

**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 THREE**

**(TUESDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2009)**

.....

(Conference reported by:  
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**THIRD DAY’S PROCEEDINGS**

**TUESDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2009**

**MORNING SESSION**

*(Congress assembled at 9.30 a.m.)*

**SAFETY PROCEDURES ANNOUNCEMENT**

THE PRESIDENT: Will Congress come to order, please? She’s speaking sweetly this morning! Congress, you are about to hear the safety announcement. Please listen carefully. *(Fire procedure announcement)* Thank you. Colleagues, will you make sure your mobile phones are switched off, please - you have been very good up till now - or make sure they are on silent.

I have an announcement to make and it is a sad one. We have been advised of the death of a retired senior officer, Maureen Marsden from North West & Irish Region. Colleagues, this Congress will send their condolences to her family; Liverpool North West will see that is carried. Thank you.

**STANDING ORDERS REPORT NO. 5**

SIS. H. JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): President, Congress, Emergency Motions. The SOC has accepted the following Emergency Motion as being in order for debate: Emergency Motion 5 ID Cards – Aviation Industry, standing in the name of North West & Irish Region. The SOC is recommending that this be heard in the Wednesday afternoon session. President, Congress, I move SOC Report No.5.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Helen. Any questions on the report? No. Agree to accept it?

*Standing Orders Committee Report No.5 was adopted.*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Helen. Thank you, Barry.

**REGIONAL SECRETARY’S REPORT: YORKSHIRE & NORTH DERBYSHIRE REGION (pages 144-159)**

**YORKSHIRE AND NORTH DERBYSHIRE REGION**

**1. MEMBERSHIP AND RECRUITMENT**

<b>FINANCIAL MEMBERSHIP</b>	
Section Financial Membership (by each Section):	

COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION	13,534
MANUFACTURING SECTION	14,624
PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION	29,005
Grade 1 members	33,563
Grade 2 members	15,482
Retired, Reduced Rate & Others	8,118
Male Membership	29,112
Female Membership	28,051
Total number recruited 1.1.2008 – 31.12.2008	7,841
Increase 1.1.2008 – 31.12.2008	1,522
Membership on Check-off	37,611
Membership on Direct Debit	12,281

### The Region

2008 saw the growth and development of our region in a number of ways, making it a very satisfactory year indeed.

First and foremost was the style of management bringing accountability, openness, transparency and consistency which has really engaged with people across the region. This in turn has led to people walking tall once more, feeling part of a committed team that is ready for whatever challenges come our way.

This has achieved startling results on the membership front with a growth of almost 2000 members in the year and 200 more people joining us every month than 12 months ago.

GMB@Work is at the heart of everything we do and the Regional Management Team manage their teams of officers, staff, branches and activists to ensure first class delivery and support for our members.

A huge amount of work has been done with branches to revitalise them and encouraging them to play their full part in the democracy of their union. The results speak for themselves with us needing an election to attend Congress and more motions submitted than for many a year.

To support branches further, we have provided branch computers on the proviso that these are used to communicate with their members in the production of newsletters and branch directories. For branches that are not yet computerised, our staff produce these and assist with distribution. This not only bridges the communication gap, but also develops our staff towards the front line support of members which is central to the region's business plan this year.

Another major success story is on the training and education of our activists. In 2008 we not only appointed, but actually trained twice as many representatives as in the previous year. That is probably the most important statistic in this report, because again in line with GMB@Work it is them that are best positioned to service, organise and recruit in the workplace, so we are brilliantly placed going forward.

In line with Congress policy, we continue to do our bit on the green agenda and we have an eco friendly and recycling policy across the region that is strictly adhered to.

Congress also charged us with providing a better service to migrant workers, and I am delighted to report real progress in this area too. We have a project worker employed who is Polish, and he is working closely with our team in recruiting and organising migrant workers and the numbers are already in their hundreds.

Added to that he has put on training on health and safety and being active in the union, obviously in their native languages and both were over subscribed.

Managing through clarity, consistency and compassion our agenda is here to stay. The regional team enjoy being part of something successful and are totally committed to the GMB@Work agenda to deliver even more opportunities and growth over the next 12 months.

## **Economic & Employment Situation**

### **Commercial services section**

Until the catastrophic events following the meltdown in the financial services sector in the part of 2008, the situation in the region was quite buoyant with employers reporting no significant downturns in business despite the pessimistic forecasts from 2007.

UK economic growth has generally ground to a halt raising the prospect of a recession in the near future. Inflation did rise significantly as forecast but then tailed off dramatically later in the year. Non food retailers on the high street suffered their worst December on record as consumers reined in their spending putting shopping off until the last minute attracted by the ever downward spiral of sale upon sale with even the likes of M&S affected.

**Food and Drink** was one of the few sectors to see an increase in sales with supermarket tills singing. 3663 Wakefield closed in August with the loss of seventy jobs with work being distributed amongst sister sites elsewhere. Despite that, the Bradford site suffered seven redundancies with many other employers shaving back on employment costs.

Cadburys Trebor Bassets shed jobs as they seek to place themselves competitively in the market place midway through the year. Wilkinson Stores made the largest announcement of potential redundancies through reorganisation of its store warehousing however protracted discussions are hoped to reduce the impact longer term.

**Aviation** was badly affected by the economic downturn with more than thirty airlines nationally and a number of tour operators failing. When oil prices peaked in 2008, operating costs spiralled so the recent fall has been a welcome relief to all transport related employers. Redundancies took place at both Doncaster and Leeds/Bradford airports amongst the various service providers such as Servisair etc.

**The Hotel Industry** is also badly hit as consumer spending contracts with many hotels reporting a lack of visitor numbers at weekends. Leeds and Sheffield particularly were booming but construction of major hotel and other projects has now virtually ceased with half completed hotels littering the city landscapes as companies enter administration.

**Legal Services** on the other hand, particularly for the professionals in the business recovery, insolvency, debt collection, asset recovery or commercial broking, life is somewhat hectic! The picture is mixed however as there has been a reduction in some demand for legal services leading to downscaling and some legal companies folding.

Within the region, in May Whittles merged with Thompsons and work continues to harmonise terms and conditions of employment. The Legal Services Commission announced their plan to 'reconfigure' its services and negotiations continue to explore the options, particularly at the Leeds site which will potentially close in 2010.

**Energy & Utilities** Looking at the energy companies, they have suffered a loss of public confidence with the major suppliers cashing in on increasing energy prices passing the cost straight on to consumers leading to one chief executive quoted as saying the colder it gets, the more profit they make revealing the harsh reality of capitalism and privatisation for our members. UK Coal continue to operate deep mine operations investing also in wind power and cashing in on their still massive property portfolio gifted to them by privatisation.

**The Security Industry** continues to thrive albeit on extremely low margins resulting in low pay and uncertain job security as contracts are pitched at the lowest levels amongst the many providers. The major players such as G4S also suffer as they have lost the contract at Leeds/Bradford airport for 2009. Securitas Guarding also suffered redundancies following the collapse of Woolworths.

### **Settlements**

Settlement levels in the electricity, gas and water sectors continue to generally outstrip the rest of the economy with one or two exceptions.

**CE Electric** members endured a difficult year for industrial relations with a lengthy dispute eventually leading to an above inflation three year deal accepted by our members.

**Asda Stores** membership received a 2.5% increase in April with a further 1.5% in October.

**Monckton Coke** increased basic pay by 3.5% in June and also reduced owed hours on their annualised hours system.

**ABB** is the contractor supplying maintenance to Monckton Coke and they followed the agreement. Consultations are ongoing regarding transferring the service back in house.

**Yorkshire Water Services** are in the third year of a five year deal where annual salaries have increased by 4.3%.

**Scottish & Southern Energy** at Ferrybridge power station begins the first of a three year deal with salaries and related payments rising to 4.6% plus a non consolidated £500 lump sum paid in March.

**British Energy** at Eggborough power station received a 5% increase.

### **Membership & Recruitment**

Membership in the section once again increased over the year reflecting the remarkable turnaround within the region as a whole which grew by 2.7%. This also as ever reflects the hard work done on the ground in the workplaces by our enthusiastic and committed activists overseen by the officer force who are 100% committed to the GMB@Work agenda of membership growth and building workplace organisation.

The number of new reps being recruited doubled over the year and their enthusiasm in the workplace will be complimented by existing reps who are attending the consolidation courses which will all help offset the effects of the recession looming large for 2009.

**British Gas** in particular increased membership by 229 new members although the company is expected to cut back on its recruitment into 2009.

**Asda Stores** are targeted following the four store national strategy, ours being the York, Shipley, Pudsey and (new) Glasshoughton stores. Issues are a plenty to recruit and organise around including the Charter,

health & safety, equal pay/equal value grievances and the pension scheme for example. All campaign literature is on the regional website found at [www.gmbyorkshire.org.uk](http://www.gmbyorkshire.org.uk)

### **Thanks**

Finally, as well as placing on record my thanks and appreciation to all the workplace and full time organisers in the region as I do every year, special mention should be made of Peter Edwards who after over 32 years representing members in Securicor, both at the York CVIT depot and on the national negotiating body, announced his intention to retire from employment at the end of January 2009.

