people to Congress. First of all, I would like to say welcome to the General Member Auditors, Jim Clarke from Midland & East Coast Region, Ian Burkett from Midland & East Coast Region, and Pat Perry from North West & Irish Region.

Let me now welcome the Regional Secretaries attending Congress. I also welcome our ex-Regional Secretaries for 2009, as advised by the regions. They are John Cope, London Region; Billy Smith, North West & Irish Region; John Whelan, North West & Irish Region. Welcome. Of course, the regional guests I will announce later.

Later today we will welcome Glenys Wilmott, leader of the European Parliamentary Labour Party, Colin Burgon MP, Lenia Lopez from the ICAP, the Cuban Friendship Institute, and Alvaro Sanchez from the Venezuelan Embassy.

Could I now also welcome great friends of ours, the verbatim shorthand writers, Michael Thear and Phyllis Hilder.

Could I remind Congress that the hall has an induction loop system fitted and to use this facility you will need to set your hearing aid to the "T" position.

Could I ask delegates to take a moment to check that they have three very important documents: The Congress Programme: this is the order of business for the week, though changes may be necessary and I will try to give you advance warning. This also includes details of fringe meetings and exhibitions. Please note that the programme has been revised because we have a guest speaker arriving on Tuesday. A revised schedule is on the orange paper so please use this to follow debates. The Final Agenda: this 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, and representation statements for Congress. You also have the Income and Expenditure Statement.

There are recycling bins in the hall for paper and plastic. All Congress documents are printed on FSC approved paper and all GMB carrier bags are biodegradable.

There is free Fairtrade tea and coffee throughout Congress for all credential holders and which is available from the Stage Door Café and the Bistro in the Floral Hall, part of the Exhibition Area. Please remember to show your credential badge. We would like to thank Liverpool Victoria again for supplying our Congress refreshments.

## **ROLL CALL**

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, roll call. Malcolm?

*The VICE PRESIDENT called the roll.*

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, Malcolm. Could I advise Regional Secretaries to notify any further alterations to the Congress Office. Okay, Malcolm.

## **APPOINTMENT OF TELLERS**

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I will now report the following tellers that have been appointed:

### **Birmingham**

No. 1 – Martin Schuck to count Northern

### **London**

No. 2 – Barbara Benham to count North West & Irish

### **Midland**

No. 3 – Rob Whilding to count GMB Scotland

### **Northern**

No. 4 – George Murray to count Southern

### **North West & Irish**

No. 5 – Derek Sutcliffe to count South Western

### **GMB Scotland**

No. 6 – Brenda Carson to count Yorkshire

### **Southern**

No. 7 - Jeffrey Ballanger to count Birmingham

### **South Western**

No. 8 – Greg Hughes to count London

### **Yorkshire**

No. 9 – Neil Sawyer to count Midland.

Could I emphasise that tellers must remain in the Congress hall while Congress is in session and that delegates must be in their allotted seats when a vote is taken. Thank you, Mary.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Malcolm. Paul Kenny will now give a practical demonstration on eligibility for voting.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you, Mary. Would everybody please stand up? Okay, everybody, visitors, everybody stand up. Thank you very much. Right, visitors, you can sit down. I was only doing that to get you at it! Will all the officers please sit down? Will all the staff please sit down? Will the Regional Secretaries please sit down? Will the National Officials all sit down? Will the President, the Vice President, the auditors, all sit down? The shorthand writers; including me, sit down. Those of you who

are left are the ones who have a vote! Oh, and the CEC – sorry, yes. The CEC sit down. (*Laughter*) I was entitled to put a little fix in early, wasn't I! Okay, all the CEC. Only those left are entitled to vote. Only lay members, non CEC members, are entitled to vote. If you see anybody who is currently sitting down who puts their hand up when the time comes, come and tell us. Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Paul. The second deliberate mistake was that it is not an orange/yellow paper, it is a pink one with your agenda on if you are looking for your order of business.

### **STANDING ORDERS REPORT NO. 1**

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Malcolm. Could I now move to ask Helen Johnson, Chair of Standing Orders, to address Congress.

SIS. H. JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): President, Congress, Helen Johnson, Midland & East Coast Region, Standing Orders Committee Chair, formally moving SOC Report No.1.

President, Congress, before I move the report and, President, with your permission I would like to mention the passing away of two former SOC members. Congress, John Curtis from Birmingham & West Midlands Region passed away last year. John was a previous chair of the SOC going back to 1997. John Onslow, from London Region, also passed away last year. John had been a London Region member of the SOC for many years. Both are sadly missed and we offer our sympathies to their families, friends and colleague trade unionists.

President, Congress, I will now move on to SOC Report No.1. You will find a copy of the report in the copy of your Final Agenda starting at page 20. I formally move adoption of that report and in doing so the SOC would like to thank delegates and the regional secretaries for agreeing 22 composite motions that also appear in the Final Agenda, starting at page 87.

Would colleagues please note the longstanding 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 guidelines that the President and the SOC work to.

Withdrawn motions. The SOC have been advised that the following rule amendment has been withdrawn: Rule Amendment 239 in the name of Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region.

Would Congress delegates please note that if Congress motions or rule amendments are asked to be withdrawn during the week the following procedure should be adhered to. One, you should notify your regional secretary; two, the regional secretary should then inform the SOC in writing that the motion has been withdrawn; and three, the SOC will

then report the matter to Congress so that all delegates will be aware of the position and will be able to follow the Congress Agenda.

Existing policy motions. President, Congress, last year recommendation 14 of the CEC Special Report, *A Framework for the Future of the GMB Moving Forward*, which had been carried by Congress in 2007, came into effect.

Motions which were existing policy were endorsed by Congress without the need for debate. The SOC is recommending that a similar approach is taken for Congress 2009.

The CEC has advised the SOC which motions are in line with existing policy. The SOC has accepted the advice and is recommending that these motions are put to Congress to be endorsed without the need for debate. You will find that the existing policy motions are listed in SOC Report No.1 at page 21 of your Final Agenda.

You will also find it helpful to refer to the detailed report from the CEC which is at page 107 of your Final Agenda. This explains when the policy in question was reached.

Motions and rule amendments out of order. The SOC has ruled that the following motions and rule amendments are out of order:

Motion 114 - Green Book. The motion refers to a specific element of local authority member terms and conditions, namely, the Green Book. In accordance with the Guidelines for Congress Business the motion ought to be dealt with by a more appropriate body, that is, the NGC for local government services.

Motion 118 - NHS Pay Deal. The motion refers to a specific element of the NHS members' terms and conditions, namely, their pay. In accordance with the Guidelines for Congress Business this motion ought to be dealt with by a more appropriate body, that is, the NHS National Advisory Committee.

Motion 159 – Disaffiliation from the Labour Party. The motion calls for an end to the affiliation to the Labour Party. This would require consequential amendments to Rules 12.1 and 19.10 of the GMB Rule Book. There are not proposed amendments to these rules and the motion is out of order for this reason.

Rule Amendment 257 – Political Fund. The rule amendment proposes to amend Rule 65 so that no payment shall be made from the Union's Political Fund in respect of affiliation to the Labour Party save where such affiliation has been approved by a ballot of members. This would require consequential amendments to Rule 12.1 and 19.10. There are no proposed amendments to these rules and the rule amendment is deficient and out of order for that reason.

Emergency Motions. Prior to the publication of the Final Agenda the SOC accepted Emergency Motion 1, Ban the Blacklists, standing in the name of Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region as being in order for debate.

The SOC has since accepted the following Emergency Motion as being in order for debate: Emergency Motion 2, National Grid Greed, standing in the name of Northern Region. The SOC is recommending that this be heard in the Monday afternoon session.

DVDs. The SOC has given permission for a DVD to be shown, *GMB at Work*.

Finally, the election of President and Vice President. Congress, no election is required for the President or Vice President because there is only one nomination for each position. They are Mary Turner for President and Malcolm Sage for Vice President. They are both elected unopposed. (*Applause*)

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

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Helen. Does any delegate wish to speak on any of the SOC recommendations? Remember, not a speech, a point!

SIS. K. HENDRY (London): I am seeking reference back on the basis of the ruling out of order of Motions 159 and Rule Amendment 257. I just need to say that I was going to speak on these motions and rule amendments (if they got through) without the support of the London Region.

What I wish the reference back to do is seek clarity on how a substantive motion on the issues concerned, i.e. Labour Party disaffiliation and the Political Fund, can actually get on to the agenda. For two years now motions on this issue have been ruled out of order, both last year and this year. I think we need to have a debate about the Union's relationship with the Labour Party. It is a crucial time to have this debate, other unions are having this debate, but I do believe that there appears to be confusion on how we actually get a motion on to the agenda.

Last year the SOC Report No.1 said that the Labour Party affiliation motion will be ruled out of order on the basis that it would require amendment to four rules, and at the time the rules were 2.10, 10.7, 2.10 and 66. Now, that was different numbering so it may well be different motions this year, therefore it is a bit confusing. There is apparent discrepancy, and I emphasise apparent because it may just not be clear as to why four rule amendments were required last year but this year with no apparent changes in the Rule Book since then it would only need two consequential amendments to 12.1 and 19.10.

What I am seeking is reference back for clarification. Whatever people feel about the issue, the substantive issue, I think it is not in our interests that we do not have this debate and actually have ----

THE PRESIDENT: Colleague, can you wind up, please? There is a question.

SIS. HENDRY: So, reference back is really on the basis of clarification on a list of the rules that would be required to be amended or changed, or deleted, and a full explanation as to the way those particular rules work so that in future if the branch wants to bring this forward they are able to do so. Thanks very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Anyone else? No? Can I call Helen to reply?

SIS. H. JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): President, Congress, responding to the challenge to SOC Report No.1.

Dealing first with Motion 159, Disaffiliation from the Labour Party, the motion calls for an end to our affiliation to the Labour Party. This would require consequential amendments to Rule 12.1 and 19.10 of the GMB Rule Book. Rule 12.1 is a mandatory GMB rule which requires the National President, amongst other duties, to attend the Labour Party Conference. Under Rule 19.10 we are required by the Central Executive Council that regional councils will elect representatives to go to the Labour Party Conference. There are no proposed consequential amendments to these rules and so it is that they are left untouched. The SOC firmly believes that there is no discrepancy between last year's response and this year's response to this matter and the motion is ruled out of order for this reason.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Helen. Conference, all those in favour of reference back, please show. All those against. That is *LOST*.

Congress, all those in favour of Standing Orders Report, please show. All those against? That is *CARRIED*. Helen, thank you very much. Helen, congratulations on being elected for the second year running to Standing Orders. Well done. (*Applause*)

*Standing Orders Committee Report No.1 was adopted.*

THE PRESIDENT: Could I call Paul Kenny, please? Whether he will answer me is another matter.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Mary, Helen has made the announcement but I just formally congratulate you and Malcolm on your re-election as President and Vice President. I think you both have been absolutely brilliant servants of the GMB and I think the unanimous decision of the delegation of Congress to support you clearly shows that everybody has absolute faith in the President and the Vice President. Congratulations. You are doing a great job, both of you. Well done. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul, and thanks to Congress. I always feel humble at this. I am proud to be your President. I am proud to be GMB. I know Malcolm feels the same. He will be thanking you later on. I have a great colleague in Malcolm and also all head office staff, everyone who helps me a great deal. Thank you very much indeed.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Could I also take the opportunity to thank you for your vote of confidence in Mary and myself in re-electing us as President and Vice President for the forthcoming four years and assure you that we will continue to represent you with pride and dignity as we have in the past. Thank you very much. (*Applause*) May I now call on your President to give the address to Congress. President, Mary Turner.

### **PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS TO GMB CONGRESS 2009**

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning, Congress. Could I welcome all of you, delegates, visitors, staff, exhibitors, to Blackpool this week. First of all, I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate the worthy boilermakers on their 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Do you know, Congress, it is great to see worthy president, Billy Hughes, back with us looking so fit and well. Welcome back, Bill. We missed you last year. (*Applause*)

I do not know where John Toomey is but clearly the love affair between the Turner family and the boilermakers goes back a long way as the person who published their rules back in 1834 was a C. Turner. How about that, John?

This year we are making special awards to a person or branch from each region for outstanding achievement. As experienced Congress delegates will already know, Congress for the GMB is the coming together of a huge family and later on this morning we will welcome over 100 children from schools in the North West & Irish Region. They are the winners of the GMB Schools Healthy Eating Competition and will be joining us here to collect their prizes, and then have a party treat and a trip to the zoo.

Congress, traditionally in the President's address I cover the events of the past year. The events of the past couple of weeks will take more time than we have today, or perhaps even a week. Harold Wilson said, *A week is a long time in politics*. In the current climate, an hour or a day is a long time in politics. Today we are still coming to terms with the results of the European and Council elections and can I say sorry to the hundreds of Labour councillors up and down the country who have lost their seats it is not because of anything they have done but because of the wrongdoing in Parliament.

Before these elections we were already seeing destruction created by the Tories and LibDem council employers offering 0.5% to public services and redundancies across the board while their counterparts in Parliament are claiming for duck houses, moat cleaning, and wisteria pruning, mortgage interest on their country estates and their mansions in London and Henley. Well, if that is the way they want to live then let them pay for it themselves, not us, the taxpayer. (*Applause*)

Colleagues, the NEC of the Labour Party has given the go-ahead for local parties that are not happy with the expenses claims of their MPs to ask the NEC to begin the process of investigation and not, as the press calls it, the Star Chamber. I want GMB members and the Labour Party to be part of the process of cleaning up British politics. We need to clear out the MPs who have made money out of the expenses system.

Turning to the Euro elections there is a chill spreading across Europe that was liberated from Nazi rule 65 years ago as right wing extremist parties are gaining ground. We all share the horror of seeing racists like Nick Griffin and his henchman, Andrew Brons, elected to the European Parliament. The election of people from the BNP and UKIP means that we have lost good decent people who have fought our corner in Europe, and have said goodbye to some of our most dedicated Labour MEPs. I want to pay tribute today to their achievements in bringing in new laws to improve conditions for working people, guaranteed rights of four weeks paid holidays, time off for new parents, rights for employers of disabled workers to bid for public procurement contracts, rights for part-time, temporary, and agency workers, and funding local community groups and charities to help deprived areas through European Social Funds.

Congress, later this morning we will be welcoming Glenys Wilmott. Congratulations to her on her election and as Chair of the EU Labour Group. I would also say I was absolutely delighted to see Stephen Hughes also re-elected, and many, many more. Last month I joined Glenys on the Silk Mill March in Derby commemorating the struggle of 175 years ago by workers locked out of Taylors Silk Mill for fighting for better terms and conditions. Following that dispute workers were blacklisted and never able to find employment again.

It is a disgrace that blacklisting of union members practised by Victorians mill owners still continues to this present day. Congress, the Government is at last taking action to outlaw this practice but it should not have needed revelations of an illegal blacklist in the construction industry operated by an ex-member of the economic league to bring this about. We all knew it went on. People in this hall have been blacklisted and I should know because I was one of them, and it does not need another government consultation before bringing in regulations to outlaw it. This does not just affect the employee, it affects their families. You are already targeted and when it is known you are going for a job, believe you me, your children will suffer too.

Contrast the way trade unionists who just want decent wages and fairness at work are treated with the way the reptiles that have destroyed our financial system are rewarded by failure. Government and ministers, and even the Prime Minister, seem far happier to listen to the clarion calls from business and the City rather than heed any warnings or listen to any words of concern coming from the unions.

Congress, after every terrible poll, each defeat at the ballot box or crisis, the Government keeps promising to listen and learn and then listens to the people who got us into this mess and invites them to help clean it up. When Gordon Brown became Prime Minister his new government had all the talent, including Digby Jones and a host of his friends from the City, including Damon Buffini (I have another word for him, buffoon) head of Primera Private Equity Group, but where were the trade unionists? Where was the voice or experience from the workplace, the communities of the council estates up and down this country.

Congress, on 28<sup>th</sup> March, together with GMB members, I was at the forefront of the *Put People First* demonstration, joining thousands of people marching to demand action on poverty, climate change, and jobs in advance of the G20 summit. I did not meet any bankers, private equity bosses, or tax haven gangsters on that march, instead I marched with the ordinary people of Britain who are furious with the bankers and chancers who exploited the flawed financial system for their own ends while creating global financial crisis which our children, grandchildren, and generations to come will pay for.

The economic crisis was less of a surprise to us, the GMB, than to the financial wizards. We warned about private equity profiteers who reap huge rewards without having to pay any tax while wrecking the lives of employees, and venture capitalists with huge salaries and pay-offs for failure. Sometimes I have seen one of the lone voices on Labour's National Executive demanding action on a flawed corruption expenses system, or raising the plight of people with pleural plaques who are being denied compensation unless they are given the death sentence of mesothelioma, and challenging Peter Mandelson's bonkers plan for the Royal Mail, the plan to part-privatise. They say it is not privatisation but as far as I am concerned if it walks like a duck, quacks like a duck, then it is a bloody duck.

Congress, the world has changed since the last GMB Congress held in Blackpool in 2006 but the GMB has not changed. We still fight for fairness and justice for workers and, as I said at the beginning of the address, a week is a long time in politics but one thing is certain, within a year we will have a general election. In 1979, 30 years ago this year, Thatcher was elected and now the Tories are standing in the shadows. Remember what the Tories did to us. Despite the new image and makeovers they are still the nasty party. If they get in again, there will be a very, very nasty time for us trade unionists. They would make attacks on trade union rights and freedoms beyond the scope that Thatcher ever thought of. The Tories have already pledged to repeal safeguards in the Health & Safety at Work Act. They would do much worse than this if they got into power again. They have already been doing the ground work for their attack on trade unions. Francis *Four House* Maude and his colleagues have asked 200 questions about trade unions facility time, recognition, and political funds in the past year. Make no mistake, the Tories would undo the hard-won legislation that makes life better for working people, the disadvantaged, the children who will be joining us here today so full of hope and enthusiasm for the future.

Congress, once again the Tories have a little list and we are on it, and so is the national minimum wage. Remember when there was no limit to how low the wage could be and no limit to the working week. Remember the days before the winter fuel allowance, free bus passes for pensioners, paid holidays, and the national minimum wage. I remember care workers and security guards on a pound an hour and 70 hours a week, working people taking home a pittance, the destruction of our communities, the treachery and plotting to destroy the miners and their communities, the breaking of the pensions link, and worst of all the imprisonment of our Cammell Laird members without a trial. Whose bright idea was it to outsource our public services, sell off our school meals leading to the epidemic of obesity and diabetes the like of which we have never seen? Well, the Tories

turned us into limbo dancers, constantly moving the bar down and up to see how low we could go.

Congress, it was not that more people voted for the BNP in the European elections, it was that less people voted for Labour. If traditional voters stay at home but the extremists get their voters out, then we face a real crisis. Disillusion with politics and the political class is at the heart of the political malaise destroying our political system. The fact that our own people, people we knew and trusted, will milk the expenses system has left us angry and disgusted. Remember that it was across all political parties, not exclusive to Labour, but because it happened on Labour's watch the Labour Party is taking the brunt. Colleagues, for me it is not about what was in the rules, it is what was morally right and what was morally wrong. Those are my rules.

Some years ago John Monks made a speech to the Fabian Society expressing disquiet that New Labour often seemed embarrassed by its traditional supporters and their beliefs and traditions. He said that unions were seen by New Labour as the embarrassing elderly relative at a family party. When did he make that speech, just after Labour's worst ever vote at the 2001 European elections, four years before the drop in votes at the 2005 elections, and eight years before the disastrous results of the 2009 elections. Well, you know, Gordon, it is time to listen and learn, not just talk about it after every crisis. Once again, we need to remind the Labour Party who are their real friends and that sometimes older relatives are sources of sound advice and help, not fair weather friends who desert you when the going gets tough; they will always support you. We do not need a new leader, we need a new direction, and we need new policies. *(Applause)*

Colleagues, over the coming year we will work to ensure that the Labour Party remembers that we the trade unions are the Labour Party. We will work to ensure that Labour returns to its traditional values and listens to us because only the trade union movement can fight and work to ensure the election of a future Labour government. When we are asked to canvass, help stuff envelopes, or speak up and vote for Labour, remember the decent hardworking MPs who have worked for us, such as, and I will just name two, Kelvin Hopkins and Angela Eagle, who have not exploited the expenses system. There are many good MPs like them, and the ministers who have listened to us. There is the legislation that has helped working people. Remember that we the trade unions are the Labour Party and we must fight and work for a future Labour government because, you know, Congress, we cannot contemplate the alternative.

Congress, I know that some ministers have started to resign but I will only pick one in particular and I am doing this for a certain group of people in this hall, when James Purnell said he could not come out and face his constituency because he did not agree with Gordon Brown, well, he did not have any problems with coming out and facing our Remploy members and shutting down their factories. That is the moral of James Purnell, and good riddance. *(Applause)* Thank you, Congress.

## **VOTE OF THANKS TO THE PRESIDENT**

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mary. Can I now call on Gary Doolan, CEC London Region, to give the vote of thanks to the President. Gary.

BRO. G. DOOLAN (CEC, Public Services): I do not know who is more nervous about me coming up here, Mary, you or me. President, Congress, it is an honour to be moving the vote of thanks to our President, Mary Turner. I am sure that in moving this vote of thanks to you, President, I do so on behalf of Congress as a whole, especially the London Region where you have been held in very high esteem for many years, even before you were elected to the CEC in 1983. This was in itself a unique event as this was your first Regional Council. You were elected to both the Regional Committee and the CEC at a time election to the CEC was by a show of hands at the first October Regional Council meeting.

Colleagues, I believe Mary was the first woman CEC members elected in the London region and regardless of the changes to the system in the election to the CEC she has been consistently elected to those posts ever since: not bad for a dinner lady, eh? But what an inspiration she has become to many other women employed in both local authorities and elsewhere. At a time when Mary was a GMWU convenor in Brent she proposed a school meals programme that even today many would believe to be very modern and progressive. She proposed that all schoolchildren will have free nutritious school meals, that the dinner break should be part of the school day, and pupils would not be able to leave the school premises. Even then she was aware of the drugs problem and courageously campaigned against vending vans being allowed on or next to school premises. She was one of the first to realise the inadequacies of and challenged the introduction of what was known as the cooked chilled meal. This was food portions cooked en masse and frozen, then sent out to schools and warmed up in commercial microwaves, one of the early steps of the downward spiral of good wholesome meals cooked on the premises as she did at Elstone School and as did thousands of other school cooks across the country. She was also one of the early vociferous opponents of CCT (compulsory competitive tendering) and, as Mary has already mentioned, the limbo or how low can you go (as she described it) that ripped the heart out of universal school catering as well as the rest of local authority services.

Congress, most of us have known Mary as our President but she also presides over many other trade union events, especially those where the members welcome the involvement of our National President, always helpful, always understanding, especially to new or nervous members on their first visit to the dreaded podium. I have it on good authority, though, that she was a bit nervous at her first Congress and especially as she was told she had to claim the right to reply when she was not aware until after the CEC had answered the resolution.

I believe it would be true to say that we also owe a thank you to Denny Turner, Mary's long-suffering husband, who has been outstanding in his support for Mary and the GMB throughout her years of trade union activity, something not always popular in the early

years. I can vividly recall an example of Denny's suffering. In York at the National Public Services Conference where Mary made Denny carry her luggage from the hotel and walk it to the train station, Denny had been complaining all week of pains in his side. Mary continued to claim, "There's nothing wrong with him. It's all in his head." We later found out that Denny had three broken ribs.

Colleagues, some officers involved in Mary's period as a convenor in Brent were John Cope who went on to become Regional Secretary, Paul Kenny, another rightful secretary of the GMB, Sharon Holder, now a national officer, Tony Ward, a regional senior officer, and finally Paul Hayes, our newly appointed Regional Secretary in the London Region, all of whom I am sure will have tales to tell but not in public.

But, colleagues, I believe and I am sure you will agree that the most outstanding achievement for which we owe Mary our thanks is for her governance towards the end of the period of office of the former general secretary and the legal clouds that were gathering round the discrimination issues involving the Lancashire Region in 2005, coming together as they did in a manner that placed her in the most invidious position, that called upon her to take on a burden the like of which was unknown in our history and with very few people that she could confide in. For the record, acknowledgement of the magnitude of the problem was highlighted in the King Report, and I quote: "When the allegations which are the subject matter of this report were brought to the president of the union's attention she acted with great integrity and resolve despite the difficult position in which she was placed. We feel it appropriate to recognise her actions in this matter." Colleagues, the issues were fought with enormous difficulty, with legal threats on all sides, but the record shows that despite the fact that she herself was the target of some shameless attacks during that period, thanks to her usual calm demeanour, her integrity, and her firm resolve, we came through that nightmare period stronger, more united than we had ever been for many years, and it shows. Mary, it is thanks to you.

Congress, it gives me great pleasure to move the vote of thanks to our National President, Mary Turner. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Can I say thank you, Gary. I sweated there, Gary, when I saw it was you! Thanks, Congress, ever so much. We will tell the other stories at the bar.

## **OBITUARY LIST**

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I would like you to stand in silence as a mark of respect for our departed colleagues. The names will be scrolled up on the screen and a copy of the obituary list is in your wallets. Thank you.

(*A silent tribute*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Congress.

## **CONFIRMATION OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE**

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Congress, I will now move to confirmation of the Standing Orders Committee:

Birmingham – Elizabeth Corbett  
London – Joe Isaacs  
Midland – Helen Johnson (SOC Chair)  
Northern – George Emmerson  
North West & Irish – Bob Welham  
Scotland – Mary Finn  
Southern – Charles Adje  
South Western – Gareth Lewis  
Yorkshire – Peter Bagnell

The CEC Observers to the SOC are:

Lena Sharp – Commercial Services Section  
Liz Blackman – Public Services Section  
Andy McGivern – Manufacturing Section

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Malcolm, very much indeed.

Colleagues, Congress, I would like to express a point of procedure before we begin our first debate. To save time I will take motions in groups and ask the CEC speaker to reply to groups rather than deal with each motion individually. The Congress Programme shows the grouping. 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, for instance, support with qualification or support with a statement, seek withdrawal, or refer, I will call on someone to give the CEC recommendation in a reply to the debate.

Could I remind Congress that there are two rostrums with chairs in front for the movers and seconders to wait for their turn to speak. A large cross (could be a kiss) in front of a motion in the programme means that the SOC has ruled the motion out of order. Existing policy motions are marked in the Final Agenda with a large EP against them. These, as outlined by SOC Report No.1, have not been listed in the programme as they will not be debated.

Congress, the CEC rule amendments can be found in the Final Agenda at pages 101 to 106 and I will be calling Malcolm Sage to reply to those.

I will explain how I intend to take the debate on the CEC Special Report. The Special Report will be moved and seconded on behalf of the CEC. I will invite each region in turn to put up one speaker. I will then ask any speakers opposed to the report, and finally we will move to a vote. Paul Kenny will be moving that and Audrey Harry seconding. The regions are listed in anti-clockwise order as they are seated in the hall. Colleagues, Malcolm.

**CEC RULE AMENDMENTS 1 - 7**

**CECRA1. Rule 5.5**

**After first sentence insert new sentence:**

**“The Central Executive Council will make the final decision on a recommendation from a Region”**

New Clause 5.5 to read:

5 Regional councils or regional committees have the power to recommend that the Central Executive Council cancel, and the Central Executive Council (with or without a recommendation) has the power to cancel, the membership of any member for any of the reasons set out in clause 4 above. The Central Executive Council will make the final decision on a recommendation from a Region. A member who has their membership cancelled will not be eligible to rejoin without the permission of the Central Executive Council or the appropriate regional committee.

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

**CECRA2. Rule 5.7**

**Line 2: After “clause 4 or 5” insert:**

**“(except where the Central Executive Council has made the final decision on a recommendation from a Region)”**

New Clause 5.7 to read:

7 If the member is not satisfied with the Central Executive Council’s decision under clause 4 or 5 (except where the Central Executive Council has made the final decision on a recommendation from a Region) of this rule, he or she can appeal by writing to the general secretary within one month of the decision being made. The case will be referred to the Appeals Tribunal, who will make the final decision. In giving its decision, the Central Executive Council must tell the member, in writing, about their right to appeal.

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

**CECRA3. Rule 19.13**

**Delete first sentence “In each region there will be a regional equal rights committee and a regional race advisory committee.” and insert:**

**“In each region there will be a regional equality forum”**

**and**

**Line 4 delete “committees” and insert “forum”**

New clause 19.13 to read:

13 In each region there will be a regional equality forum. The members will be elected in whichever way Congress feels is appropriate. The forum will be set up to advise the regional council and the regional committee.

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

**CECRA4. Rule 20.2**

**Lines 2, 3, and 6 insert “black and minority ethnic”**

**Lines 2, 3, and 7 delete “regional race advisory committee” and insert “regional equality forum”**

New clause 20.2 to read:

2 Two representatives will be elected to seats on regional councils reserved for black and minority ethnic members of the regional equality forum. Only black and minority ethnic members of the regional equality forum will be eligible to be nominated for election under this clause. One of the two seats under this clause will be reserved for women, and only black and minority ethnic women members of the regional equality forum will be eligible to be nominated for election to that seat.

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

**CECRA5. Rule 64**

**Lines 5 and 6 delete “regional council or”**

**Line 8 delete “2.6”, insert “2.8”**

New Rule 64 to read:

Members who are candidates for local public organisations will be chosen by our members from a list of Branch nominations. The candidates must have been in the union for at least 12 months before they can be nominated, and must be approved by the regional committee. The regional committee can choose whether to give financial support to these candidates (see rule 2.8).

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

**CECRA6. Rules 65.3, 65.4, 65A.8**

**Delete “Brandon House, 180 Borough High Street, London SE1 1LW”**

**Insert “22<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Euston Tower, 286 Euston Road, London NW1 3JJ”**

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

**CECRA7. Rule 36.9**

**Line 3 Delete: “January”, Insert “December”**

New Clause 36.9 to read:

9 Representatives to trades councils and similar local organisations will be elected at the last meeting in December each year.

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

*(Carried)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: On behalf of the CEC, I move Rule Amendments 1 – 7. Colleagues, all of these rule amendments are housekeeping matters and the CEC proposals are not intended to do anything more than tidy up some loose ends in the Rule Book.

Rule Amendments 1 and 2 are in place to clarify the appeals process in disciplinary cases where a member might have their membership cancelled. Rule Amendments 3 and 4 are needed after last year’s Congress adopted the report called *Equality Through Inclusion: The GMB’s Strategy*. Our rules now reflect the new GMB Equality Strategy. Rule Amendment 5 corrects an error in the numbers quoted in the rule. It also gives authority to the regional committee rather than the regional council. This is so that matters can be dealt with more quickly as the regional committees meet more frequently. Rule Amendment 6 changes the address of the Certification Officer, who has moved. By law we need to quote this in the rule book. Finally, Rule Amendment 7 means that nominations will be sought in December which brings this rule into line with other rules about when branches should meet. Thanks to Birmingham Region for pointing that out.

Congress, please support CEC Rule Amendments 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Malcolm. Does anyone wish to speak against? *(No response)* In that case, I put CEC Rule Amendments 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Those against?

*CEC Rule Amendments 1-7 were carried.*

## **CEC SPECIAL REPORT: CONGRESS FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS**

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I call on Paul Kenny to move the CEC Special Report: Congress Future Arrangements.

### **CEC SPECIAL REPORT TO CONGRESS 2009**

#### **GMB**

#### **CONGRESS FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS DELEGATES TO CONGRESS AND SECTION CONFERENCES**

##### **Introduction**

1. This discussion note considers options open to the Central Executive Council regarding the rules on eligibility for election as delegates to the Union's (annual) Congress and (biennial) Section National Conferences.

The CEC meeting held on 7 September 2008 agreed to submit a rule amendment to Congress 2009 to change the representation level to 1 delegate per complete 1500 members in each Region with a consistent approach across all Regions for how Congress delegates are elected to encourage a wider Congress democracy.

The CEC were advised at its 2 December 2008 meeting that because of capacity issues at the Congress 2010 venue it is proposed that this Rule Amendment will not be effective until Congress 2011.

2. Under rules 8 and 18, each Region elects one Congress delegate from its fully financial membership in the preceding September on the basis of 1:2,000. The rules do not provide for reserved Section delegates but rule 19.11/12 allows Regional Councils to seek CEC approval for by-laws establishing geographical and industrial sections to ensure fair representation.
3. Under rule A3.2 and the Special Report "Guidelines for Sections" adopted by Congress '93, each Region is represented by one Section Conference delegate from its financial membership in the Section on the basis of 1:2,000 up to a maximum of 150 delegates across the Union as a whole. Regions are obliged by rule to ensure geographically fair representation for members of the Section. In line with the Special Report delegates must be working in the Section covered by the Conference – this excludes those who are unemployed or who have retired from work in their Section.
4. In 2008, we held both Congress and Section Conferences. In a change from previous years, we held Section Conferences on the Tuesday and Wednesday morning of Congress week. There was just one election, for

5. A number of facts are clear. First, the reduction in membership numbers (which reflects to some extent an actual fall, but also greater accuracy in the figures) means that we have seen almost a 25% drop in the number of elected Congress delegates from 383 in 1988 to 289 in 2008. Secondly, there is evidence that the average age of Congress delegates is higher than that for their Conference counterparts – not surprising given the requirement for the latter to be working in the Section and the fact that quite a few Congress delegates have retired from work. Lastly, Regions differ significantly in their arrangements for electing Congress delegates.
6. It is important that the Union continues to recognise and respect the continuing contribution of our activists who have retired from paid work:
  - we cannot afford to lose the wealth of experience that retired members bring to their activities on behalf of the Union and its members
  - retired members are an invaluable source of mentoring for younger activists
  - the difficulties we encounter in obtaining paid release for activists in the private sector are unlikely to ease as we enter a brutal recession. So the Union will continue to depend on retired activists in many cases to represent members in grievance and disciplinary meetings
  - it would appear very unfair to ask retired members to continue those efforts but exclude them from Congress.
7. Nevertheless, it is a matter of concern that some Regions' Congress delegations appear to exclude some key workplace representatives:
  - like all trade unions, we are first and always an organisation of *workers*. It is vital that our key decisions are made predominantly by workplace representatives;
  - Congress has ultimate say over all the Union's policies, industrial and general (including political issues) and of course it alone has authority to amend the Union's rules. While Section Conferences are advisory, they consider primarily the industrial or workplace priorities and objectives of the Union. Nevertheless, the demarcation line between the two is not clear-cut and it is not sensible for key workplace representatives to be under-represented at Congress;
  - we must continue to ensure that when Conferences in particular take decisions on workplace and industrial relations issues, they are fully representative of our members at work in the Sections. Only by doing so can we be sure that our members at work will accept that they owe a loyalty to those decisions.