A presentation was made at the NNC and by the branch where he will continue as branch president but the mark of the man is that he will stay on as an accompanying representative representing members in unorganised workplaces at disciplinarys and grievances. Thank you.

### **Manufacturing**

Manufacturing in the region has declined further in the second half of 2008. Dunlop Latex Foam has closed with the loss of two hundred jobs. Ellbee (Leeds), Federal Mogul (Bradford) and many smaller firms have made at least three hundred and forty redundancies in the fourth quarter of 2008.

Dorlux, Halifax were placed into administration in November 2008 with the prospect for 2009 looking bleak.

The distribution sector is looking very vulnerable and this is having a knock on effect in manufacturing.

The future will, if the end of 2008 is anything to go by, be very difficult for the manufacturing industry.

I would like to pay tribute to all the members from Remploy who turned out on a particularly cold day in York for the demonstration and march.

The York factory may have closed however it is not forgotten. Thanks to James Stribley and all his colleagues for their commitment to keeping Remploy factories open in 2008.

The credit crunch will undoubtedly cause more closures in 2009, all in the manufacturing industry must keep up the political pressure to make the Government support the British Manufacturing Industry.

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### **Dunlop Latex Foam – Pannal**

Factory closure in September 2008 resulting two hundred redundancies.

### **Ellbee – Leeds**

Introduction of short time working and fifty-four redundancies, from September 2008 to December 2008.

### **Federal Mogul – Bradford**

Twelve redundancies announced in November 2008.

### **Dorlux – Halifax**

Went into administration on the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2008 and was taken over on the 14<sup>th</sup> November 2008. Case referred to GMB legal dept for failure to consult with the GMB (TUPE).

### **Angus Fire (Kidde Products)**

GMB members accepted an £11 per week increase on their basic pay. There have also been two employees made redundant.

### **Johnson & Johnson**

On the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2008, Johnson & Johnson sold their Wound Management process at their Gargrave site to a company called Systagenix. This resulted in three hundred and twenty-three Johnson & Johnson employees transferring to Systagenix.

The distribution side of Johnson & Johnson's has been retained by them. Ninety-six employees and approximately thirty agency staff remain employed.

However, the distribution side will be phased out over the next eight months and work will be relocated in Leeds and Belgium. Time scales are yet to be announced.

Shop stewards at Johnson & Johnson have attended the GMB@Work 2 day training and a 1 day TUPE training.

### **Magnet Ltd**

GMB members accepted a 3% pay increase in July 2008.

### **Remploy**

The campaign to "Save the Remploy factories" carried on in 2008. The revised business plan kept the Pontefract factory open and allowed members from the Bradford factory to opportunity to relocate to the Leeds factory.

Unfortunately, the York factory closed in March; however, this has not been the end of the campaign as we continue to lobby for the establishment of a Remploy factory in the York area. The climax of that campaign was the high profile march and rally in November.

### **Brightside and Chesterfield**

3% pay award.

5 minutes additional tea break.

### **Brightside**

20 voluntary redundancies under the national modernisation.

Warehouse project implemented.

### **Chesterfield**

No redundancies.

### **Ferrybridge FGD**

Project due to be completed March 09 approximately 80 workers left on site.

### **Hertel Ltd**

4% increase for cleaning staff.

### **Hanson Brick**

The above company responded to the impending recession in the Building Supplies Industry by closing many of its brickworks rather than creating further stockpiles. This led to the workforce at Howley Park being greatly reduced and a change in shift patterns for the remaining members. Thankfully this was mainly achieved via volunteers.

### **Symphony**

The above company have now opened a new factory in Barnsley. Talks are scheduled to establish recognition arrangements at the new site and the protection of employees at the existing Leeds and Rotherham sites.

### **Haworth Scouring**

The above company has substantially cut back its productions targets to reflect the current economic environment leading to large scale redundancies.

### **Treves/Arcadia/Burberry's**

Limited redundancies have also occurred at the above companies. All were made following the appropriate consultation with the GMB so that member's interests were properly protected.

### **J T Ellis**

Advised late December 2008 of failing order book.  
Short time working to be introduced in January 2009.  
Optimistic that after Easter 2009 company will get back to full production.

### **Phoenix Brick**

Has closed and made all staff (except five for security reasons) redundant and stated that by March they are expecting to be running one of the two kilns again.

### **Clarkson Osborn, Sheffield**

Four redundancies in October 2008.

### **Firth Rixson Special Steels Ltd, Sheffield**

1<sup>st</sup> October 2008 - 3% increase on all aspects of pay.

### **Premdor, Barnsley**

Redundancies throughout first half of this year.  
3% pay increase from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008. Anniversary date for pay negotiations changed from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 1<sup>st</sup> January. Next pay negotiations to reflect 1<sup>st</sup> January 2010.

### **Sanofi Aventis, Chapelton, Sheffield**

1<sup>st</sup> January 2009. Increase on basic rates of 3.95%.  
Non contractual attendance bonus, 12 months nil absence £500, 6 months 1 period of absence - £150.  
Second 6 months July - December £150.  
Holiday year to change from April - March to January - December.  
20 minute paid morning break.  
20 minute paid afternoon break.  
Unpaid lunch break.

### **Tinsley Bridge Limited, Sheffield**

Due to fall in order books reduction demand of nearly 50%. Through October and November 2008 consulting on twenty-eight redundancies plus entering into short time working from 18<sup>th</sup> November 2008. Considering using a weeks holiday over Christmas from next year.

### **Public Services**

Membership of the Public Services section within the region stands at 29,005, of these 20,531 are women. Our membership in this section has grown slightly over the past 12 months.

The past year has been a challenging one for members in the Public Sector. The continued restrictions on pay levels at a national level combined with continuous restructure and re-organisation (within local government in particular) have ensured that morale has been at rock bottom. Despite this we have seen

our representatives and officers work tirelessly to build GMB membership, improve terms and conditions and protect jobs and services.

Over the past year we have seen a marked increase in the number of new representatives appointed across the public services section and those already in post have been encouraged and supported through GMB@Work training and implementation to step up their own contribution to the GMB cause. Public services branches have also been encouraged to play a greater role in workplace organisation and campaigning.

### **Local Government**

The continued roll out and implementation of single status has been the dominant feature across our local authorities. In the majority of our 13 local councils single status has been introduced without agreement or is set to be imposed on the workforce in the face of GMB opposition.

In Leeds, where GMB is the largest union with over 7,000 members, our members were involved in a sustained industrial dispute in an effort to secure a better set of pay and grading proposals which delivered equality and not at the expense of pay cuts. Our members in refuse and street cleansing services led the campaign with work to rule and strike action however they received huge support from the workforce and the citizens of Leeds during a high profile battle. Although we secured some improvements in the proposals ultimately Leeds City Council imposed the package through termination of contracts.

In Sheffield, Doncaster, Kirklees and Calderdale, our representatives and officers are either still in negotiations over the introduction of single status or are in consultation with GMB members over the final package on offer.

In every local authority our representatives/officers have sought to build GMB membership on the back of the direct consultation with the workforce which is essential in these negotiations.

In every local authority we have pursued vigorously our aspiration of delivering equal pay compensation and equality going forward. Where this has not been possible through negotiation we have campaigned on equal pay and lodged equal pay claims on behalf of our women members with the support of our regional lawyers.

The region's Local Government Core Group – which brings together all senior lay representatives and local government officers to discuss strategy and organisation has met every 2 months throughout the year. This has been an invaluable source of support and direction for all involved in these difficult times.

The Core Group has continued to receive reports and advice on equal pay from our legal advisers and to determine and monitor GMB@Work activity in the councils within the region.

### **Schools**

We have campaigned and organised within schools like never before this year – we recruited 1919 new members in schools during the academic year which is 4 times higher than the previous year. Just as crucial the number of new representatives and contacts appointed within schools has rocketed. Our membership in schools with the region is nudging 8000.

We have nominated 4 school based representatives to the unions National Schools Advisory Committee. We held two conferences for school staff in 2008 and have established a regional schools forum to ensure regular contact with our representatives/contacts in schools is maintained.

### **West Yorkshire Police**

Our membership with the West Yorkshire Police has grown over the year and stands at 444. Our members entered into an industrial dispute during 2008 in defence of the introduction of new shift rotas. The campaign received widespread media coverage and our local representatives played a key role in building union organisation during the dispute. We remain active in trying to defend our members' interests within the West Yorkshire Police Authority.

### **NHS**

Our membership levels in the NHS continue to grow, slowly but surely branch reviews and workplace audits are in progress and beginning to demonstrate a greater awareness of GMB@Work and the need to translate the good work done by our representatives into membership growth and greater organisation.

This is in spite of the very difficult circumstances that our NHS members endure every day whilst at work in the NHS. Not only are staff shortages at dangerous levels, but the added pressure of trying to continue to provide vital services to sick people is causing many of our NHS members to consider finding alternative employment. Those who remain are reporting that they are suffering physical, mental and emotional exhaustion.

With reference to private contractors in the NHS, we continue to insist that Agenda for Change terms and conditions of employment are implemented. However, many contractors are attempting to resist.

Therefore, further joint guidance has been issued accordingly. There is reluctance from GMB members employed by private contractors to become reps. However, we remain optimistic that this can be resolved in the coming year.

GMB recognition within the NHS remains a contentious issue.

The York Hospital de-recognised the GMB towards the end of 2007. This led to an emergency motion being unanimously passed by the Yorkshire Regional TUC AGM deploring the move and demanding our re-recognition.

This campaign continues and we are working with Unison within the Trust and regionally to ensure the employer cannot play one union off against another.

In Yorkshire Ambulance service our 244 members had their rights to union collective representation unilaterally withdrawn. Check off remains in place and after sustained negotiations with the Trust we expect recognition to be restored.

In these areas and beyond the reaching of a regional accord with Unison has enabled us to put greater pressure on employers who have hitherto tried to divide and conquer the two biggest unions in Public Services within the region.

### **Southern Cross**

We have focused heavily on building organisation within Southern Cross over the past 12 months. Our membership density is now at 35% - up from 8% in May 2006. We have 705 members – up by 482 over the same period. We have re-organised our branch support for our Southern Cross members. We have mapped all homes within the region and we continue to focus officer, ROT and activist resources on this regional and national target.

## 2. GENERAL ORGANISATION

Regional Senior Organisers	3
Membership Development Officers	0
Regional Organisers	15
Organising Officers	4
No. of Branches	110
New Branches	2
Branch Equality Officers	30
Branch Youth Officers	14

## 3. BENEFITS

Dispute	0.00
Total Disablement	0.00
Working Accident	5,172.20
Occupational Fatal Accident	0.00
Non-occupational Fatal Accident	0.00
Funeral	22,498.00

## 4. JOURNALS & PUBLICITY

The regional magazine is produced three times per year which includes national and regional news and articles. The region also sponsored many charities and organisations during 2008 and these were:

- Anti Bullying – The Young Person's Guide
- Jane Tomlinson 10K Charity Run
- Upton United FC
- South Yorkshire Festival
- Action for Sick Children
- The Hockey Forum
- The Genesis Appeal
- Children with Leukaemia
- 3 Peaks Challenge (Heart Research)
- Huddersfield Pink Picnic
- Brinsworth Whitehall JFC
- TUC Aid
- TUC Organising Post
- Circus Starr – Wheatfields Hospice
- Children's Heart Federation
- Bosom Friends & Bradford Cancer Support
- The Great North Run 2008
- St Gemma's Hospice
- Rawthorpe Amateur Boxing Club
- Bluebell Wood Children's Hospice
- World Sports Co-operation

## 5. LEGAL SERVICES

### (a) Occupational Accidents and Diseases (*Including Criminal Injuries*)

Applications for Legal Assistance	Legal Assistance Granted
855	855

#### Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Court	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
898	335	4	559 £3,540,208.56	-	£3,540,208.56
Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008		2389			

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

Claims supported by Union	
	165

#### Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Rejected	Withdrawn	Lost in Tribunal	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
89	22	14	2	49 £155,526.79	2 £42,650.00	£198,176.79
Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008		176				

### (c) Other Employment Law Cases

Supported by Union	Unsuccessful	Damages/ Compensation	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008
-	-	-	-

### (d) Social Security Cases

Supported by Union	Successful	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008
33	18	53

The legal department is responsible for overseeing the region's comprehensive legal services. Much of the region's legal services are provided by Thompsons Solicitors. The biggest requirement for legal assistance continues to be in the area of personal injury and disease. The legal assistance scheme also includes free legal assistance on work related criminal matters; a road traffic accident scheme; a free will preparation

service; discounted rates for family law, probate and conveyancing. Members can access a free 30 minute legal advice session on any other legal question.

Most of the region's employment law work is conducted by the regional GMB legal department, with 'overspill' and, for example, public sector equal pay cases, referred to Thompsons as required. The regional legal department operates a professional and efficient employment tribunal casework management system and provides a first class successful service to members. Unfair dismissal claims made up the largest proportion of cases taken in 2008 with other cases taken under a variety of causes including equal pay, race discrimination and age discrimination. Almost £200,000 was recovered in compensation for GMB members from employment tribunal claims during the course of 2008.

'In house' knowledge and practical experience of handling employment tribunal cases is utilised to provide regular employment law training courses as an integral part of the region's training agenda for lay representatives and activists. Empowering workplace representatives is aided by the department providing or arranging a wide range of employment law training. There is a monthly introduction to GMB legal services and a basic employment rights course as part of the induction of new representatives. Training is also provided in a range of employment law topics such as discrimination law, redundancy; and dispute resolution procedures (including the affect of the Employment Act 2008 on handling grievance and disciplinary issues). The region's full-time officers are also kept abreast of new developments in employment law through the use of bulletins and briefings.

## **6. EQUALITY & INCLUSION**

In August 2008, we held the inaugural Equality and Inclusion Forum meeting. The purpose for the meeting was to combine all of the equality strands, into one forum. The reason we did this were many. The first of which was that the Equal Rights, Race, Disability and other advisory committees were not working. Membership had dropped to an unacceptable level and therefore, the region could not produce a plan of work. We could not be certain that our Advisory Committee members were active in their workplaces. We also wished to ensure that in the Yorkshire & North Derbyshire region, our Equality Advisory Committees were reinvigorated and also are reflective of the National Equality and Inclusion Forum.

The forum have met quarterly and I am pleased to note increased membership that is now becoming more reflective of the diversity of membership that we have in the Yorkshire & North Derbyshire region. At the time of writing, we are in the process of putting together a plan of work for 2009. We intend to introduce the following:

- Agree the plan of work at the next forum meeting
- Put into action a method of community engagement which will take GMB into the Black and Ethnic Minority communities and workplaces to recruit and organise and also to ensure that they feel they have a valuable contribution to make and GMB is the best union to do this.
- Present the changes to the Equality Bill to forum members
- Ensure that each forum member has a role
- We hope to ensure that the forum takes responsibility for producing a regional newsletter to keep all members informed of the work being done
- To ensure that the regional website is continually updated and equality issues and information is available. This will be linked to the national website
- Be actively involved with the Sheffield Racial Equality Council to promote all forms of discriminatory practices.

The work of this forum is beginning to show benefits. The Remploy rally held in York was a great success. The Remploy members reminded us all of the reasons we are trade unionists. Despite their disability and health problems, they attended the march despite the freezing cold and dense fog to help draw attention to the awful decision to close the Remploy factories in the Yorkshire and North Derbyshire region.

## 7. YOUTH

Following the re launch of the Regional Young Members' Advisory Committee in October 2007 and the initial first steps taken to raise our profile among young workers and students – as conveyed in last year's report - I am pleased to relay that significant progress has been made in 2008, thanks primarily to a new layer of young activists and to the growing support of the region's branches.

Throughout the year RYMAC has met regularly, initially on a monthly basis and then more recently at two monthly intervals. The committee's focus has been to share and develop ideas on how to first attract and then to organise young people into union life and to propose campaigns to support, both inside and outside workplaces and colleges, to generate greater collectivism. In a nutshell our team – led by a core group of five - met seven times as a committee, engaged in a number of organising initiatives, hosted a No Sweat – Anti Exploitation Campaign meeting, hosted an Anti Fascist day of action, both sponsored and promoted the demonstration against the BNP's Red, White & Blue festival, participated in and led debate at a number of TUC committees and conferences, attended GMB Congress, played a leading role in GMB's Young Members' Organising conference, undertook GMB@Work Training and represented the region at a number of music festivals.

At the first meeting of the year in January the committee proposed to develop a bulletin for bar workers with the intention of organising those employed in bars around the Universities in Sheffield – where one of the team was employed. A couple of campaigns were also endorsed – No Sweat, the anti exploitation campaign and Climate Change with respect to raising awareness and supporting events. The GMB national delegation for TUC Youth conference also adopted two statements written by David Grant of Sheffield Municipal and Light (Involving Young Workers in Global Unionism) and Daniel Randall of Club Stewards (Adopting a Campaigning Model for Young Workers) to represent the voice of GMB at the conference. Both David and Daniel attended the conference as delegates.

The Bar Worker bulletin proposal became a reality in February and was designed and produced by Daniel. A Hope Not Hate event was endorsed for March and Colin Kirkham, Regional Education Officer, spoke to the committee about the Regional Secretary's offer for six young activists to undertake the 12 day training programme for new stewards. Whilst none of our key activists are post holders – essentially because they are studying or employed in unrecognised work places - it is felt invaluable to equip them with the necessary tools to both build for recognition and to hit the ground running when they do enter a workplace on completion of their studies.