8. These factors point away from a revolution and towards an evolution in our procedures so that they produce a more sensible balance in the make-up of Congress delegations.
9. Any change should apply to both those years in which Section Conferences take place and those in which they do not (i.e. in rules revision years).

### **Recommendations**

10. The CEC has already agreed to recommend to Congress a move to one Congress delegate per complete 1,500 fully financial members in a Region. This will create sufficient extra places to help ensure that our retired activists continue to play a key role in Congress, while at the same time having more opportunities for our younger activists (including workplace representatives) to participate at the supreme policy making body of the Union. But it would be important to protect the predominantly workplace-based nature of our Section Conferences, for reasons set out above.
11. The CEC suggests that with effect from Congress 2011 Regional Congress and Section Conference delegations are elected on the following uniform basis:

The election of Section Conference delegates be rolled up into the election of Congress delegates.

A minimum 80% of each Region's delegates should be working members

The election should be conducted so as to ensure a balanced representation reflecting the geographical, sectional and industrial make-up of the Region and to ensure representative gender, ethnic and sexual orientation balance in the delegation.

Branches with more than 250 members as at the relevant September figures may nominate two members for election as delegates.

12. The CEC is invited to consider these options, with a view to reaching decisions in principle following which this paper will go out for Regional consultation. Any subsequent rule amendments would then be drafted for consideration at a future CEC meeting.

It is suggested that the Task Group be recalled to co-ordinate Regional responses and make recommendations to the CEC on these proposals.

If Congress were to accept these proposed changes any new rules would place an obligation on the CEC to issue guidelines for a uniform election

across all Regions for the election of Congress (and therefore Section Conference) delegates.

This Special Report has been designed to promote discussion and participation in the shaping of our union's democratic future structures. The final outcome after consultation with Regions may well offer fresh perspectives for the CEC to consider.

*(Adopted)*

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you, President. Good morning, Congress. Sorry about the earlier slip about the voting arrangements. I will try not to make too many mistakes this week.

Firstly, I have great pleasure on behalf of the CEC to move the Special Report on the Congress Future Arrangements. I hope everyone has a copy of it and that everybody will take the time and trouble to read it. It is probably the biggest and deepest look at how Congress functions and how we widen it that has taken place in sixty years. The Union has made great strides forward in recent years, but the Executive and the Senior Management Team have been tireless in their efforts to make the GMB stronger in every way possible, but the heart of what we do has to be democratic, accountable lay member control, and that is Congress. Our Congress or your Congress – I think to think it is everybody's Congress – is our Parliament. Many of us in this hall lived through years when Congress and branches were undermined and attacked, which resulted in the abolition of Annual Congress. It is no coincidence that during those years the Union's membership and its activists fell and the Union's spending went unchecked. Neither is it a coincidence that when we brought back Annual Conference the membership increased, the shop stewards' numbers went up, the Union became financially healthy again and accountability and organizing were back in fashion. So we have done a lot that we can be really proud of, but we have got to deepen and widen our democracy to ensure that we reflect the world that our members work in and encourage that new generation which is so vital to the future of our Union.

*This* report seeks to open up the debate. Some of the recommendations and ideas for debate are that we reduce the qualifying numbers for a seat at Congress from 1 per 2,000 members to one per 1500, which is a 25% increase in the number of lay delegates who would come to Congress, and that we standardise and uniform the election system across the Union. At the moment there are different systems operating in different regions. The operation of a new system would allow and encourage more new delegates, but we must make sure that we blend experience with commitment. This is not about whether you are 17 or 70. This is not an age issue. This is a commitment issue. Frankly, this Union would have been in pretty deep and dire 'do-do' if it had not been for the passion and commitment of long-serving branch secretaries and activists who carried us through the bleak and dark years in the '80s and '90s. When people talk about changing the face of the Union, if you are going to throw out or seek to reject all of that experience and commitment, then you are making a bad decision. So this document seeks to blend both

the incoming new delegates and also maintain and ensure that we keep the passion, commitment and knowledge of our long-serving people.

One of the suggestions is that we do something about tackling some of the glass ceilings that people have found around the place. It means that because of the current rules the bigger branches may be entitled to have more than one delegate, thereby ensuring that you have experience but giving the opportunity to branches of bringing somebody new along as well, whether that is a young member or an RMA member, and we can look at race, gender, sexuality, all the things that ensure that we get that new change in balance.

The President, the Vice President, the CEC and the SMT – all of them – have expressed total confidence and faith that the right way to go about this is to go out and talk to the branches, the regions, the regional councils and the regional committees so that those views about what would work better for members, for branches and regions comes back to us. The suggestion is that we take our time, we consult through 2009 to 2010 with branches, regions, industrial groups and members, and we recall the working party, the Task Group, which served us so well in reorganising the Union just three years ago. Then we report back next year with a set of recommendations that we could put in place for elections to Congress in 2011. It looks sensible, it looks like we have a plan to maintain experience, expand participation, particularly in areas of work which are currently under or not represented at Congress, we can encourage more involvement and, yes, it will cost more. In my view, as General Secretary and Treasurer, that is worth every penny. Widening and deepening the democracy of the Union and involving more lay members in our Parliament is worth every penny.

Let's never, ever, get fooled again with the idea that abolishing Congress or diluting the power of lay members to make policy is a good way of travelling forward. Congress is worth everything we put into it, and let's never be fooled into thinking otherwise again. Thank you.

SIS. A. HARRY (CEC, Manufacturing): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC and I am seconding the CEC's Special Report on Congress Future Arrangements.

Colleagues, these ideas from the CEC are aimed at making Congress bigger and better. The CEC wants to hear more voices at Congress from all across the country, from all industries and sectors where GMB members work, and all the age groups and ethnic backgrounds. That is why we are suggesting increasing the number of delegates by one-third. We want Congress to be inclusive, not exclusive. Our working members make an essential contribution to this Union and become our experienced activists. We want you to take this plan away, to talk about it and think about it in the months to come. The CEC will consult on it and bring it back with any improvements to Congress next year.

The GMB Congress is the beating heart of our Union. The aim of this plan is for a big infusion of lay democracy to make Congress stronger and healthier. Please support the report. I second.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Audrey. I will now go around the Regions. I call London Region first.

BRO. S. McKENZIE (London): Comrades, brothers and sisters, I am speaking in support of the Report. Last year – I don't know about our comrades in the Public Sector and Commercial Services section meetings – in the Manufacturing section meeting that I went to, it was one of the best GMB events that I have ever attended since I have been a member of this Union because we had Arthur Scargill and Paul Kenny speaking. The room was packed with about 200 people and the thought went through my mind, "I wish to God that all the members of our branch and region could have been here", because that was the sort of meeting which fires you up and enthuses you to go back and build the Union in the local area. That is exactly the same feeling that I had about 120 years ago when I was young and I went to my first union conference. I spent the rest of my life, as a result of that, going out and trying to build the Union. So we have to say that this report is a very, very positive step in the right direction because the more people we can get along to GMB Congress and the GMB sectional meetings, it is absolutely clear to me that more people will get involved in the Union, and the Union will grow as a result of that. Please support this, in effect, discussion document and please support the principle of one delegate per 2,000 going down to one delegate per 1,500. I think it is going to pay dividends in the long run. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Birmingham.

BRO. G. HARVEY (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I am speaking to the *Special Report: Congress Future Arrangements*. Before I start, I would just like to say that I am in full-time employment. The grey hair is because I have done more than 45 years service to this Union in the GMWU, MATSA, APEX and GMB. We have been through the lot. I have also been in the Engineering Section, the Energy & Utilities Section, the Food & Leisure Section and now I am in the Commercial Services Section. *(Laughter)*

If I can come to the document, we are in support of the document, but I have just a couple of things to raise. In section 3 we also thought that sectional conference worked very well last year, but we would be concerned that rule A3.2 and the Special Report "Guidelines for Sections" in Congress 93 would debar retired and unemployed members. Our big concern there is unemployed members the way we are now.

I have also made some other notes, as have people in my region. In point 11, where we are saying that a minimum of 80% of each region's delegates should be working members, if we did not get that amount, what would we do? Also, would the delegates who are coming to Conference be able to get a week's paid leave or four or five days as opposed to two days for the sectional conference at the moment? I would also like to know what we would do if we don't reach the 80%. Point 11.4, where we are saying that the election should be conducted for a balanced representation, I would like to know, without fiddling the election, how we do it, and we do not want to go down that road again, do we?

The other thing is that we have put a representative gender of ethnic, sexual orientation balance in a delegation. There is no mentioned of disabled, Paul. I take it that that is an oversight and it will be put right.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: We left it in deliberately for you to pick it up.

BRO. HARVEY: Just to add on that, in section 12 do we understand that a blueprint has been drawn up for this? We are still going to come back and talk about it. I think that one way forward that I have thought about – I do not know whether it would work right – is that last year, although we did not ‘officially’ do it, to have two-thirds of delegates elected and a third appointed could get round a lot of these problems, and that is actually what we did last year. Thank you. I hope you support the document. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I call North West & Irish Region.

BRO. S. BODEN (North West & Irish): I am speaking with the support of my branch and my region. I am also speaking in support of the CEC Report, *Congress Future Arrangements*. The year 2007 was my first attendance at Congress in Brighton. It was “Wow! Fantastic!” For lay delegates to have a say on the Union’s policy is the way forward. With the ever-changing economic and political climate at the moment, we must have a Congress that is adaptable and fit for purpose. As the CEC Report says, this is not a revolution but evolution. I call upon Congress to support this CEC Report and let’s think about the future. Thank you.

BRO. A. MOSS (North West & Irish): Congress, President and General Secretary, I want to talk about 5.5 in the rule change. What we want to see is, within that rule change, that there are calls for the exclusion of any member of the BNP Party to be added to that clause. It should not just be that the people can be disenfranchised from our Union. It should be that they are thrown out of the Union if they are members of the BNP. I would ask everyone to support that. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I call South Western, Yorkshire and then GMB Scotland.

SIS. A. LEADER (South Western): Congress, I am responding to the Special Report. Congress, the Report seeks both to recognise and reflect the valuable contributions made by all of our Union’s activists, irrespective of whether they are retired or are still in work. It seeks to achieve a sensible balance between those two categories when determining the composition of regional delegations to Congress. The key principle driving this report relates to widening the democracy of Congress, section elections and participation arrangements. The CEC recommendation to reduce the ratio between delegate places and numbers of fully financial members will assist in achieving this objective and in ensuring that the opportunity to take part in the vital policy and industrial decision-making processes is increased in showing that the make-up of regional delegations takes full account of gender, ethnic and sexual orientation considerations, which is also a crucial requirement.

Congress, the specific details within the report will doubtless provoke animated discussion and there is an obvious need to give careful consideration to all aspects of it. South Western Region welcomes the Report and the spirit and intention within it, and looks forward to consulting with branches and members in due course. Thank you.

BRO. R. ALDERMAN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Conference, I am speaking in support of the CEC Special Report on *Congress Future Arrangements*.

President and Congress, this Special Report shows a way forward for more of our younger trade union activists to get involved in Congress decision-making and, at the same time, not having any detrimental effect on our retired members' representation at Congress. We all know they do a sterling job within their region and pass on a wealth of experience to our younger activists within the trade union. It is essential that we get more younger activists involved in the future of our Union and Congress business. Please support.

SIS. C. LAVERY (GMB Scotland): Congress, I am responding to the CEC Special Report: *Congress Future Arrangements*. GMB Scotland welcomes this Special Report and the options set out. The report covers a wide range of issues, in particular the 25% drop in the number of elected Congress delegates from 383 in 1988 to 289 in 2008. Section 6 of the Report sets out clearly the value of our retired activists and the value of the contribution they can still make, but still exclude them from Congress.

Section 7 of the Report is equally as clear in stating that it is vital that key decisions are made predominantly by workplace representatives. The rationale behind this we will set out. The CEC's position to agree the recommendation to Congress and move to one Congress delegate per 1,500 fully financial members, as stated, will create the extra places ensuring that our retired activists play a key role at Congress, achieving a blend of developed maturity with the opportunity for the need of a youthful dynamic influence. GMB Scotland supports the Report and endorses the proposals set out in section 12 of agreeing in principle followed by regional consultation. This, we believe, will ensure the promotion of discussion, participation and, as the report concludes, a fresh perspective for consideration. GMB Scotland supports. (*Applause*)

BRO. A. NEWMAN (Southern): I am speaking to the CEC Report on *Future Conference Arrangements* on behalf of Southern Region.

Comrades and friends, during the past few years our Union has made great strides in recruiting more women workers, more BME, people of every race, creed, colour and members right across the age range. This is not just a question of fairness. It is also an important trade union principle that, as a general union, our membership must reflect the composition of the workforce, because otherwise, when we take forward the interests of our members, there is a danger that we are not taking forward the interests of every worker. So it is vitally important that we reflect an equalities agenda in our membership. It is also, therefore, vitally important that our membership, which is reflected in that

equalities agenda, is also reflected in the decision-making bodies of the Union. We commend the recommendations and the issues to your consideration in the Special Report. In particular, we welcome the idea that the larger branches can send more than one delegate. In the past, branches have had to choose between sending a delegate with experience and having to choose someone who is a new activist coming into the Union. To be able to send more than one delegate gets around that problem. We can work on both. We can perpetuate the experience and continue to bring people to Congress so that we can draw on their years and years of experience, but also bring forward people with passion and commitment. It is also important in any trade union that the decisions regarding issues reflecting the membership are made by people who the issues affect. Therefore, it is important that the majority of people at Congress and the decision-making bodies of the Union are people in work. Comrades, Southern Region supports this Special Report on *Future Conference Arrangements* and commends it to Congress. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I call Midland & East Coast Region and then Northern Region.

BRO. D. HOCKING (Midland & East Coast): Conference, I am speaking on the CEC Special Report: *Congress Future Arrangements*. President and Congress, the Midland & East Coast Region embraces this document and looks forward to the debate that will inevitably follow. In particular, the inclusion of a greater cross section of our membership and paying more attention to geographical selection. We also look forward to seeing a larger number of delegates who are still applying their trades and professions attending sectional conferences. However, as a word of caution. I hail from an engineering background, building gas turbines. A few years ago it was the Rolls Royce of gas turbines. But continuous improvements and alterations meant that this Rolls Royce was still a great machine but had started to develop problems, costing jobs and members. This we called “over engineering”. I hope that when we do start debating this document we remember that we must keep it simple, make it user-friendly and make it work. Don’t over-engineer it. I support. *(Applause)*

BRO. A. HARDY (Northern): I am speaking in support of the CEC Special Report: *Congress Future Arrangements*. The Northern Region fully supports the recommendations in this report. The additional places in the delegation will help young members in particular to come along and participate. It is also sensible to roll into one the election of delegates from both sectional conferences and Congress. The balance proposed between working members and retired members is a positive one. In that way we maintain all the experience and knowledge of our retired members whilst at the same time having up-to-date knowledge and experience of the workplace, thus providing the perfect combination. The Northern Region welcomes these proposals. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to speak against the Report? *(No response)* No. In that case, I call Paul Kenny to reply.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you, President. There are a couple of quick points to reply on. Glyn, if there any mistakes in it, you will make sure we get them right when we get back next year. This is an opportunity to deal with many of the issues that

you raised about excluding retired people from sectional conferences. At the moment, there is an imbalance. In some areas you end up with very, very few people who are actually working in the industry today at some sectional conferences, or parts of them, and in other areas we are excluded from all the experience of our retired members who actually have got a history to tell about the industry or about the particular company. You have to have that effective balance, and in many areas we just don't have it.

The 80% figure is only included as, effectively, to provoke a response. There are no tablets of stone. I want to be absolutely clear. There is no second report already written. There is no fait accompli. We will come through this on the basis of what we and you think are the right ways to proceed. There seems to be universal acceptance and agreement that expanding out the base of delegates at Congress is a pretty good idea. The National Finance Director has corrected me to say that when I said it was a 25% increase in Congress delegates, I was wrong. It is actually a 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ % increase. I am not precisely sure which region is going to provide the one-third, but that is why he is the finance director and I am not. He crunches the numbers. So I think all of the questions which you raise will be fathomed out.

In terms of the balance, one of the reasons we want to uniform the system of election across the whole union – we have a number of systems at the moment – is that there are areas of different regions which do not get delegates to Congress on a geographic basis. From the way the rule is written, that there is not actually a guarantee that industrial branches in certain areas will get members to Congress and that, clearly, as Congress delegates will also be sectional delegates, it actually needs to be re-written. So the reality of life is that by having a uniform system you can guarantee that you allocate the number of seats across the region to encompass the geographical situation. You don't want all the delegates coming from the cities and the areas outside the big cities would be ignored, because they have a whole range of particular issues. Having a universal system guarantees consistency of approach and ensures that we can cover the largest area both geographically and industrially that we can.

Arthur, I am going to come back to your point in a minute. There was an interesting intervention into this debate, although I suspect it might have been somewhere else, but I am going to come back to it. I think Ann, from South Western, made the really strong point about the issue of making sure that the skills, the commitment and the knowledge that the retired members and the long-serving activists are not lost. It is all very well with people, who sometimes have played no role in building up or maintaining the Union, shouting from the sidelines on the basis that it is only a relatively small number of activists that makes policy. I have got news for you. It always was. Who do you think turns out at branch meetings? Who do you think turns up, attends the meetings and looks after the members? It is not 100 per cent of the membership. I am sorry about it. It is a hard fact. A lot of people don't want to come to hear me because they want to go and watch *Eastenders*. Well, at a lot of the branch meetings I go to there is more life and death in them than there will ever be in *Eastenders*. So the truth of the matter is that the Union's direction and policy has always rested, as the work of the Union has always rested, on those key activists. I just do not buy into that almost New Labour-ish slant that

people tried to put on activists' engagement a few years ago that somehow if you have got to a certain age you are no longer of any use or support to the Union. I just don't buy that rubbish at all. The idea that Billy Hughes or Jan Smith for example, have less enthusiasm now than some other people is just a load of rubbish, and it should be seen as a load of rubbish. We don't throw out our jewels just because we want to reform. You include those in the system. So I am really pleased about that. I agree entirely with Andy from Southern Region. I think this is a golden opportunity to actually make the representation at Congress a lot more inclusive. It widens our base, it broadens our base, but ultimately what will happen is that you will now consider what you want. All of those enquiries will come back, the views of the branches and the regional councils. They will sift them with the Working Task Group, which is lay member dominated, I can assure you, and then next year at Congress that will become a report which you will take, decipher, carve-up and do what you so wish with. But what we want to end up with is a wider base at Congress involving more people both in the world of work and guarantee the rights of our committed retired activists.

Arthur, I do not want the point to go about the BNP. Let me be absolutely clear. Membership of the BNP is completely and utterly inappropriate with membership of the GMB. That is absolutely unequivocal. (*Applause*) If there are people who believe that the BNP is the political solution, then they can have no role to play. Not only don't we want them, but we will put a toe up their very large rears as fast as we can get our hands on them! They are incompatible with trade union membership. All our basic principles are completely at odds with them. When you think about people like Nick Griffin and the guy who got elected the other day, when you think about their backgrounds and what they have stood for, what they have consciously – I am not talking about being duped – proposed about race hatred, about attacks on other people's religions, including trade unionists, how could they possibly, how could they possibly have anything to give the trade union Movement? So we reject them. We reject them, their membership and their values.

Arthur, I said something last week after the Euro elections. They were simple words. They were that 65 years ago we sent an army to stop the Nazis coming from Europe to Britain and 65 years later we are exporting Nazis to Europe. It is a pretty awful moment. After I said that, I got tonnes of emails calling me all sorts of interesting names, including calling me "Irish scum" and that my family wouldn't know anything about fighting in wars. I wrote back to one guy. I actually don't believe any more in the argument of not taking them on because I think they have got to be exposed publicly. I think the argument that you ignore them is now dead. I think you have got to confront them. (*Applause*) So I wrote back to this interesting individual. He wrote and said that I was scum, basically. I think he wrote that I was an "Irish B..." or some sort. He drew that conclusion by the fact that my name is "Kenny". You can obviously tell from my accent that I come from Dublin. (*Applause*) Anyway, the upshot was that I wrote to him and I said, "I am proud of your dad". He said his dad has fallen. "I am really proud of your dad that he fought against the Nazis, against an evil leadership and their whole programme of genocide." I said that I am proud of him that he fought against that. I hope I have the courage when the time comes to do that. But as for my family knowing nothing about the war, my

grandfather fought in the First World War and my father fought in the Second World War. But never let facts get in the way of a good old bit of race hatred and bigotry, because that is what they are good at. Then he wrote back to me. He said: “Okay, fine, you’re all right, but it’s the immigrants we’re after.” My dad was Irish. He just didn’t get it, did he?

We are clear where we stand. However bad we ever get, however difficult our problems will be, we don’t need them and we don’t need them and their money. If the day ever comes that they get influence inside a British trade union that will be the time to walk away and start a new one. Let’s reject them for what they are: Maggots! That is all they are. They are Maggots which feed on the insecurity and fear of people. (*Applause and cheers*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Paul. Colleagues, I now put the Report to Conference. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against?

*The CEC Special Report: Congress Future Arrangements was adopted.*

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, before I go on to the next business, I have to go back on an issue that we have just dealt with. Malcolm Sage has moved the Special Rules. I ask Paul Kenny if he would second them?

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: I second.

THE PRESIDENT: I ask Congress now to re-vote, as you did, on the first seven. All those in favour please show? Anyone against?

*CEC Rule Amendments 1-7 were carried.*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I now move on to our next order of business. I will be calling Motion 3. I have been notified that Motion 6 has been withdrawn. Does Congress agree? (*Agreed*) I will then call Motion 7 and Motion 8. I will then be calling Bernie Taylor to reply on behalf of the CEC.

## **UNION ORGANISATION: CONGRESS**

### **MOTIONS**

#### **Motion 3**

### **3. MOTIONS**

Congress acknowledges that the current new regime of excluding motions to Congress because they are section specific in alternate years (Congresses with integrated section conferences) leads to a diminution of the understanding within the union as a whole of the issues which are important to its sections.

*(Withdrawn)*

SIS. P. ROSS (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I am speaking without the support of my region. President and Congress, when the branch was asked to withdraw this motion, my branch secretary said, "It's your last Congress. Do you mind being a bit controversial?", and I said, "No, it's my middle name." I know that people don't like change but you are, surely, allowed to review change and see whether or not it has achieved what it set out to do. Our Congress is the opportunity for ordinary members of with branch motions to have their say. I am told that the new system of integrating section conferences into Congress is very cost-effective. Having been a co-opted member of the old Energy & Utilities Section Committee for about ten years, if you check the figures, ours were probably the cheapest section conferences ever. For a start, at most having three women delegates, we never had to have a disco. However, with all the telescoping of the sections, we are in danger of losing the identity of small groups of members. Congress has usually been an opportunity for such groups to raise awareness of their issues and canvass support from the wider membership.

Do you remember the APEX Partnership? When they merged with the GMB it was written into the GMB Rule Book that they had a branch delegate section conference. Whatever happened to that? I know they had several caretaker national officers during their metamorphosis into the Commercial Services Section who did not know that that was in the rules, but when did it ever get written out? Did anyone get the opportunity to fight for it? Were the ordinary ex-APEX members alerted to it? There must be branches which are eligible who are wondering why they have not been invited to send delegates for a few years?

Although my pit has closed, I still represent the coal industry. If you look in the GMB Diary where have we gone? I have looked in vain for "Coal and the extractive industries". Not only do UK Coal Management and the other unions at the pits pretend we don't exist as a coal union, our own Union doesn't think that we exist either. On top of all of that, we are heading for a two day Congress in the future if all existing policy motions are remitted from the agenda. You know, believe it or not, I don't keep trudging to the podium because I like to hear the sound of my own voice, but because I am articulating the concerns of my branch which relies on me to remind you that we still have deep mines and GMB members work at them and down them. We try to make our motions on coal each time looking from a different angle, and we are disappointed that the CEC has deemed that our topic was already existing policy. As we get ever fewer pits, we get more desperate to fight for those which are left. Even if we are no longer in the GMB Diary, to have debated the motion might have made the general membership aware that we do still have members in coal, and there are a few other industries represented in this hall that will feel the same way about their members.

In submitting the motion, the branch was not wanting to tread on CEC sensibilities, well, not a lot, anyway, but it was wanting to speak up for ordinary members to ensure that we do not lose sight of the fact that it is the members who make the Union and not the other way round.

Another phrase no longer in the diary said: “The particular strength of a general union is that it gives to workers in any industry, however large or small, the combined support of all its members in all industries and services.” Reading the CEC’s Special Report on *Congress Future Arrangements* they are, obviously, not completely convinced by the new format either if they are spending any savings they have made on section conferences being incorporated and having more delegates to Congress in the future. Perhaps they can achieve their aims of including more workers if they had industry or section specific conferences and seminars when working members can attend them, such as at weekends. Not everyone can get a week off work. For me it has always been annual leave. We need to ensure that the changes achieve what they set out to do, not the cost-effective bit which was always obvious, but in terms of member satisfaction with the Union and how well the ordinary member in the branch feels that their interests are being represented.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Pam. Secunder?

BRO. I. KEMP (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I second Motion 3 without the support of the region.

President and Congress, look at any union banner, including our own, and what words do you see? You see “Unity is Strength”, “United We Stand” and our own, “Working Together”. Phrases like these say why we are in a union and explain the strength and principles of trade unionism. Our members joined for that unity and protection in numbers as a whole, not just for one small part of it. One of the benefits in the reduction in the number of sections to three is the increased potential for unity and knowledge between the workers in different industries. We can draw on each other. Let’s be honest. In the past we reduced any type of unity or concern for each other by the self-imposed Vulcanised structure that we had. It is bad enough fighting the bosses’ tactical divide and rule without imposing it on ourselves. There are a damned sight more things that unite us than divide us.

As activists we should always be aware of the issues that affect every member of this Union all of the time and not just every other year. With the reorganization of Congress and section conferences, we are in a learning curve. Let’s learn the lessons. Let’s move forward. Congress, support Motion 3. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Colleague, did I hear you say that you were speaking without the support of your region?

BRO. KEMP: Yes, President.

THE PRESIDENT: Pam, I did not hear you acknowledge that you were speaking without the support of your region? (*Calls of "She did"*) Did you? That is fine, because it is a bit muffled at the back. Thank you. Does anyone wish to speak in this debate? (*No response*) In that case, I call Gerry Ferguson to reply on behalf of the CEC?

BRO. G. FERGUSON (CEC, Manufacturing): President, the CEC is asking for the withdrawal of Motion 3 and asked that you oppose this motion if it is not withdrawn. Delegates, the motion is asking that you agree that the understanding of the issue that affects the Union as a whole has been diminished by the introduction of the integration of sectional conferences in Congress in alternative years. Congress, this is not the case. The integration of the section conferences arose out of a recommendation in the document *Framework for the Future*, adopted by Congress in 2006 in this very hall. These recommendations were drawn up by a task group taken from across the Union, including CEC members and non-CEC members. Full consultation took place on the task group's discussions.

Last year in Congress at Plymouth, we introduced the integration Congress programme. There was a lot of hard work and intense planning leading up to Congress 2008 to ensure that the business of the section conferences were successfully integrated into the Congress schedule. This result was from a very dynamic programme which also delivered considerable cost savings. All national secretaries reported back to the main Congress on the deliberations and discussions of the section conferences. Yes, lessons were learnt and it will be a lot easier next time.

In addition, the new GMB Magazine, which is now mailed to every member of the Union, keeps members as a whole updated about the breadth and depth of Union work on national issues, section conferences, section campaigns and local issues aimed at the region, not just once a year but every three months.

Delegates, the CEC is committed to continue the process of making Congress more dynamic, accessible and relevant to the members. This morning you have adopted the CEC Special Report on *Congress Future Arrangements*, which will widen democracy within this Union. Congress, this motion is asking us to go backwards and not forwards. We are asking for it to be withdrawn. If it is not withdrawn, we, the CEC, are asking you to oppose Motion 3. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gerry. Pam, do you want to use your right to reply? (*Declined*) Thank you. Pam, will you withdraw?

SIS. P. ROSS: Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: So Yorkshire & North Derbyshire is willing to withdraw. Does Congress agree? (*Agreed*)

*Motion 3 was withdrawn.*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, Motion 6 has been withdrawn by the region. I thank the region. They have notified Standing Orders. Does Congress agree to that? (*Agreed*)

*Motion 6 was withdrawn.*

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 7 is to be moved by Yorkshire & North Derbyshire. Then I will call Motion 8: Geographical Boundaries of the GMB.

## **UNION ORGANISATION: GENERAL**

### **WORKING TOGETHER WITH UNISON**

#### **Motion 7**

#### **7. WORKING TOGETHER WITH UNISON**

Congress acknowledges and supports our closer working arrangements with UNISON on matters of political or industrial issues affecting GMB members.

Whilst we support such working arrangements in principle, we believe also that, in practice, it is essential that local and regional dialogue between GMB and UNISON takes place in order to ensure closer working arrangements actually develop on the ground.

Congress believes such a dialogue should be initiated within each region of the GMB and its UNISON counterpart.

YORKSHIRE NO. 1 BRANCH  
*Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. R. ALDERMAN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I move Motion 7, Working Together with UNISON. President and Congress, we acknowledge and support the closer working with our colleagues at UNISON. It is all right until we try and put it into practice at ground level. They agree things at National and Regional, but by the time it gets down to ground level it all changes, because when it gets to ground level UNISON branches do their own thing, of which I believe that many colleagues in this room have had first hand experience. We need a way forward to explain to UNISON what dialogue and working together really means. But I suppose it would be like looking for rocking horse manure. When things are agreed at the national level, UNISON branches ignore it and do their own thing, which causes a great problem to our members on the ground, both our lay delegates and shop stewards who are trying to represent our members to make sure that they get a fair deal. It is not happening. All that we ask for is that what is happening at national and regional level is passed down to the local branches and make UNISON fully aware what “Working Together” means. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Can I have a seconder?

SIS. A. SMITH (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and first-time speaker, so bear with me. In seconding Ray's motion, we recognise the work already being done between GMB and UNISON. However, there should be a firm commitment from regions and branches if this is to be an equal deal. From my experience as branch secretary to Sheffield Health branch, in the Sheffield teaching hospitals we have no recognition whatsoever, and this is mainly because of the UNISON branch there. That is what I am trying to get across. This motion should be supported because we have to get a commitment from UNISON to support the other trade union which is GMB. I would like you all to support this motion so that they make life easier for me in our branch. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: That wasn't so bad, was it, Angela? Well done.

## **GEOGRAPHICAL BOUNDARIES OF THE GMB**

### **Motion 8**

#### **8. GEOGRAPHICAL BOUNDARIES OF THE GMB**

This Congress instructs the CEC to address the issues of Regional Boundaries forthwith.

The current situation of boundaries dividing cities, such as in the case in London, is plainly ridiculous. Therefore the CEC must present to Congress 2010 a plan for re-drawing the boundaries, with a view to correcting this situation and making our Union more effective and efficient.

SOLO BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. S. MCKENZIE (London): Comrades, brothers and sisters, I move Motion 8. We have made a very important decision this morning which has taken this Union forward in relation to the passing of this report. I think we have also got some work to do in tidying up the organization of the Union. I must admit that when I joined this Union I was a little surprised, being a member of the London Region, to find out that places like Ipswich and Norwich were in London, and south of the river, places like Southwark, Lewisham and Greenwich, places where I live and have worked for most of my life, are evidently not in London. I couldn't understand this, and I think that anyone who actually lives in London would get rather confused by it. There could have been a logical reason as to why things were organized in this way, and I was very open-minded about it, but when you start to apply trade unionism in practice in the workplace at a regional level, most unions, and maybe it is local government or something of that nature, where you are in joint discussions with the other unions before you go in to meet the employers, they will have a London Region as part of a big southern and eastern region or London will be on its own, because that is the way most employers, whether it is local government, the Health Service, commercial services or manufacturing tend to organize themselves. We are already at a disadvantage because we have got two different regions which are

autonomous of one another. We have got to meeting with ourselves because we meet with the other unions before we meet with the employers. We are already at a disadvantage. So I think, practically, the geography of this Union makes our task more difficult. It certainly does in London. I am not an expert on this subject. That is why we have put into this resolution that we would like the CEC to look at it and to come back with proposals for improving the situation in the next year.

I believe that if they were to do that and sensible proposals were to come forward that are acceptable to everyone and to go through, another giant step would have been taken to take this Union forward. Please support this motion. We are only asking that you have a look at it. Thank you.

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

BRO. T. FLANAGAN (London): I am from the GMB Professional Drivers Revolutionary Group, evidently, but in reality Professional Drivers. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I would take it gently, because by the time you get off, we may be opposing.

BRO. FLANAGAN: As to these boundaries, you might ask “What does a Cockney know about anything north of the River?” Well, not a lot, as it happens. But in my new role I have been travelling all over the place, and when I get to Hull I think, “Oh, this is Yorkshire”, but no, “This is Midlands & East Coast”. It is very confusing and I think it does lead to complications. I know that it is going to lead to squeaky bum time for some regional secretaries. Never mind, if we are going to have to get the Union properly efficient, then we are going to have to look at some of this.

I really think that Steve has hit the nail on the head. We are not saying that you should redraw the boundaries irrationally, but let’s have a look at them and let’s see if we can improve the recruitment and let’s see if it works for the benefit of the Union. If it doesn’t, we won’t do it, quite obviously, but if it does we need to have the debate and see how we are going to arrange it. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to speak in opposition to Motion 7 and/or Motion 8?

MR. A. MOSS (North West & Irish Region): President and General Secretary, I am speaking against Motion 7, Working Together with UNISON. Well, that is derogatory in its own terms. I want to take you back to last year when the public sector had a wage offer which we felt was derogatory but, unfortunately, the GMB accepted it. The T&G, or as I call them “the Thick Gits” and UNISON got together and decided to vote against it and they decided to go on strike. In Liverpool we were opposed so were UNISON, believe it or not. Liverpool is one of the biggest regions in their union. Most of the 200,000 people in the region voted against going on strike, but went along with the party whip and went on strike. What we ended up with was the biggest farce that you have ever

seen in your life. Liverpool had more GMB members on strike than there were UNISON. We wouldn't cross the picket line. They put one up and 50 of us never turned up. That is what they did. They put one in every area and we didn't cross the picket line but they did.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, no!