RYMAC hosted a talk by Mike Treen, from the Unite union of New Zealand, on their successful 'Supersize My Pay' Campaign. The talk focused on Unite's effective strategy of organising young workers in big name fast food outlets such as Macdonalds, Pizza Hut, KFC and Starbucks and their success in ending the age discrimination of New Zealand's National Minimum wage. The meeting was well attended, attracting members and activists from other trade unions and created a great sense of internationalism, This was heightened further by the presence of Axel Persson from CGT - one of the main TU Federations in France. Axel, a young trade union leader shared his experiences of these companies across France and of organising young workers which proved to be an invaluable lesson for us. Axel subsequently was invited to speak at the Young Members' meeting at Congress 2008.

In March, our Regional Young Members' Committee hosted an anti fascist activity day, organised and led by the Hope Not Hate campaign. Approximately 20 people from across the region came together to participate in a two hour workshop which covered topics such as the nature of the British National Party and why trade unions should campaign against fascism. This was followed by a leafleting exercise against the BNP in Heckmondwike. The BNP lost this seat, which goes to show how pivotal both the work of anti fascist organisations and our involvement in such campaigns are. Thanks to all those who were involved across the region in this essential activity. Particular thanks to Leeds General branch for their mobilisation of anti fascist activities in Leeds and Rotherham.

Utilising a number of lessons learned and methods from the Supersize My Pay Campaign, our team conducted the first leafleting exercise around Sheffield University bars in April with the Bar Worker bulletin - which highlights key employment rights and health and safety concerns, encourages staff to contact GMB and outlines who we are and what GMB stands for. The team made a number of good contacts and further activities were planned. Also in April a letter went to branches requesting that attention be given to the election of a branch youth officer, that post holders' details be forwarded and also offered RYMAC's services in this process. Consequently our branch young members' officer profile went from three people to nine – an increase of 200 per cent.

Throughout the next couple of months the young members' page on the regional website was developed further and work commenced on drafting relevant employment rights/organisational material for young people. RYMAC met in May and July and discussions continued as to how to broaden young member involvement and growth across the region, plus further anti fascist activities were undertaken along with a pledge to support the mobilisation against the BNP's Red, White and Blue festival scheduled for August. In June Daniel and David Grant attended GMB Congress as observers and a team of ten went to Glastonbury to work behind Workers' Beer bars and raise money for further campaigns and activities. Piotr Plonka CTL project worker and RYMAC member also came along to help out on the GMB stall with colleagues from Southern region.

In July RYMAC decided to escalate the Bar Worker campaign to include Sheffield Hallam Students Union and links were made with a key activist at the University. Lengthy discussions were also had about the old 10pence weekly membership rate for working students and where it fitted in today's organising agenda. A proposal was made to adopt the recent promotional rate of 70pence per week which was supported by the Regional Secretary. Daniel was also asked to sit on the GMB National Working Party for climate change.

August saw the demo against the BNP festival endorsed by RYMAC and attended by a number of our Young Activists and a team of eighteen attended Leeds Festival increasing our campaigning fund further in the process. Our involvement with Workers' Beer certainly impressed a number of student employees at Wilkinson and I feel, aided the healthy increase in young GMB membership across the company during the summer months. Two new members from Wilkinson in fact joined the team to help out at the Leeds festival.

Daniel attended TUC Congress in September as a regional delegate. It has to be said that our young activists have been consistent in their involvement with the TUC at all levels throughout the year but particularly with respect to the Regional TUC Young Members' Forum where they have been pro active in attending meetings and taking part in cross union initiatives and discussions concerning young member organisation.

In October the committee met again to assess work undertaken so far and to examine how some of the initiatives they had devised could be developed further – particular focus being given to new and more creative ways of communication, radio and dvd for example, and a commitment was made to support work going forward regarding the organisation of migrant workers. These proposals are still in embryonic form at this stage.

November, whilst we only sent three of a potential five delegates to the GMB Young Members' Organising Conference in November – Yorkshire & North Derbyshire continued to punch above our weight in terms of the contributions made to the main meeting and the numerous workshops that had been organised and with respect to the social and networking aspect of the event.

In December a further communication was sent to branches concerning the election of branch youth officers and encouraging an invite to RYMAC to attend branch to speak to members. Already, as a result of the request, we have a further five Branch Youth Officers in place and a healthy network is taking form. The number of Branch Youth Officers then has gone from three in number at the beginning of the year to fourteen at as of the close of 2008. We still have a long way to go but significant steps have been taken.

Finally, the committee has been tremendous in 2008. People have come and gone but we have had a core of consistent, dedicated trade unionists who have led the discussion and initiatives. Particular thanks and acknowledgement then must go to David Grant, Gareth Hartley, Piotr Plonka, Daniel Randall and Lydia Wilkinson. The key to 2009 will be to take the work beyond the committee and to the branches and the workplaces, to develop the important links that are currently taking shape with branches and therefore grow and broaden young member membership and activism across the region.

## 8. EDUCATION TRAINING

(a) GMB Courses - Basic Training					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
GMB@Work	13	126	51	177	354
Introduction to GMB (2 days) inc. on-site 2 day	10	98	26	124	228
GMB/TUC Induction (5 days)	8	81	21	102	510
Branch Officers (please specify subject)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

(b) On Site Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Risk Assessment	5	33	9	42	210
Disciplinary	5	36	14	50	250
Grievance	5	28	13	41	205
Statutory Disputes	4	27	10	37	148
TUPE	2	11	4	15	30
H & S Inspection	4	29	7	36	144
Age Discrimination	2	15	5	20	40
DDA Disability	2	11	5	16	32
Job Evaluation	1	6	1	7	7
COSHH	2	17	3	20	40
Pensions (2 day)	1	8	4	12	24

Laptop Training	2	17	0	17	34
ULR (3 day)	2	28	22	50	100
GMB@Work (1 day)	3	15	23	38	114

(c) Health & Safety Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
H&S 3 day	8	73	20	93	279

(d) Other Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
GFTU weekends					
Time Management	1	1	0	1	3
Getting to Know your Pensions	1	1	0	1	3
Introduction to Human Resources	1	1	0	1	3
Equality Reps	2	1	1	2	6
Basics of Health& Safety	1	1	1	1	3
Negotiating & Influencing in the Workplace	1	1	0	1	3
Building Self Esteem	1	0	5	5	15
Tackling Discrimination	1	1	0	1	3
Effective Communication	1	1	0	1	3
Powerpoint Presentations	1	0	1	1	3
Introduction to Leadership Skills	1	1	0	1	3
Introduction to Leadership Theory	1	1	0	1	3
Tackling Workplace Conflict	1	3	0	3	
Advanced Negotiating Behaviour	1	1	0	1	3
Risk Assessment (5 days)	1	2	0	2	10
Getting Assertive at Work	2	1	1	1	6
Public Speaking	1	1	2	3	9
Trade Union & International Development	1	1	0	1	3
Digital Imaging	1	1	1	2	6
Self Management & Personal Effectiveness	1	1	1	2	6
Organising Migrant Workers	1	1	0	1	3
Desktop Publishing	1	0	1	1	3
Representing your Members	1	1	0	1	3
Emotional Intelligence	1	1	2	3	9
Website Design	1	2	1	3	9
Dealing with Bullying & Harassment	1	4	1	5	15
Stress Management	1	0	1	1	3

Strengthening Leadership Potential	1	1	2	3	9
Diversity Reps Part 2	1	1	0	1	3
Tackling Workplace Hazards	1	2	0	2	6
Discrimination & the Law	1	1	0	1	3
Understanding Company Accounts	1	0	1	1	3
<b>Northern College (5 days)</b>					
Advanced Health & Safety	2	15	1	16	80
Practical Employment Law	1	3	0	3	15
Understanding the DDA (3 days)	1	2	1	3	9
Bargaining Skills	1	3	0	3	15
Stewards Refresher Course	1	2	0	2	10

(e) TUC Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Reps Stage 1 (12 days)	1	5	0	5	60
Reps Stage 2 (10 days)	1	2	0	2	20
H & S Stage 1 (12 days)	5	4	1	5	60
H & S Stage 2 (10 days)	1	3	0	3	30
H & S Update (2 days)	1	2	0	2	4
ICT Project (10 evenings)	1	0	2	2	20
Stepping Up the Advanced Course Stage 2 (12 days)	1	1	0	1	12
Diploma In Occupational H & S (35 days)	2	3	0	3	105
ULR	1	3	0	3	9
Pension Champions (5 days)	1	1	0	1	5
Employment Law Certificate (36 days)	1	1	0	1	36

2008 saw the introduction in January of a new shaped 12-day core induction programme within the region. An increase of recognised post holders has meant an increase in course attendances. New courses that were introduced in 2008 were TUPE, Job Evaluation and COSHH, all one-day internal GMB provision.

The region was also successful in its application for funding to continue its work with regional projects via ULF funding. This has seen a significant increase in post-holding ULR's, thus promoting the trade union learning agenda.

## 9. HEALTH & SAFETY

As from 1 March 2008, the Yorkshire & North Derbyshire region has been operating a department dedicated to health and safety. The main focus of the department will be to deliver on the Congress report 'GMB @ Work' by organising and campaigning around health and safety in the workplace and to this end the region's health & safety officer will be working closely with organisers, the regional organising team, branches and activists.