BRO. MOSS: Then we had a meeting. We had this get together meeting with UNISON, and at that get together meeting, they actually told us that they were happy to do what they did. What we said was, "Why didn't you tell us? We had homes that weren't covered; we had the elderly who weren't covered; special schools that weren't covered." We asked them if they could tell us a bit earlier so that we could arrange our members to look after these people, because as far as we were concerned we weren't going to let them down. What did they do. They said right to our faces, "We weren't going to tell you, anyway." They told us at 5 o'clock that night. Our members had to scurry round in Liverpool looking after the elderly. I opposed this get together with them. Yes, we have a better relationship with branches than we ever do with national. Please oppose this motion. You don't want to get into bed with a group of people who you can't trust. Thanks very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Alan. I get the feeling that you are not keen on this motion somehow. Is there anyone else who wishes to speak?

SIS. D. PETERSON (London): President, can I just clarify? You did say that we could speak in opposition against Motion 7, did you?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

SIS. PETERSON: I am speaking in opposition to Motion 7. I remember years ago going to plenty of public service conferences where UNISON was counted as a swear word. I am not looking at anybody in particular, but she will know who I mean. In our branch at Camden UNISON actively try and poach our members. They actively try and make a nuisance of themselves in negotiations with the council always against us. So I think that to say now that we want to work in unison with UNISON, if you will pardon the pun, is going backwards and not forwards. When we had the chance to work actively with T&G, who we have always got on well with, that was not accepted. So I oppose this motion. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Dott. I also feel that you are not happy with the resolution. Anyone else? Does anyone wish to speak against Motion 8? No? Okay. Bernie, I did not slip up this time!

BRO. B. TAYLOR (CEC, Manufacturing): First of all, we are seeking support for Motion 7 with a statement, and also support for Motion 8 with a qualification.

As far as Motion 7 is concerned, it is asking for a regional dialogue with UNISON. We actually do that at the moment and for the past 18 months the GMB and UNISON have been working closely together. Both unions can fight effectively industrial-wise but when we get together we have enormous strength and power, especially on issues relating to pensions and employment rights, and pay issues. There are also other issues to do with social care, especially in the public and private sector. Politically we can work together and we can support each other to fight discrimination, inequality, and unemployment, and again we have been very successful on that. I know one of our colleagues has been up and is opposed. All right, often we will get disagreement from time to time but overall we work very well together and as we always say, *United we stand, Divided we fall*. I think that stands very much as far as this is concerned.

As far as Motion 8 is concerned, which is asking about regional boundaries, this was actually put to Congress last year and it was defeated. There is one particular issue that has to do with crossover of membership but as far as boundaries are concerned the CEC and the senior management team will obviously look at that. As far as we are concerned at the moment we have no intentions of changing the boundaries of the Union. Again, we would ask that you support both 7 and 8 with the qualifications that I have put before you. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Bernie. Does Yorkshire & North Derbyshire accept the statement? Speak to Mary. Does the mover accept the statement? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Motion 8, does London Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Can I put Motions 7 and 8 to the vote, please? Thank you. North West, pack it up over there!

*Motion 7 was carried.*

*Motion 8 was carried.*

## **UNION ORGANISATION: REPRESENTATION & ACCOUNTABILITY**

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REPRESENTATIVES**

#### **MOTION 17**

##### **17. ENVIRONMENTAL REPRESENTATIVES**

Congress calls on the CEC to look at appointing environmental representatives or make it part of the role of the health and safety representative. This will make the GMB take the lead on environmental matters in the workplace.

BRIGHTSIDE BRANCH  
*Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. N. SAWYER (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress is aware of the environmental issues such as, for example, the ice caps melting, or the Indonesian tsunami, etc. This shows a drastic change of weather climate throughout the world, even in Gt. Britain recently with the flooding Sheffield. Environmental representatives should

be in place to assist companies in managing both theirs and our responsibilities nationally and globally, with a view to improving the current world life situations on environmental issues. Although Health & Safety reps are in place and at the forefront, it is all our responsibilities to save the planet. I move this motion. (*Applause*)

BRO. P. BROWNE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire) seconded the motion. He said: In the current financial crisis green technology and environment look like being two of government ways of kick-starting and maintaining the economy with its pledge of 100,000 new sustainable jobs. Let us try to be ahead of the Government in understanding and implementing the changes in our workplaces so that when things eventually pick up again we can hold them to their promises by having reps who are conversant with the changes. I ask you to support the motion. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Congress, the CEC are supporting the motion.

*Motion 17 was carried.*

## **REGIONAL SECRETARY’S REPORT: NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION**

**(PAGES 103-112)**

### **NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION**

#### **1. MEMBERSHIP AND RECRUITMENT**

<b>FINANCIAL MEMBERSHIP</b>	
Section Financial Membership (by each Section):	
COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION	25,519
MANUFACTURING SECTION	25,402
PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION	40,135
Grade 1 members	61,899
Grade 2 members	16,463
Retired, Reduced Rate & Others	10,694
Male Membership	51,759
Female Membership	37,297
Total number recruited 1.1.2008 – 31.12.2008	14,142
Increase/Decrease 1.1.2008 – 31.12.2008	1,028 increase
Membership on Check-off	58,109
Membership on Direct Debit	18,362

#### **Response to the Organising Agenda**

The North West & Irish Region continues to address the challenges of the merging of two Regions, but we are pleased to report that the vast majority of the membership, activists, officers and staff have embraced the change and are working to take the Region forward.

GMB @Work continues to be core to all activist initial support training, follow on training and officer training.

We are gradually moving away from the old fashioned out-moded large general branches to smaller workplace branches, which puts ownership back to the activists, stewards and members and gives them a far clearer set of objectives and aims that are more transparent and easier to follow any gains/losses and act on them at a much faster pace. Certainly some of our bigger workplace memberships, Manchester City Council, G4S, Cheshire County Council, Wilkinsons and soon Asda Distribution Centres, have found it far more workable and we have seen a renewed enthusiasm amongst activists and many new faces not only coming forward for nominations for Congress, but also relishing being able to take a more active role in the Region.

A major success has been the recognition agreement signed in Northern Ireland with Four Seasons Care Homes which has not only secured a sizeable membership in the 64 homes but also looks likely to expand to cover the whole of the UK.

In accordance with decisions from previous Congresses, the Region has actively promoted lay representative participation at both national and local level and greater emphasis has been placed on their roles and responsibilities which the Region believes will greatly assist in the development of the activist and provide a stronger and better-equipped workforce.

All areas of organisation have been looked at from the perspective of giving value to the organisation of the Region.

We have a leavers' report produced which allows us to secure some retention in a cost effective way and are monitoring expenditures such as administration charges with a view to producing on-going savings for the Region.

A new Regional Website has been developed which is much more user friendly than previously and has had a favourable response. It is particularly useful in highlighting good news stories, major changes in employment rights/laws and profiling Regional/National campaigns.

The merger of the Trade Union formerly known as ASU has been an interesting challenge that has been achieved with considerable patience and persistence and hard work. The GMB @ Work organising agenda was delivered to many former ASU reps and was well received with extremely positive feedback. Further training both nationally and regionally is planned to complete the restructuring of the membership into the various Regions.

All officers have rota'd stand down days and if they are not assigned school visits or Southern Cross homes then they are expected to use the mapping exercises they have undertaken with their activists/ reps to consolidate existing workplaces, or work on Regional/National targets, all of which is recorded on weekly activity reports and fed into the Regional Organising Team.

Public Services, in particular local government, continues to dominate our organising agenda with the focal point being single status and equal pay. The regional picture on single status continues to be mixed in that whilst some local authorities, such as Chester City Council, Cheshire County Council, Manchester City Council and Pendle implemented single status a number of years ago, lay representatives and organisers are still involved in negotiations on implementation in a number of authorities including Liverpool City Council, Sefton MBC, Salford and Bolton.

The northwest area of the Region currently has 5,000+ claims for equal pay lodged at Tribunal on behalf of its local government membership. The claims are against most of the area's local authorities with the largest group against Liverpool City Council – approximately 1,500.

Working with the Region's solicitors we are attempting to negotiate settlements above the matrix offers (which have become standard across the region). We continue to use the regional magazine and localised newsletters/bulletins to ensure the GMB's position regarding equal pay is known throughout the Region.

We are continuing to look at the best way to deliver the organising agenda in the NHS by holding meetings with lead reps in the Trusts and also by sending out regular updates on issues such as RPA, Agenda for Change in 2008. He has endeavoured to identify new reps where we have none across both the Trusts and the job groups where we have membership. Meetings were held with NIAS reps from ASU to develop the agenda within this workplace.

Councils across Northern Ireland have been instructed by government to carry out a comprehensive review of how services can be better delivered in the future, with particular emphasis being placed on a more cohesive approach whilst at the same time trying to provide good efficient public services. A huge saving will be achieved by way of the fact that the twenty-six councils presently delivering local government services will be reduced to eleven within the next three years. We have already become already involved in a series of meetings shaping the future terms and conditions for our members whom would be come subjected to these changes.

We are taking every opportunity to ensure that the GMB is better recognised and that we become better strategically placed to avail of recruitment opportunities within the newly formed councils in the future.

The Region has seen continued growth in DHL/G4S and Asda, both in retail and distribution. Recognition agreements have been achieved at Veolia, Blackpool, at Resource in Northern Ireland and at Avon Buses.

Many Greenfield sites are currently being targeted across the whole of Ireland with a long term goal of establishing operational arrangements in the South to allow future plans for growth and expansion to come to fruition.

The Region had been seeing a significant downturn in this section as early as August 2008 and had some concerns that the TUC seemed to be on the back foot somewhat when it came to collating statistics to develop a regional response to any "potential" recession. It really seemed no one took it seriously until the South was affected.

As manufacturing jobs disappeared we are almost seeing a repeat of the demise of the clothing and textile industry and the next 12 months will see extreme challenges in this section.

### **Recruitment and Campaigns**

The Region's recruitment strategy follows the principles laid down in GMB @ Work and a similar process is followed as that used by the National Organising Team when considering regional recruitment targets.

Despite recognising the progress made we are not complacent and as we move forward we will continue to review and modify our approach to recruitment in an effort to ensure that our policies and practices are reflected in membership growth.

Throughout last year the Region's recruitment strategy involved a combination of direct Officer recruitment activity as well as branch consolidation involving Officers and activists at all levels. We have recently added two more Officers to our Organising Team bringing us back up to four with full time dedicated admin support and the leadership of a Senior Organiser. The team are all based in our Runcorn office where they plan, prepare and action recruitment activity for both the team itself and all other Officer teams. The Officer teams work mainly in pairs on weekly rota'd stand down days.

Targets are identified by the team and in addition to National Organising Team targets other local targets are fed through by Officers and branches.

Long term Regional Targets last year (Jan – Dec figures) were as follows:

TARGET	MEMBERS RECRUITED
Schools	401 (Sep Dec)
Southern Cross	378
G4S	260
Four Seasons	639 (11 months)
ASDA	479
Wilkinsons	63 (part year)

In 2008 we focused most of our recruitment efforts on Public Services, particularly schools. All Officers will continue to be involved in direct recruitment activity and branch consolidation will remain a priority as will the application of GMB @ Work.

For all the above targets with the exception of schools the Region's figures are in the top quartile of all regions figures nationally.

### **Economic and Employment Situation**

The North West covers an area of 14,165 km<sup>2</sup> with a population of 6.8 million (working age population is 4.2 million). According to Government Office for the North West, it is "a region of contrasts covering the 5 areas of Greater Manchester, Merseyside, Cheshire, Cumbria and Lancashire. The region is larger than several EU countries, and has a diverse mix of people representing many ethnic groups. Four-fifths of the region is rural, but around sixty per cent of the population live in the 2 core conurbations of Greater Manchester and Merseyside.

The region generates 11% of the UK's Gross Domestic Product, despite a decline in traditional manufacturing and engineering industries. New industries are growing - the Region has the biggest film and television production industry outside London and Manchester Airport is the largest outside the South East. Areas such as Cheshire, southern Greater Manchester, Liverpool and Manchester City centres continue to grow, but many communities have yet to see the fruits of this urban renaissance. This is reflected in the continued presence of North West neighbourhoods high in the Indices of Deprivation (GONW 2007).

The North West is a £106 billion economy (Office for National Statistics 2006). Historically, it has under-performed compared with the UK economy, but in recent years the region has been growing faster than the England average. The Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA) points out that "the region is home to a diverse range of internationally competitive sectors. These are knowledge-based, widely traded, have international potential and account for around 55% of the North West's GVA. The NWDA invests heavily in these sectors to develop higher value activity, increase business formation, improve productivity, and identify future growth opportunities from converging markets and technologies. The region has created a net additional 150,000 new jobs in the past few years although many of these have been low paid, often part-time jobs, in the service sector.

It is reported that the North West economy declined at it's fastest for at least 12 years during December 2008 with substantial job losses and marked reductions in output. The rate of contraction was faster than the UK average as the crisis in financial and credit markets restricted the flow of new business. Reports said difficulties for the automotive and construction sectors were having a bigger impact on other businesses.

Meanwhile Greater Manchester Chamber's quarterly economic survey showed almost a quarter of manufacturers expect to axe staff over the next three months. Confidence has deteriorated generally and service businesses also expect redundancies. Bury Council have issued an HR1 with a loss of 4000 employees with GMB losses expected to be approximately 22- further discussions are taking place. Southway Housing has also started consultation on a restructure where there may be redundancies.

The current national unemployment rate is 6.1% and the national claimant rate is 3.0%. Across the Region the rate is as follows:

Northwest - 3.5% Northern Ireland - 3.3%

The Region has twenty-eight areas above the national claimant rate.

Blackburn & Darwen	3.8%	Wigan	-	3.8%	
Blackpool	-	4.6%	Wirral	-	4.3%
Bolton	-	3.7%	Ballymoney	-	3.3%
Halton	-	4.7%	Belfast	-	4.5%
Knowsley	-	5.5%	Coleraine	-	3.7%
Liverpool	-	6.3%	Cookstown	-	3.2%
Manchester	-	4.3%	Craigavon	-	3.1%
Oldham	-	3.8%	Derry	-	5.2%
Rochdale	-	4.1%	Down	-	3.2%
Salford	-	3.8%	Limavady	-	5.2%
Sefton	-	4.0%	Moyle	-	4.4%
St Helens	-	4.1%	Newry & Morne	-	3.1%
Tameside	-	3.6%	Omagh	-	3.2%
Warrington	-	3.0%	Strabane	-	5.5%

The Region has seen a significant knock-on effect as a result of losses in JCB on Thomas Storey Fabrications, closure at Rolls Royce, Greenberg Glass, Chemix, Bernsteins going into administration with the loss of 250 jobs and Hansen's Brick mothballing a site due to the virtual halt in construction.

The problems faced by the car industry has also had serious knock-ons with manufacturers who supply seats, cables, components to the industry. On top of this many local authorities are seeking to shed large numbers of staff. It bears repeating that the next 12 months are going to be extremely challenging.

## 2. GENERAL ORGANISATION

Regional Senior Organisers	6
Membership Development Officers	0
Regional Organisers	26
Organising Officers	0
No. of Branches	256
New Branches	14
Branch Equality Officers	25
Branch Youth Officers	7

### 3. BENEFITS

Dispute	-
Total Disablement	-
Working Accident	8,384.95
Occupational Fatal Accident	-
Non-occupational Fatal Accident	-
Funeral	33,408.00

### 4. JOURNALS AND PUBLICITY

Officers and lay representatives across the Region have successfully used all forms of local media to address and highlight national and regional GMB issues and campaigns. National press releases have been welcomed and are tailored accordingly to fit regional activity and as such we have been regularly called upon to comment on local radio and television. In Northern Ireland the media has been used to cover recent disputes in education and also in relation to William Hill betting shops. This has undoubtedly assisted recruitment in such areas. The media in Northern Ireland has also been utilised to highlight the lack of funding in the independent care sector. This in turn enabled our Members to see that they would directly benefit from any improved funding provided by Government. Such positive initiatives in Northern Ireland have been complemented by the provision of periodical newsletters to members in various sectors of industry and have been warmly welcomed by Members.

The Regional Magazine, Fusion has been extremely well received by Members in the region and has been a powerful vehicle to reinforce and complement national messages and issues such as equal pay as well as highlighting the excellent successes and work of regional lay officials, staff and officers. The magazine has also been a useful tool to highlight GMB services and legal successes. The regional Asda articles and ongoing excellent updates in the magazine have been extremely well received by members and have complemented regular mail shots to Asda members about matters of national and regional importance.

The welcomed production of a simplified TU56 form has made for a faster, more efficient legal system for members at stressful times.

The Region has placed regular advertisements in Big Issue in the North, Congress publications as well the Morning Star conference editions greetings.

The Region was proud to play its part along with the NW TUC in the 2008 European Capital of Culture celebrations in Liverpool. Events sponsored included a photography exhibition of workers through the years, a trade union history walk and sponsorship of a superlambanana.

Regional lay representatives, staff and officers were proud to support, help write, produce and star in a much acclaimed play about an industrial dispute which led to the jailing of 37 shipbuilding workers as it received its premiere showing in the Novas CUC Theatre this year. The play, entitled '30 Days in Walton Jail', is part of a regional GMB proud campaign in support of the jailed workers. The 37 trade unionists, some of whom helped write the play, spent a month in jail as a result of the 1984 dispute. The main thing the campaign sought to highlight is compensation for all workers involved in the 1984 dispute and a public apology from the government for their wrongful imprisonment. The play was warmly received by a packed audience and media across the Region.

The merger of the ASU, former Ambulance Service Union with the GMB gave rise for positive publicity opportunities at the Ambex (Ambulance Service) Conference in Harrogate. Thanks to former senior ASU Officials and GMB Officers combined expertise and new and positive impressive promotional literature and

materials, new members were attracted as well as excellent opportunities for networking. Welcome literature was also sent from the Region to every former ASU member and new website material has also supported the excellent combined hard work of lay officials, staff and officers.

The Regional Annual Women's Conference continued to go from strength to strength attracting the President of the National TUC and the President of the GMB and welcomed delegates from around the regions. Local media celebrities provided dramatic, innovative and thought provoking performances on difficult topics such as violence and the devastating effects on lives and how if not tackled they can spill over into the workplace. Many first time delegates welcomed this friendly, relaxed approach to understanding more about the work of the GMB and the role of women in the GMB.

A newly designed, named and updated regional website has been formed and branch websites and newsletters are actively encouraged throughout the Region.

Regional media training is constantly reviewed and offered to support activists and officers.

Excellent media coverage has been captured on a range of national and regional issues. Extensive GMB public service media coverage included local government disputes over pay, council tax collections, cuts in services, loss of jobs at Oldham Council, scrapping of free parking at Preston Council, Trafford Council job cuts, Manchester City Congestion charges campaign, free school meals campaign for primary school children across the UK, temporary agency workers charges in local government, equal pay claims, NHS staff and pay matters/ potential strikes, affordable housing, overspending at Bolton Council and ambulance service mismanagement.

Other extensive media coverage was captured over the following GMB regional matters: Akzo Nobel and Crown Paint job cuts, potential airport strikes, Bolton copper workers pay dispute, Cammell Laird pay dispute, the closure of an historic brickworks at Accrington – Hanson Bricks, Legal Services Commission job losses, pensions, energy windfall taxes on greedy energy privateers superprofits, affordable housing and Labour Party funding.

## 5. LEGAL SERVICES

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

Applications for Legal Assistance	Legal Assistance Granted
1162	1162

#### Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Court	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
3	232	Nil	581 £3,352,972.78	Nil	£3,352,972.78
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2008		2,445			

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

Claims supported by Union	39
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### Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Tribunal	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
7	1	Nil	6 £13,824.72	Nil	£13,824.72
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2008		114			

#### (c) Other Employment Law Cases

Supported by Union	Unsuccessful	Damages/ Compensation	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008
5,000 Equal Pay Claims			5,000

#### (d) Social Security Cases

Supported by Union	Successful	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008
1	Nil	3

## 6. EQUALITY & INCLUSION

It has been another busy and productive year for the Region's RERAC. Attendance has been modest and RERAC has run some very successful campaigns that commenced mid 2007 and came to an end in 2008.

Below is a brief summary of the region's campaigns and events:-

### Manchester Pride

This is the third year the Region has been represented at the Manchester Pride event, with RERAC organising and staffing the event throughout. Funding for this event is donated by branches, with the Region subsidising any shortfall. Again this event did modestly increase membership within the Region and raises the profile of our Region within the North West.

### Stockport Women's Centre

Stockport Women's Centre provides a safe environment within which women can meet and rebuild their lives, having suffered from domestic violence. The Centre has been very successful in targeting many women that other agencies have found it difficult to reach, due to health, economic, age or social reasons. Branches generously donated towards this worthy cause, culminating in raising £300 which paid for the women and their families to enjoy the Christmas season with a traditional pantomime. Also donated was a much needed sewing machine for the Centre's Arts & Crafts section. The Centre provided the GMB with very positive publicity in their magazine and within the Centre itself.

### Regional Equality Banner

RERAC successfully ran this appeal during 2007/08 and have now commissioned a regional equalities banner which covers all the equality strands.

The banner has already been used at several regional events and the design chosen means that it will still be suitable for the newly formed regional equality forum.

### Refuse Campaign

This campaign is ongoing but appears to have lost some of its momentum during 2008, primarily due to various charities competing for old mobile phones. Nevertheless, we will continue as a Region to promote and support this worthy cause.

### Women's Conference

Another successful women's conference run by our Education Department. This year's theme was bullying and harassment and the lively agenda included many guest speakers who each spoke covering different angles of the subject, ranging from personal experiences, legal views to a satirical view.

### Cultural Cohesion Event

The Region's RERAC and RRAC were given priority to attend the Cultural Cohesion event which was organised by our Education Department in partnership with the TUC. The event was aimed at raising awareness and skills of representatives.

### Regional Equality Forum

Initially the Region delayed this hoping for more guidance from the National Forum but work is now underway within the Region to form a new regional Equality Forum that will mirror and complement our new national equality structure. The new Forum will be in place early February 2009.

The Region has been represented at all TUC conferences and events that have taken place, with the exception of the Women's seat but this has been addressed and the North West will be represented in this seat in 2009.

Finally, work is ongoing to update the Equality Section in our regional website and it is hoped by March 09 to complete this, with all the new structures in place. As well as the regional website, the Region's Equality sections have been promoted within the regional magazine and efforts are being made to improve this area also.

Ethnic breakdown in the North West is as follows:

1	black female	1	black male
11	white female	10	white male

## 7. TRAINING

(a) GMB Courses Basic Training					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total StudentDays
Introduction to GMB (10 days)	14	141	37	178	1780
GMB/ASU Induction (5 days)	1	20	-	20	100
GMB @ WORK	15	161	37	198	396

(b) On Site Courses (please specify subjects)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Organisation for Negotiation (3 days)	3	28	1	29	87
Communication (2 days)	1	10	6	16	32
Grievance & Disciplinary (3 days)	3	29	14	43	129
Branch Organisation (1 day)	1	5	2	7	7
Bullying and Harassment (2 days)	3	32	5	37	74
Pensions (2 day)	2	13	2	15	30
Tutor Review Day (1 day)	1	4	6	10	10
Induction for ASU Reps (2 days)	2	25	3	28	56
Women's Inter. Day (1 day)	1	2	20	22	22
TUPE (1 day)	1	19	6	25	25
Two-Tier Workforce (1 day)	3	21	5	26	26

(c) Health & Safety Courses (please specify subjects)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
H&S Inspection (2 days)	3	28	5	32	64

(d) Other Courses (please specify subjects / weekdays/ weekends)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Women's Conference (2 days)	1	8	72	80	160
Cultural Cohesion (1 day)	1	16	8	24	24
ULR (5 days)	2	10	2	12	60
First Steps to Tutoring (5 days)	1	3	3	6	30

(e) TUC (STUC & ICTU) Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Combination of 10 day & short courses		33	6	39	390

## 8. HEALTH & SAFETY

Regional initiatives include working in partnership with employers e.g. Asda, Heinz, Wincanton, Robert McBride. Also supporting Safety reps through workplace visits and raising the profile of the GMB Organising around Health & Safety.

Asda Hyde store piloted a new health and safety initiative introducing signage at the back of house in warehouse. GMB were invited to meet with Training officer/Manager, to discuss safe systems of work. This was a successful visit which builds on a working together approach with Asda, something we or they are not used to doing. Management at the store have welcomed our input and we are looking forward to building on this in the future.

Ongoing projects include, Cash and Valuables in Transit (CVIT) Project, an initiative driven by the HSE, and partnered by GMB, Local Authorities. Greater Manchester Police, G4S and other service providers in the Industry, this project seeks to bring together all stakeholders.

The (CVIT) Project which is a project initiative between HSE, Local authorities, Greater Manchester Police and stakeholders. The project will involve CVIT guards, of which a substantial number will be GMB members. Initially the aim is to work with CVIT companies operating in the Greater Manchester area, but the ultimate aim is to influence the industry nationwide. Nationally there is over 10,000 staff employed as CVIT guards. The British Security Industry Association (BSIA) state that in 2007 there was over 10,000 incidents nationwide involving CVIT. In the past 6 years there have been 145 serious injuries to CVIT guards. The outcome desired and objectives will be looking to make improvements in health, safety and wellbeing of employees engaged in this work. CVIT staff and also staff in financial and retail premises receiving cash.

The theme of this years' Workers Memorial Day, was Occupational Health and a number of events were held across the Region. In Manchester the GMB Safety Rep from Asda, Shaun Buckley, spoke on behalf of the GMB and gave an excellent speech on ongoing issues at his workplace around manual handling problems. The event brought around 200 workers together and Tony Lloyd MP contributed to the event, as always. An event was held at Regional Office and for staff and local reps, led by the Regional President. Reps north of the Region attended a joint union event at Preston City Centre, which was well attended by GMB Union. Local reps and staff at our Holywood Office, held a minutes silence in recognition of those who died at work.

We have for some time been liaising with the Health @ Work Organisation and have been talking to them on initiatives that will address issues within the workplace such as health and well-being and alcohol awareness, diet, smoking. These initiatives involve working constructively with employers on behalf of our members.

*(Adopted)*

*The report was formally moved.*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Formally moved. Thank you, Paul. Any questions on Paul's report? No? Accept that report? *(Agreed)*

*Regional Secretary's Report: North West & Irish Region (pages 103-112) was adopted.*

**INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: PUBLIC SERVICES  
SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF  
COMPOSITE MOTION 10**

**C10. COVERING MOTIONS**

- 115. SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF (South Western Region)
- 116. SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF (London Region)

## SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF

This Congress has concerns that school support staff are fulfilling the role of the class room teachers, i.e. Higher Learning Teaching Assistants (HLTA), in one case an HLTA on a 37 hour working week, 90% of a week with no teacher support at all..

HLTA's are teaching pupils for a qualification in GCSE that they themselves have not got.

HLTA's are taking classes with LSA's (Learning Support Assistant) with no teacher support and planning classes without teacher input. We would also like to see listed the amount of hours laid down on how many hours per week support staff are to cover a class without teacher support.

They continue to be employed on temporary or fixed term contracts – those employed on a permanent basis still face the annual attack on their hours due to school budget constraints.

Many Teaching Assistants who have special needs skills continue to be employed via funding for a specific child face either reduction in hours or termination of employment when that child changes school. Teachers are leaving school employment only to be replaced by an HLTA, with no attempt at replacing the teacher or using supply teachers. We feel that support staff are being abused purely for savings on School budgets and the knock on effects are the pupil's education and indeed the support staff are fulfilling roles that they are not trained or paid for.

We even have one example in the South Western Region where a school which has overspent is now proposing to cut the Teaching Assistant's hours **and** down grade them through the job evaluation process!

The Workforce Agreement Monitoring (WAMG) has guidelines in force, but we feel that there are grey areas that need urgent attention, locally and national i.e. what is a group of pupils, and what is a class. One Head teacher insists that a group is up to 28 pupils.

Hopefully once the national joint committee for school support staff is in place these specific issues can be addressed. Until then we call upon Congress to continue to highlight the inequality of this group of workers who are predominately low paid, part time women workers.

To conclude, Congress we ask you to support this motion.

*(Carried)*

**BRO. H. BURGESS (London):** Congress has concern for school support staff not only as a local issue but a national problem. The National Union of Teachers also shares our concern but from a teacher's point of view. School support staff are in the post to work alongside and assist teaching staff. This is reflected by their wages which is around two-thirds less than the teacher. We find that in some schools as teachers are leaving they are not being replaced by teachers or indeed teaching supply staff, which is a cost of between £100 and £150 a day. These roles are being filled by support staff. For example, higher learning support assistants are working a 37-hour week, 32 of these hours taking a class on their own, and sometimes with a learning support assistant supporting them. Remember, at this time they are teaching subjects in GCSEs that they themselves do not

have. Their concerns are not about themselves but the pupils they are teaching and their education and future.

The Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group (known as WAMG) has guidelines in force but there are too many grey areas that need urgent attention. For example, one teaching assistant complained about the amount of people she was teaching, which was a group of 30. The head teacher said, no, a group is 28 and a class is 30. What is a group and what is a class? This is nothing less than abuse of the staff and I strongly urge that you get behind these staff and campaign on the misuse of the support staff.

Along with our colleagues in the South Western Region some teaching assistants require special needs skills to teach pupils on a one-to-one basis. They are on fixed and short-term contracts. When a pupil moves on the contract is over unless there is another pupil to fill a place. While we all agree that the building blocks are being laid for the school support negotiating body and we are also aware of the current agreement, we feel this is an issue that Congress needs to support. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: South Western Region to second.

BRO. C. JONES (South Western) seconding Composite Motion 10, said: Vice President, Congress, the extent of the responsibilities of GMB members within schools and the quality of their contribution to the learning process ought to speak for itself. Sadly, however, it is often difficult to obtain the necessary and due recognition for their efforts simply because doing so would have the effect of highlighting the less than satisfactory terms and conditions of employment. The roles and responsibilities of key groups of staff are never clearly defined, properly formalised, or appropriately recognised by those in authority. The cover function for these teachers is a regular feature of the working week but is often happening outside of prescribed criteria and without a clear and coherent framework of safeguards, recognition, or reward. There are significant levels of job substitution, including situations whereby teaching assistants are required to impart learning in subjects in respect of which they have no formal qualifications themselves. This blatant exploitation by the increasing practice of employing support staff on temporary and term-time only contracts has the obvious and de-motivating effect upon both levels of earnings and employment security.

The overt situations of past pay and inequality amongst support staff have not been positively addressed due to either the failure of the local authority to progress pay and grading reviews or due to the outcome of such reviews producing unjustifiable gradings for our members. We commend the active and positive involvement of our colleagues in negotiating both the structure of any new body and its terms of reference. The establishment of a negotiating council specific to school support staff can only benefit our members. In the interim period, I urge Congress to support any feasible means by which the difficulties inherent within the education system may be resolved. For far too long our members have been faced with increasing workloads, inferior terms and conditions, and a lack of career progression which serves to shame the education system within this country. Congress, please support this composite motion. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Anyone else want to come in on the debate? No? Could I now call on Viv Smart to give the CEC statement?

SIS. V. SMART (CEC, Public Services): The CEC is supporting Composite 10 with the following statement. Congress, it has been GMB policy for years to campaign for national terms and conditions for school support staff. Our campaign has called for an end to the abuse they suffer through the demands made of them in schools and the lack of proper recognition for the roles they carry out. Nowadays support staff are just as much the professionals in schools as teachers are.

The good news is that at long last the Labour Government has not only listened to our campaign but has acted on it. A new national negotiating body for school support staff has been set out in legislation to get royal assent in the autumn and government has used its prerogative powers to allow the body to get on with its work immediately. I am pleased to tell Congress that the first meeting of this new body will take place on 7<sup>th</sup> July heralding a new era for school support staff. GMB is one of only three trade unions to be invited to be part of the new body facing up against local government employers, faith school employers, and foundation school employers. The new body covers all maintained schools in England and will establish common conditions in a national pay structure for over 400,000 support staff across 20,000 schools.

This is the first national bargaining machinery to be established for many years and is the culmination of a really powerful campaign by GMB. It is a fantastic achievement in itself and we can be justly proud because it is GMB that has led the campaign and sustained it through several changes of minister. As we have done, so many thousands of school staff have joined the GMB to support our campaign and there are still many tens of thousands who will no doubt want to join. GMB is proud to already represent over 100,000 school support staff members. It is for them that we now have to deliver.

Great though our achievement is in establishing the negotiating body, the real work is about to start. The opportunity is there. GMB will take that opportunity and lead the way in establishing national pay and conditions for school support staff and deliver the justice they so richly deserve. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Viv. Do the mover and seconder accept the statement? *(Agreed)* The CEC are supporting this motion with the statement.

*Composite Motion 10 was carried.*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Malcolm. Congress, before I move to the next item on the agenda, which I think is one of our most important items this week because our future is coming on, could I ask that all delegates please go to the Ethical Threads stand where they will get a free T-shirt; not now! Okay? There are also some wonderful T-shirts for sale there. Please dig deep and support the T-shirts and Ethical Threads.

Colleagues, before I move to the next business I know I said thank you to Congress this morning and for new delegates I, too, get a bit nervous when we first start Congress, but then we settle in. I want to send two special thanks. One is to my region for their support all the way through my time with this Union. Yes, nationally there have been ups and downs but I tell you we have a great union and a union that is going forward. So, I want to thank them because without them and my branch I could not do the job, none of us could without them. This week I have some stewards here observing Congress to show them that we are a democratic union and eventually, hopefully, they will be delegates to this Congress.

I would also like to say some special thanks to Barbara Benham (you will be hearing her this week), George Fraser, Brenda and Edna, and to my special friend (and I was his apprentice for many years) John Cope, who is our ex-regional secretary and still is doing as much work, and to my new regional secretary, who I have known as a shop steward and someone who came to Congress. I would like to say to Paul Hayes, thank you, and we do wish you luck and I promise you, you will get all the support in the world from me and the region. Thank you, Paul. (*Applause*)

Last but by no means least I would like to say thanks – my grandson may be looking in on the internet, his dad will not because he does not know how to use it - to my family who are very important. Every single one of you in this room could not do the job you are doing or be here without the support of your family and friends. So, thanks to my family, and not forgetting Gary Doolan. I tell you, I went into a cold sweat when I saw him coming up. We have had some times but, Gary, thank you, too. Can I say thanks to my husband, Den, who I do believe deserves a Gold Badge at times when he is answering that phone. Sometimes he has said he is going to tell them to join UNISON but he does not, so to all my family thank you for everything. (*Applause*)

## **GMB HEALTHY EATING SCHOOLS COMPETITION: PRESENTATION TO WINNERS**

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I am pleased to welcome some special visitors to our Congress this year, representatives from the three winning classes, and I would like to thank Laura Walsh who has been busy keeping the children entertained. We will be hearing more from Laura on Tuesday.