The department now has an email database of health & safety reps numbered in the hundreds, which allows for immediate and direct contact with as many reps as possible; in any event, a high level of contact is maintained with all H&S reps who are informed of developments within health, safety, welfare and the environment on a regular basis.

During May 2008, the department held a successful re-launch of its services and has continued to gather momentum by setting out the aims of the department through a 'Statement of Intent'. This has now been circulated widely and has assisted in raising both the department's profile and setting out the union's expectations in regard to GMB@Work and health and safety representative's role.

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

Throughout 2008, the regional health and safety officer delivered two, one day, bi-monthly courses aimed at bolstering the core knowledge and supporting the activities of the region's health and safety representatives; these are 'Workplace Inspections/Understanding the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations' and 'Understanding Risk Assessment and the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations'. Both courses tie in with GMB@Work and focus on how H&S reps can use the unique rights afforded them under the SRSC Regs to better organise their workplaces. From May 2008, training also included a one day course on COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health). And as from next year, a course will be developed that focuses on the 'Green Agenda', recognised as a key area with massive potential for workplace organisation. The department also provides tailor-made training in specific areas, or on specific topics upon request, which has been effectively used in securing recognition deals and will be offered to activists to aid them in campaigning for their members' safety and welfare at work more effectively.

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

## **10. POLITICAL**

It has been a tough six months for the Labour Party with the party lagging behind in the opinion polls. However, Gordon Brown has been head and shoulders above David Cameron since the Labour Party Conference . This renewed faith in our leader has translated into electoral victory with victory against all odds in Dewsbury in a ward bi-election Labour winning the seat.

The region has welcomed two new MP's into membership, Angela Smith the MP for Hillsborough and Linda Riordan the MP for Halifax. Thank you for joining the GMB and welcome!

The region has affiliated to almost all the constituencies in the region, if any branch or member wishes to become a constituency delegate, please contact the Brighthouse Office on 01484 720 022 and I will give you the details of your local Constituency Labour Party Secretary.

The campaign continues in local government with the key seats campaign in Leeds working very well at the 2008 local elections - Leeds held firm with no losses, many thanks to all who have helped in Leeds. Thanks to Cllr James Lewis, Cllr Mark Dobson and Labour Group Lead Cllr Keith Wakefield for their support during the disputes and difficulties in 2008, we are committed to returning Labour to power in Leeds.

The region held its first Political Forum in 2008 with an excellent debate facilitated by Jon Trickett MP.

The year has been a very turbulent time with the fortunes of the party in constant flux. The local elections were a disaster in many areas throughout the region. Wakefield MDC came within one seat of losing a Labour majority for the first time ever.

The campaign against the BNP continued in 2008 with joint campaigns with Hope not Hate next year will be crucial, with the Euro Elections with a real possibility that the BNP could beat Labour. We all must give support to Richard Corbett MEP who is a GMB member. Richard and Glenis Willmott MEP are always there supporting the GMB in our region regardless.

Regardless of your views on the EU we cannot allow the fascist BNP to win in 2009. The region will continue to work with our key allies in the Labour Party to move forward to a socialist future.

Finally I would like to pass on the regions best wishes to Colin Burgon MP and Mike Wood MP, both GMB and socialist die-hards who voted against the Government on trade union issues many times in 2008.

*(Adopted)*

**THE PRESIDENT:** Could I ask Tim Roache, Regional Secretary, Yorkshire & North Derbyshire to move his report, (pages 144-159).

*The report was formally moved.*

**THE PRESIDENT:** Thank you, Tim. Page 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, and 159. Congress agree to accept the report? *(Agreed)*  
Thank you very much.

*The Regional Secretary's Report: Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region (pages 144-159) was adopted.*

## **EMERGENCY MOTION 1: BAN THE BLACKLISTERS**

### **EM1. BAN THE BLACKLISTERS**

Congress,

The unmasking of the Consulting Association as a supplier of information about workers to the building trade shows the practice of blacklisting trade unionists still continues. We deplore the fact they were allowed to continue for so long and condemn those companies that used the service of

this organisation. As a trade union, we also deplore the fact that a Labour Government was negligent in including the banning of just such practices in legislation yet, did not enact it.

This practice must be put firmly in the dustbin of history. Congress calls on the Government to finally make the holding, distribution and use of blacklists illegal, with massive punishments to both the supplier and end user.

PARKGATE BRANCH  
*Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. I. KEMP (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): President, Congress, first of all I would like to thank the SOC for allowing this Emergency Motion. Congress knows that Emergency Motions are for unforeseen circumstances and urgent situations. Colleagues, as trade union activists we have known that blacklisting of trade unionists has been used ever since pyramid builders went on strike to increase their beer allowance and although history does not record it I am sure our brothers and sisters in the Southern Region working on Stonehenge came out in solidarity.

The Consulting Association which has just been exposed as a compiler and provider of blacklists is just the latest in a line of anti-union schemes and organisations used by the employers none of which in themselves are illegal, in fact the Consulting Association was prosecuted under the Data Protection Act and not under employment law. How many lives have been ruined through being blacklisted? How many kids have gone without simply because a parent could not get a job because they are an active trade unionist? What an indictment of capitalism? Here we have an organisation making money not by job creation but actually preventing people from working. These companies like Balfour Beatty do not let them plead poverty when they are paying £3,000 a time to obtain these lists. Shame on you! It is not as if this or any other government was naively unaware of these practices. The Consulting Association's predecessor, the Economic League, work hand in hand with MI5 and right-wing MPs. The Blair government was actually going to make blacklisting illegal but the bosses called the tune and Mr. Blair danced. I do not know about being George Bush's poodle but he was certainly the CBI's on this occasion. What was it that these men did that led to their names being selected, collated, and distributed? Did they demand massive wages? Did they want to build barricades in the streets instead of houses, shops, and offices? No, in an industry notorious for injuries and death they were concerned about health and safety. They believe workers' lives are more important than profits via shortcuts. Colleagues, we say no more victimisation of those who, to paraphrase Billy Bragg, believe in a helping hand and in their fellow man. In a plea to a fellow GMB member who wants our support, Mr. Brown, it is time to put an end to blacklisting, make it illegal, and bring in massive punitive fines to those who compile them and those who use them. Congress, support Emergency Motion 1 and ban the blacklisters, not trade unionists. *(Applause)*

BRO. T. POLLARD (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, think back to Sunday morning and our President's address. This included a very personal, eloquent, and

heartfelt reference to her suffering the disgraceful act of being blacklisted. I will refer to this not to seek Mary's sympathy for a first-time speaker (me, not her) but to highlight the devastating effects of a blacklist on individuals, something which should not be lost on not only Congress but also employers and the government. In the region and throughout the country our members have known for years the existence of such blacklists, particularly in the engineering and construction industry, and lightly-skilled craft workers, and have been penalised by employers for speaking their minds, sticking up for fellow workers, for organising and campaigning, in fact for pursuing the GMB@Work agenda before that became GMB policy. This has affected our members and their families for years and an attack on one is an attack on all. This must stop now. Congress, I second Emergency Motion 1. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Does anyone wish to come in on this debate? Can I say that they stooped as low as even to school dinner ladies and putting them on the blacklist.

BRO. P. SOPER (Midland & East Coast): I was at a meeting on construction with Kathleen here yesterday and one of the major points that came up on this blacklisting is that thousands of workers are dying in the construction industry because nobody dare take the job of a safety rep because he will never work again. I second.

THE PRESIDENT: Anyone else? Eddie?

BRO. E. MARNELL (CEC, Manufacturing): Congress, this Emergency Motion has the full support of the CEC. The practice of blacklisting trade unionists should never exist in this civilised and free society. The freedom to belong to a trade union is set out in the European Convention of Human Rights. The CEC deplors the fact that it took the revelation that the Consulting Association was selling a database of 3,213 workers for £3,000 a year to major construction companies for the government to take action at last. The legislative powers have existed since 1999 to outlaw this practice but the government refused to enact them saying there was no evidence that the practice existed and all the while 40 of the major building companies who benefited from public procurement contracts could pick and choose their workers using the Consulting Association blacklist.

Some interesting information came to light about the Consulting Association when the boss, Ian Kay, appeared in court on June 2<sup>nd</sup>. From 1919 the Economic League was the most prominent organisation involved in the blacklisting of so-called subversives. It was paid by companies and worked closely with Special Branch to compile databases of individuals. It was wound up in the early 1990s after pressure from the media and parliament exposed its flawed operations. According to The Guardian newspaper many of its operatives went to ground and Ian Kay, one of the most effective research people specialising in trade unions, took his files with him and carried on his business through the Consulting Association. It has taken all these years to expose him for providing a blacklist of trade unionists. Thanks to the action of the Information Commissioner he is now awaiting sentencing by the Crown Court.

In May this year the government announced a consultation with the intention of at last enacting the legislation against blacklisting. We do not believe that we need another consultation but that this legislation should be immediately enacted. Too many people for far too long have suffered discrimination for their trade union beliefs; I, and many people like me, are living proof of that. What is worse is that if you are on the blacklist so are your families. If the government want proof, I will give it to them.