North West and Irish Region ran a competition for primary schools in the Blackpool, Blackburn, with Darwin, areas to design a poster on Healthy Eating. We are delighted to have received over 100 entries and, believe you me, it was an extremely difficult task for myself, Malcolm, Helen, and the staff, to judge. All the entries were of a high standard and the children had clearly put a lot of effort into their interpretation of Healthy Eating and a Healthy Eating lifestyle.

It gives me great pleasure to award the prizes for the three winning classes who are here with us today with their families. Can I say welcome to all of them. I am now just going to leave the platform for one minute. I have another microphone.

*(Applause for the children entering the hall)*

**THIRD PRIZE AND A CHEQUE FOR £1,000 TO WHITECHAPEL PRIMARY SCHOOL, PRESTON**

THE PRESIDENT *(speaking to one of the children)*: It gives me great pleasure to give £1,000 for your school and to say thank to you and all your little friends there, your school friends, who drew a lovely picture. Do you eat your school dinners? You do? That's a good girl. *(Laughter)* Would you like to say something?

SCHOOL CHILD: Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

A TEACHER: Thank you very much. That was an amazing prize. We are going to use it to build a shelter on our playground which is somewhat exposed, so it will be brilliant. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: *(Shaking hands with the children)* Thank you for the lovely pictures you did. It gives me great pleasure to give you this cheque for £1,000. *(Applause)* And to you for the school I want to remind you of the trade union movement and, hopefully, you will all be members when you are older. Membership forms on the way out! *(Laughter/Applause)*

**SECOND PRIZE AND A CHEQUE FOR £3,000 TO OUR LADY OF THE ASSUMPTION SCHOOL, BLACKPOOL**

THE PRESIDENT: Could I now award the 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize to Our Lady of the Assumption School, and Emily Hollinghurst ready to receive it. *(Applause)* *(Speaking to one of the children)* Your pictures were wonderful. What is your name? *(Lauren)* You took great delight in doing it, didn't you? When I phoned your school you were all so excited we did not need a telephone! It was a wonderful picture. Thank you very much all of you for participating. I hope that you will do well with the cheque.

A TEACHER: Just on behalf of Our Lady of the Assumption School we would like to say thank you very much. Obviously we are very proud of Lauren and we are going to be using the money for a gardening area so our children can grow their own fruits and vegetables at school. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. It gives me great pleasure to give you a cheque for £3,000. Enjoy yourself at the zoo and the little party out the back. Well done. And this is for you and the school in memory of the GMB Congress. Membership forms are on the way out for you, too! You can practise filling them in for when you are older. *(Applause/Laughter)* He *(indicating one child)* wants his cards now! Well done. Enjoy yourself.

**FIRST PRIZE AND A CHEQUE FOR £5,000 TO WENSLEY FOLD CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL, BLACKBURN**

THE PRESIDENT: Would you like to introduce yourself as somebody has been scribbling on my notes!

MS. DEBBIE MERCER : I am Debbie Mercer from Wensley Fold.

THE PRESIDENT (*speaking to one of the children*): What is your name? How old are you? Seven? Did you help with the picture? You did? It was wonderful. You gave me such a hard task, all of you. What are you going to do with the money?

SCHOOL CHILD: An outdoor classroom.

THE PRESIDENT: An outdoor classroom, and what will you do in the outdoor classroom? (*Play*) Play? I think we are all going to go there to play. Can you build one for us? Yes? You will? Okay. When I phoned you, you were so excited.

MS. DEBBIE MERCER: We were extremely excited and also extremely proud of the children. Every single one of them contributed towards the poster which makes it that bit more special. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I will come down to you all. It gives me great pleasure to give the school a cheque for £5,000 to help with what you want to do with it. (*Applause*) That is a token for the school to keep of our stay in Blackpool from the North West & Irish Region and the GMB overall. (*Speaking to the children*) Is that all right? Are you going to join the Union? Yes, you are? So, on the way out make sure your teacher gets a membership form for all the staff in the kitchen, won't you, and the support staff? Yes? All right, okay. (*Applause*) Safe journey. Thank you. (*Children leaving via centre aisle*) Make sure you all wave to your mum and dad. You can pick up the membership forms as well on your way out, mums and dads!

Could I say, this is our future and we should care for them and show them we do care about them. You know what, I am a school dinner lady; well, I was. Okay? So, eat all your meals up. Thank you all very, very much indeed.

**PRESIDENT'S HIGHLY COMMENDED AWARD TO THE ACORNS PRIMARY SCHOOL, PRESTON**

THE PRESIDENT: Could I say that all the entries are actually outside on show so please take time in the Pavilion to have a look.

We did award nine other awards. They did not win but the effort they put in we thought should be recognised so I used my discretion as the President, with the help of the Vice President, and we will give Paul the bill afterwards. (*Laughter*) There is one school in particular I would like to mention. We decided to give the President's Highly

Commended Award to the Acorns Primary School in Preston. They are a very small special needs school who said that they would like a bicycle and some fruit trees. Because we could not have them here today I shall be presenting a prize to this school personally on behalf of Congress on Wednesday morning. Colleagues, they said, "We'll just have the fruit trees," because they were so thrilled that they had filled in competitions year in and year out and nobody had ever replied to them, whether they had won or lost. So, the delight in the school, they were so delighted that they said, "Forget about the bike, it might be too costly, just give us the trees." Well, I have got news for them, we are giving them the bike and we are giving them the trees. (*Applause*)

Yesterday at the CEC it was moved that maybe each region could adopt a special needs school and give them bikes so they can carry out their exercise and get on with their lives. Can I thank all the regions – all the regions – for their participation and all my lovely friends down there. Thank you. Enjoy your zoo trip and your party. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Congress stands adjourned. It is a 2 o'clock return.

*Congress adjourned for lunch.*

## **AFTERNOON SESSION**

*Congress reassembled at 2.00 p.m.*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, please come to order. Congress, I thank the Accrington Polish Saturday School Choir for their lively entertainment during the break. The choir is part of a large Polish Community Group who met through their Catholic church. The church saw the need to set up a centre for education, a Polish Saturday School for children of the migrant Polish community who have settled in Accrington. There is also a centre to provide information and support to local migrant workers, all run by volunteers, with no funding or sponsorship. Could I thank Marta and the choir for coming to Congress today. Let me at this stage make a presentation to the choir Leader, Marta Kiedrowicz. The choir will now sing a final song: "We are the World".  
*("We are the World" sung by Accrington Polish Saturday School Choir)*

Congress, I think you will agree with me that that wonderful. The next time that the BNP knocks at anybody's door, remember these children. These are our children. Wherever they come from, colour and/or creed is irrelevant. So remember that when you talk to the BNP. These children are welcome in the GMB family at any time, and that was wonderful. *(Cheers and applause)* Thank you very much. There is a gift to follow for you to remember us by. And as I told the other children earlier, there are membership forms when you start work to join. You will always be welcome with us. *(Presentation made amidst applause)*

MS. MARTA KIEDROWICZ: On behalf of the Accrington Polish Saturday School Choir, I would like to thank the President, the Congress and the regions for your warm welcome. It has been a pleasure to participate in this wonderful community event. We hope you enjoyed the music. Thank you very much. *(Applause)* Thank you, Blackpool.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, let me pass on to you some information that I have just received. A gang in Accrington was going round breaking all the windows in their parents' homes and the Polish workers' homes in Accrington. We know where they came from and that is why we must keep the BNP out. To any racist, we say "Out, Out, Out!"  
*(Applause)*

### **ADDRESS BY KATE GREEN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE CHILD POVERTY ACTION GROUP**

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, it gives me great pleasure, as the next part of our business, to welcome someone who I have got to know quite well. She is on the platform and her name is Kate Green. She is the Chief Executive of the Child Poverty Action Group. I am going to ask Kate to address Congress. Kate has been Chief Executive of the Child Poverty Action Group since 2004. CPAG is the leading charity campaigning for the abolition of child poverty in the UK and for a better deal for low-income families and

children. Kate is also Chair of the London Child Poverty Commission, which is committed to reducing child poverty in the capital. She has also worked for the One Parent Families charity, and is also a trustee of End Child Poverty. Congress, it is my pleasure to know her and it was my pleasure to march with her on the G20 march. Kate Green, please address Congress.

MS. KATE GREEN (Chief Executive, Child Poverty Action Group): President and Congress, I cannot say how pleased I am to have the chance to be with you today, and to say as well that I am absolutely delighted that CPAG has been involved with the GMB in the production of the CEC's Special Report: *Raising the Kids*, which I know is going to be launched by Paul in a few minutes time.

For CPAG it is great to have such a strong sign of support from the GMB publicly and powerfully signaling the importance that you give as a trade union to ending child poverty. But, of course, it is a no-brainer, really, isn't it? Your members know already how hard it is to be raising your kids on too little money, going out to work in poorly paid, poor quality jobs, in stop-go unstable work, with sometimes parents doing two, three or even more jobs, jobs which still leave you struggling just to get by to pay the bills and to buy the things you need for the kids. Your campaign, the GMB campaign, for better jobs is across all sectors of what is, after all, one of the world's largest economies. Our campaign, the Child Poverty Action Group's campaign, to end child poverty in what is still one of the world's richest countries are two sides of the same coin.

So I am really pleased that we are working so publicly together on these twin-track agendas, and I think there is a great deal that we have to do. Because despite the good progress made during the past ten years in reducing child poverty down by 400,000 children since 1999, and with a new Child Poverty Bill published in Parliament just on Friday to put the target to eradicate child poverty into law, still we have one of the highest rates of child poverty in Europe. The progress made in the first few years of the millennium has not been sustained, and in fact the most recent sets of figures that we have seen have been showing child poverty starting to rise again. While we do expect that there should be some improvement in next year's figures, the Budget this April did nearly nothing to reduce child poverty further. It gave families with children just an extra 38 pence a week to spend, which is less than the price of a pint of milk.

It is not that the Government have been doing all the wrong things. In fact, the medicine it has been applying has mostly been right. It is just that the dose is nowhere near strong enough. Take employment. Take work. Do you know, for many years now we have heard from the politicians that work is the best route out of poverty. Do you know what? That is what the CPAG thinks, too. I am talking about good work, work that is decently paid, that enables you to support your family, allows you to balance working and family life, work with decent prospects and conditions. That is the best, the most sustainable route out of poverty for most families. What is more, it is exactly what most parents want to do. Many things about work are better than ten years ago: improved maternity and paternity rights, a right for parents to ask to work flexibly, a huge expansion in child care, no where need as much as we need but streets ahead of where we were, better financial

support for families, for example, through the Tax Credit. Yes, I know they have got their problems, but they have been worth billions of pounds to low income households. Of course, Labour's most popular policy, the introduction of the National Minimum Wage. But for all that, and for all that even today with unemployment rising and rising, I think, quite frighteningly now, we still have an exceptionally high employment right. Actually, it is the sixth highest in the European Union. Yet, even with that high employment right, we still have one of the highest rates of child poverty in Europe as well. So work is not proving a route out of poverty for many families. In fact, most children growing up below the poverty line in this country have at least one parent in paid work. In the Special Report that is being published this afternoon, we look at why that is and what can be done about it. One of the things – again, it is a bit of a no-brainer, isn't it? – is that pay for the poorest at work simply needs to rise.

In saying that there are a couple of myths I want to dispel, not dispel for this audience, I know that, but dispel so that the politicians and the business leaders can hear what we have to say. Especially, I want to say this as we head into the worst recession in a generation and times for families look very, very tough. The first is the myth that we cannot afford to increase pay in a recession, but in the last recession, in the 1990s, they continued to rise even as unemployment increased. There just is not the evidence of a relationship between rising unemployment and falling pay growth, but what we can see is that employers continue to offer pay rises even in an economic downturn. The question is who gets the benefit of those rises? We see the way in which income inequality in this country is actually perpetrated even in a recession, as pay rises for those at the top go up and those at the bottom do not, the rich get richer and the poorer get further and further behind. So we can, apparently, afford wage growth in a recession. The question is who gets the benefit of that growth? It is absolutely essential, if we are serious about ending child poverty, serious about work as a route out of poverty, that those on the lowest pay receive a fair share of pay growth. That means a fair day's pay for a fair day's work, the National Minimum Wage continuing to increase in real terms and index-linked to ensure that it does, no messing around with making it up with tips, which should be received in addition, and every worker paid the same National Minimum Wage, whether you are 22, 42 or 62. (*Applause*) That is the first myth, that pay can't rise.

The second myth I want to address is that there is no point in increasing pay for the lowest earning households because it is all wiped out by claw backs of Tax Credits and other benefits, and that families just face these exceptionally high so-called 'marginal deduction rates' as they see their earnings increase. It is certainly true that there is a problem. Two million low earning employees will face effective marginal tax rates of 60% in 2009-10 and a quarter-of-a-million low paid employees will face a marginal deduction rate of 80%. Just imagine the fuss if we tried to hit Lord Ashcroft, Andrew Lloyd-Webber or Lord Sugar with that sort of top tax rate! So there is a problem about the way in which pay interacts within work-financial support. But the answer isn't to hold back pay, nor is it to say that there is not a role for extra financial support alongside pay to make sure that families have enough on which to raise their children. But we have to get the balance right. Subsidising low pay employers and hitting low income families

with eye-wateringly high marginal deduction rates, as we do now, means that the system is not working properly. We have to fix it and we can.

In *Raising the Kids* we talk about a number of things that need to be done, but I would like to highlight just a few. The first is about ensuring that families can meet the cost of going out to work. It is ironic, isn't it? You get a job, you want to go out to work, working makes you feel good about yourself and it is about pride. I hear this a lot from parents, actually, and especially lone parents. They say, "Work is about wanting to be an example for your kids". Of course, it is natural that parents want to go out to work to be able to provide for their kids. So off you go and get a job, and then you find you have to pay for new clothes for work, travel costs, child care costs and dinner money, because you lose your entitlement to free school meals when you get back to work. So, really, at the end of all of that, no wonder families in work are still in poverty. They are hardly any better off. What is more, you are working really long hours so you don't see much of your kids, and you are stressed out because your child care arrangements are probably on the verge of collapsing. You start worrying, now that you have started working, that you might have to pay some of your Tax Credits back. All that is mad! It is mad, isn't it?

If work is a route out of poverty, we have to make sure that work really pays, not that it starts to cost you more. That is why, for example, the GMB and the Child Poverty Action Group have long been campaigning for universal free school meals. Some local authorities have actually introduced them. The Scottish Government is bringing them in for all Primary 1-3 children and for families on the maximum Working Tax Credit, and that is a start that we need to see spread everywhere. It is why we need to invest much more in child care places. Child care is important not just so that parents can go out to work but because good quality child care is good for children. It is good for their wellbeing, it is good for their development, it is good for their future educational outcomes and, actually, it is good fun for kids. They like to have time to socialise. They want to spend time with other kids. But work will really pay only when we move away from complicated means tested benefits and make sure we have universal financial support available to help every family to meet the costs of raising children and then parents get a fair reward for their labour on top of that. So all those ill informed comments about a life of luxury on benefits is not true, of course. You are hardly going to live it large on Job Seekers' Allowance of £3,344 a year. But all of those arguments that you are better off not working would be totally wiped out if the extra money you got from wages was all money that you would keep to spend on your kids.

But then let's turn our attention to rates of pay and look at where the problem lies. There are patterns to low pay, you know. It is not random. The things that determine it are gender. The majority of low paid workers are women and working often part-time. Disability and ethnicity pre-dispose people to lower pay, and working in certain industries, in retail, catering and hospitality and financial services. It is outrageous that whilst City bankers with their massive bonuses at the top, who nearly destroyed our financial system, almost one in ten low paid workers in Britain are working in the back rooms of the very same banks.

Consider low pay in the public sector. A quarter of low paid workers are in the public sector, the very same public sector that subsidises low pay through Tax Credits and benefits. Someone in the Treasury really ought to do the maths. We have already got Glasgow City Council, some of the London boroughs, Oxford, Norwich, Preston and Boris Johnson recognizing that this can't be right. Local government is beginning to understand the responsibility in the public sector to pay decent wages to employees and to contractors. In central Government it is good to see the Department for Children, Schools & Families is now a living wage employer, too. But we really ought to be looking to the whole of the public sector to be a beacon for decent pay. Just imagine, when we have got every worker in the public sector on decent wages, how many kids that will help to get them out of poverty and to keep them out?

Of course, this recession is a tremendous concern, hitting the poorest the hardest, but maybe we can take a good thing out of it now, and that is that the public, finally, are fed-up with the gross excesses and unfairness that allowed a few get-rich-quick fat cats the obscenest of rewards while leaving the hardest pressed families, who were in no way responsible for bringing about the recession bearing the brunt of its effects.

Finally, now, ordinary people are saying loud and clear, "We've had enough of this injustice. We want a fairer society. Those who have more should pay more, and those who have least must be helped the most." So if we are able to have a debate on fairness at last, decent pay must be at the heart of that debate. Fair pay isn't just for the good times. It's at the heart of the way that we will tackle the causes of the mess that we are in and the heart of how we will end child poverty, too.

I am incredibly proud that Child Poverty Action Group is working with the GMB on a campaign that will matter so much for so many families, a campaign that will help to end child poverty for good. Thank you very much for asking me and for letting me join your Congress today. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Let me say 'thank you' for that wonderful speech. It was not just the speech but your whole life is dedicated to eroding children's poverty. If there is anything we can do, we will. You know that the GMB is there for you. I thank you for the way you work with us and we work well together. We complement each other. On behalf of the GMB, this Whiskey is made by our members, drunk by our members and passed by our members. Just to remind you of us, please accept this gift, which is also made by our members and you have something with which you can fill the glass, because when you next come back we want the glass full for our children in poverty. Thank you. *(Presentation made amidst applause)*

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Colleagues, *these* prints are on sale outside. They are original prints that we got from the Marx Memorial Library. One is of the Moscow Metro in 1936. We are giving *these* prints as gifts to speakers this week. *This* one is a copy of an original print detailing the Moscow Metro in 1036. We got these originally from the Marx Memorial Library. Many of them have been buried for 60 or 70 years. You won't find that in Ikea, trust me. Alongside it, *this* one is a copy of another original

print from the Marx Memorial Library from the Spanish Civil War. It portrays people fighting the Nazis, basically, and Franco's regime. You can see the bombers on this side and people looking up towards a bright new future into the Sun to be met by the forces of Fascism. Maybe that is a poster that we should stick up all round the country to remind us that these people haven't gone away and that they are still organizing in our communities. They are original posters. We hope they find a home either in your home or office and we will make sure that they will get transported back for you. That was the bit you were worried most about, wasn't it, but thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Kate, I would be delighted if you would join us on the platform for the next part of our business. Let me tell Conference that I went into the children's party. You can still see that I am eating the biscuits. They were delighted. They also wanted me to go off to the zoo with them. I said that I couldn't. They said, "Oh, give it to somebody else, Miss". I haven't been called "Miss" for years. Then the little fellow, Tommy, he said, "Miss, where can I get the membership forms?" (*Laughter*) I said, "You just keep remembering that until you're 16. Take one home for the mother. They're on the stand out *there*." They were lovely, though. It was a wonderful day.

## **CEC SPECIAL REPORT: RAISING THE KIDS: STOP IN-WORK POVERTY**

GMB is the third largest trade union in the UK, representing over 600,000 workers across all sectors of the economy.

CPAG is the leading charity campaigning for the abolition of child poverty in the UK and for a better deal for low-income families and children.

With this report, GMB and CPAG have joined forces to raise the issue of in-work poverty.

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## Preface

Those bearing the brunt of the economic recession are not the same people who brought it about in the first place. Rather, they are hardpressed families, often on low pay and in insecure work. Everything that can be done to limit unemployment must be done, but there is another threat, which preceded the downturn and is likely to be compounded by it: that of low pay.

The recession has sharpened minds about just how unequal Britain is. A year working full time on the minimum wage gives a salary of £11,918 – loose change to those complaining about the proposed 50 per cent income tax rate on incomes 13 times this level at £150,000. These are not gaps; they have become chasms.

This report is published to highlight the continuing scourge of low pay, which undermines statements that work is the best route out of poverty. Low pay is a cause of poverty; it damages children and wastes talent. The wider inequality created by our unfair labour market damages our social fabric and means that everyone loses – rich and poor alike. Low pay is also associated with wider issues – of job quality, job security and of the ability to access skills and training that could help people progress. Child poverty is ‘everybody’s business’ and this means that employers should pay decent wages.

Of course, business is now under serious pressure, but this has been caused by a falling demand for goods and services, not by the wage costs of the lowest paid. In previous recessions, average earnings kept increasing despite rising unemployment and so far, excluding bonuses, average earnings have again continued to grow. It would be wrong for those paid least to face the most restraint.

Paid work has been lauded as the route out of poverty, but for the more than one in two poor children with a working parent, that promise has been false. The recession has highlighted public unease about our unequal society and it is right that rates of pay of those on the lowest wages increase. Concern about fairness

cannot only be for times of economic growth – the recession makes the task more urgent, not less.

**Paul Kenny**, General Secretary of the GMB and **Kate Green**, Chief Executive of the Child Poverty Action Group

## Introduction

The roots of the current economic crisis lie in deregulated economic policies that prioritised GDP growth over income and wealth distribution. Policies of ‘trickle-down economics’ have left the UK a highly unequal country, and one in which low pay and in-work poverty is widespread. It is time for a change to narrow these inequalities.

The Government has put in place a raft of policies to reduce child poverty, most of which are based on the assumption that work is the only reliable route out of poverty. However, for many families, getting a job is by no means a secure way out of poverty. In fact, most poor children actually have a parent in work<sup>1</sup> For these children, parental wages (plus other ‘transfers’ such as child benefit and tax credits) do not protect them from poverty. Indeed, in international terms, the UK maintains an uneasy balance of both a high employment rate and a high child poverty rate (we have the sixth highest employment rate in the European Union,<sup>2</sup> but stand joint twenty-first on child poverty<sup>3</sup>).

This report, written jointly by the Child Poverty Action Group and the GMB, demands a change of direction on employment policy: one that tackles in-work poverty and puts fairness first. Some welcome protections have been put in place in the past decade (tax credits and the national minimum wage), but too often the promise that ‘work is a route out of poverty’ has been false. Employment, in itself, does not provide a safe way out of poverty: pay, hours and family size are also important. This report argues that, while increasing pay rates is not the only solution to low-paid employment (parental hours and other transfers are also important), it makes a significant contribution to family incomes, and can help fulfil the promise of employment as a route out of poverty.

We make three central arguments:

- If employment is to form a more effective and sustainable route out of poverty, pay rates for those on lower incomes need to rise.
- Concerns about unemployment should not be used to hold down pay for the lowest paid.

- The public has had its fill of wide and deep inequalities, and the mood is shifting towards a fairer form of capitalism. Ensuring that employment is decently paid and pay inequalities are narrowed is central to this.

The recent Budget statement<sup>4</sup> illustrates just how unequal the UK has become. For the first time in a decade, proposals have been put in place that represent a significant shift in approach. They include: taxing the super-rich, with measures to taper the personal allowance (for those with incomes over £100,000); introducing a new 50 per cent income tax rate (on incomes above £150,000); and tapering private pension rate relief to the basic level (between £150,000 and £180,000).

Although the moves provoked howls of protest from some quarters (and support from many others), these objections simply illustrate how ignorant many people continue to be about how privileged those earning such large sums are. To put a little perspective on this:

- Half the working population earn less than £17,597 a year – one eighth of the £150,000 threshold.<sup>5</sup>

- A 40-hour week on the national minimum wage produces a gross salary of £11,918, about one-thirteenth of the £150,000 threshold.

- The adult rate of jobseeker's allowance (paid at £64.30 per week) is worth £3,344 a year, one-forty-fifth of the £150,000 threshold.

It is quite simply morally wrong and socially unhealthy for a society to sustain such enormous gaps. Those on the lowest rates of pay, for instance in the public services, retail or hospitality sectors, are performing the tasks on which richer groups and the whole of society depend. Sub-prime jobs may reduce the cost of some goods and services (and benefit the well paid) but they cause individual and social costs through the damage wrought by poverty and inequality.<sup>6</sup> It is not in anyone's interests to allow inequalities to continue. The challenge now, and for whichever political party holds power after the next election, is to redress these inequalities by ensuring that in every policy area those at the bottom of the pile gain more than those at the top. Increasing the pay of low-paid workers can be done, and must be central to a politics of fairness.

At the time of writing, the Government has accepted recommendations on the minimum wage. From October 2009, the adult rate will increase from £5.73 to £5.80, and the youth development rate will increase from £4.77 to £4.83 for 18–21-year olds and from £3.53 to £3.57 for 16/17- year-olds.<sup>7</sup> It is welcome that the Government has resisted calls to freeze the rate, but current earnings inflation (excluding bonuses) is still around three times this level (see below) and will lead to stronger calls for the minimum wage to be increased in real terms beyond 2009.

# Low-pay Britain

There is no single definition of low pay,<sup>8</sup> so this section looks at the distribution of wages and the extent of low pay as defined by the New Policy Institute as an hourly rate of less than £7. Other thresholds include the London Living Wage, which, in 2008, was set at £7.45 an hour,<sup>9</sup> the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's Minimum Income Standard, which estimates that an hourly wage of £6.88 for a single childless adult is needed to meet the Standard,<sup>10</sup> and the Scottish Living Wage campaign, which has argued for a £7 an hour minimum wage (adopted by Glasgow Council).<sup>11</sup>

## Wage inequality is large

Half of all employees have gross incomes below £17,597 a year (£338.40 per week). This 'median' rises when part-time workers are excluded because they work fewer hours and receive a lower average hourly wage. Applying the figures from 2008 pay data to the number of UK employees (29.3 million<sup>12</sup>) suggests that, in 2008, **about three million employees earned below £6 an hour.**

Table 1

### Distribution of gross earnings, 2008

	Full time		Part time		All employees	
	Per year	Per hour	Per year	Per hour	Per year	Per hour
10% earned less than	£13,614	£6.66	£2,496	£5.52	£6,094	£6.00
25% earned less than	£17,597	£8.50	£4,659	£6.02	£12,392	£7.48
50% earned less than	£24,887	£11.97	£7,644	£7.50	£17,597	£10.61
25% earned more than	£35,157	£17.56	£11,622	£10.97	£31,294	£16.30
10% earned more than	£49,234	£25.02	£18,320	£18.56	£44,346	£23.62

Note: figures are annualised from weekly data.

Source: National Statistics, 2008 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings Analysis by all Employees, available at [www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=15187](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=15187)

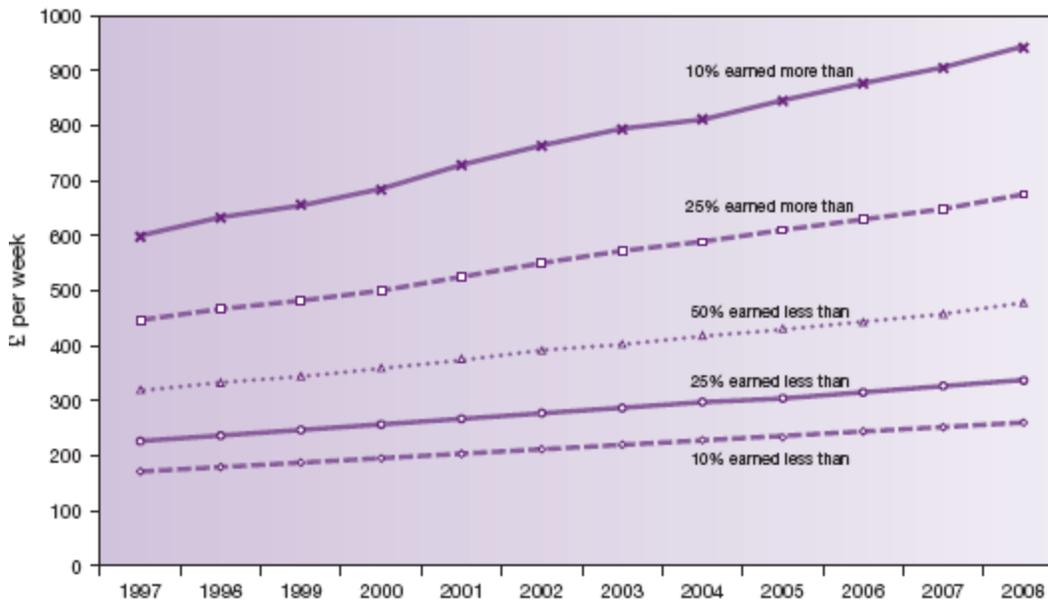
More fine-grain analysis also shows wider inequalities. Work from the Institute for Fiscal Studies shows that the incomes of the top 10 per cent were about twice the average; that the top 1 per cent had incomes six times the average; and the top 0.1 per cent had incomes 32 times the average.<sup>13</sup> Much of this difference was driven by earnings.

## Wage inequality has grown

While over the past ten years earnings have risen for most workers, pay gaps have widened and the top 10 per cent of earners have gained more than other groups.

Figure 1

**Pay distribution changes 1997–2008 (full-time employee gross wages)**



Note: only full-time gross earnings are shown, but part-time workers show a similar pattern.

Source: National Statistics, *Tables Accompanying Patterns of Pay: ASHE results 1997–2008* available at [www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=14123](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=14123)

**Low pay is patterned by industry, gender, disability and ethnicity**

Low pay is extremely patterned, and reinforces other inequalities. The New Policy Institute mapped workers earning hourly wages below £7 and found the following.<sup>14</sup>

- **The risk of low pay varies by industry.** Seventy per cent of employees in the hotel and restaurant sectors are paid below £7 an hour, as are 52 per cent of retail and wholesale workers and 20 per cent of public service workers, but just 15 per cent of banking, finance and insurance workers. Turning to the composition of the low paid, **one in three low-paid workers are in retail** (29 per cent) **and one-quarter in the public sector** (23 per cent). One in ten work in hotels and restaurants (11 per cent) and in banking, finance and insurance (9 per cent), 15 per cent work in manufacturing and production, and the remaining 12 per cent in other services.

- **The majority of low-paid workers are women and are part time.**

Forty-two per cent of those paid under £7 per hour are women working part time. Twelve per cent are men working part time, 23 per cent are women working full time and 23 per cent are men working full time.

- **Disabled workers are more likely to experience low pay than non-disabled workers.** This finding applies to both full- and part time work (the chances in each of being low paid are around 10 percentage points higher) and exists irrespective of skill level.

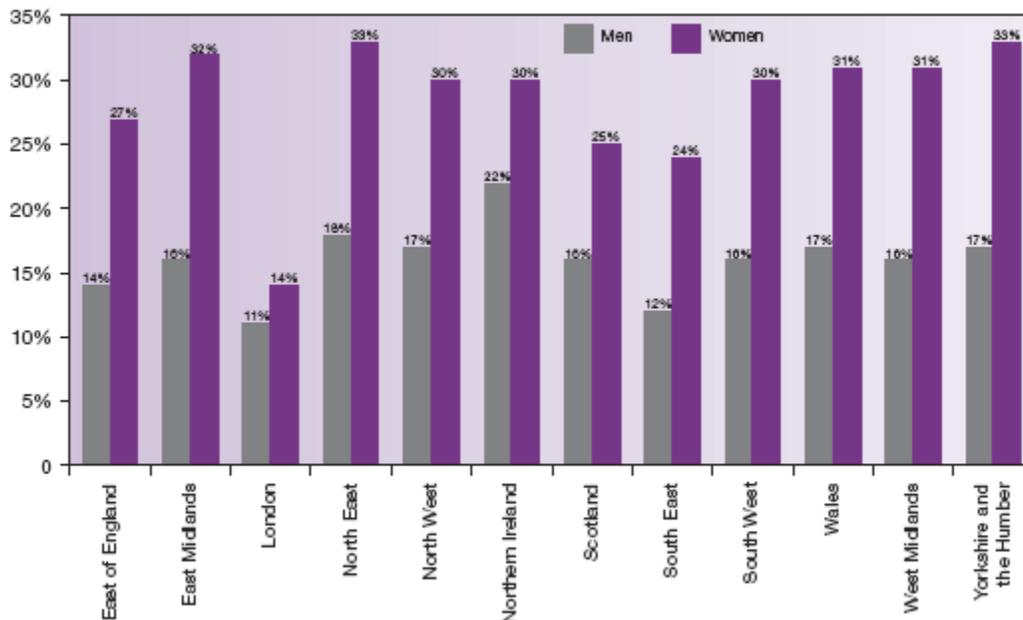
- **Bangladeshi (51 per cent) and Pakistani (46 per cent) workers are the most likely to be low paid.** Around one-third of Black African workers (32 per cent), White British (28 per cent) and Indian (28 per cent), and a quarter of Black Caribbean (23 per cent) workers have hourly wages below £7.

### Low pay varies by region and country

This section uses two measures of low pay: low hourly rates and the proportion of children in families receiving working tax credit. On the first measure, while women are much more likely to be low paid than men, irrespective of region, in England they face the greatest chance of being low paid in the North East and in Yorkshire and the Humber. Men in Northern Ireland face the highest risk of being low paid. On the second measure, in 2006/07 of the 22 per cent of children in the UK living in a family receiving working tax credit, the proportion was again highest in Yorkshire and the Humber and the North East, and lowest in the South East, East of England and London.

Figure 2

**Low pay (below £7 an hour) by geographic area, 2008**



Source: New Policy Institute figures, available at [www.poverty.org.uk](http://www.poverty.org.uk)

Table 2

**Children in families on working tax credit, 2006/07**

	Children in families on working tax credit		Children in low-income families	
	Number (000s)	Per cent	Number (000s)	Per cent
United Kingdom	2,895	22%	5,559	42%
England	2,402	22%	4,634	42%
North East	139	26%	263	49%
North West	388	25%	718	47%
Yorkshire and the Humber	295	27%	518	47%
East Midlands	221	24%	385	41%
West Midlands	298	24%	564	46%
East of England	224	18%	417	34%
London	311	18%	823	49%
South East	300	17%	558	32%
South West	227	22%	388	37%
Wales	159	25%	297	47%
Scotland	231	23%	428	42%
Northern Ireland	102	23%	198	45%

Note: 'Children in families on working tax credit' are those getting both working tax credit and child tax credit.

'Children in low-income families' include this group and those children in workless households.

Source: End Child Poverty Campaign. These figures are based on an analysis of tax credit data. Local authority and constituency data is also available at [www.endchildpoverty.org.uk](http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk)

**Low pay is also linked to poorer job quality**

Low earnings is one key problem, but low rates of hourly pay are also likely to be associated with lower job quality, reflected in aspects of job control, security, chances of progression, of training and other job related benefits. Each of these aspects has an impact on the chances of job sustainability. Progress on the different aspects of job quality, including low pay, is important to help improve sustainability. Problems are compounded as families who are struggling to make ends meet may work longer hours and have multiple jobs, with the inevitable impact on their time to parent.