In 1995 on the Mersey we had a local agreement for shipwrights whereby all the unemployed shipwrights on Merseyside dry-dock all ships and in the event of work being available on those ships then the unemployed shipwrights have a claim to that work. In 1995, lo and behold, every able-bodied shipwright that docked an Italian liner got work except *moi*. That is the proof. Also, many of the lads who were involved in the dispute in Cammell Laird in 1984 applied for jobs and got them at Fords Halewood only to turn up to start work on the Monday to be given a second interview which, lo and behold, they all failed. Congress, please support Emergency Motion with this statement. Thank you. (*Applause*)

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

*Emergency Motion 1 was carried.*

## **SOCIAL POLICY – HOUSING HOUSING MOTION 185**

### **185. HOUSING**

Congress requests the GMB to lobby government for large council house and affordable home housing projects. This is urgently required to give everyone the opportunity for a decent home and in the current recessionary times will give a massive boost to the construction industry, which will filter benefit throughout the wider economy. In carrying out this work, there must be an equal priority in bringing existing housing stock up to decent living standards. There must also be a strong commitment to the environment, to the preservation of green space, protection to historical and architecturally important buildings, protection to the visual character of areas and with reasonable regard to existing home owners or residents in planning districts. There should be a priority to genuine brownfield sites and a reversal of the government policy, classifying gardens as brownfield.

DOVER FERRIES X23 BRANCH  
*Southern Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. P. GOODACRE (Southern): Good morning, President, Congress. Congress wishes the GMB to campaign for and lobby government for an extensive and ambitious programme of publicly funded house-building. This programme would be for the benefit of current and future generations and, as such, its properties would be for rent, not sale. While measures taken by the current government are welcome they do not scratch the

surface of the housing crisis facing our nation. Unavailability of credit, worsening economic conditions, a chronic shortage of supply, and price to earnings ratios at historically high levels, severely restrict the opportunity of living in a decent home for a large percentage of the population. A publicly funded house-building programme represents the only chance for millions to live in decent, affordable, accommodation. Furthermore, Congress wishes this programme to consist of high-quality builds rather than the high-density, low-quality dwellings that have characterised private development and tarnished the countryside in recent years. Such should be the nature of any future state building programme that anyone would feel proud to call these houses homes.

As a nation we need to radically rethink our attitudes towards housing. There is no stigma to renting. In more economically advanced and prosperous nations in Europe, such as Germany and France, renting is commonplace. This obsession with home ownership has brought widespread misery to millions of working people. Massive increase of access to high-standard accommodation would be combined with security of tenure and affordable rents. Marking another departure from private builds, the proposed programme will proceed with due regard to the environment. Its focus will include the renovation of existing properties to high standards, the rejuvenation of brown field sites, and the protection of our natural heritage. I feel it is necessary to draw attention to some of the practices of private builds over the last couple of decades. The grounds of existing dwellings are often treated as brown field sites. This allows developers to parachute high-density builds into what were formerly gardens with complete disregard to existing dwellings and people already in the neighbourhood. These kinds of practices have to stop.

The programme for posting this motion is ambitious and expensive. However, it will pay for itself many times over delivering short and long-term social and economic benefits. It will deliver a much needed short-term boost to the economy, providing jobs and opportunities for retraining. With affordable rents families will have larger disposable incomes to spend stimulating the economy further. Removal of the millstone of mortgages based on astronomical price to earnings ratios will represent a huge increase in quality of life for millions. The national obsession with home ownership has resulted in a cycle of boom and bust with economic policy dictated by the concerns of overheating in the housing market rather than the needs of British industry. The current lack of affordable housing falls demographically on a number of groups, for example, young workers, low-wage earners. This represents, fundamentally, an inequality in our society, an inequality which we as a movement are obliged to address. Congress, please support this motion. I move. (*Applause*)

*The motion was formally seconded.*

**LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING  
COMPOSITE 19  
INVEST IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR**

**C19. COVERING MOTIONS**

186. LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING (Northern Region)

## 187. CREDIT CRUNCH – SOCIAL HOUSING (Midland & East Coast Region)

### LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING

Congress recognizes that despite the current housing crisis and the collapse of house prices caused by reckless private investment practices, there is still a huge under supply of housing in the UK.

Congress further recognizes that if our future housing needs are to be met it is now clear that this can only be delivered by public investment delivered by local authorities.

Congress calls upon the Government to abandon its, clearly unjustified, faith in the private sector and return the control and management of social/public housing to local authorities.

Congress calls upon the CEC to lobby the Government to:

- provide the legislative protection and investment to ensure our future housing needs are delivered by our local authorities.
- Divert monies being given to private banks, and not being passed on to the public and Local Authorities in order to build more social housing.

This will provide affordable shelter for not only those made homeless by the current credit crisis and those already on long waiting lists, but will also provide a welcome stimulus to the building industry, with the subsequent knock on effect to the suppliers to the industry.

*(Carried)*

**BRO. M. BAKER (Northern):** Congress, the current economic crisis has made what was already a bad situation in the housing market much worse. The prices of houses have collapsed in the market and at the same time no one can get a mortgage because they either do not have a permanent job or do not have the often as high as 40% deposit many mortgage lenders are asking for. Private rental properties often charge ridiculously high rents and are often not maintained to a good standard. Social housing, whether it be housing associations or ALMOs, or some other form, is almost impossible to get. They often have excellent tenancy policies and the waiting lists are so long that their accommodation again is almost impossible to get.

So where does that leave us? It leaves us with the need for local authorities to build council houses again. The government needs to abandon its faith in the private sector and become realistic about how the housing shortage is solved. The control and management of social housing needs to be with local authority control, letting policies become fairer and choice-based letting that does not work becomes a thing of the past. The government needs to invest in local authorities and remove the logistic obstacles to allow them to build council houses again. Only if the government takes these steps can the housing shortages be addressed. Never again must we allow ourselves to get into this situation where young families cannot afford to buy or to leave their parents' homes, and cannot find suitable rented accommodation. It is a terrible situation we find ourselves in which has only been made worse by the current economic situation. Let our Labour government do something positive for our members by being brave and do what needs to be done in

the housing sector. The result would be jobs in the construction industry, and affordable housing, well-managed housing. Let us call on the government to be brave and bold and make a decision. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

BRO. J. EVANS (Midland & East Coast): I second Composite 19. President, Congress, we have all seen the billions of pounds made available from the public purse to shore up the failed banking industry. We have also seen the billions pumped in as a so-called fiscal stimulus but with few tangible results. The motion calls for a real economic stimulus by getting our construction workers into work and providing good quality social housing which the country needs, a house for those made homeless through the current credit crisis, homes for those who are making do in inappropriate bed and breakfast accommodation all the time whilst they languish on long waiting lists. The knock-on effects to the suppliers and the wider economic community will generate visible green shoots we all long for. Let's grow our housing stock and let's get the nation back to work. *(Applause/standing ovation)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. If I was to give an award for courage it would be given to you. *(Applause)*

## **COMMUNITY HOUSING MOTION 189**

### **189. COMMUNITY HOUSING**

Congress urges the Government to start a programme of building work for community housing to help:

- a) Kick start the economy – by employment opportunities
- b) Support families being evicted from homes due to non payment (default) on mortgages, due to unemployment.

S162 BRANCH  
*North West and Irish Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. J. LACY (North West & Irish): President, Congress, good morning. Congress urges government to start a programme of building work for council housing to help a) kick-start the economy – by employment opportunities, and b) support families being evicted from homes for non-payment (default) on mortgages due to unemployment.

Part a): Congress, we are now many months into a serious downturn within the building construction sector of the economy. Thousands upon thousands of proud trades people have been caught up in this terrible turn of events for their industry and are now trying to eke out a living by turning to alternative forms of employment to keep their families and homes afloat. This is an unacceptable waste of an experienced, talented, professional workforce and a possible permanent loss to the future recovery of the construction industry. We are looking at a multibillion pound a year industry that has virtually ground to a halt and is all but dormant. Public housing construction fell by 35% alone in the first quarter this year compared to the same period last year. Due to the downturn in the

economy local authorities are looking at cutting spending on building maintenance and renovation as part of the decent homes programme. This area of the building sector accounts for a significant proportion of work for medium contractors, who are currently amongst the hardest hit and are having to lay off many of their workers. It is no secret that demand for affordable council housing far outweighs supply. It is also no secret that a significant proportion of council house stock is in urgent need of repair, renovation, or replacement. Up to five million people are expected to be on council housing lists by the turn of the year, with a fair proportion expected to have arrived on these lists via mortgage defaults or repossessions. Add to this the fact that fewer and fewer people are able to get a foot on the private property ladder, it is clear to see that this is an area that requires urgent attention by the government and can be a catalyst to getting the building and construction industry moving. Although welcome, the government's promised funding package announced in April's budget for the construction sector to the tune of £600m to get the industry moving is only a spit in the ocean compared to the billions of pounds of taxpayers' money that has been thrown at the financial sector, and of the funds in the package only a limited amount is earmarked to go to local authority housing projects. The reality is that more needs to be done now to get low-cost affordable housing projects started which will go a long way to getting our building or construction trades people back to work.

Part b): Also announced in the Budget were measures to help mortgage defaulters which is also to be welcomed but this help needs to be immediate and now and not dependent upon some Whitehall bureaucrat's wishes that eventually the moneylenders will yield to government pressure to stop evicting families from their homes before they have exhausted all avenues to help them. As I have previously mentioned, billions of pounds of taxpayers' money is being used to bail out the banks, banks that against all caution and advice gambled on high-risk strategies with hardly any or no due diligence, some of whose chief executives have walked away from these financial wrecks with payoffs and handsome pensions, all of which will leave a legacy of debt for years to come that we will all have to pay back, the very same banks that have contributed to the economic downturn that is now affecting everybody across the globe, taking government handouts courtesy of the taxpayer and now refrained from using injections of money given to them to release finance in the forms of loans to help get sectors like the construction and building industry moving again.

Thousands of first-time buyers who once rented the very homes they live in now face losing them. These are hardworking families who sold and bought into Maggie's dream of home-ownership and because of unemployment caused by the downturn now face the reality of the boom and bust cycle. These are the people that desperately now need and deserve the government's help, unlike the greedy banks who gambled heavily against the advice of the few shrewd financial experts who expressed their concerns so they could make short-term profits, gambles that they lost heavily and yet now receive all the help the government can throw at them. Congress urges the government to show as much commitment to helping these poor unfortunate families as it has to the self-indulgent financial morons of the City. Congress, please support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

*The motion was formally seconded.*

## **HOUSING MOTION 191**

### **191. HOUSING**

This Congress calls on the government to widen the definition of the term 'key workers' so that our members in key public sector jobs have access to affordable housing.

ISLINGTON APEX BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. V. WEST (London): President, Congress, if a teacher is a key worker, why not a teaching assistant? If a doctor or a nurse is a key worker, why not a hospital porter or a hospital cleaner? The government has rightly provided assistance in finding housing for many key workers but we believe that the definition of what is a key worker is far too narrow. Our members have the same difficulties as others in finding decent affordable housing and as other key public sector workers deserve the same treatment. Without teaching assistants, without hospital porters and cleaners, our schools and hospitals would soon close down. The definition of key workers to assist them in finding decent affordable housing needs to be widened. I move. *(Applause)*

BRO. G. SHARKEY (London): Congress, although we welcome and recognise the introduction of schemes to assist housing key workers within public services there are many other groups of available workers who we feel should have the same advantage as the police, doctors, nurses, and fire service employees. The definition of a key worker is someone employed within the public sector in a frontline role delivering an essential public service in the areas of health, education, and community safety. Although we deeply support the doctors, nurses, police, and fire service employees already included in the scheme, I ask you why is it then that hospital cleaners who work to a high standard to keep the outbreaks of MSRA and C.diff from the hospital wards are not deemed essential key workers? Why are employees who work within the school meals service not included as essential? Surely, they safeguard our children's future health by providing decent, balanced, and healthy school meals. What about those working within the care sector whose dedication is always overlooked and hardly ever recognised? Who would do the work if they were not there? Why are staff maintaining our parks not included in the definition of essential, don't they safeguard our children from unwelcome guests while at play and make sure the areas in which they play are free from needles, broken glass, etc? Doesn't this demonstrate community safety? Colleagues, the list goes on and on. That is why we call on the government to revise the scheme by widening the scope of definition of a key worker to include all frontline staff who work within the public services, which we, the public, fully recognise we cannot do without. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: George, thank you. Colleagues, first-time speaker at Congress. Well done, George.

## TENANTS MANAGEMENT MOTION 192

### 192. TENANTS MANAGEMENT ORGANISATION

TMO's are now being set up across the country. Regrettably Bristol is being 'shoe horned' into this Government initiative. Tenants are being misled by local government officers and outside organisations with a financial interest to opt out of the local council structure and set up their own structure being in charge of day to running of their housing, grounds maintenance and caretaking services. Yet again this is another example of the erosion of our public services and our members in these areas of work losing their status of local council workers and being managed by a community group and/or voluntary/private sector organisation.

This is privatisation of our social housing by stealth and needs to be made clear to tenants what they are actually voting on.

We therefore ask congress to support this motion.

BRISTOL PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH  
*South Western Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. E. BRODRICK (South Western): Congress, I would like to give you a short definition of what is mean by a tenant management organisation, or TMO for short. According to the government this scheme enables grass-root involvement in identifying and delivering social housing services. However, further research throws up that TMOs are for residents who live in social housing and who are considering taking control of housing and related services. It looks at how you can consider the choices for having more influence over housing and other community-based services in your neighbourhood. Information is available from the government to explain how to set up a tenant management organisation or negotiate local management agreements (LMAs). It provides information on the tenant empowerment programme and the right to manage route and the voluntary route, and the funding and support available to make it happen. That is a lot of jargon.

Of course, the GMB is not against local people influencing local services and working with the local council to prioritise services but when it comes to our members previously employed by the local authority now being employed by a tenant management committee then it begins to raise issues. The research report produced in 2002 for the office of the Deputy Prime Minister glossed over the direct staffing issue by saying some staff were concerned about their employment status whilst others saw it as an opportunity to bring more variety to their work. Variety, what does that actually mean? Does it mean no job description or just working to a nominal one which does not actually have any relevance to the job they are being required to do but relates more to local community politics? Of course, there are many good people on management committees, mostly in the voluntary sector. Is this what the government wants to do with our public services, split service provision between the private and voluntary sector to manage, provide, and diminish, public responsibility?

TMOs are now being set up across the country. In some areas tenants are being misled. They are being asked if they wish to receive more information about TMOs and their request is seen by the consultants employed to undertake their work – how much they take in cash from the councils – as definitely in favour of a TMO in their area. For example, in a city like Bristol where tenants voted against an LMO and outsourcing of housing stock, they are now being targeted and misled to adopt the TMO model. Many of our members consider that the tenants are being shoehorned into this government initiative. What about funding for these TMOs? Presumably, the Budget cake will remain the same but more slices to be taken from it. What does that actually mean? Generally, there are savings throughout the economies of scale but if each TMO is responsible for their area, including pay and conditions, how do they cope with sickness absence or staff on leave? They still have to pay for absent employees. When dealing with smaller scale work groups and budgets it is harder to manage even the most basic of requirements. Most caretakers either live on site or near to where they work so the council is already employing a local workforce. Through tenant participation forums residents are able to have a significant amount of influence and shape priorities of their service.

Our members believe tenants are being misled by local government officers and outside organisations with a financial interest to opt out of the local council structure and set up their own structure, being in charge of day-to-day running of their housing, grounds, maintenance, and caretaker services. After all, if the Budget is devolved to the TMO then there is no longer a problem for the local council officers to make the books balance. If there is additional funding available the consultants will support the TMO in spending it until the money runs out, that is, like some other government initiatives fronted by external experts.

Again, this is seen by many GMB members as another attack upon our housing caretaker services. This is another example of the erosion of our public services and our members in these areas of work losing their status of local council workers, and being managed by a community group and/or voluntary private sector organisations. This is privatisation of our social housing by stealth. Some councils have failed in outsourcing their housing stock and have turned their attention to community committees. It needs to be made clear to tenants what they are actually voting on. We are not against change but it has to be for the right reasons. Congress, please support this motion. (*Applause*)

*The motion was formally seconded.*

## **COUNCIL TAX MOTION 193**

### **193. COUNCIL TAX**

Congress calls on the GMB to campaign for a major review of Council Tax to remove inequalities in the banding system and other inequities in the current regime.

*(Carried)*

BRO. V. WEST (London): Congress, local taxation has been a minefield for decades. The old rating system proved difficult to reform for successive governments since the 1960s. The dreaded Poll Tax proved to be the beginning of the end for Margaret Thatcher and since John Major replaced it with the Council Tax we have again seen a system of local taxation that is unclear and rife with inequality. However, a system of funding local services via tax based on property is not in itself a bad thing and there was some merit in retaining the property-based tax rather than the liberal system of introducing a local income tax. However, after about 15 years of the Council Tax the system needs a major overhaul otherwise we will continue to see pensioners facing Council Tax hardship and people prepared to go to prison in a wave of publicity rather than pay a tax that they see themselves as unequal and causing them hardship. I am sure that a commitment to major reform of Council Tax would prove to be a popular manifesto commitment. I move. *(Applause)*

BRO. M. AKBAR (London): Madam President, Congress, let us call on GMB to campaign the government to shake up and put in equality in the Council Tax. This government has been in office for more than 10 years and inequality has been there a lot longer. The current system of Council Tax is a nightmare to understand by anyone. Congress, it is so confusing that your property could be in one band and the property behind your garden could be in another. Congress, I call on GMB to tell the government not to be scared to make a change to a system that was set and introduced by the John Major government. I can understand what it did to John Major's government, even the Tories realised that the Poll Tax had been unsustainable. However, the Council Tax was introduced in haste which led to inequality in the system which has got worse over the past 15 years. I believe that the time is now to give the people some money back in the way of putting equality in the Council Tax. Congress, I call on your support. Please support. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mo. Can I now call any speakers who wish to come in on the debate?