There is a relationship between both the current skill level and pay, and between skill levels and the likelihood of receiving training. Employers are currently less likely to invest in the skills of those at the bottom of the labour market.<sup>15</sup> The Leitch vision<sup>16</sup> of investing more widely in workplace skills to help employability and boost social mobility comes up against this barrier, and shows that more needs to be done (through schemes such as 'Train to Gain') to invest in all employees – not just those in secure jobs.

# Low pay, the national minimum wage and working tax credit

There are two key protections against low pay: the legal minimum wage and in-work support (including working tax credit). This section considers the role of these mechanisms in reducing low pay.

Although the provision of in-work support is currently essential to protect some families from in-work poverty, our organisations believe that the key policy aim should be to raise the income level of low-paid workers and, within this, the proportion of income coming from pay. A more aggressive strategy is needed to achieve this. Increasing wages would have the benefit of reducing the proportion of means-tested support provided, which is complex and currently subsidises poor employment practices. Increasing the proportion of family incomes that comes from wages would also ensure that employment efforts are valued and recognised more fairly.

## **The national minimum wage has been a real success and should be raised**

The national minimum wage recently celebrated its tenth birthday. It has been a tremendous success: no serious politician would now countenance a return to the unregulated wage abuses that occurred before 1999. The minimum wage is not only a widely accepted part of civilising the employment market, protecting and increasing the wages of the lowest paid, but it has not produced the unemployment ill effects that were predicted by the business lobby. For much of 2009, the minimum wage will be £5.73 per hour for most employees (the development rate is £4.77 for those aged 18–21 years and £3.53 for 16/17-year-olds). The minimum wage has increased in real terms against wages since its introduction without ill effect. However, it is still set low (about 48 per cent of gross hourly median earnings).<sup>17</sup> Policy can, and should, have an explicit aim to raise its relative value in order to narrow pay inequality.

While the national minimum wage has successfully provided a wage floor for many of the most vulnerable workers, significant numbers are still paid below this level. Figures published in 2008<sup>18</sup> suggest that 1 per cent of the workforce (288,000) were paid below the level of the minimum wage and, although these figures do not prove noncompliance with the national minimum wage,<sup>19</sup> the majority (224,000) were aged over 22 years (and so were not subject to lower rates).

Women faced nearly twice the risk of being paid below the minimum wage level as men, and part-time workers were more than twice as likely as full-time employees to be in this group.

### **The tax credit system tops up wages, but subsidises poor-paying employers**

It has sometimes been argued that increases in the national minimum wage are not a well-directed mechanism to raise real incomes because of the interaction with working tax credit and other in-work support. This interaction means that, for those entitled to it (particularly families), net incomes can be higher than gross wages imply (assuming in-work support is claimed).

Families with children may, for example, be entitled to a combination of means-tested child tax credit, working tax credit (which subsidise low wages and provides support for childcare costs), housing benefit and council tax benefit. As earnings rise, these means-tested entitlements are reduced. This means that additional income from employment generates a poverty trap in which higher taxes, and fewer tax credits or housing benefit, sap additional income. This effect is real and punitive: in 2009/10, two million employees will face high, so-called 'marginal tax rates', losing 60p or more in benefits and tax credits and paying more tax for each additional pound earned. A quarter of a million workers face marginal tax rates of over 80 per cent.<sup>20</sup>

The provision of in-work support is a clear recognition that the market delivers too low an income for many working people. Given that work is often presented as the best route out of poverty, in order for child poverty objectives to be met, it is essential that net incomes rise. This can be achieved within the current framework by making earnings disregards more generous, providing 'mini-job' support,<sup>21</sup> and altering the tapers and generosity of benefits and tax credits. In the longer term, Child Poverty Action Group's recent Manifesto<sup>22</sup> presents the case for shifting away from reliance on means-tested support because it is right that those on the lowest earnings are fairly rewarded for their labour (rather than the state subsidising low-paying employers) and because this helps to reduce families' reliance on complex, often unclaimed<sup>23</sup> and error-prone<sup>24</sup> means-tested benefits and tax credits.

## **Low pay and child poverty**

This report started with the simple truth that most children in poverty have a working parent, but the link between employment and poverty is a complex one.<sup>25</sup> Child poverty is determined by household income (largely earned income, and benefit and tax transfers). Because the same income will stretch further in a smaller rather than a larger family, family size also matters. The way to increase gross employment returns is, therefore, to increase either earnings, the number

of hours worked, or both. Net incomes are also affected by tax. Table 3 shows the child poverty risk by parental employment status.

Table 3

**Risk of poverty by employment type**

	Relative low income, before housing costs (government target measure)	Relative low income, after housing costs
<b>Lone parent:</b>		
in full-time work	10	22
in part-time work	22	32
not working	58	75
<b>Couple with children:</b>		
both in full-time work	2	3
one in full-time work, one in part-time work	4	8
one in full-time work, one not working	18	29
one or more in part-time work	54	61
neither in work	68	79
<b>Average risk</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>31</b>

Note: the definition is children living in households with needs-adjusted incomes below 60 per cent of the median income. The first column is the central measure informing government targets to halve child poverty by 2010/11 and eradicate it by 2020. The after housing cost measure is included as this gives a better indication of disposable incomes.

Source: Department for Work and Pensions, *Households Below Average Income: an analysis of the income distribution 1994/95-2007/08*, National Statistics, 2009

Breaking the risk of child poverty down by category:

- Child poverty rates fall when parents are in employment (because the safety net is set below the level of the poverty line).

- If parents are in part-time work (particularly so for couples with no full-time worker), a significant minority of their children are poor.

- The best 'guarantee' of children not being poor is to have two parents in full-time work, a model experienced by few children<sup>26</sup> and which may not be the way many parents choose to balance work and care.

These figures also only state risks of income poverty; they do not show the financial costs of work (for instance, transport and childcare). These costs often leave parents either feeling or being little better off in employment. While some support is available to help meet some of these additional expenses, families also lose out financially when they move off benefits into work. For example, although 80 per cent of childcare costs can be claimed via the childcare element

of working tax credit (subject to income and threshold restrictions), parents still have to find the remaining 20 per cent, which leaves them little better off. Families have to pay for childcare when dropping off and collecting their children (who may be in different places) and when travelling to and from work, during which time they are not being paid. Part-time workers may have to pay for full-time childcare during holidays and half-terms in order to secure a place. Childcare constitutes a major erosion of low earnings.

Families who move off out-of-work benefits and into work also lose additional financial support, such as free school meals, which are available to families claiming out-of-work benefits, but denied to most families in work. The loss of free school meals has a negative effect on family budgets, and on children's health and development. Access to a hot, nutritious meal at lunchtime enhances children's concentration levels and their ability to engage with the educational process, and facilitates social inclusion in schools. Having a hot nutritious meal at lunchtime takes some of the pressure off food budgets at home. Both CPAG and GMB have campaigned for many years, calling for universal free school meals, and were instrumental in getting government commitment to the pilots that are now being put in place in England by the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Department of Health to consider the health benefits of providing free school meals to all primary school pupils in two deprived local authorities, and of extending eligibility to those whose parents are in low-paid work. However, while other local authorities have made the decision to extend free school meals, the Scottish Government has gone further than elsewhere in the UK in proposing the provision of universal free school meals to all primary 1-3 pupils and extending free school meal entitlement to those in low-paid work (and getting both maximum child tax credit and maximum working tax credit).

For employment to become a much more reliable route out of poverty, additional costs need to be reduced, and the provision of financial support which enhances children's wellbeing and ensures that gains from work are maintained, is essential. Meanwhile, when parents find themselves little better off in employment, work may not be sustainable and they may get caught in a 'revolving door', moving in and out of poor-quality jobs (while their children move in and out of childcare provision). A large proportion of new claims for jobseeker's allowance, for example, are from previous claimants who had moved into jobs in the past six months,<sup>27</sup> which could not then be sustained. This 'churn' is particularly high for some groups (especially for lone parents)<sup>28</sup> and is not only damaging for both parents and children, but it is costly and undermines official attempts to increase the employment rate. Recently, there has been some general acceptance that policy must move from simply getting parents in to employment ('work-first' policies) to monitoring longer-term outcomes of moves into work.<sup>29</sup> **Employment policy also needs to consider not just whether people stay in work, but whether their pay lifts them out of poverty**<sup>30</sup> and whether they experience pay progression despite the poverty gap mentioned above.

# Low pay and the recession

Low-paid workers face three key risks from a recession that was not of their making.

- As they are likely to be more insecure at work, they may face a higher risk of unemployment.
- As they are reliant on low pay, they are more likely to have fewer resources to fall back on and so will be the hardest hit if made redundant.
- For those remaining in work, employers may impose wage restraint on the lowest paid.

Although the evidence on the first risk – that low-paid workers are likely to face a higher risk of unemployment – is somewhat mixed, it seems likely that those paid the least are likely to have worse overall employment conditions, may consequently be the easiest to make redundant and often lack union representation. According to the New Policy Institute, just one in seven of those paid below £7 an hour are unionised, compared with 41 per cent of those earning £15–£20 per hour.<sup>31</sup>

Labour market statistics show a mixed picture of where redundancies are occurring by industry. Of 263,000 redundancies in October–December 2008, 60,000 were in the manufacturing industries, 48,000 in construction, 49,000 in distribution, hotels and restaurants (where pay rates might be expected to be the lowest), and 52,000 in finance and business services.<sup>32</sup> Of these redundancies, around two-thirds were men.<sup>33</sup> Local data on jobseeker's allowance caseloads suggests two trends: caseloads are rising proportionately fastest in areas that had the lowest starting rates of unemployment, **but the largest numeric increases in jobseeker's allowance caseloads are happening in areas which already had high caseloads** (a more important measure in capturing the general scale of unemployment).<sup>34</sup>

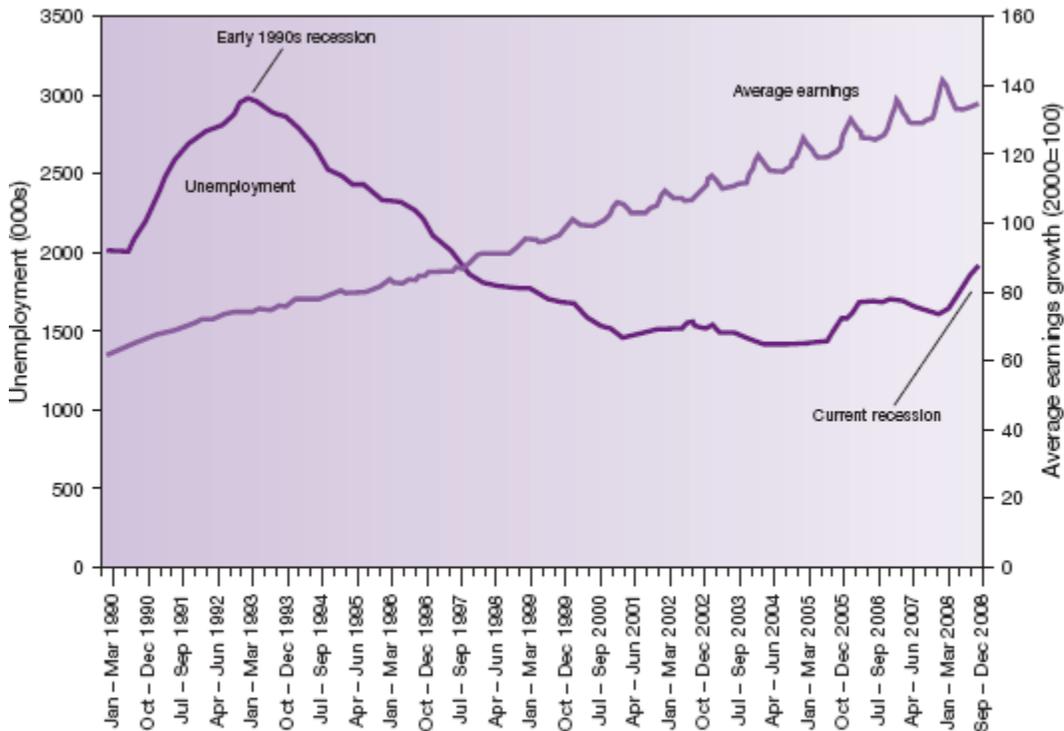
The evidence on the second risk – that low-paid workers have fewer resources to fall back on – is provided by the Family Resources Survey data. There is a link between savings and work status and household incomes. Those who are either workless or who work part time are the most likely to report having no savings. **There is also a clear association between falling household income and rising proportions reporting low or no savings:** more than one-third of households with weekly incomes below £300 report having no savings at all.<sup>35</sup>

The third risk – that employers may impose pay restraint on the lowest paid – is complex. The most important point to stress is that the wage costs of the lowest paid did not drive the recession, and small increases to the minimum wage did not create the strain that business is now undoubtedly under. The causes must

be sought elsewhere – in falling demand and the availability of credit. Statistics (for Great Britain and covering December 2008 to February 2009) show annual average earnings inflation of 0.1 per cent when bonuses are included; but 3.2 per cent when bonuses are excluded. This pattern is familiar – recessions and unemployment do not mean that *average* earnings necessarily stop growing.

Figure 3

**Unemployment and average earnings growth, 1990–2008**



Source: average earnings figures from National Statistics, *Average Earnings Index*, updated 22 April 2009, available at [www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/tsdataset.asp?vlnk=392&More=Y](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/tsdataset.asp?vlnk=392&More=Y); unemployment figures are from National Statistics, *Labour Force Survey: unemployment by age and duration (16+ & working age)*, available at [www.statistics.gov.uk/STATBASE/xdataset.asp?vlnk=1385](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/STATBASE/xdataset.asp?vlnk=1385)

Figure 3 plots average earnings’ growth from 1990 onwards against unemployment. The most striking thing is the lack of an apparent relationship between unemployment and average wage growth. The chart does not suggest that serious pressures are not being experienced by business and other employers now, but rather that, if wage growth is going on, it is important that those on low pay receive a fair share of the growth. Since average earnings’ growth does not appear to have slowed down during the recession of the early 1990s, it is not a strong argument to suggest that wage growth contributed to either higher unemployment or the subsequent recovery. **Even in a recession, it is important that the national minimum wage continues to rise in real terms.**

# Conclusion: what can be done?

Just as excessive deregulation got us into the current mess, the prioritisation of GDP growth over fairness has resulted in high poverty rates. This report has argued that the recession should prompt a rethink, and that the public mood has shifted towards greater fairness. It is time, in other words, to put an end to sub-prime jobs.

This short report has sought to do several things:

- To highlight just how unequal earnings are in the UK, to show that many people are locked into low pay in spite of their efforts and so proves a moral case: that earnings at the bottom need to rise as part of the anti-poverty strategy.
- To urge that concerns about rising unemployment should not lead to restraining the rate of the national minimum wage. In the last recession, average earnings kept rising and so, therefore, should the national minimum wage.
- To argue that recent events have highlighted the large gaps in pay and income experienced in the UK, and the damage this has done. The public mood is in place for a fairer form of capitalism. Making sure that employment is decently paid will help realise that ambition.

The overarching aim of national pay policy should be to reduce inequalities: pay at the bottom should be rising faster than that at the top. This last section suggests some practical steps to make this happen.

## **Increase the national minimum wage**

The national minimum wage has been a significant success. It has raised the incomes of many lower income workers, been of benefit to those experiencing the lowest rates of pay, and has not led to the unemployment predicted by those who opposed it. Clearly, businesses are hard-pressed in current circumstances, but so too are families.

Campaigners need to be vigilant to avoid the recession turning into an argument for those on low pay to share more of the burden. There is little evidence of a connection between pay rises and unemployment. A better strategy is one that narrows pay inequality by encouraging pay restraint at the top and allows those who have slipped behind to catch up by implementing above-earnings inflation increases to the national minimum wage. With this in mind, it is disappointing that

the minimum wage will rise by just 1 per cent in October 2009. This will build pressure for a real-terms increase as the economy recovers. Progressive rises to the minimum wage are an important way to narrow pay inequality.

### **Extend the adult rate of the minimum wage to young workers**

One specific move to be made on the minimum wage is to extend the adult rate to younger workers. We welcome the fact that the Government will extend the adult rate of the minimum wage to cover 21-year-olds from October 2010 and urge it to go further and increase its coverage to younger workers.<sup>36</sup> The minimum wage should be extended to cover apprentices and should not discriminate against younger workers.

### **Invest in training, targeted at those with low skills**

One explanation for low pay is that individuals have low skills and so are considered less productive. Whether true or not, correctly applied training that provides the skills employers need and ensures that those at the bottom of the labour market are not excluded, can open a path to pay progression and to valuing talents more appropriately. Investing in human capital during the recession through training would also be a good way to capitalise on the economic recovery when this appears.

### **End pay discrimination**

Pay discrimination remains a problem. A persistent gender pay gap and lower pay for many other minority groups increases the risk of in-work poverty. Wider use of pay audits to uncover pay inequalities is one key mechanism to identify those groups concentrated on low pay scales (recently proposed in the equality bill).<sup>37</sup> This tool, properly used, can effectively expose existing patterns and so encourage employers to interrogate their reasons and help root out discrimination. However, the private sector is excluded until at least 2013.

### **Tackle low pay in the public sector**

One in four low-paid jobs are in the public sector. Not only does this highlight poor employment practice across central, local and devolved government and supply chains, but it is perverse. The Government is paying low wages to many employees on the one hand, while topping them up with tax credits on the other. Initiatives such as the Living Wage (which the Greater London Authority has signed up to) show what can be done. The Government cannot expect other employers to tackle low pay if it fails to do so itself. Government can lead by example by ensuring its own pay policies are more progressive.

## Provide a decent minimum income for all

Finally, while policy makers ought to target low pay, this will not, on its own, deal with poverty. Some families will never have a parent in work (perhaps because of disability, or caring responsibilities) and, for others, paid work is unlikely to yield a sufficiently high income to lift them out of poverty. Other families experience falls in income after the loss of a job. More needs to be done to address the value of the safety net – raising both child payments (including child benefit) and adult rates of income support and jobseeker's allowance – in order to provide these families with an adequate standard of income, in and out of employment.

### Notes

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- 10 The hourly wages required to meet the minimum standard vary significantly by household size and numbers of workers. See J Bradshaw, S Middleton, A Davis, N Oldfield, N Smith, L Cusworth and J Williams, *A Minimum Income Standard for Britain*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2008
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- 21 See K Bell, M Brewer and D Phillips, *Lone Parents and 'Mini-jobs'*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2007
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- 24 See for example, Department for Work and Pensions, *Fraud and Error in the Benefits System: April 2007 to March 2008*, National Statistics, 2008
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- 26 In 2006/07, only about 1 in 10 children were growing up in a household in which two parents were working full time. See Department for Work and Pensions, *Households Below Average Income: an analysis of the income distribution 1994/95-2007/08*, National Statistics, 2009, Table 4.5
- 27 Almost half of the men and one-third of the women. See New Policy Institute analysis at [www.poverty.org.uk](http://www.poverty.org.uk)
- 28 M Evans, S Harkness and R A Ortiz, *Lone Parents Cycling Between Work and Benefits*, Department for Work and Pensions Research Report 217, 2004
- 29 See D Freud, *Reducing Dependency, Increasing Opportunity: options for the future of welfare to work*, an independent report to the Department for Work and Pensions, Corporate Document Services, 2007
- 30 A recommendation in the Harker Review. See L Harker, *Delivering on Child Poverty: what would it take? A report for the Department for Work and Pensions*, Cm 6951, 2006

31 See [www.poverty.org.uk](http://www.poverty.org.uk), Indicator 57

32 Office for National Statistics, *Labour Market Statistics April 2009*, April 2009, Table 24

33 Office for National Statistics, *Labour Market Statistics April 2009*, April 2009, Table 23

34 Author's analysis of claimant count by parliamentary constituency (March 2009 figures), obtained from [www.nomisweb.co.uk](http://www.nomisweb.co.uk)

35 Department for Work and Pensions, *Family Resources Survey 2006/07*, National Statistics, 2008, Section 5

36 See 'Government Approves New £5.80 Minimum Wage Rate', Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reforms Press Release, 12 May 2009

37 Government Equalities Office, *A Fairer Future: the Equality Bill and other action to make equality a reality*, April 2009

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, it gives me great pleasure to ask Brenda Fraser and Billy Tonner to move the CEC's Special Report: Raising The Kids: Stop In-Work Poverty.

As before, this is how I intend to take the debate on the CEC's Special Report. The Special Report will be moved and seconded by Brenda and Billy. I will invite each Region in turn to put up one speaker. I will then ask for any speakers opposed to the report. Finally, we will then move to the vote.

SIS. B. FRASER (CEC, Manufacturing): President and Congress, I move the CEC's Special Report: Raising The Kids: Stop In-Work Poverty on behalf of the CEC.

Colleagues, today the GMB welcomed over one hundred children to Congress and I know you have been moved by the enthusiasm and joy of the schools who won the prizes in the GMB competition. We were delighted by the children from the Polish Choir who sang for us. We saw these children bright, happy and full of hope for the future but, colleagues, statistically, it is like that one in three of them lives in poverty and will continue to do so if the Government's commitment to eradicate child poverty by 2020 continues to fail to meet its targets.

Figures released last month reveal that 2.9 million children live in families whose incomes are below the breadline. As opposed to some popular opinion, child poverty does not mean not having the most expensive trainers and i-Pods, but it means losing out on the basic necessities. It means living in sub-standard housing. It means that your family cannot afford to put the heating on. It means eating cheap food, full of additives, fat and sugar. It means never wearing clothes that haven't been worn by someone else. It means stigmatisation. When children grow up in poverty they pay a heavy price. Research shows that they have more illnesses, perform poorly in school, have more mental health problems and earn less when they are adults. It is appalling that such inequality persists in the UK and, rather than improving the situation of our poorest children, the situation is getting worse. To be fair, the Labour Government's commitment in 1999 to eradicate child poverty by 2020 was a serious commitment and a brave step that the Tories would never have contemplated. Labour has just announced its intention to place a legal duty on government, local authorities and other public organizations to show that they are working to meet this goal. Great news! However, the Government still needs to get its own work on poverty reduction back on track.

The economic crisis hasn't helped, of course, but it is not right to say that the target cannot be met because of it. The people suffering most from the economic recession are not the people who caused it. Those suffering are the hard pressed families, often on low

pay and in insecure work struggling to keep their families together. When it was announced in the 2008 Budget that the 10 pence tax band would be abolished in 2009, it was hardly noticed by commentators, but when the 2009 Budget increased the tax rate by 10 pence for people earning over £150,000 a year, you would have thought it was the end of civilization as we know it.

We have no sympathy for this elite who get paid 8 times more than half of the working population who earn less than £18,000, and nearly 50 times what the growing numbers struggling along on Job Seekers Allowance of £3,334 a year. Congress, the GMB has worked with the Child Poverty Action Group to produce *this* report which reveals that it will continue working to improve the present scourge of those on low pay which undermines the belief that work is the best route out of poverty. Low pay is the cause of poverty. Decent work for working people is the key to moving children out of poverty.

Congress, I am proud to move this report. Thank you. (*Applause*)

BRO. B. TONNER (CEC, Public Services): Congress, the Government is to be congratulated in that it is attempting to address child poverty and set a target for its eradication by 2020. However, the UK remains a highly unequal country where low pay and in-work poverty is widespread. The Government's focus on work as a route out of poverty is undermined by the system. Getting a job is by no means the way out of poverty. In fact, most children living in poverty have a working parent. They work in low pay sectors. One in three low paid workers are in the retail sector. One in four are in the public services, thereby highlight the perversity of the Government paying low wages to public employees while topping them up with Tax Credits.

The Government has taken steps to redress the balance, but the focus has been on topping up family income through in-work benefits which subsidise low pay employers. The very existence of in-work benefits demonstrates that for many people incomes are too low to sustain family life. This joint report on In-Work Poverty reveals the surprisingly large number of workers and their families who rely on Child and Working Tax Credits. There are almost five million, of which 17% of those are of working age and in employment. The average payment is £3,200 per annum. The total paid out was £15 thousand million pounds! I think some people call that a billion, but I don't understand these words. So I prefer to repeat that. The total was £15 thousand million!

Family Tax Credits and the Minimum Wage are areas of funding that the Tories have declared that they would dismantle in the same way that Thatcher cut back on State subsidies to industry. We all know the damage that that did to our communities and to the economy. This is the money that workers and, indeed, many of our members rely on for survival. It is our Labour Government which has provided this essential support for families. When people switch their vote from Labour to the BNP, they are voting directly against their own interests. This GMB has a job to do, to help people understand the consequences of this kind of voting. If we are to ensure that the targets to reduce and then eliminate child poverty are to be met, then it is time for action to be taken to increase

the Minimum Wage to a living wage level, to extend the adult rate of the Minimum Wage to young workers, to invest in training and skills, to address the gender gap and end pay discrimination, to tackle low pay in the public sector and, finally, to have a decent minimum income for all by raising the safety net benefits for children and adults.

Congress, *this* Report is one of a number of Special Reports to you this week, but of all of them I urge you to take this document home, read it, digest it and pass the message to everyone in your families, workplaces, to employers and, especially, to your Members of Parliament. I am privileged and proud to second *this* document. I ask Congress to accept the Report. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I will now go round the regions. The first group are Birmingham, North West & Irish and then London.

SIS. S. TANNER (Birmingham & West Midlands): I am speaking in support of the CEC's Special Report: *Raising The Kids: Stop In-Work Poverty*. Congress, when reading this document I have to say that I was somewhat shocked to find that half the working population earn less than £17,500 per year. We hear in the media so many times that average pay is over £22,000 and people automatically assume that this figure must be correct. But that does not take into account those who are working part-time hours, mainly women workers who are also trying to balance the need to work with bringing up their children. Whether we like to admit it or not, even in our so-called modern society, it is still the vast majority of women who have to do this balancing act, not men. Also the National Minimum Wage was an excellent piece of legislation from the Labour Government and the public needs to be reminded that this was opposed by the Conservatives. So although welcome it still only delivers just under £12,000 a year.

We welcome the fact that the National Minimum Wage is to rise again in October but more needs to be done. The National Minimum Wage needs to rise significantly beyond 2009 to keep place with earnings inflation. It is also sad to note that in the West Midlands 31% of women and 16% of men earn less than £7 an hour. Because of this situation, there are children in poverty in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, which is an absolute disgrace. Children at school see what their friends have, such as new shoes, the latest fashions in clothes, the i-Pod, the mobile, the list goes on. How does a mother explain to her child that they cannot have a new pair of shoes or a new school uniform until the next year because she can't afford it? Well, we know that that is not always the case. The mother will try to get the money by borrowing and sometimes from an unscrupulous source because she does not have any security to borrow on. The spiral goes into further debt and poverty continues. Congress, we should not be living in a society where there are haves-and-have-nots. This report is welcome. The Labour Government has done a lot to be proud of with the National Minimum Wage and the introduction of Working Family Tax Credits, but the GMB must lead the way in the campaign to reduce the inequalities that exist.

*This* report, in its conclusion, makes a series of recommendations to achieve these aims. We, in the GMB, working with the Child Poverty Action Group, can make a difference

to the lives of all those children and families in poverty. The Birmingham Region commends this Special Report to Congress. *(Applause)*

SIS. B. BENHAM (London): I am speaking to the CEC's Special Report: Raising The Kids: Stop In-Work Poverty. London Region welcomes this report and is grateful for the depth of the detail contained within it. The report provides in detail just how much this Government has done for the low paid, and we should publicise this fact to the widest possible audience. If Britain's press reported fairly on facts instead of following a concerned campaign against the Prime Minister in particular, and the Labour Party in general – let's be fair, we do have issues with them – then we may not have seen the disastrous election results of last week. What is painfully obvious to everybody, press and public, is that if a Tory Government comes into power, the Minimum Wage would be under threat. The Working Family Tax Credit will certainly go, as indeed would other benefits. Just witness Peter Lilley's comments this week about the £190 payment to pregnant women. As the Report says, 50% of the working population earn under £17,597 a year. That, colleagues, is an awful lot of people who would be worse off under a Tory Government, so why would they vote Tory, BNP or anybody else? It is simple, colleagues. The media choose only to print the bad things and this has to stop. The circulation of *this* report may well stop it. If London Region was to offer any criticism of the report it would in relation to the fact that hundreds of thousands of people are being paid less than the Minimum Wage and no plan to remedy this situation is offered. I am sure the CEC will address this. Congress, London wholeheartedly supports the CEC's Special Report. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Barbara. Midland.

SIS. M. DAVEY (Midland & East Coast): I am speaking in support of the CEC Report on Child Poverty. President and Congress, the simple truth is that most children in poverty have a working parent, but the link between employment and poverty is a complex one. Child poverty is determined by household income which is part-earned benefit and tax transfers. Let's take a look at what we do for children in the Third World countries and all the media adverts we see on their issues. No one wishes to take away anything from them – they are important, too – but at the same time let's not forget the children in our country, the ones who live in so much poverty that they end up on the streets. Some even go into prostitution at a very young age and some get into street crime. Why are we so willing to send aid abroad to other countries yet see our own children live in such disgusting and degrading manner?

So what can we do to help the lower paid and the young? We could increase the National Minimum Wage; extend the adult rate of the Minimum Wage to young workers; invest in training for those with low skills; put an end to pay discrimination and tackle low pay in the public sector, provide a decent minimum wage for all and improve benefits to children. Employment policy also needs to consider not just whether people stay in work but whether their pay lifts them out of poverty. I ask you to support the CEC's Report. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Northern Region.

SIS. E. JEFFREY (Northern): I am speaking in support of the CEC's Special Report: Raising The Kids. Congress, child poverty is still a real issue in this country. At a time of economic recession, it is often the weak and vulnerable who suffer the most. Fairness has to be at the core of what we do. This Government has helped in so many ways to make the raising of kids easier and they have really made an effort to assist people to be able to work and raise kids. Tax credits have made a real impact. Sure Start Centres have made affordable good quality child care a reality for the first time. We totally support the conclusions of this report. Increasing the National Minimum Wage, the equalization of rates, targeting training, an end to pay discrimination, tackling low pay in the public sector and providing a decent minimum income for all. Congress, Northern Region supports this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

BRO. F. McKAY (GMB Scotland): Congress, I believe it is a great pity that we have to discuss child poverty in Britain today. There are many reasons for child poverty but there are many more reasons for eradicating child poverty. There are four key causes for poverty. There is low educational attainment and a lack of training which can severely limit a person's likelihood of accessing, sustaining, and advancing in employment and earning a decent wage. There is low pay. This can act as a disincentive to people who are looking to make the transition from benefits to work. And there is caring responsibilities: a lack of high-quality reliable child care can also discourage those furthest from the job market in seeking employment. There is the lack of incentives in the benefit system; people who are looking to move from benefits into work are not provided with adequate support.

The Government has set targets for improving welfare in the UK; some of these include eradicating child poverty by 2020 and to achieve equity for disabled people by 2025. Congress, why do we have to wait this length of time for anything to happen? Why do our ministers not look back at the work of Robert Owen who wrote this in 1816 about child care workplaces and nurseries: "An institution has been devised to afford the means of receiving your children at an early age almost as soon as they could walk. By this means many of you, mothers and families, will be able to earn a better maintenance or support for your children. You will have less care and anxiety about them where the children will be prevented from acquiring any bad habits and gradually prepare to learn the best."

Congress, if our leading politicians would look back at the work of this man they may just learn something. GMB Scotland is fully behind this report and welcomes the opportunity to put this and our kids to the forefront of our agenda. This is our future. Thank you. (*Applause*)

SIS. M. GREGG (North West & Irish) supporting the report on *Raising the Kids*, said: We all of us know the effect low pay has on the health and welfare of children. We would like just to highlight one of the reasons. The regions have highlighted most of the points we were going to raise. In Northern Ireland we have a very high public service

employment and so you have regional difficulties where percentages can vary. These public service employers are not at the top scale, they are mostly at the bottom pay scale. Therefore, when there is pay comparison due to percentage increase this compounds the problem. Somebody on £30,000 they get 3%, somebody on £11,000 gets 3%, so that also helps to create the problem. We all acknowledge the effect of low pay and we would just like to say that we support the report and congratulate the GMB on carrying it out. Thank you. *(Applause)*

BRO. A. GOODFELLOW (Southern) speaking in support of *Raising the Kids – Special Report*, said: Congress, as a school governor and a governor's rep on Southampton Early Years Partnership which is part of the Sure Start Scheme I have seen on many occasions where parents who themselves have been through the poverty chain struggle in existence hoping their child can break out of the chain.

Congress, child poverty, as we know it, has been here for more than 100 years but that is no excuse for ignoring it. It is incumbent upon every generation to advance children's wellbeing. The last generation made great strides in housing and reducing child mortality. Many childhood diseases have now been eradicated. This generation has responsibility to advance education, the potential fulfilment, and the confidence to succeed to every child in society today. In essence, every child matters, every disabled child matters, every child has a vital role to play in the future because they are the future.

The GMB has put together a document that has a place in any future government's manifesto. It covers every issue that is necessary to enable families to have the tools that will empower them to give equal opportunity through equal parity to every child. As for the child of today, just like the GMB of the past that fought for better health and medicines for the poor, the GMB of today will fight to give liberty to aspire, and to those that believe the underclass and the poor, and the weak, and the vulnerable, should always be at the bottom of the heap I say this, beware, one day your servants will become your masters. You may say that there will always be rich but it does not mean to say you have to be poor. This document does not expect the earth but what it does expect is those in power to read it and act upon it. Every child is precious because every child is special. If we fail them, they will fail us, and for the GMB failure is not an option. Thank you. *(Applause)*

BRO. M. WILSON (South Western) speaking in support of *Raising the Kids: Special Report*, said: President, Congress, the report is an excellent exposition of the root cause of poverty and proposes pragmatic and workable solutions to address the scourge of low pay in the labour market. The fact that over four million workers have to rely upon the credit tax system to prop up inadequate levels of income is a shameful indictment upon an economy that fails to deliver a living wage for so many people.

Congress, whilst a tax credit system is a necessary safety net, it has the effect of subsidising greedy employers who refuse to share the spoils of their economic success with those who create it for them. Employment is quite rightly put forward as an escape

route from family poverty but cannot achieve this objective without decent pay levels being offered.

This is shown in the paradox of high UK employment and a child poverty rate that is itself far too high for any responsible and civilised society. The incidence of poverty in society can be tackled by a combination of measures, including raising pay rates, providing opportunities for training and career progression, and ensuring that the benefits safety net is adequately funded.

Colleagues, the direction of employment policy is in urgent need of change. Present inequalities in our society need to be readdressed in order to ensure that those at the bottom receive proportionately more than those at the top. An unequal Britain is an unhealthy Britain and child poverty must be eradicated. Please support the report.  
(Applause)

SIS. P. ROSS (Yorkshire & N Derbyshire) speaking in support of *Raising the Kids*, said: President, Congress, I asked one of my now adult sons what his memories were of having grown up in poverty. He said, “You’re always aware that we have no money but there’s nothing you can do about it so you just have to accept getting hand-me-downs, your clothes being darned, not getting things new, not having what your mates have got.”

The most important thing is not to lose your home, so that is the first bill to pay. Go to the supermarket when the DSS money comes in. The list is itemised down to the last penny; if it costs more you cannot afford it unless you do without something else. It is a struggle. But what is really hard are the nasty surprises like things breaking. My children got used to me on my hands and knees under the upside down washing machine fitting new bushes which I had got from a shop on Leaman Road. The only reason we had a washing machine was my mother took pity on me doing the family washing by hand and treated me to one. It was our one luxury.

We had no car; could not afford it. A black and white tele, rented; could not afford a colour licence anyway. Holidays were a day out somewhere where entry was free, too expensive to pay admission for four children, and we could not afford bus fares. The children did a lot of walking; at least that made them fit. Could not afford sweets and cakes very often, either, the dentist loved them, and they did not suffer from obesity, we could not afford junk food, everything was home-made, and we did not throw a lot of food away, but we could not afford a lot of fresh fruit either because that was too expensive. I used to loiter round the market at the end of the day and pick up bargains until I got an allotment to grow my own. If I had managed to save enough pennies to take them to a cheap café it was always, “You can have something to eat or something to drink,” we could not afford both.

Keeping up with their mates was probably the worst. Do you remember transformers? A lad in Ben’s class, and Ben would have been about 8, had £5 a week pocket money, in 1984. That was a quarter of what I spent a week on food. This lad bought a new figure every week and Ben got one for Christmas. How can you compete? How can you

explain that to a child? Christmas was another challenge. I would start buying lots of little inexpensive bits months beforehand, money my mother sent me for my Christmas present I spent on the children, and I made things. When Ben was 10 he said, "There has to be a Father Christmas because we get so many presents and I know we are so poor."

At Christmas we used to save up to have a blazing coal fire. The fire heated the water and the house but we did not always have coal. When we ran out of coal we sat round a paraffin heater in one room of the house. We had one warm year. The children and I were in the York mystery plays and we were filmed for YTV and the nice TV lady bought me a load of coal as a thank you.

Although they lived a long way off, we often relied on both sets of parents for help. My late husband was an actor, mostly resting. Sometimes when he worked he would get no money from the DSS for several months because he had signed off and he would not get paid by the TV company for months so we would have gaps with no income whatsoever. You just do not know how long it will go on, this scrimping to survive, or if it will ever end. It is not Third World poverty but by modern western standards most people who have not been there cannot comprehend it. For instance, if your living room needed painting, do you think twice about going out and buying a pot of paint? For us we could not afford paint so we washed down the walls.

One thing my children do seem to have gained from their experience is that they value quality of life over money and they are determined it will never happen to their children. I just wish it had not happened to mine. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Pam, thank you. Can I say I was so pleased that you were supporting that; I was sure you would. Congress, new delegates, I admire Pam and pay tribute to her for the way she has worked with the coal industry and the mining communities to keep that issue alive. No one has worked harder at this Congress every single year, her and her branch, so you have our sheer admiration. Thank you, Pam. (*Applause*)

I do not think there was anything controversial in that document. We do not need Brenda to reply. Okay, Brenda? Does anyone wish to speak against? No? I did not think so, somehow. Colleagues, can I put the document to the vote.

*The CEC Special Report: Raising the Kids: Stop In-Work Poverty was adopted.*

THE PRESIDENT: That was a great debate.

## **STANDING ORDERS REPORT NO. 2**

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, could I now ask Helen Johnson, Chair of Standing Orders Committee, to move SOC Report No. 2. Helen?

SIS. H. JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): Congress, withdrawn motions. The SOC has been advised that the following motions have been withdrawn:

Motion 6 – Amalgamation – standing in the name of London Region was withdrawn this morning.

Motion 25 – Contributions in public services, standing in the name of Northern Region. Rule Amendment 243, standing in the name of Birmingham & West Midlands Region, has been withdrawn in favour of CEC Rule Amendment No. 7.

Just to reiterate, that is Motion 6, Motion 25, and Rule Amendment 243, all withdrawn.

Emergency Motions. The SOC has accepted the following Emergency Motion as being in order for debate: Emergency Motion No.3 – Corus Steel Teesside, standing in the name of Northern Region. The SOC is recommending that this be heard in the Tuesday morning session.

Bucket Collections. The SOC has given permission for three bucket collections. First, for the Birmingham Children’s Hospital Kids Kidney Appeal by Birmingham & West Midlands Region. The SOC is recommending that the collection takes place at the close of business today.

Second, for Zoe’s Place Baby Hospice by North West & Irish Region, the SOC is recommending that this takes place at the close of the morning session tomorrow.

Third, for Cancer and Biodetection Dogs by London Region, the SOC is recommending that this takes place at the close of the morning session on Tuesday.

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

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Helen, very much. Anyone wish to speak on the report? Congress accepts the report?

*The SOC Report No.2 was adopted*

## **SOCIAL POLICY: WELFARE RIGHTS & SERVICES**

### **PAYING GRANDPARENTS**

#### **MOTION 211**

#### **211. PAYING GRANDPARENTS**

Congress asks that Grandparents fulfilling the role of carers for their grandchildren, enabling a parent or parents to work, should have the option of being paid as part of Working Tax Credit.

NORFOLK PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. V. THOMAS (London): Madam President, Congress, grandparents who help with childcare do not qualify for payments via tax credits, benefits paid to working parents on low and medium incomes who send children to nurseries or childminders. As the number of working mothers increase grandparents are being increasingly relied upon to help out with caring for their grandchildren. According to research carried out by the HSBC one in four parents turn to their own parents for help with childcare. On average, grandparents contribute nearly 16 hours per week caring for their grandchildren. I know from personal experience how invaluable this help can be. As a teaching assistant with a working day more child-friendly than many jobs, I still needed my youngest son to be taken to and collected from primary school. Many parents find themselves in this position needing childcare at the beginning and end of their working day. I was fortunate in that my parents were living locally and were willing and able to help and I know that my parents and son benefited greatly from this regular interaction. I am now happily a grandparent myself. I have two grandsons with another grandchild due any day and it gives me great pleasure to look after them when both their parents are at work. Many parents are in a quandary regarding provision of childcare for their children. Whilst there are many excellent childcare providers we have recently heard the heartrending case of child abuse at a children's nursery. Many of those parents are probably wishing that their children had been in the care of their grandparents. The government initiative of *every child matters* brings to mind the plain and simple truth that every grandchild matters to their grandparents. Financially, many grandparents are struggling to make ends meet on basic state pension and pension credits. Let's stop the marginalisation of grandparents by helping to alleviate pensioner poverty at the same time freeing parents from anxiety surrounding childcare and giving grandchildren emotional support and stability. As the saying goes, *Home is where the heart is*, let's put grandparents back into the heart of the family, give them the recognition they deserve, let's value and celebrate them, and let's pay them. Congress, please support this motion. I move. (*Applause*)

SIS. D. CRANGLE (London): President, Congress, children are often looked after by relatives, particularly grandparents, as the mothers go out to work. Without these older carers a lot of family life in Britain would collapse into chaos. The elderly themselves are a fast growing group whose care needs threaten to overwhelm public budgets unless we find some new answers. The charity, Grandparents Plus, publishes a fascinating report into who actually does the childcare in this country, while a Labour peer, Baroness Hollis, opens up a new fund in the campaign to give the elderly easier ways to stay in their own homes. A lot of this sounds just a touch technical. It is important to remember what basic everyday issues we are talking about.

It is about a 60-year old grandmother grappling with a demanding 2-year old so that her daughter can keep earning but who is now getting into trouble with her own part-time boss and is fretting about her future. It is about an 80-year old granny who still lives in her own house yet is struggling to cope; she dreads going into residential care and cannot afford to stay there. Multiply these individuals by a million or two and you begin to get an idea of the scale of the problem.

Let's start with the grandparent carers. Marriages are in decline. Stepfamilies are the fastest growing group. Nearly three-quarters of women are economically active so what happens? These days a quarter of families rely on grandparents for childcare and that proportion rises to half with single-parent families. This is a massive change. The bank, HSBC, has cost the amount parents would have to spend on childcare if they did not have a granny or grandpa to help out and come up with the astonishing figure of £50bn, not far short of a fair part of the Treasury bank bailout.

A third of grandparents now have a dependent child living with them and as if looking after the children is not enough half of all grandparents have a living parent of their own. They are often having a tough time; many of them are only in their 50s and 60s and still trying to manage at least part-time work of their own. Around 30% of grandparents are of working age yet there are disadvantages in all sorts of ways.

A parent, a foster parent, or some someone looking after a disabled adult for 20 hours or more gets National Insurance credits. A grandparent does not. This seems unfair and markedly barmy. Grandparents get no flexible working help or special leave. Parents cannot claim child tax credits for care by grandparents. Nine out of ten grandparents do all the caring for free. The charity, Grandparents Plus, says the grandparents should become the beneficiaries of some kind of financial recognition for their new role. Working tax credits for grandparents would help put parents into work and grandparents out of poverty in return for the support that they offer. I second this motion. *(Applause)*

## **DOMESTIC FUEL TO BE ZERO RATED**

### **MOTION 213**

#### **213. DOMESTIC FUEL TO BE ZERO RATED VAT**

Congress we call upon you to lobby government with regard to the fact that as pensioners and a lot of working class people are finding it more and more difficult to pay their gas and electric bills. The government should remove the VAT as gas and electric are not a luxury but are a necessity in running a healthy home, especially during the winter months.

BRAINTREE AND BOCKING BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. D. RIGBY (London): Congress, brothers, sisters, President, my branch calls upon Congress to lobby this government with regards to the fact that there are pensioners and a lot of working-class people who are on low incomes and finding it more and more difficult to pay their gas and electricity bills. For example, if a pensioner had a bill of, say, £60 for a quarter, £9 of this is spent on VAT at 15%. The government must remove the VAT on these utility bills for pensioners and low-paid workers as they are not a luxury but a necessity in running a healthy home, especially in the winter months. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

BRO. D. BENSTEAD (London): Congress, with the current economic crisis causing further hardship for working-class families we ask the Union to lobby government to ease the burden of the poorest members of our society by reducing the VAT on domestic fuel to zero. One third of pensioner households are now in fuel poverty spending more than 10% of their income on energy bills. Six years ago the winter fuel payment covered over one-third of the average annual gas and electricity bill. It now covers just one-fifth. The choice between heat or eat has now become commonplace. A loaf of bread is no comfort when hyperthermia has set in. A warm room has no effect on an empty stomach. In a modern society such as ours how can we even justify one death a year through fuel poverty let alone over 25,000, the majority of which are pensioners. The motion proposed, if successful, will go some way to helping ordinary citizens to keep warm. Last winter more than nine pensioners died of a cold-related illness every hour. Congress, please support. *(Applause)*

## **SEVERE WEATHER PAYMENTS**

### **MOTION 214**

#### **214. SEVERE WEATHER PAYMENTS**

Congress agrees that this Labour Government will remove the present criteria of 7 consecutive days below freezing to trigger payments and put in a proper fair system throughout the UK.

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

*(Carried)*

BRO. D. KEMPSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, in an ideal world our senior citizens should not have to go through all the anguish of having to decide between keeping warm and feeding themselves. They should not have the added worry in regard to receiving severe weather payments. It is grossly wrong and unfair for them to have to worry in regard to the trigger method attached to this payment kicking in, like it did earlier this year where we had six days of freezing weather in the south and on the seventh day the temperature rose by one degree above freezing, hence no payments to a lot of senior citizens. Congress, this motion is asking that the criterion is removed and a fair system is implemented for all. Congress, removing the trigger system from the payment should be the start of our campaign and our ultimate aim is for all senior citizens taken out of poverty all together for ever. Congress, I ask you to support. I move. *(Applause)*

BRO. P. COOMBES (Birmingham & West Midlands) seconding motion 214 said: I implore you all, please, to support this motion and ask that we get a fair, equal, and proper system in for one and all, immediately. Cheers. *(Applause)*

## **WINTER FUEL ALLOWANCE FOR FAMILIES WITH DISABLED CHILDREN**

### **MOTION 216**

#### **216. WINTER FUEL ALLOWANCE FOR FAMILIES WITH DISABLED CHILDREN**

Congress calls on the GMB to campaign for families with disabled children to receive a winter fuel allowance which would match that currently paid to pensioners.

HAVERING BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. C. KERR (London): Congress, keeping warm is a basic human need. We tend to think of fuel poverty only as pensioner problems but this is not the case. No family with a disabled child should be living in poverty but two-thirds of families with disabled children struggle to pay their fuel bills in wintertime. Although suppliers are not allowed to disconnect disabled households, many install meters as customers struggle to pay their bills. They set up these families without energy as soon as their money dries up. Research shows that UK families of disabled children are amongst the poorest, often living on below average incomes. It also costs three times as much to bring up a disabled child compared to other children and childcare costs up to five times as much. They are 50% more likely to be in debt than other families and 50% less likely to be able to afford the likes of new clothes and school outings. Higher energy bills in the winter are yet another cost that hits families with disabled children disproportionately hard. The yearly gas and electricity bills are nearly doubled compared with other families. Many conditions of disabilities worsen in cold weather, or children may be prone to picking up infections so the heating needs to be on for longer, in some cases constantly.

The Government says it is committed to halving child poverty by 2012 and ending child poverty by 2020. Reducing poverty amongst families with disabled children must be part of this and extending the winter fuel allowance to them will help them achieve this target. Congress therefore calls on the GMB to lobby the government for a winter fuel allowance for families with disabled children and receipt of a disability living allowance like that currently paid to pensioners. Please support. I move. *(Applause)*

BRO. D. GREEN (London) seconding Motion 216, said: This is a motion that could affect any one of us at any time. A disabled child needs more patience, more love, and a hell of a lot more money to raise them. So, a winter fuel allowance could and would make a difference to their lives, particularly in this present climate. By giving this payment to families with disabled children it would be a stepping stone for bigger and brighter things to come for them in the future, so I ask you all to support this motion. *(Applause)*

## **CLAIMING UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT**

### **MOTION 217**

#### **217. CLAIMING UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT**

In the current economic climate sadly some of our members find themselves facing unemployment for the first time in their lives. Equally some are facing difficulties accessing what they are entitled to.

Jobcentre Plus are having to cope with a steep rise in applications over the last six months and in many cases do not have sufficient staff or accommodation to facilitate the increase of staff required.

This has a detrimental impact upon the actual processing of applications which in reality means our members have to wait longer than 10 days (JCP target) to receive their benefit.

In the South Western Region we have examples of some of our members having to wait for their benefit to be processed up to six weeks from the time of their initial application.

We request more information is available for branches in order to provide practical information.

Congress we ask you to support this motion.

BRISTOL PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH  
*South Western Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. J. SMITH (South Western): President, Congress, with the rising unemployment mostly through no fault of their own young people find themselves having to go to Job Centre Plus. Many centres lack sufficient staff or the space to accommodate the increase needed to process claims. In one area of the South Western Region they have closed centres in a bid to rationalise the service, with claimants having to travel across the city. This lack of resources means claimants wait longer than 10 days to receive their benefits. We have one young member who was made redundant and had to register for the first time. After completing the forms she was told they would have to do a search. This took over six weeks in which time she did not receive any money. She attended appointments and kept checking on a weekly basis with her local office, which was some distance away from her home. Eventually, after six weeks, she was told, "Just think of all the money you will get once we have processed your claim." In the meantime, she had no money to live on, to buy food, to pay her rent, heating, or travelling costs to the job centre. She had to borrow money from family and friends. She was told she could apply for a crisis loan but was afraid she would not be able to repay it. After contacting the GMB she was informed of her rights. The centre was reminded of their target, respond, process, pay, within 10 working days. Her claim was processed and her benefit paid. She was also unaware of the training and re-skilling element of the centre's role. Figures show one of the hardest hit groups of workers are the under-25s. By being unaware of their rights they can find themselves in financial difficulties.

With the chilling prediction of 2.3m unemployed in the second quarter of 2010 the GMB needs to lead by example. Congress, we therefore request more information is available for branches in order to provide practical information to support any member who is made redundant. This needs to be basic, clear information. Please support. (*Applause*)

*Motion 217 was formally seconded.*

## **UNCLAIMED BENEFIT**

### **MOTION 218**

#### **218. UNCLAIMED BENEFIT**

Congress calls for the Government to use unclaimed benefits for benefit take up campaigns.

NORFOLK PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. G. DOUCE (London): President, Congress, literally tens of billions of pounds worth of benefits are going unclaimed each year. Why should this be? Claimants should not be ashamed of needing benefits. Unfortunately, all too often the reason is, "I didn't know I was entitled to that." Whose fault is it that UK citizens do not know which benefits they are entitled to? Now, that is an interesting question. There has been so much unclaimed benefit expiring, including about £10bn worth of means tested child benefits. If there is that much unclaimed expired benefits about, then families are certainly struggling and it is prolonging child poverty. If this money has expired, what is done with it? Don't you think that as a trade union we have a social conscience and should call for the government to reinvest this money in take-up campaigns so those who are less privileged should be aware of the benefits they are entitled to. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Congress, I think it is that young man's first time and he did extremely well. Well done. (*Applause*) It is not *this* man's first time, either!

BRO. A. McLEAN (London): I am here to support the resolution proposed by my colleague. I am sure that you are all well aware of the fact that many individuals do not make claims for the state benefits that they are entitled to. There is a multitude of factors which contribute to this and these barriers can only be removed by better awareness of the benefits available and the qualifying conditions for them. This can only be achieved by greater benefits campaigns and the availability of personalised benefit advice provided by support organisations. I second this resolution. I am therefore asking you to provide your support to enable us to lobby the government to ensure that any monies from unclaimed benefits are redirected into provision of benefit advice and take-up campaigns. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Alistair. Does anyone wish to speak in this debate? Does anyone want to oppose any resolution that we have debated? There is no CEC speaker, colleagues, so I will get on with the vote. Sorry.

BRO. D. SUTCLIFFE (North West & Irish) speaking in support of Motion 211 said: I am sure many of you are grandparents out there and I am sure many of you on many occasions look after your grandchildren. I fully support the motion but I would just mention an area of concern. When we go for this we must take into account that grandparents have brought up their own children in good, healthy, and safe homes. We do not want any restrictions putting on the grandparents' conditions where they look after the children. Other than that, I fully support them. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Does anyone wish to come in on the debate before I take the vote? Motion 211 is supported by the CEC, Motion 213 is supported by the CEC, Motion 214 is supported by the CEC, Motion 216 is supported by the CEC, Motion 217, and Motion 218. Could I have a show of hands voting for those en bloc?

*Motion 211 was carried.*

*Motion 213 was carried.*

*Motion 214 was carried.*

*Motion 216 was carried.*

*Motion 217 was carried.*

*Motion 218 was carried.*

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I just have a couple of announcements before I move to the next debate. Number one is that we have Glenys Wilmott in the room. She is with her region in the hall. Glenys, welcome. (*Applause*) We also have another guest in the hall, up in the balcony, a great favourite with us; she was on the CEC. I understand Joan Lewis is here. Joan, I am absolutely delighted that you are here. I cannot see you. Where are you, Joan? I can hear that Geordie accent. Okay, Joan, see you later. Welcome to Congress.

I have an apology to make. Could I just apologise to those of you who went along to the Institute of Employment Rights fringe this lunchtime. As you well know, the organiser had to cancel the fringe and I am sorry we overlooked announcing that this morning. Congress, I was not made aware of it until after lunch. Kathleen will be speaking on related issues of Equal Pay or Exploitation in Engineering Construction tomorrow lunchtime. Hopefully, all your questions will be answered then. Thank you.

## **UNION ORGANISATION – RECRUITMENT & ORGANISATION**

### **NATIONAL MIGRANT WORKERS RECRUITMENT & ORGANISING**

#### **STRATEGY**

## **COMPOSITE MOTION 1**

### **C1. COVERING MOTIONS**

11. NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR MIGRANT WORKERS (Southern Region)
12. NATIONAL MIGRANT WORKERS' STRATEGY (Southern Region)

### **NATIONAL MIGRANT WORKERS RECRUITMENT & ORGANISING STRATEGY**

The GMB has been the leading trade union when it comes to recruiting, organising and protecting migrant workers. The GMB has had a long held belief that in order to protect UK workers' terms and conditions we must recruit and organise the migrant workers who are exploited into accepting poor wages and even poorer employment rights in the workplace.

As Britain's labour market continues to become more deregulated, leading to ever more exploitation of both indigenous and migrant workers, there is an urgent requirement for the GMB to tackle this increasing exploitation, by re-emphasising its commitment to a national organising strategy, piloted by some regions of our union in response to the GMB national strategy laid down in 2006/7.

Congress asks that this is now implemented and carried out encompassing migrant workers and other indigenous workers resourced nationally in all regions of our union. This will enable the GMB to continue to be the leading trades union in the recruiting, organising and protection of migrant workers.

Congress notes that in some regions migrant worker recruitment and organising strategies have been successful in recruiting a large number of new members and that this strategy is the best way to address a growing need for migrant worker protection in this country. These migrant worker projects have been carried out using minimum resources from GMB funds as they have been financed by way of Government and TUC funding and the Learning Works for All Fund. Migrant workers have been trained to run the projects themselves with assistance and guidance from their regions.

Congress agrees that in the coming years there are going to be increasing amounts of migrant workers entering the UK. By offering a way into English language courses and numeracy and literacy courses in partnership with local colleges implementing education strategy, and by offering representation in the workplace the Southern Region now has a large Migrant Workers Branch as well as Migrant Workers Forum run by migrant workers. Recruitment of migrant workers has been highly successful.

So as to create a GMB nationwide focused National Migrant Strategy, this Congress therefore seeks the adoption, nationally, of the Southern Region's successful Migrant Workers Recruitment and Organising Strategy. Having been developed with the GMB's National Organising Strategy in mind, has successfully sought to recognise and understand the issues surrounding migrant workers, both in the workplace and the wider community and has organised, successfully, with migrant workers in those two areas.

*(Carried)*

THE PRESIDENT: Can we now move to Union Organisation, Recruitment & Organisation, Composite 1, National Migrant Workers Recruitment & Organising Strategy, Southern Region to move, Southern Region to second. The CEC are supporting it with a qualification.

SIS. A. GLAPINSKA (Southern): Congress, I would like to say how proud I am to be making this speech today to my fellow GMB members and to you, President, and our visitors in the gallery. I am a Polish migrant worker and because the GMB had offered English lessons for migrant workers, our people, in 2007 I eagerly used the opportunity of learning the language which attracted me to become an active member of our trade union. Colleagues, migrant workers are ordinary people just like you, just trying to make a living, trying to feed their kids and keep a roof over their heads. There has been a lot of untrue reports from the media saying that migrant workers are here to steal your jobs, they are here only to claim benefits, and that they are a burden on society. I want to say that I have never seen a migrant worker yet who is not here to work and to try to make a wage for their families. I have seen migrant workers who have come to the learning centre in Southampton frightened and in tears because their employer did not pay them for months; some have got themselves into debt because they have not been paid their holiday money or their employer has for some reason delayed their wages. There are some who have been sacked without reason and some who have been very badly discriminated against.

Colleagues, I want you to think about what it feels like to be a young migrant mother who has kids to feed and clothe, she has been dismissed after working out a short-term contract and because she has no longer got an employment contract she cannot be registered by the Home Office and therefore cannot even access the basic benefits that would give her enough money to pay the rent and feed the kids. This is the hard, harsh world that migrant workers have to live in.

The GMB Southern Region has helped many migrant workers by representing them in the workplace and by giving advice and guidance in their own language by GMB migrant project workers and staff in the learning centres and GMB offices. By accepting the government funding through a dual learning fund we have managed to make life just a bit easier for migrants by providing education through local colleges, and the major barriers such as language and numeracy skills are being overcome. In the GMB centres we have organised over 2,000 migrant workers so that they can start to defend themselves against bad employers and we have led on education and representation for migrant workers at the GMB based in Plymouth and Swindon, as well as the learning centres in Gatwick and Southampton.

Colleagues, we can be proud of the work carried out by the GMB in some of our regions but we really need our great union to roll out the Migrant Workers Strategy over all of our regions and offer this help to the most vulnerable workers in the UK workplaces. We now have a migrant workers branch in Southampton that has half a hundred

members. We continue to recruit many migrant workers into our union because they know we will provide them with a defence against bad employers. We can encourage migrant workers to be strong and fight wrong employers but it is very difficult for migrant workers to put their head above the parapet when they are already constantly targeted for discrimination and victimisation. We have been successful in recruiting many members into the Union and this success story can be expanded over the whole country if Congress passes this motion today. Colleagues, help us to support the migrant worker members in our great union. Please support the motion. (*Applause*)

BRO. A. NEWMAN (Southern): Comrades and friends, madam President, Congress, there has been a change in the workforce in many manufacturing workplaces and in care homes where large parts of the workforce are migrant workers, which means people who have come to the country in the last two or three years, and we need to respond as a union in organising the workplace as it actually exists. Now, we also need to be clear that many of these migrant workers are fantastic trade unionists. We have cases of workplaces where it is the migrant workers have organised themselves through GMB, and they are pushing for union recognition, recruiting the indigenous workers around them; they are at the core of reorganising. We have other workplaces where indigenous British and Polish shop stewards have stood shoulder to shoulder to prevent the workforce being divided along ethnic lines with redundancies and pay cuts, and things, and have done a fantastic job in emphasising that we are all workers. What is very clear is that all this organising also needs project workers that can help us over the issues of language, over the casework issues, and so far that has been funded by the TUC Union Learning Fund, EU funding, etc. If there is a Tory government and they cut that type of funding, then we will not have the project workers who are absolutely necessary to the Migrant Workers Strategy. That is why we ask Congress to endorse the Migrant Workers Strategy, to roll it out, and to fund the project workers that we need to recruit migrant workers right across the country. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Does anyone wish to come in on the debate?

BRO. T. FLANAGAN (London): I am unsure about this motion because we had a recent incident with Romanian drivers being brought into the country to drive minicabs in London. I will not name the firm in case there are some writs flying about but this firm do some work for the BBC so they are fairly high profile. They had these guys trained supposedly in Slovakia to pass the topographical test of the PCA, which of course was a farce. The guys were brought into the country, their licences had not arrived, so they put these guys into accommodation which had no electricity and no hot water, and this was in January. They gave them £60 a week to deliver cards. The employment rights of Romanians seems to be somewhat of an issue of debate, whether they can actually work as self-employed or run their own business. There is no doubt that when they were working for that company were working as workers under the direction of the company. Subsequently, the Daily Mirror got hold of the issue and involved me. I immediately enrolled them in the Professional Drivers Branch. To enrol them into another branch would have been inappropriate because the industry is specific and they needed someone who knew about the laws and the regulations within that industry.

Now, how that fits in with the plan with Southern Region I am unsure but I have reservations about this. I think there is more than one way to skin a cat. We have skinned this one. These guys are into membership and, believe you me, they are militant. I have to calm them down occasionally. At the moment I have paid their first two months' contribution but now they want to pay their own and they want to get stuck in.

THE PRESIDENT: Terry, I am about to skin the cat if you do not get down!

BRO. T. FLANAGAN (London): When I am standing here, Mary, I cannot hear your comments, unfortunately. Perhaps it is fortunate.

THE PRESIDENT: There will be more than one cat skinned before the week is out. Carry on.

BRO. T. FLANAGAN (London): You can buy me a drink later on! Bloody lights up there, whose working that!! The point of the issue here is that I am not sure we need to enrol people from specific industries into general branches because they will get the wrong advice and it will not work. If they are going into the cab industry, they need to go into the Professional Drivers Branch, and every region by now should have one. If you do not have one, contact us and we will set it up for you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Terry. Anyone else? Okay, can I call Lena Sharp to reply on behalf of the CEC?

SIS. L. SHARP (CEC, Commercial Services): President, Congress, the CEC is supporting Composite 1 with qualifications. This motion proposes a course of action that is consistent with GMB@Work and highlights the existing collective policy developed, adopted, and implemented through the national organising team by all regions. The qualifications are, firstly, the change in economic situation both in the UK and abroad means that it is not necessarily the case that the coming years will see an increase in the number of migrant workers entering the UK. Secondly, a number of campaigns and projects have been launched in regions in addition to those referred to in the motion. Following the adoption of this policy, some, but not by all means all, have been supported by public money. In many cases they have been supported by existing GMB regional and national resources.

Congress, the focus of GMB@Work must be and will remain building our members' power to make a difference in the workplace but we must not feel threatened if Polish, Portuguese, Lithuanian, or Asian workers want to organise and recruit for GMB within their own communities, initially as a first step to building the Union where they work. That is not separatism as some would claim, it is the basic decency and respect GMB must show migrant workers as working people first and migrants second. Self-organisation is as essential as integration. These are both guiding principles for us and one cannot happen without the other. It is a policy we should be proud of and boast

about, and we should never ever abandon this decency and respect for fear of what the racist thugs in the BNP may say.

Congress, 120 years ago GMB was built by migrant workers. We are as committed today as we always have been to organising migrant workers into our Union. Finally, Congress, our campaign over the last few months to protect and implement the EU posted workers directive goes hand-in-hand with our strategy to organise migrant workers. This is the best way to protect all GMB workers and members from the effects of exploitation. The anger expressed by members in Lindsey, Milford Haven, and the Isle of Grain, have made it less likely that employers in the construction and engineering sector can exploit migrant workers from the EU 14 states by undercutting UK wages and conditions. Let's be clear about this, British jobs for British workers is a cul-de-sac and the only thing waiting for us down that dead end is the BNP. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Lena. Does the region accept the qualification?  
*(Agreed)*

*Composite Motion 1 was carried.*

## **INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY – ENVIRONMENT**

### **PHASE 3 EUROPEAN EMISSIONS TRADING SCHEME**

#### **MOTION 147**

#### **147. PHASE 3 EUROPEAN EMISSIONS TRADING SCHEME**

Congress,

In 2013 we see the start of Phase 3 of the European Emissions. This will give an unfair advantage to companies trading from outside the EU. They will be able to import goods having made significant savings on the CO<sub>2</sub> price.

We look for assurances that this so-called carbon leakage does not occur.

BUXTON BRANCH  
*Midland & East Coast Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. R. WHILDING (Midland & East Coast): Congress, in 2005 the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme started. This was phase one of three which covered 2005 to 2007. We are now in phase two which covers 2008 to 2012. During phase two a CO<sub>2</sub> usage allowance will be worked out and for the affected companies the allocation of the CO<sub>2</sub> credits will then go forward to phase three, which starts in 2013. At present, the third phase is set to run until 2020. On 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013 affected companies will be given 80% of their CO<sub>2</sub> credits and will have to purchase the remaining 20%. This will then change year on year. Congress, industry is very concerned about the different allocations. Present allocations between different countries indicate wide differences with several countries proposing allocations that appear to give significant surplus to their

sectors. Congress, all we ask for is a level playing field. The affected companies agree that carbon emissions need to be controlled but have grave concerns about the trading disadvantages. They also have to compete with companies outside the EU. Congress, we need to lobby government so that when 2013 comes we have a level playing field. I move. *(Applause)*

BRO.J. NEEDHAM (Midland & East Coast): The EU Emission Trading Scheme has, as my colleague said, three phases of which we are currently in phase two. During phase two CO<sub>2</sub> usage allocation was worked out for the affected companies. These affected companies will be given 80% of their CO<sub>2</sub> credits and will have to purchase the remaining 20%. Companies have great concerns about the trading disadvantage that the EU countries will be put under. Non-EU countries do not have to comply with these rules. We would like a CO<sub>2</sub> levy on all affected products that are imported from outside the EU. We believe that this would help in keeping industries and jobs in the EU and allow for better control of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. I second. *(Applause)*

## **GENDER BENDING CHEMICALS (ENDOCRINE DISRUPTERS)**

### **MOTION 148**

#### **148. GENDER BENDING CHEMICALS (ENDOCRINE DISRUPTERS)**

Congress fully supports the European Parliament and moves world wide to control the use of all chemicals that cause the gender of males to become female to a point when this will not happen.

Congress recognises the danger that such chemicals cause to human life including:

- Genital abnormalities
- Sperm counts reduced by 60% in the last 50 years, in 20 countries.
- Twice as many girls as boys born in highly polluted areas:

These abnormalities are mirrored in all vertebrates including Polar Bears.

If this is allowed to continue it will pose a serious threat to the continuation of both animals and humans alike.

Congress urges HM Government to do all in its power to agree with all Governments effective measures to render these chemicals harmless.

HEATHERWOOD & WINDSOR PARK H25 BRANCH  
*Southern Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. R. REEVES (Southern) moving the motion, said: President, Congress, since the drafting of this motion it is very welcome that Europe has introduced the registration, evaluation, authorisation, and restriction of chemicals directive – a bit of a mouthful, but there you go – to tackle the serious and complicated problem. However, there is more to be done. The rest of the world needs to be convinced as it is a worldwide problem. Europe is leading the way. The world needs to follow. As with many environmental issues, there are powerful commercial interests opposing these moves. They failed this

time. I regret to say these new rules were fought by our government on the grounds of commercial viability; a short-term view. These chemicals are extremely dangerous in the long-term. They build up, spread, and must be tackled worldwide now. This shows how effective and important the European Parliament can be in tackling European and world issues. They showed the way on global warming and have done it again on dangerous chemicals so we need sympathetic members to the cause of our belief in the collective welfare of the individual. Those opposed need to be shown up for what they are, short-sighted and self-serving at best, but very dangerous at worst. We must not give up on Europe but we must make it more effective. This is getting away from the point of this motion, which is to further the cause of the worldwide control of these highly dangerous chemicals. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Seconder?

*Motion 148 was formally seconded.*

Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? *(No response)* In that case, I call John Dolan on behalf of the CEC who will speak to the qualification to Motion 147.

BRO. J. DOLAN (CEC, Manufacturing): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motion 147 – Phase 3 European Emissions Trading Scheme, which the CEC is supporting with a qualification.

The CEC welcomes this motion as it gives us an opportunity to establish our position in a very important area affecting us both industrially and environmentally. The propose Phase 3 European ETS comes into effect in 2013, and for the first time it will include aviation emissions. However, contrary to some of the propaganda from some areas, this sector is not the worst polluter and a properly integrated transport policy as new technology develops should not impact upon aviation to a great extent.

The concerns raised in the motion relate to the prospect of some major manufacturing industries, covering steel, aluminium and cement, all of which are large producers of CO<sup>2</sup>, could be profoundly affected and, in some cases, relocated to north Africa or Turkey, which are outside the EU but not very far away geographically.

In the lead-up to the Copenhagen Summit at the end of this year, the EU is taking a lead in tackling climate change, principally with a view of influencing both the USA and China, the two largest polluters in the world. The CEC qualification reflects these areas of concern, and given that the movers of the motion have already stated that they accept them in principle and (1) agree with the EU taking a lead in seeking control of CO<sup>2</sup> emissions; (2) agree with the broad proposals of the ETS programme, and (3) where they are seeking independent rigorous monitoring of the scheme to ensure fair competition, which currently does not take place. The potential for unfair trading would penalize industries both here and across the EU. If Congress agrees that we can accept these qualifications, we ask you to support Motion 147 with the qualification and also support Motion 148. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. On Motion 148 the CEC is supporting. Does the region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*)

I put Motion 147 to the vote with the qualification. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

I put Motion 148. The CEC is supporting. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

*Motion 147 was carried.*

*Motion 148 was carried.*

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, this is not on your agenda. Before I open the Health and Safety debate and the Environment debate, there is an item not on your programme. I would like to congratulate the election and work of two other presidents who are in this hall. One is Sheila Bearcroft from our own CEC, and the other is Vaughan Gething, both from Wales. Sheila, this year, is the President of the TUC. Sheila, we are absolutely delighted that you are the President of the TUC. I ask Sheila to stand up and come to the platform. (*Applause*) Congress, Sheila on Sunday has been recognized for her work in the trade union Movement and has just been awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. Well done. (*Applause and cheers*) Sheila, before I ask you to say a couple of words, where is Vaughan Gething. Would Vaughan come to the platform. We would also like to congratulate Vaughan Gething on having served for a year as the youngest ever President of the Wales TUC. (*Applause*) Vaughan was 34 years old when he was elected at the Wales TUC's Annual Conference in Llandudno. Vaughan lives in Cardiff and is a senior solicitor and partner with Thompsons solicitors, the largest trade union law firm in the country. He is a GMB and Labour Party member and currently Chair of Newtown branch Labour Party. Vaughan, welcome to Conference.

I ask Sheila to address Conference.

SIS. S. BEARCROFT (CEC, and President of the TUC): Congress, I feel totally humbled, very privileged, and privileged in being the first lay member of the GMB to be made TUC President. When I became a shop steward, I never thought that I would ever become a president of anything, let alone the TUC. However, one thing I can say is that without the help of you, the GMB, and the support that I have been given, I would not have made it. I would like, personally, to thank my region, my regional secretary, my General Secretary and all of Congress for the support that you have given me throughout the past year and over the years. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sheila. Vaughan.

BRO. V. GETHING: Thank you, President and Congress. I am delighted to stand before you following my year in office at the Wales TUC. Again, from my point of view, I joined the GMB when I was a student in Aberystwyth, and I never expected to be here at Congress. It was not why I joined. Again, over the past year it has been a real privilege to serve the whole Movement, but I am very much aware that I only got to achieve that

position because of the support of my Union and with the support of many individuals within my Union as well. In addition to being the youngest I was also the first black President. Again, I particularly remember the way in which I was supported by the GMB through the Race Committee, as it was, and for all those other people who helped to clear the way for me, I will never forget that. I will always be grateful for the time and effort given to me. It has been a great honour. The GMB is such a part of my life that I am even going to marry another GMB member next year.

THE PRESIDENT: I'll be waiting, Vaughan.

BRO. GETHING: I am, obviously, delighted to be here. I did not really expect this to happen, but it has been a privilege to have served in your name and I look forward to being able to do that at some point again in the future. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, doesn't it make you feel proud that we are such a multi-cultural union. When the BNP knocks at anyone's door, take a look and say, "Look what we would have lost if they get their way". *(Applause) (Presentations made amidst applause)*

## **EMPLOYMENT POLICY**

### **HEALTH & SAFETY AT WORK**

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, we now move on to Employment Policy: Health & Safety at Work. I call Motion 36 from Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region and then Motion 37 from Midland & East Coast.

### **HEALTH & SAFETY**

#### **Motion 36**

#### **36. HEALTH & SAFETY**

Congress calls on the CEC to lobby the Government to recognise stress complaints, where it is found to be work related as a reportable condition under RIDDOR and is reportable after 3 days.

BRIGHTSIDE BRANCH  
*Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. P. BROWNE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire) : Congress, I move Motion 36. When researching this motion, I was struck by the amount of information on the subject of stress at work. There have been year-on-year surveys on symptoms and results, some tragic when not treated. Stress tests have been carried out in many different workplaces such as hospitals and council offices, for example. The results have been shocking. The British Medical Journal, four years ago, in a survey, showed that stress-related mental

health problems had, for the first time, topped physical ailments as the chief cause of long-term sickness benefit claims in Britain.

Just last week in our local newspaper, in a study called *Health in the Workplace* by Norwich Union, they found that 49% of staff interviewed were going to work ill. They also found that 32% were not taking lunch breaks. GPs involved in the survey reported that they had seen patients' increased drug and alcohol use. They expect levels of depression to increase. The Health & Safety Executive in a 2003 survey reported that five million people feeling extremely stressed at work. It would be interesting to see the results if they did one of their stress tests at the House of Commons because MPs must be climbing the walls. Standards have been written into the 1999 Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations, where employers have a duty to assess the risk of stress and undertake measures to control the risks. In a booklet produced by the Leeds Mental Health Trust on Stress, under the list of things that stress at work may cause is illness both physical and psychological. So how the official line can be that stress at work is still not regarded as a reportable illness is beyond me.

At the pre-Congress meeting to give out the motions, our regional organizer always stresses the importance that if you are having trouble writing your motion, let someone know. In other words, report it because, if you do not, it will be three months of increasing stress followed by four minutes of silence stood *here*. I ask you to support the motion. (*Applause*)

SIS. S. WALKER (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I second Motion 36 on Health & Safety at Work. President and Congress, we must all know of colleagues in our workplaces who have been off sick due to work-related stress. If the Government recognized workplace stress and made companies report it under the RIDDOR three day absence rule, it would give the employers the kick up the backside they need to do something about it and to make changes to the working environment to reduce the workplace stresses which were causes the stress. We do not go to work to get stressed out, and employers have a duty of care whilst we are there to make the workplace as safe and as stress-free as they possibly can.

We are calling on the CEC to lobby Government to make this happen. Please support. (*Applause*)

## **DISPLAY SCREEN REGULATIONS AND CASH REGISTERS**

### **Motion 37**

#### **37. DISPLAY SCREEN REGULATIONS AND CASH REGISTERS**

Congress,

These Regulations need to be amended to include staff who work on computerised tills, as they are not protected under these Regulations.

Why should their office / admin colleagues be protected, and staff on the tills are not and often suffer poor working conditions.

SCARBOROUGH & NORTH YORKS COMMUNITY BRANCH  
*Midland & East Coast Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. A. COLLIER (Midland & East Coast): I am a first-time speaker at Congress, and I can recommend the stress balls. I move Motion 37 on Display Screen Regulations and Cash Registers.

Chair and Congress, the Display Screen Regulations need amending so that employees who work on computerized tills are covered and protected under these regulations like their office and administration colleagues. As more and more businesses opt to use computerized tills in this fast growing technological world, more and more employees suffer health issues due to poor working conditions as they are excluded from these regulations. Why? That is the question. Employees are protected under these regulations as they take into consideration their eye-sight with regular eye tests and whether they need glasses to view the screen, the work chair and the work station, space around the work station and freedom of movement, changes of activity and regular breaks, lighting, including reflection and glare, noise, heat, radiation, humidity and adequate health and safety training and information for the operator to safely do the job. All of these are important factors, whether you are working in an office on a computer or working on a computerized till. The employees who work on the tills are currently suffering without protection under the current regulations with uncomfortable chairs, cramped conditions and very little space to move and change position. The florescent lighting in shops is a major problem, causing reflection and glare on the screens, making them difficult to see clearly, and giving the operators bad headaches, sometimes even migraines. Noise, heat, radiation and adequate health and safety information and training are also important factors which need addressing for these staff who often work in noisy and hot atmospheres. Also, like their office and administration colleagues, they will be entitled to regular eye tests, and if they need glasses to view the screen when sitting down in front of it the employer has a duty to pay for these also. I believe that having good eyesight is so important. So, please, let's campaign by lobbying our MPs, our health and safety officers, the health and safety campaign groups and get these regulations amended so all of these employees are protected and their working conditions are improved. I move.  
*(Applause)*

SIS. C. CLARKSON (Midland & East Coast): I am speaking in support of Motion 37, Display Screen Regulations and Cash Registers.

President and Congress, I support everything that Andrea has said, but I would like to widen the scope of the motion. Supermarkets not only have computerized tills but they also have hand held computer guns to count stock and to check prices. They also have hand held printers, both of which have small screens, approximately 3 inches square, with several lines of information on them for the operator to read. The actual weight of the equipment is about 2½ lbs. You use this equipment like a gun with a finger trigger, which

no doubt will cause RSI. Congress, new technology is harming our workers now and will harm workers in the future. As an example, we are being provided by ASDA-Walmart with light enhanced spectacles to save on electricity.

But, seriously, technology is moving fast. We need regulations to move just as fast as technology to protect our working men and women. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? (*No response*) Does anyone wish to speak against? (*No response*) In that case, I call June Minnery on Motion 36.

SIS. J. MINNERY (CEC, Public Services): President and Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC.

The CEC is supporting Motion 36 on Health & Safety but with a qualification. The CEC recognizes the awful effects of work-related stress, and we know that one in five British workers find their job very or extremely stressful. In the economic climate, employers are not replacing staff, and those who are still employed are expected to take on more and more duties. By having employees take on these extra duties, employers set unrealistic deadlines and expect them to work longer hours. Their leisure time is greatly reduced, if not wiped out completely, and leaves no time for their families. These extra duties are causes of stress in the workplace and should therefore be treated as a workplace illness.

We know that each year more than 13.5 million working days are lost due to stress, depression and anxiety at a cost of more than £4 billion per year. Congress, you will be aware that there are no specific regulations tackling stress at work, and that stress itself is not a reportable work-related condition or illness. This means that employers often ignore stress and do not tackle it as they do not want to acknowledge that it is a problem. There are voluntary management standards and these work well when they are used, but they are not well understood and have not been widely adopted.

Congress, the CEC believes that properly managed work-related stress is key to improving health and safety standards. GMB has recently published new guidance on tackling stress, and has lobbied the HSE to better consider occupational health issues in its new strategy. We believe that there is a real merit in a GMB campaign to improve the reporting of stress.

The qualification is that we need to give full consideration to the way forward on the options available to us. They are either to lobby for a new set of regulations on the management of stress or for changes to current practice on the reporting of ill-health to include stress. With that qualification, Congress, the CEC asks you to support Motion 36, and to support Motion 37. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, June. Does Yorkshire & North Derbyshire accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) With the region accepting the qualification, I put Motion 36 to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against. That is carried. I put

Motion 37. The CEC is supporting. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against?  
That is carried.

*Motion 36 was carried.*

*Motion 37 was carried.*

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY AWARDS**

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I now move to the Health and Safety Awards and the presentation of the Daniel Dennis Award which, as you know, is dear to our hearts.

Congress, this is the third year that we are presenting this award and we will continue to keep the memory of Daniel alive through this annual award. It gives me great pleasure to announce that the winner of the Daniel Dennis Safety Representative of the Year is Chas Henderson from Midland & East Coast Region. Chaz, would you like to join us on the platform. *(Applause)*

As a GMB safety rep at Rigid Containers Limited in Desborough, Northamptonshire, Chas has worked tirelessly to safeguard his work colleagues and GMB members. The company employs a significant number of migrant workers who have had problems understanding the safety instructions which are written and spoken in English. Chas secured for them lifelong learning and training in English for speakers of other languages. By using health and safety as a campaigning issue, Chas has not only been able to galvanise members but has also raised the profile of the GMB and improved communications between the employer and the Union. Chas, I ask Sheila and Vaughan, with myself, to present your award. *(Presentation made amidst applause)*

BRO. C. HENDERSON (Midland & East Coast): President and Congress, excuse me that this is my first time at Congress so I get a bit muddled up. With regard to health and safety in the workplace, I am sure that we all still have many battles ahead of us, but being part of this great Union means that we can all work together to achieve better policies and safer working environments for our members.

In my own place of work there have been a number of accidents, and management still ignores the SRSC regulations. I have challenged our management many times and reminded them of our rights as health and safety reps. An agreement has now been reached that there will be joint management and union health and safety courses made available to new and existing health and safety reps, thereby making our workplace a safer place to work. It is for these reasons that I feel honoured to accept the Daniel Dennis Award and accept it in his memory. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, well done, Chas, from all of us and keep up the good work.

The winner of the Highly Commended Silver Badge for another outstanding safety representative, who was a very close second, goes to Bob Welham from North West &

Irish Region. (*Applause*) Bob has done a great deal to change the health and safety culture and improve incident reporting at the Crown Paints' site in Darwin. He has secured more paid time off for training of safety reps and established a quarterly health and safety forum at the site. Some of the activities that Bob has undertaken in the past year include addressing the European Chemical Industry Council, meeting with the Director of the Chemical Industries Association to promote health and safety, self-analysis with the industry, working with the Health & Safety Executive in Bootle to put together a website about cancer in the chemical industry. Bob, it gives me great pleasure to ask Sheila Bearcroft, the President of the TUC, and Vaughan Getting of the Welsh TUC, to present you with your award. (*Presentation made amidst applause*)

BRO. R. WELHAM (North West & Irish): President and Congress, yesterday the General Secretary said no speeches, so I think he was thinking he might hear something about greedy bankers, greedy politicians and "greedy bastards", as one former General Secretary once said.

In terms of health and safety the work that I have done was certainly with the members in mind all the time. One of the things that we did find when I was working for Akzo Nobel, when we did the global study, was that there are still countries in the world where the compulsory working of 16 hour shifts is going on. We did manage to stop that within the company and change the hours. Of course, what I found amazing about the work that we have done with the chemical sector in this last year was that we were asked to go along and work with the General Secretary of MSEF, Reinhardt Rudge, and in an entire day the trade union Movement was not mentioned once other than by an American executive who was involved with health and safety for Dow Chemicals when he said that they had worked with the Steel Workers' Union. So my job, although I thought it was to make a report, was certainly to make sure that the employers did not ignore us and did not do this sidelining of the unions which they have become accustomed to. By the end of the seminar, the first name on their lips was, of course, the GMB.

So I would like to thank Ken Lowe for the nomination, Paul McCarthy and the North West & Irish Region for the support that they have given me. Thank you, Comrades. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you for that. Can we now move to the European Report.

## **EUROPEAN REPORT**

### **EUROPEAN OFFICE**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The GMB European office has been very active in maximising GMB and the wider trade union movement's influence in ensuring that major EU social and employment policy proposals, which finally became unblocked during 2008 (Temporary Agency Workers, Working Time, European Works' Councils) meet the needs of our members and their families, in line with motion 144 agreed at GMB Congress 2008. The office continues to monitor and respond to a wide range of EU and International policy proposals 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 develop the positive working relationships and solidarity with our trade union colleagues across Europe and the world in promoting labour rights, decent work, conditions and pay, and to strengthen trade union recognition and organisation.

**CEC Political, European & International Committee** – The recently combined CEC Political, European and International Committee is working positively and effectively in considering and developing GMB policy in relation to a wide range of issues, campaigns and initiatives. Attendance is consistently high, as is involvement in policy discussions. The Committee focuses on GMB's scope to influence legislative proposals and policy development at national, European and International level.

## **2. PERSONNEL**

European Officer, Kathleen Walker Shaw and European Research and Policy Officer, Sarah King, continue to represent the GMB's interests in Europe. Both are based in the GMB European office located at the centre of the EU decision making institutions.

## **3. GMB MEP GROUP**

GMB continues to work closely at European, national and regional level with our group of MEPs in the European Parliament: Stephen Hughes (North East – Group convenor), Richard Corbett (Yorkshire and Humberside – Chair), Robert Evans (London), Neena Gill (West Midlands), Glenys Kinnock (Wales), David Martin (Scotland) and Glenis Willmott (East Midlands). The group continues to meet bi-monthly in Brussels. Glenys Kinnock and Robert Evans announced that they will not be standing again in the 2009 European Parliament elections. GMB wishes them well for the future, and thanks them for their support and friendship over the years. The GMB strategy for the European Parliament election campaign has been finalised and work is underway. The General Secretary was invited to attend a wider meeting of European trade union general secretaries with leaders of the European Socialist Group in the European Parliament in December 2008 to discuss their manifesto and strategy for the elections. As well as our sitting GMB MEP's, we have a number of GMB candidates on the regional lists for the European Parliament elections on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2009, and collectively we will be supporting them to maximise their vote, and hopefully expand the size of the Labour group in the European Parliament. It is vital that we maximise the turnout of the trade union vote in these elections, as a low turnout in this proportional representation election could see the awful prospect of the BNP gaining a seat in the European Parliament. Glenis Willmott is standing for the leadership of the European Parliamentary Labour Party. The election is in January 2009, and Glenis has GMB's full support. GMB MEPs played a major role in 2008, in securing agreement on the long awaited Temporary Agency Worker Directive, as well as improvements to the European Works' Council Directive. The majority also supported our position regarding the revision of the Working Time Directive, despite coming under considerable pressure to do otherwise, and we thank them for their solidarity and commitment during this difficult vote. GMB MEPs, and several colleagues in the EPLP, have continued their support and involvement in the Remploy campaign, both in their regions and at national level, which is greatly appreciated.

## **4. SUPPORT FOR RECRUITMENT AND ORGANISATION**

The GMB European office continues to support the work of National and Regional Secretaries and officers in organising and recruitment, particularly relating to multinational companies. Frequently, this work involves the European and International trade union sector federations, ETUC, as well as direct contacts with other European trade union colleagues, MEPs and with the EU institutions.

**Migrant workers** – Final agreement on the EU Temporary Agency Workers Directive will provide vital protections for both domestic and migrant agency workers in the UK and across Europe, who have been

unacceptably exploited for too long. It is hoped these provisions will help support recruitment and organisation work in this area, as well as more generally for workers on temporary contracts.

**European Works' Councils** – The GMB European office has been working with trade union and MEP colleagues to strengthen the European Works' Council Directive in the recent revision process, which is now agreed. These stronger rights to information and consultation, as well as rights to training, offer opportunities to develop our organising influence in multinationals, and to show a strong leadership role, which could stimulate further recruitment. The European office continues to provide support and advice to officers and GMB representatives on the development of European Works' Councils, and our role within them.

**Comparing terms and conditions** – The European 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 helpful.

**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, Temporary Agency Workers Directive, EWC's and Health and Safety to assist them in their roles, and support the bargaining agenda.

## 5. RECOGNITION

Comparing trade union recognition across key target multinational companies is another function of the European office, which has proved valuable in supporting GMB bids for recognition. European trade union colleagues continue to show solidarity in offering support to our members, and raising the issue with management in their national works councils or committees when requested.

## 6. EU POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND CAMPAIGNS

GMB continues to have a high profile at national, European and International level in raising our members' concerns, and influencing a large number of specific EU policy and legislative issues both within the EU institutions and at the highest level of UK Government:

**Working Time Directive Revision** – There have been major developments during 2008 on this long-stalled proposal. The political agreement reached by the EU Council of Ministers meeting in June 2008 on this issue was completely contrary to the trade union position, and constituted a step backwards in rights and working conditions in relation to working time. GMB has played a key role within the UK and European trade union movement in seeking positive amendment to this political agreement. At GMB's initiative, the TULO trade union group brought an emergency motion to Labour Party Conference to formally establish that ending the opt-out to the 48 hour working week was Labour Party policy. The motion was overwhelmingly supported. GMB held regular meetings with MEPs, and provided regular letters and briefings, urging MEPs to vote to end the opt-out to 48 hour week, to protect on-call workers rights that all on-call time is counted as working time, to ensure protections related to extended reference periods, and to allow workers greater ability to organise their working hours to achieve a better work/life balance. On 16<sup>th</sup> December ETUC organised a major demonstration in Strasbourg. On 17<sup>th</sup> December 2008, the European Parliament voted in its second reading on the Revised Directive, and supported all of the trade union positions on these issues, which was a marvellous achievement. GMB and our trade union colleagues across Europe are grateful to MEPs for the principled support they have shown, particularly as many were put under a lot of pressure not to defend this position. A conciliation committee of European Parliament and Council is now likely to be set up in late January 2009 to seek a compromise between these two very different positions. GMB will

continue to work with TULO, TUC, European trade union colleagues, MEPs and the EU Institutions to ensure a positive outcome to this process. The European Officer continues to provide regular updates on the position.

**Temporary Agency Workers Directive** – After being blocked for several years, the proposals were finally adopted in 2008. GMB played an influential role both at EU level, and within the TUC delegation, which secured a tri-partite agreement with the Government and CBI in May 2008. This allowed progress at EU level with EU Ministers reaching political agreement on the proposals at their Council in June 2008. The proposals give day one rights to equal treatment for temporary agency workers at EU level, whilst allowing social partner agreements in Member States to derogate from that principle, as is the case in UK, where workers will have equal treatment after 12 weeks. The provisions must be transposed into Member State legislation by December 2011.

**European Court of Justice cases** – The European Court of Justice delivered its judgments in two more cases in 2008 – Ruffert, and Commission v Luxembourg – following in the same vein as the Viking and Laval cases decided at the end of 2007. In the Ruffert case, German public procurement law requiring contractors to adhere to collectively agreed minimum wages were deemed to be a restriction on the freedom to provide services. The decision therefore calls into question the status and enforcement of social clauses in public contracts for foreign service providers. The Luxembourg case raised further important questions regarding the interpretation of the Posting of Workers Directive, particularly regarding the issue of national public policy provisions. The four cases raise serious issues regarding trade union rights and, more generally, on the future of Social Europe. GMB has continued discussions with the ETUC and TUC about the implications of the cases, and on developing the trade union response. This includes calling for a Social Progress Clause/Protocol (to help correct the balance between the economic freedoms of the single market and fundamental social rights), to be attached to the European Treaties, in addition to developing an early warning system and litigation strategy for any future cases. Discussions continue about how best to address the deficiencies in the Posting of Workers Directive that the cases have highlighted. The TUC will sit on an ETUC Working Party on this issue. Following trade union pressure, the European Commission has changed its stance, and has also established a specialist working party to consider the implications of the cases and what action may be required, giving the ETUC and BusinessEurope observer status. GMB also worked closely with colleagues in the European Parliament to ensure that its response to the cases reflected key trade union concerns.

**Cross-border healthcare** - In July 2008, as part of its Renewed Social Agenda package, the European Commission published its proposals for a Directive on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare, where European citizens travel to other Member States to receive medical treatment of their own accord. The European Court of Justice has confirmed that patients have the right to access cross-border care, and have the cost of treatment reimbursed by their home country. However, the situations when this will apply need to be clarified to provide patients with certainty about when they can recover their costs, and to also ensure that Member States can properly plan and manage their healthcare systems. GMB and other public service union colleagues are following these proposals closely to ensure they are not used to liberalise the sector, and encourage an internal market for healthcare. GMB believes that the proposals are a disproportionate response to the issue of cross-border healthcare. They could threaten the NHS' ability to properly plan and organise healthcare budgets, and lead to inequality, where only those with the financial resources are able to access this right. GMB has been working with national and European public sector union colleagues and MEPs in the European Parliament to secure key amendments to the proposals.

**Anti-discrimination** - In July 2008, the European Commission published its proposals for a new Equal Treatment Directive, prohibiting discrimination outside the workplace on grounds of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. GMB and other trade unions campaigned together with MEPs to ensure the EU Commission proposal covered all the discrimination strands not previously covered by EU

legislation. GMB retired members have direct experience of age discrimination when seeking travel and other forms of insurance. The European office is working with colleagues in the European Parliament to secure amendments to the proposals to ensure that age and disability discrimination in the provision of financial services is prohibited, and that the refusal or cost of insurance for older people and those with disabilities is based on actual rather than perceived risks attributed to these groups.

**Public Procurement** – The European Officer continues to work in close co-operation with National Secretary Phil Davies, the Remploy stewards and consortium officers to ensure that the rights we secured at EU level to reserve contracts for supported employment workplaces for people with disabilities are implemented and used at all levels of public contracting. Regular meetings continue with Government Ministers and departments, and Members of the Welsh and Scottish Assemblies, with the aim of significantly increasing the number of public contracts being awarded to Remploy and other supported factories and businesses. The lack of progress in public contracts being awarded to Remploy was raised again by GMB members at Labour Party Conference. On behalf of the Remploy trade union consortium, the European Officer has been actively involved in the revision of the Office of Government Commerce guidance on reserving contracts in 2008, and amending the text to ensure that it provides positive encouragement for public authorities to use this contracting method. The European Officer also supported South Western Regional Secretary, Allan Garley, in his work with the Welsh Assembly to produce a positive guide for public contractors to reserve contracts for supported employment workplaces. The Welsh Assembly has published a reserved contract due to be decided early in 2009. MEPs continue to give their support and commitment to the campaign, which is most welcome.

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 colleagues in the European trade union sector Federations, and with the support of Stephen Hughes MEP in the European Parliament, we urged the EU Commission, through a campaign of letters, to be more open and inclusive with its work and studies in preparation for an EU guide to Social Procurement expected in spring 2009. GMB has been participating in the EU Commission meetings on this issue, and together with trade union colleagues, has made suggestions for improving the guide.

**EU Lisbon Treaty** – The UK Government refused to hold a referendum on the EU Reform (Lisbon) Treaty, which GMB campaigned for, and was the subject of motion 145 at Congress 2008. Instead, it ratified the European Union (Amendment) Bill in summer 2008. In June 2008 Ireland returned a “NO” vote in its referendum on the Treaty, which opened up further opportunity to highlight GMB and trade union concerns about the Treaty. After months of discussions, during the EU Summit in December 2008, the Irish Government agreed to hold a second referendum (likely in Autumn 2009) on the basis of agreement of various legal and other guarantees related to the Treaty, which will be incorporated into the Treaty as part of the Croatian accession Treaty. Clearly, this will re-open the debate again. The UK Government was heavily involved in the compromise agreement with Ireland in December, and at pains to ensure it did not make any change to the Lisbon Treaty which would involve further UK Parliamentary scrutiny, particularly in the area of employment and social rights. GMB continues to monitor this situation, and to support attempts across the EU trade union movement to push for a social protocol clause.

**Defending trade union rights, freedoms and labour standards** – 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. Further representations were made to the EU Commission and European Parliament during the review process of the trade agreements in autumn 2008. GMB also supported the Justice for Colombia campaign to highlight violence towards and murder of trade unionists there, and called for action to be taken to ensure that any renewal of the trade status to Colombia was dependent on compliance with labour standards, and trade union and

human rights. GMB is also assisting Bananalink with the organisation of a Parliamentary delegation to Guatemala to gather support for ending the violence and exploitation of workers and trade unions there, and to promote decent work and trade union rights and freedoms.

## **7. SUPPORT FOR TRAINING, EU FUNDED PROJECTS, DELEGATIONS**

The European office continues to support GMB regions and sections in developing EU funded projects, and participating in a range of conferences, meetings and training sessions relevant to our work, including those which are funded by the EU. The European Officer has also been supporting Manufacturing Section colleagues in seeking European interregional funding for a skills and employment project to rebuild the Medway Queen paddle steamer.

North West and Irish Region continued their success with the annual Women's Conference in 2008, and the European Officer was pleased to be involved in this positive event.

The European Officer gave the annual lecture to Cardiff University Business School on GMB/Trade Unions in Europe, as part of its graduate programme, highlighting our campaigning work at EU level as Britain's most pro-active union in this area.

The European office was pleased to host an EU awareness raising programme for the GMB Retired Members Association in Brussels in December, supported by European Parliament funding. Our positive relationship with Danish trade union colleagues continues, and we welcomed a number of trade union delegations from Denmark in 2008, exchanging information on industrial relations and organising. The office also gave presentations on GMB work and EU activities to delegations of trade union colleagues from TUC regions and Ruskin College.

**THE PRESIDENT:** I now move to the European Report. I call Kathleen Walker-Shaw, GMB European Officer, to move her report on pages 25-28 of the General Secretary's Report.

**SIS. K. WALKER-SHAW (GMB European Officer):** I move my report. Thank you.

**THE PRESIDENT:** Are there any questions on the European Report, pages 25 – 28 of the General Secretary's Report. *(No response)* Is Congress prepared to accept those pages?

*(Agreed)*

## **POLITICAL EUROPEAN UNION**

**THE PRESIDENT:** Colleagues, item 9 is the Political: European Union. Motion 168 on Europe is to be moved by the Southern Region. Motion 170, UK Membership of the Euro, also to be moved by the Southern Region.

## **EUROPE**

### **Motion 168**

## 168. EUROPE

Congress urges the GMB leadership to campaign with the wider labour movement to restrain the liberalising agenda of the European Commission and its merciless doctrine of de-regulation, the free market, unfettered capitalism and the obsession with additional competition. It must be recognised that the extremes of competitive forces create an environment where it is often impossible for a good quality business, offering quality service and offering good employment, to exist. Its policies create a 'race to the bottom' mentality and agenda which are symptomatic of the economic disaster in which we all now find ourselves. The labour movement must force government to end the neo liberalism economic policy and principles.

DOVER FERRIES X23 BRANCH  
*Southern Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. P. GOODACRE (Southern): Congress, I move Motion 168, Europe. Congress calls upon the GMB to campaign with the wider labour movement against the liberalizing agenda of the European Commission. The European Commission is an undemocratic body that has shown a relentless commitment to the deregulation of markets, increased competition and unfettered capitalism. The neo-liberal ideology and policies of the European Commission are fundamentally detrimental to the interests of working people across the European Union. They encourage a steady deterioration in the terms and conditions of workers, a harmonization towards the bottom rather than the top. The race to the bottom will exacerbate the current economic crisis and delay future prosperity. Maintaining and stepping up our efforts in Europe must be a priority. Constant vigilance is necessary. As we know, much employment legislation originates from the bodies of the European Union.

Recent elections have shown an alarming lurch to the political right in this country and across Europe. Ironically, it is right-wing free market policies that have led to the current economic crisis. Should these patterns recreate themselves in the coming national elections, we will need all the help we can get. During the last dark period of the Thatcher years Europe was the sole source of progressive pro-labour legislation. Trade within the European Union, the free movement of goods, services and people is critical to our material prosperity. However, this free movement is not an end within itself. The preamble to the Treaty of Rome states that the purpose of the free movement of goods, services and people is to facilitate improvements in the living and working conditions of the people of Europe. The pro-capital neo-liberal policies of the European Commission undermine this principle. The improvement in living and working conditions for working people is a foundation of the labour Movement and our trade union. It is a goal that we must ensure is at the heart of the European Union. Congress, please support this motion.  
*(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Can I have a seconder? *(Formally seconded)*

## UK MEMBERSHIP OF THE EURO

### Motion 170

## 170. UK MEMBERSHIP OF THE EURO

Congress recognises that in the 10 years since its launch, the euro has become established as a truly global currency.

More importantly for our Union, with the likes of Nissan, Honda and other multinational companies either refusing to increase their investment or closing down their factories in the UK because we are not in the Eurozone, it is clear that joining the euro would be good for jobs, stability and our economic prosperity.

Staying out increasingly means that we are losing out and therefore Congress calls on the CEC to campaign for Britain to join the euro at the earliest possible date.

BRUSSELS B59 BRANCH  
*Southern Region*

*(Referred)*

THE PRESIDENT: I assume, Bro. Goodacre, that you are moving the next motion?

BRO. GOODACRE (Southern): No, I am not. Unfortunately, the mover of Motion 170 on the Euro is unable to be here. I believe the CEC has asked for referral back and the Region is happy to accept that.

THE PRESIDENT: Right. Does Conference accept reference back? *(Accepted)*

Does anyone wish to come in on the debate on Motions 168 and 170, if they wish? *(No response)*

BRO. N. CHILDS (London): Thanks, Chair. Congress, please bear with me. This is the first time I have spoken at Congress. I am a bit nervous. I did want to speak on this motion. I only read it on my way to Blackpool. I am asking you to oppose Motion 170. In doing so, let me make it clear that I do not do so on the basis of the petty parochialism of UKIP and other reactionary elements. The issue here for me boils down to democracy and having democratic control over our own economy.

This motion, by proposing to abolish the pound, causes us to hand over power over our currency and economy to unelected, unaccountable bureaucrats in the European Central Bank in Brussels. The ECB is a neo-liberal bankers' club run in the interests of big business, not in the interests of working people. Adopting the Euro and surrendering our gold reserves to the unaccountable European Central Bank will prevent a future progressive Labour Government introducing such things as credit controls and tariff controls to protect British manufacturing. This motion is well-intended but it is not the Euro which is preventing our manufacturing industry from growing. It is the respective policies of Tory and Labour Governments which are not supporting the manufacturing industry in this country. Instead, they are deregulating the City and warping the economy away from the productive sector. So it is not about the Euro. It is about maintaining our economic independence and putting in place policies to support manufacturing. Congress, I urge you not to support this motion; yes, to the EU; yes, to our economic independence, but no to the bankers' club. Thank you. *(Applause)*

BRO. J. TOOMEY (North West & Irish): Many faults I have, but one of them is not being wrong. Take my word for it. We should adopt the Euro in this country. We should have done it ten years ago. We have seen the decimation of the manufacturing and textile industry in this country. When I look now at Britain in Europe, UKIP and the BNP, and Brown lukewarm, look at what Europe has done for you here. From the European Court to the European Parliament we have free prescriptions for those over 60; bus passes and all the rest of it. Yet Britain remains reserved and suspicious. Even Brown's lukewarm on Europe. There's no doubt about it. Blair wanted to go into the Euro. Brown put forward a five point criteria. Well, we passed that many years ago. So the best place for Brown is with the SNP, and let's get somebody else in his place who will take us into the Euro because that is the only way that this country will prosper.

If we look at the car industry in Germany, such as Opel etc. Look what the French did. What's Brown doing for Vauxhall and the van companies? Sod all! So if we were in the heart of Europe, then you might get somewhere. So stop siding with America all the time and get into Europe at the heart of it and play your part. Thank you. (*Applause and cheers*)

THE PRESIDENT: I can sleep easy tonight because John isn't torturing me today. He must have been to church this morning. (*Laughter*)

Does anyone else wish to speak before I call the vote? (*No response*) In that case, on Motion 168, Europe, I am going to Gordon Gibbs. The CEC is supporting. On Motion 170, I do not think we need to call Gordon Gibbs. Gordon, Motion 170 has been referred, and that was the only one you were speaking to. But we have to let some CEC members down. I see you are happy. Good.

In that case, I put Motion 168 to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

*Motion 168 was carried.*

#### **ADDRESS BY SIS. GLENYS WILMOTT MEP:**

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, it gives me great pleasure at this moment to ask Glenys Wilmot MEP to address Congress. Glenys is well-known to us as she was a GMB officer in the Midland & East Coast Region for 16 years. As a political officer and a senior organizer before she accepted the seat of Member of the European Parliament for the East Midlands in February 2006, it did not take long for Glenys's talent to be recognized and the GMB was proud to support Glenys in her successful election as Leader of the European Parliamentary Labour Party in January 2009. We were delighted when we heard that she had been re-elected as EPLP leader unchallenged at our group meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> June. It has been a very difficult election for our MEPs and a black day for British politics. We now have two BNP MEPs elected to the European Parliament. So many of our workplace rights have come from Europe. Glenys and her colleagues have fought

tirelessly to protect and promote trade union interests in Europe. Glenys led the important Health & Safety Strategy Report through the European Parliament. Glenys is a great asset to our GMB MEP group and we look forward to continuing to work closely with her and our MEP colleagues.

Glenys, this morning I addressed Congress and I made the point that, as a result of what happened in Parliament with the MPs that you and many hundreds of councillors suffered. As you know, because you were at the NEC, how bloody angry I was over the whole lot. Would you address Congress, please. (*Applause*)

SIS. G. WILMOTT: President and colleagues, thanks very much for your invitation to speak to you here today just a week after the European elections. I have to say that after such a bruising few weeks it is great to be here amongst friends. It really is. On behalf of the much reduced group of GMB MEPs, Stephen Hughes, David Martin and myself, I want to start by expressing my profound gratitude to the GMB for all the work you did and the help you gave to us and the other Labour candidates in those elections.

Nationally, regionally and locally, our Union came up trumps. As leader of the EPLP I can tell you that the Labour MEPs, whether GMB members or not, are hugely grateful for all that you did. But, colleagues, all the resources in the world would not have been enough to prevent the tidal wave, the tsunami that engulfed us last week. You will know that we lost good MEPs, including my colleague, Richard Corbett, one of the GMB group of MEPs. You will know that the Labour group has gone down from 19 to 13 and that Labour's share of the vote was lower than any national set of elections since 1918. You will also know that while the Tories barely increased their share of the vote from 2004, there was a worrying resurgence of the discredited little Englanders, the UK Independence Party. They are certainly no friends of the trade union Movement, but even more frighteningly that Fascism in the guise of the British National Party has finally achieved a national foothold with the election of two MEPs in Yorkshire and the North West. Nor has the swing to the right just been restricted to the UK. All the major countries, like France, Germany, Italy and Spain have had the same experience. In Austria far right parties won 18% of the vote. I repeat, 18%! In the Netherlands the Euro sceptic and anti foreigner Freedom Party won four seats, and there were gains, too, for extremists in Italy, Romania, Denmark, Slovakia, Finland and Hungary. If you ever wanted confirmation of the trend, Germany's main neo-Nazi party made sweeping gains in the local elections, putting extremists into town halls and council chambers right across that country.

Colleagues, the result of the European elections are not just an academic exercise. They have real implications for all of us, not least for us in the trade union Movement. Anyone who cares about the rights of working people, about better health and safety, about discrimination, about fairness and justice, really, should be alarmed. What was particularly concerning was that the left was divided in France and other EU countries, but also here in the UK. Sadly, in the Yorkshire and Humber region, for example, if the votes for the No to EU to Democracy Party, led by Bob Crow had gone to Labour, the

BNP would now not have a seat and the GMB member, Richard Corbett, would still be Labour MEP. Five thousand votes were in it. That's all. It is a sobering thought.

With the right in greater control in the European Parliament as well as amongst the Member state governments in the Council, let me remind you of just a couple of issues which will be affected. The Working Time Directive is already in jeopardy with the breakdown in the conciliation procedure, between the Parliament and the Council of Ministers. Without a doubt, the Commission is now trying to resolve the on-call issue by the back door as quickly as possible. They want to avoid taking Member state governments to court over failures of the implementation and enforcement of the current Working Time Directive. They are hoping to dump the issue of the opt-out. Labour MEPs worked very hard to try and get a result on the Working Time Directive, as you probably know, but even if the Commission re-introduced proposals, our weakened position in the Parliament will mean that any meaningful action will become very difficult. Problems also remain with the Posting of Workers' Directive, which has been severely undermined by the recent Court judgments of Laval, Ruffert and Luxembourg in particular. Sadly, neither Member state governments nor the EU Commission have any serious intention of putting this right. Only the Parliament has shown any desire to address these issues.

The Commission has launched a task group on Posted workers, which will take a year to consider the issue and report back. The ETUC is very pessimistic that anything will come from the social partner discussions, which the EU Commission has cornered them into, really, by way of a sort of delaying tactic.

With the right in the European Parliament it is going to be a real fight to get what we want on any of these points. And it can get worse. Here in the UK if the Tories are elected at the next General Election, David Cameron has said that he intends to re-negotiate the Social Chapter with all the dire consequences that that implies for workers and trade unions. Of course, Tory MEPs have regularly voted against much of the employment legislation coming before the European Parliament. Last year on my own Health and Safety Report they voted against action to prevent third party violence against workers, they voted against research into the effects of nano technology on workers and against adequate protection from the dangerous effects of crystalline silica, which can cause lung disease and death.

Friends, I know we are never satisfied with the European Union or the Labour Government, but despite our complaints, despite our dissatisfaction and our natural instinct that we should be doing more, we have made great strides even in the last few years. We have hugely improved health and safety, rights for agency and part-time workers, for parents, for women and a minimum wage. These strides have been made by a Labour Government, building on legislation which has emanated in Europe.

I know that this Government and this Europe is not perfect – of course it is not – but, unfortunately, the choice is not between this Labour Government and the Labour Government of our dreams. The choice is between this Labour Government and the dire

alternative of a Tory Administration intent on rolling back the achievements we have made since 1997. Remember, the gains made in our own generation are not guaranteed for all time. We have constantly to be on our guard against attacks from the right. In this new political situation, they will be coming soon.

Colleagues, I am deeply, deeply angry at the behaviour of some MPs over their expenses. I am even more angry at some whose behaviour, whether because of ill discipline or because of careerist reasons, continue to distract us from all the main issues whilst the rest of us were trying to win an election. I am also furious at the media, which has decided that the MPs' expenses issue, whilst it was right to publicise this, should be the only issue that was on the agenda and to ignore the racists and hate filled policies of the far right, as well as the plans the Tories have both in Europe and at home. It really was a disgrace.

I am also angry that the media brought up MPs' expenses just before the European and County Council elections. It was certainly no coincidence. But what I want to do is to turn that anger into action, which will have a real impact. As trade unionists we have to be even more pro-active and get our people involved at all levels, from national right down to constituency and ward level. I know that many of you do this already, but we have to build a critical mass of trade unionists being active on every political front to have trade unionists representing us at all levels. We have to increase the level of political education in these changed times.

Far too often in the last few weeks I met people on the doorstep, trade unionists and normally Labour voters, who planned to vote BNP or UKIP, unaware of what their policies meant. I even met, believe it or not, trade union officers, not GMB, thank goodness, who did not know that so much of the employment legislation emanates from Europe. We have to make sure that our activists have the tools to deal with all of this and to encourage and support other members. We have to do it because no one else will.

Colleagues, we on the left don't have the luxury of division and blame. We have a fight on our hands which may turn out to be a really decisive moment in 21<sup>st</sup> Century politics. This is a fight that we cannot ignore and it is a fight that we can only win together. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Glenys, as an employee, you never got one of *these*. Glenys, on behalf of the Union, and I really mean this, would you like to accept this bottle of Scotch. You know where it is made. Would you also accept some glasses from our GMB members. On behalf of this Congress, I was delighted to see you re-elected. Thank you. (*Presentation made amidst applause*)

I call Paul Kenny.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: As has been explained, we will arrange for it to be transported. So take that look of panic out of your eye. You are all right. These are copies of the original prints from the Marx Memorial Library about the Spanish Civil

War. You can see from the picture – this is one of the original posters – that this is about fighting the Fascists. It is, perhaps, more relevant now than it has been for the last 60 years, so we will arrange for it to be delivered to your office.

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, while Glenys is leaving us, let me tell you that last year we had the branch secretary from our Brussels branch who came to Congress who put his point of view that they had been fighting for quite a long time to get decent terms and conditions. He was really exhausted by it. Richard Ascough, the Southern Regional Secretary, myself and Paul, and Glenys had just got elected, and we had done all in our power. I have to say that we received a letter just before Congress to thank this Union and to thank Congress for allowing him to speak to Congress and to thank everyone involved. They have now got all the terms and conditions that they have been fighting for years to get. So, you see, a good trade unionists as an MEP works wonders. Thank you. *(Applause)*

### **PRESENTATION OF THE REGIONAL OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS 2009**

THE PRESIDENT: We now come to the point of the Congress where we have the presentation of the Regional Outstanding Achievement Awards 2009. Could I thank our members in Dartington Glass, Southern Region, for providing these beautiful vases.

Could I have all the regional winners lined up at the side of the stage as their names are announced, together with a short sentence about them? The winner will collect his or her vase, and pen set, and then move across the stage. Photos will be taken of each winner plus a group shot at the end.

### **BIRMINGHAM & WEST MIDLANDS REGION – NEIL CLOWES**

THE PRESIDENT: Birmingham & West Midlands Region, Neil Clowes *(Applause)* works as a Leisure Centre Manager for Birmingham City Council and is also a GMB activist and a Health & Safety Rep. During the course of his employment he saved the life of a young boy who got into difficulties in the swimming pool, giving him CPR and literally bringing him back to life as he had stopped breathing. The Region and the Union is very proud of him and has thus nominated him for the TUC Safety Rep Award 2009.

*(Presentation amid applause)*

### **LONDON REGION – BILL DEMPSEY**

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, the next member, Bill Dempsey, is not here. He is not very well. I and my region will be presenting him with his award at the London Regional Council meeting in London in October. Bill was born in 1916 and his family were involved in the General Strike of 1926. He became an apprentice shipwright in the Port of London and an active member of the Blackwall Shipwrights Branch. He first became

a shop steward in 1933 and remained so until he returned to his trade and shop steward duties in 1946, when his employers sacked him because of his commitment to the trade union movement, resulting in a strike that eventually won back his job. Bill served as treasurer of the Blackwall Shipwrights Branch and served 15 years on the Boilermakers London District Committee. In 1983, in retirement, he became a founder member of the London and Southern Region Retired Members Association. He has given his working life to the trade union movement. He is a worthy candidate and GMB London Region, and this Union, honours him. He is not very well at the moment but, as I said, we will present that to him.

### **MIDLAND & EAST COAST REGION – KEN MOODY**

THE PRESIDENT: Our next participant is Midland & East Coast Region, Ken Moody. (*Applause*) Ken started his working life as a casual farm worker. In 1938 he started his apprenticeship in the boilermakers trade and joined the Amalgamated Society of Boilermakers, Shipwrights, Blacksmiths, and Structural Workers in 1945. He still holds the position of Branch Secretary/Treasurer in the Scunthorpe Tec Branch of the GMB. Ken's commitment to our Retired Members Association is second to none, and the Region and this Congress are proud that he is one of the receivers.

*(Presentation amid applause)*

### **NORTHERN REGION – NPOWER BRANCH**

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, our next person is Northern Region NPower Branch and Michael Hunt on behalf of the NPower Branch. The Northern Regional Committee has decided to nominate the NPower Branch for Congress Special Award 2009. This is for outstanding performance in increasing this branch from round about 50 to over 1,000 in about 18 months. The NPower Branch has been nominated for the TUC Organising Award 2009. Colleagues, could I ask Sharon McGee Johnson, Stuart Gilhespy, and Donna Couzens, to stand up. (*Applause*) Congress, I had the great pleasure earlier this year of visiting NPower Branch and I can assure you that they have a most wonderful system and I witnessed the recruitment at lunchtime in the cafeteria. I congratulate all three of them, or all nine of them in the end.

*(Presentation amid applause)*

### **NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION – RAY LOWDEN**

THE PRESIDENT: North West & Irish Region, here is somebody that this Congress knows well, it is Ray Lowden, who has been nominated by his branch, X02 Branch, Shorts Bombardier in Northern Ireland. Ray, a trade union member for 45 years, has been a member of GMB since 1989 and has given long and faithful service to X02 Branch. Above all, Ray, together with other union colleagues, showed commitment and dedication as they continued to represent the members during the most difficult time of

the Northern Ireland troubles. Colleagues, it gives me and the region great pride to say, Ray, well done. Thank you.

*(Presentation amid applause)*

### **GMB SCOTLAND – CATHY MURPHY**

THE PRESIDENT: Now can I move to GMB Scotland and someone this Congress also knows very well. I am absolutely delighted. Her name is Cathy Murphy. Cathy has been a catalyst in the revival of GMB Scotland's ability to recruit within and across Asda stores in Scotland.

She has been there for the members' grievances in stores, late evenings, early mornings, and also during the night. Her profile has given confidence to our members due to her successes in recruiting members within Asda, this in turn has been the significant factor in our membership growth.

She uses GMB@Work to organise within the stores, ensuring that we have grown our shop stewards network. She is also Branch Secretary. She is passionate about the GMB and she is an exemplar on how to recruit within Asda.

Cath, it gives me great pleasure on behalf of this Congress and we are proud to do so, and your region. Cath is not two for one in this store!

*(Presentation amid applause)*

### **SOUTHERN REGION – JOHN LEWIS**

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I now move on to Southern Region, John Lewis. John has been an active rep and a stalwart of the region for many, many years. He joined the GMWU in 1975, became a rep in 1977, and has been the G33 Greenwich Ambulance Branch Secretary since 1988. He has represented the Union at most levels and is still participating in his 70s.

John was instrumental in uniting the GMB London Ambulance Service membership and the region is very happy to endorse his nomination. John, so are we proud and happy to endorse your nomination. Thank you.

*(Presentation amid applause)*

### **SOUTH WESTERN REGION – SHARON PICKSTOCK**

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now move on to South Western Region, Sharon Pickstock. Sharon has been a GMB member for over 20 years. 2008 was a fantastic year for Sharon, who is Secretary of the GMB Barloworld Scientific Branch in Aberbargoed, South Wales. *(Laughter)* Ooh, I got over that one a bit quick!

Sharon is an active member of the South Western Regional council and in addition to running a successful branch took a Trade Union Studies Course at Bridgend College, which she passed with flying colours. Sharon was honoured as Student of the Year.

Sharon has been nominated for the TUC Women's Gold Badge 2009. Sharon, your region and this Congress are proud that you are nominated.

*(Presentation amid applause)*

## **YORKSHIRE & NORTH DERBYSHIRE REGION – THE LATE OWEN GRANT**

THE PRESIDENT: Could I now move on to Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region, the late Owen Grant. Owen's son, David Grant, will collect the award on behalf of his father. Owen Grant, a full-time convenor at Sheffield City Council, sadly passed away in March this year.

Owen started his working life in the council on the bins but soon discovered a passion for fairness and justice in the workplace when he got involved with the GMB as a rep in 1987. By 2005 Owen was a full-time convenor and he led the Sheffield convenor team after becoming the convenor secretary within Sheffield City Council in 2006.

Owen was also president of the local authority branch (S38) and has been a delegate to conference and a leading activist in Sheffield for many years.

Many will remember him for his passion for sport which he shared with his family. His wife Sharon and his son David, who is with us today, travelled the length and breadth of the UK following their beloved ice hockey team, the Sheffield Steelers.

Owen embraced GMB@Work passion and commitment, and worked with his colleagues on the Branch Committee and the convenor team to develop their own workplace mapping process.

He arranged GMB@Work training for all reps and led recruitment campaigns throughout the Council. As a result, the region has seen GMB membership grow month on month in Sheffield for almost two years now.

Owen Grant was a credit to his family, his colleagues, and his brothers and sisters in the GMB, and he will not be forgotten.

The region would like to dedicate their achievement award to the memory of Kerry May, a GMB officer who died tragically earlier this year, aged 44.

Congress, it gives me great pride to meet with Owen's son David and to present the award at Congress. I knew Owen very well myself. Thank you.

*(Presentation amid applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, could I ask Paul Kenny to say a few words?

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Congress, the idea behind these awards was really quite simple, we have fantastic values in the GMB and in the trade union movement, we have fantastic people in the GMB and in the trade union movement, and the theme today was what we do actually every day, which is serving others, not serving ourselves like other sorts of people in society but serving others. We hope these awards, which we want to do on an annual basis, will somehow reflect the thank you from the Union and from the members for all the work that you do day in, day out. Trust me, it really does make a difference. From where I sit, every single one of us in this hall should stand on our feet and give a standing ovation to these people who are representative of the fantastic work that our shop stewards and our branches, and our members, do across the Union day in, day out. Congratulations to you all, you are a blood credit to the GMB. I am proud of you all.

*(Standing ovation)*

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Just so you do not feel left out you are also all getting copies of this. All right? Thank you very much indeed for all your efforts, all your help. Could I just say that it does make a difference. There will be people who will go to work next week who will not get injured or killed because of the efforts and support of the shop stewards and our health and safety reps. If we can do that, save people's lives, then we can go home each night knowing that what we do is right, and it is noble, and we should be proud of it. I am a trade unionist, I am a GMB member, and I am proud, and I think that is the best legacy that we can leave today. Thank you, Mary, and thank all of you. *(Applause)*

## **REGIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT: MIDLAND & EAST COAST REGION**

**(PAGES 91-99)**

### **MIDLAND & EAST COAST REGION**

#### **1. MEMBERSHIP & RECRUITMENT**

<b>FINANCIAL MEMBERSHIP</b>	54,045
Section Financial Membership (by each Section):	
COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION	13,586
MANUFACTURING SECTION	16,889
PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION	23,570
Grade 1 members	36,495
Grade 2 members	11,044
Retired, Reduced Rate & Others	6,506
Male Membership	31,680

Female Membership	22,365
Total number recruited 1.1.2008 – 31.12.2008	8,211
Increase/Decrease 1.1.2008 – 31.12.2008	+482
Membership on Check-off	31,383
Membership on Direct Debit	16,388

### **Response to Organising Agenda**

The Midland and East Coast Region continues to have input and supports the National Organising Agenda. The Region's Organising Team is led by the Membership Development Officer and is overseen by a designated Senior Organiser. The Regional Organising Team is supported by a designated co-ordinator/administrator, which gives us a self sufficient recruitment team.

Membership growth is measured and monitored not only by membership levels but also by the added value of GMB@Work training, thus taking the recruitment/retention/servicing agenda into the workplace.

The main drive is focused within the National targets of Schools, Southern Cross, and Asda which has, in the main, resulted in growth within the Region.

In the past year we have delivered GMB@Work training to new and existing representatives across the Region. The training is supplemented by a Full Time Officer assisting the Education and Training Officer to deliver the GMB@Work training.

### **Recruitment Targets and Campaigns**

The Midland and East Coast Region continues to support the National Organising Team projects and our involvement in running a recruitment pilot in the NHS has produced excellent results. We have produced a DVD to assist and explain the GMB approach to servicing, representing and recruitment in the NHS.

Each office has a display board to identify our success in our designated targets.

In the Region we still operate a rolling recruitment week in each area of the Region and these are agreed for the year and organised in conjunction with the area team and Regional Organising Team, coupled with the Full Time Officer designating one day per fortnight for organising duties.

Some of the Region's targets outside the National targets are Further Education establishments, and Wilkinson's Stores. We continue to target non members in Local Authorities with levels of up to 50% non members in some Authorities.

Our goal to continue to recruit, retain and service our members is inclusive across all areas, gender and ethnicity within all communities. We continue to push our relevance to migrant workers across the Region.

One observation that can be made is as a result of the new vibrant GMB@Work ethos proves we were correct in not taking up the invitation to join UNITE.

### **Retired Members Association**

Our Retired Members Association continues to motivate others by their continuing campaigning on issues such as protecting pensions, dignified care for the elderly, reduced travel and energy costs, along with reviews of benefits and closure of Post Offices. Our RMA are fondly and respectfully known as the 'The Grey Lions' and not without reason.

### **Overview of Region's Economic and Employment Status**

The East Midlands is the third largest Region in England covering 15,607 sq km and it is the third most rural region in England (29.5% of the total population live in rural areas). Total population is 4.4 million.

The East Midlands faces particular challenges of its own:

- The effects of globalisation on an area with a strong manufacturing tradition.
- Demographic changes, including an ageing population and migration.
- Lower than average skills.

On some levels the Regional economy is doing well with high employment and relatively high economic growth. But our success is not reflected across all parts of the Region.

Manufacturing businesses throughout the East Midlands are facing severe competition from overseas, and exporting is becoming increasingly difficult for standard services and products. As the pace of technology change speeds up and new industrial economies develop, the future of the manufacturing sector within the Region must be based on the recognition that innovation through the continuous introduction of new and differentiated products and services is key to regional competitiveness.

## 2. GENERAL ORGANISATION

Regional Senior Organisers	3
Membership Development Officers	1
Regional Organisers	15
Organising Officers	2
No. of Branches	90
New Branches	1
Branch Equality Officers	43
Branch Youth Officers	27

The Regional Secretary continues to lead the Region's management team, supported by 3 Senior Organisers who each have individual geographical areas, which are aligned to improve the services we deliver to the members.

The Region has 15 servicing Organisers, supported by a Membership Development Officer and 2 Organising Officers, which form part of the Regional Organising Team who have responsibility for working in the whole of the Region with the Servicing Organisers and Activists. The 3 Senior Organisers each have responsibility for one of the Sections in the GMB, along with other responsibilities, as delegated by the Regional Secretary.

## 3. BENEFITS

Dispute	
Total Disablement	
Working Accident	£3,777.30
Occupational Fatal Accident	£6,000
Non-occupational Fatal Accident	
Funeral	£24,852.50

#### 4. JOURNALS & PUBLICITY

Our Region's aim is to raise our profile and relevance and advice to members and the wider community.

Examples are the new regional magazine, Contact, and moving its content to reflect our members and not just on industrial matters. The industrial issues are covered by National and Regional Officers.

We have increased our information flow by creating an e-mail database in Schools and Local Government, along with a text service direct to our members.

Lay membership involvement in Area Forums have proved that a traditional model of meetings is still one of the best ways to mobilise common agendas such as political forums, social forums and industrial forums, thus empowering the lay membership.

Media has played a great part in publicising the GMB involvement on issues important to local members such as closures and redundancies, and responses to political decisions.

Each officer is committed to cascading the GMB view to the general public and wider community. We continue to sponsor local initiatives and support Branches in promoting the GMB. One example being we have placed advertisements in employer handbooks in the NHS, and PCT's, creating increased interest in the GMB.

#### 5. LEGAL SERVICES

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

Applications for Legal Assistance	Legal Assistance Granted
825	561

##### Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Court	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
817	272	2	543 £5,696,161.98		£5,696,161.98
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2008		1,344			

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

Claims supported by Union	260
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##### Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Tribunal	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
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119	66		53 £279,489.21		£279,489.21
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2008			532		

(c) Other Employment Law Cases

Supported by Union	Unsuccessful	Damages/ Compensation	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008
3	14	£1,120.77	7

(d) Social Security Cases

Supported by Union	Successful	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008
1	1	1

The last batch of Unilever part-time pension claims should hopefully soon be concluded with only 5 now outstanding. A lot of the delay in concluding has been with our Solicitors/GMB having difficulty in obtaining instructions from our members due to non-notification to us of change in their addresses! In the majority of cases that have been settled Unilever confirmed that our members were entitled to additional deferred pension which was to be added to their existing deferred pension.

Through our trained representative we offer free advice and assistance where required on obtaining Welfare Benefits and there has been a significant increase in the number of appeals that our representative has had to deal with over the last year and we expect to see a further increase in Incapacity Benefit appeals since the introduction of the new Employment and Support Allowance that was introduced in October last year.

Again the free will service provided through Thompsons Solicitors continues to be very popular. Earlier in the year we re-launched, through our Regional Contact Magazine, a new paper version for registering a Personal Injury Claim with Thompsons and our members can also now complete a Personal Injury application form online via our regional website. These were introduced in addition to the Freephone Personal Injury Claim Line number, which continues to be used, so that making a claim for a Personal Injury by our members and their families, is made as widely accessible as possible.

There has, unfortunately through the effects of the downturn in the economy during the latter months of the year, been an influx of claims lodged by our members at Employment Tribunal based on unfair selection for redundancy/unfair dismissal. This is obviously a very difficult time for a lot of our members and it is important that they have the legal services of the union behind them to provide the appropriate support and advice in relation to their employment issues.

## 6. EQUALITY & INCLUSION

### Regional Equal Rights Advisory Committee

The Region's RERAC (Regional Equal Rights Advisory Committee) has met three times; it should have been four, but due to rail network problems, the meeting in May 2008 had to be cancelled.

We held the Regional Equal Rights Conference at the GMB Regional Office, Nottingham on 6 March 2008. The theme of the conference was Dignity Period, where we launched the ACTSA Dignity Period Campaign. This was also cascaded out to all Branches and workplaces. Quite a substantial number of Branches in the Region have made donations to ACTSA.

We are currently setting up a Regional Equality Forum, following a Congress decision in 2008. The Region would like to thank RERAC for their contributions and support during the years they have been on the RERAC Committee.

Ethnic Breakdown of the Regional Equal Rights Advisory Committee:

	White	Black	Asian	Other
Male	1			
Female	5	1	1	

### Regional Race Advisory Committee

Since our last report the focus of the Regional Race Committee has been on trying to understand and progress the changes that have taken place at a National level.

The establishment of the National Equality Forum in itself caused considerable concern from our Region due to the fact that there was significant objection to the process of selection for the representatives who make up that Committee.

The Region put forward several people who were not contacted with regards to selection and this further aggravated the view that was held by the committee which was that these should have been elected positions rather than selected appointments. However, in the spirit of moving forward the Race Committee and the Regional Equal Rights Committee, having reflected their concerns the Region's RACE and RERAC Officers met with Kamaljeet Jandu to discuss the NEF and the implications for the existing committees. This proved to be very fruitful as there was a much clearer picture of what was happening at a National level, and although Race Committee members and indeed RERAC members maintained reservations about the selection process and accountability, we were satisfied that with the opportunity of having a regional observer attend the NEF we would at least maintain some understanding of what was going on. Doris Benjamin, who was the National Race Committee representative, has taken up the position of regional observer to the NEF with David Lascelles acting as reserve for when Doris is not available.

In terms of the development of a Regional Equalities Forum which is part of the expectation for the GMB's new equalities structure, there was a joint committee meeting that took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2009 to discuss how the Region would progress along these lines. A number of things were agreed at this meeting, subject to the Regional Secretary's approval:

- That a Regional Equalities Conference would take place in either May or October 2009.
- That the Conference would invite Branches to send a maximum of two delegates.
- That nominations and elections for the Regional Equality Forum would take place at that Conference.
- That the Regional Equality Forum would, at a minimum, reflect the structure of the National Equality Forum, i.e.
- 2 representatives specialising on gender equality
- 2 representatives specialising in race
- 2 representatives specialising in LGBT

- 2 representatives specialising in disability
- 2 representatives specialising in migrant workers
- That the joint committees would constitute the Regional Equalities Forum in the interim period and meet prior to the Regional Equality Conference in order to ensure that it is properly organised.
- That the experience and commitment of existing committee members from the Race Committee and RERAC would not be overlooked or allowed to become redundant when the new Regional Equality Forum is established.

It is therefore hoped that by the time Congress takes place, the Regional Equalities Forum will have either been established or at least be well on the way to that completion.

Ethnic Breakdown of the Regional Race Advisory Committee:

	White	Black	Asian	Other
Male	6	1	1	
Female	1	3	1	

## 7. YOUTH

The young members of the Midland and East Coast Region in 2008 have attempted to consolidate on progress made in activity over the last couple of years. This movement has been in accordance with the shift of priorities to an Organising Agenda across the union as a whole.

The young members section and the Region as a whole fully supported an event called "Love Difference" which took place in Northampton in September 2008. The purpose of the event was to publicise and promote cross-cultural understanding in the community. Primarily this was aimed at young migrant workers who now make up a sizeable proportion of local workforces. GMB contributed to a panel discussion on the benefits of migration in both economic and cultural terms. The GMB stressed the importance of union membership for young migrant workers. The day also included performances of poetry and live music as well as the chance to network with other like-minded community groups.

One area where the GMB in this Region has made significant progress is by taking on the services of two young Polish women, Dominika Jarzynska and Marzena Sek, to help with translation issues. One of the fundamental problems with organising migrant workers is in communication, and both Dominika and Marzena have helped enormously in this department. In some cases there are still difficulties in explaining both what a union is and how it operates, and that it is about collectivism and not just an individual legal advice "company". Of course such difficulties cannot be solved overnight but the GMB is beginning to address the issue positively.

Unfortunately, for a variety of genuine reasons, this Region was not able to provide a delegation to the GMB young members' conference in London in November. We believe that the decision not to provide accommodation may have had a negative effect and that when organising such events better consideration should be given to those delegates who come from outside the capital.

On a more positive note, and at the time of writing, this Region has submitted a number of delegates for the TUC Young Members Conference in Eastbourne.

The Region's Young Members Officer, David Shamma, recently attended one of the huge demonstrations in London against the Israeli attacks on the Palestinian people of Gaza. Whilst on the one hand it was great to see a whole host of trade union banners on the march what struck David most was that there were literally

thousands of young British Asians in attendance for whom traditional politics were largely an irrelevancy. Perhaps our own Government's shameful silence and inaction in the face of the slaughter of so many Palestinians did not help, but here was a large section of British youth becoming politicized by world events and having no traditional political avenue to go down. If traditional politics are irrelevant then the GMB must engage and participate in areas where other politicians appear afraid to go.

Finally we once again have to point out that blatant age discrimination still exists in the provision of lower pay rates for young workers in the minimum wage legislation. In an era when an economic downturn is being used by some employers to attack working people the fact that this legislation is still unequal is quite frankly a disgrace that must be ended.

## 8. TRAINING

(a) GMB Courses Basic Training					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Introduction to GMB, and GMB@Work (1 day)	10	75	15	90	90
Introduction to GMB, and GMB@Work (2 days)	7	60	19	79	158
GMB/TUC Induction (5 days)	7	52	16	68	340

(b) On Site Courses (please specify subjects)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days

(c) Health & Safety Courses (please specify subjects)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Introduction to Health & Safety (3 days)	7	49	15	64	192

(d) Other Courses (please specify subjects / weekdays/ weekends)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Accompanying Reps (1 weekday)	2	11	5	16	16
Grievance and Disciplinarys (1 weekday)	2	8	3	11	11
Introduction to Pensions (2 weekdays)	1	10	2	12	24

(e) TUC (STUC & ICTU) Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
TUC courses		77	11	88	

GFTU courses		12	11	23	
Northern College courses		12	2	14	

## 9. HEALTH & SAFETY

### Workplace Organisation and Visits

In the period since last Congress, the RHSO has been involved in a number of visits to workplaces:

- William Hare Ltd (Scarborough) - H&S Review/Health Surveillance
- Rigid Containers (Desborough) - Migrant Workers/ESOL/H&S
- NET (Nottingham Trams) - Risk Assessments/Member safety
- Southern Cross (Bingham) - Risk Assessment of Care Home
- SISIS (Macclesfield) - H&S Inspection
- Kings Mill Hospital (Mansfield) - Risk and Ergonomics Assessment
- Ellis Guildford School (Nottm) - Work-related Stress

The service continues to be explained to all new representatives attending all the Regional training courses.

### Enquiries

Regional Office continues to handle health and safety enquiries. In the period since the last report to Congress the following subject areas were raised:

- Asbestos - GMB Regional database scheme
- Working temperatures - What is the minimum?
- Risk Assessments - Employers legal responsibilities
- Work-related Stress - Individual Rights/Absence
- Lone Working - Risk assessment/safe practices
- Working Time - Rest breaks/payment
- Food Hygiene - Concerns over standards

### Training

The RHSO has completed the new Workplace Safety Reps Advanced Course and this will be piloted in April 2009.

Other courses planned are short courses based on the health and safety risks faced by vulnerable workers, i.e. migrant workers.

### Information Distribution

During 2008 the following Health and Safety matters have been distributed to Safety Reps and Branches:

- January 2008 - Climate Change – The Impact on the Workplace
- February 2008 - Pleural Plaques – The Campaign for Justice
- March 2008 - Corporate Manslaughter and Homicide Act
- April 2008 - REACH/Changes to Chemical Usage - Workplaces
- May 2008 - Decriminalisation Of Death And Injury At Work
- June 2008 - Opportunity for Greater Involvement
- July 2008 - Health & Safety Offences Bill 2008
- August 2008 - Pleural Plaques Compensation

- September 2008 - Employers Liability Insurance
- October 2008 - HSE Asbestos Campaign
- November 2008 - Mesothelioma
- December 2008 - New HSE Strategy – Be Part of the Solution

The Regional Office continues to offer an e-mailing service to distribute electronic versions of documents dealing with health and safety, on request from representatives. The Region's re-vamped website holds a great deal of Health and Safety information, and additional resources are to be added, including the new Safety Representatives' Toolkit.

A revision and update of the Health and Safety pages on the Regional website is continuing. The Department will always be proactive in responding to any changes in the needs of our safety representatives.

#### **Additional Activity**

The RHSO attended the launch of the Derbyshire Asbestos Support Team in September 2008. The organisation has successfully attracted additional funding that allows it to expand into Nottingham and other areas of the East Midlands. The GMB will be supporting the organisation as much as possible.

*(Adopted)*

*The report was formally moved.*

THE PRESIDENT: Formally; thank you. Any questions? Agree to accept the report?

*(Agreed)*

*(Regional Secretary's Report: Midland & East Coast Region (pages 91-99) was adopted.*

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, that is the end of business. *(Cheers)* Thank you. See a lot of you tonight. Congress convenes in them morning. What time? It is in your report. It is 9.30 for those who have not read their Agenda.

*Conference adjourned.*