MR. L. WOODWARD (South Western): I am still a proud Remploy worker. Comrades, I am proud to be supporting Motion 189 but I really think there should be a section (c) to this. It is not only helping the construction industry but throughout the furniture industry, throughout the glass industry, and all the other industries that are allied to the construction industry. I make no apologies for this - it will help the disabled people working in places like Remploy and other supported employers in the country. It would help manufacturing. Comrades, our manufacturing industry in the UK is in dire straits. Please, support this motion and let's get our manufacturing back on the road. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

SIS. I. WALTERS (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I work for a TMO and I do not want you to throw the baby out with the bathwater. It is a small organisation. Most of the members on the board are Labour Party members and trade unionists, and they work damned hard for the community. Our members have better conditions than we had under leases to council now because we are a small organisation and we get things done quicker than when we worked for council. We have better bereavement and special leave policies, the workers do not have to wait five years to get extra five days holiday, they get a day a year until they have hit the five years. Please do not throw the baby out with the bathwater because there are some decent TMOs. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Anyone else? No? I call George Fraser on behalf of the CEC.

BRO. G. FRASER (CEC, Public Services): President, Congress, the CEC are supporting Motions 185, 191, 192, 193, and supporting Composite 19 and Motion 189 but with a qualification on each.

Firstly, colleagues, on Composite 19 there are many reasons for the current housing crisis depicted in this composite. Firstly, there is the perilous state of the construction industry in Britain today; secondly, the disastrous knock-on effect the declining building projects are having on the manufacturing sector in particular, and in light of the economy in general. Then of course there is the criminal lack of council housing and affordable housing throughout the country. But, colleagues, there are solutions and you do not need a Masters degree in mathematics or economics to know that public investment in projects to build decent housing would go a long way to solve these problems and contribute to the economic recovery. People deserve to have decent homes. They do not deserve to live in overcrowded and substandard accommodation or be hived off into bed and breakfast accommodation as they wait for years on the council waiting lists, that is, if they can even get on one in the first place.

If you ask Citizens' Advice Bureau clients they will tell you housing issues are their biggest concerns by far. If you ask MPs what fills their postbags the most, well, today it will probably be expenses but prior to that it was housing or the lack of it, but given the amount of second homes the MPs have it is not an issue that they care about. So, the call this composite brings for legal protection and investment to ensure the future housing needs are delivered by local authorities is a welcome expansion on existing GMB policy. The qualification on Composite 19 is that social housing should be financed directly through government investment and local authorities and not be dependent upon diverting money from other avenues of public spending.

Moving to Motion 189, the qualification is purely a technical point. Instead of the term "community housing" the CEC prefer to use the term "council housing" which clearly denotes housing run and managed by local authorities. Community housing could be registered social landlords, housing associations, or other private sector initiatives.

The CEC is asking the Northern Region and the North West & Irish Region to accept these qualifications and is asking Congress to support Composite 19 and Motion 189 with these qualifications. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, George. Does Midland & East Coast Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Does North West & Irish Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. In light of the regions agreeing, can I take the vote in bulk for Motion 185, Composite 19, Motions 189, 191, 192 and 193?

*Motion 185 was carried.*

*Composite 19 was carried.*

*Motion 189 was carried.*

*Motion 191 was carried.*

*Motion 192 was carried.*

*Motion 193 was carried.*

THE PRESIDENT: I have a couple of announcements before I move to the Manufacturing Section Report. One, I have had a note to ask could I clarify the lunch break times so that fringe meetings can tell their speakers. Could I say that we have been in touch with all the fringe meetings we have organised? It will be at, and they are aware of it, 12 o'clock to 1.15. Is that clear, Roy? Are you all right on that? Okay. Thank you.

I have also been asked to tell you from Dougie Henry that there is a raffle today for Zoe's Place. It is a night's stay for two – is that Walton Prison? (*Laughter*) Oh, no, it is the Hilton Hotel – dinner, bed and breakfast, between now and next June. If you want a good night cheap, buy some raffle tickets off Dougie and the team over in the North West.

Before I start the Manufacturing Section Report could I ask Congress to show their appreciation of our Corus stewards and convenors who are up in the balcony, and to show solidarity with them? Could I ask you to stand? (*Applause*) Welcome, colleagues.

## **MANUFACTURING SECTION REPORT (pages 59-71)**

### **MANUFACTURING SECTION REPORT**

#### **Manufacturing Section National Committee**

Martin Shaw	-	Birmingham & West Midlands
John Dolan	-	GMB Scotland
Ann McLaren	-	GMB Scotland
Brenda Fraser	-	London
Audrey Harry	-	Midland & East Coast
Paul Wheatley	-	Midland & East Coast
Mark Bartlett	-	Midland & East Coast
Ron Waugh	-	North West & Irish (Section President)
Edward Marnell	-	North West & Irish

John McDonnell - North West & Irish  
Andy McGivern - North West & Irish  
Mary Hutchinson - Northern  
Bernard Taylor - Northern  
Gerry Ferguson - Northern  
Sheila Bearcroft - South Western  
Don McGregor - South Western  
Brian Farr - South Western  
Brian Burton - Southern (Vice President)  
Michael Laws - Southern  
Tommy Hall - Yorkshire & North Derbyshire

### **Manufacturing Section National Officers**

Phil Davies - National Secretary  
Keith Hazlewood - National Secretary  
Allan Black - National Officer

### **Phil Davies, National Secretary**

#### **Introduction**

When the media reports that another manufacturing site has closed or is reducing its workforce they fail to report what this means in terms of the human cost and the real cost to the UK economy. How many people are thrown on the scrapheap of unemployment; how many marriage breakdowns; how many people turn to drink or drug abuse; how many homes are repossessed and how many young children suffer abuse because mum or dad may have lost their jobs. These are the questions that the media and politicians fail to address let alone answer.

There is despair within UK manufacturing that has never been seen before. The dignity of skilled workers producing high quality products is being replaced with low paid, low skilled jobs in a zero hours culture. Never before in the UK have we seen such a total disregard for the manufacturing sector as we have under Labour. A disregard that amounts to total betrayal of an industry that built the world's ships. Manufacturing in the UK has supplied the world with products that are at the cutting edge of technology. The workers within UK manufacturing have given so much to the development of the modern world: power stations, the car industry and products supplied to the world's health authority. UK manufacturers developed the motor car industry; lead in glass and ceramics production and build and construct major projects; our designers are sought after by the world. For over 100 years we led the world in textiles.

No other country including America has developed and produced the diversity of products that we produce in the UK. So why are we seeing thousands of skilled workers made redundant at JCB, Hansons, Solaglas and Pilkington. The answer and the reasons are very simple: the greed of the employers to increase profits at the expense of the workers and their families. Household names have moved offshore for one reason only: to exploit workers, to use low health and safety laws and bad labour laws to increase profits. There is a total disrespect for the workers.

The greed of the banks in the UK who are only too pleased to finance UK global companies to set up sweatshops in other parts of the world; the greed of local authorities to gain the lowest possible price for the purchase of goods. Billions of pounds of public procurement sent offshore for the reasons outlined instead of being placed by local authorities in manufacturing companies such as Remploy and the greed of a large

number of MPs in the House of Commons and the House of Lords. What other job legitimately allows you to have a second home and pays you to furnish it right down to the cup and saucer that these greedy MPs drink from. Labour was supposed to be the Party to stop sleaze not raise the benefits of MPs. The greed of the retail shops who raise the factory price by 300% to 600% crippling our manufacturers' ability to sell their products.

Neglect of the government who would rather bail out the banks to the tune of hundreds of billions of pounds than give £50m to save jobs at van manufacturer LDV. Neglect of this government to control prices of energy with our manufacturers paying anything from 40% to 100% more than its world competitors. Neglect by the government to make sure that any funding for training should come down to the sharp end and if we have to make it easy for employers to take on apprentices by financial inducement then so be it.

The current situation of the funding of sector skills councils does not seem to be delivering the goods.

The UK manufacturing industry can be proud of its record. We still lead the way with research and development. Manufacturing needs a hand up not a hand out. Millions of British people need and depend on jobs in manufacturing. UK plc now needs a revitalised manufacturing industry.

The Section Committee has been slow to take shape but after the election of the Section President and Vice President we hope to become a pro-active, campaigning Section representing our members at the highest level.

Finally I would like to thank Keith Hazlewood and Allan Black for their commitment in what is our most difficult time. The Section could not operate without our Section PAs Auriol Ware and Marilene Smith who not only deal with the day to day running of the Section but are always willing to start early and finish late when required to do so. My thanks go to them both.

### **Construction**

The construction industry continues to decline with major projects being held up because of the lack of funds. Thousands of construction workers who eighteen months ago were in demand are now being thrown on the scrapheap. The government's programme of building schools for the future has not really started and it is hoped that this project will help to revitalise the construction industry.

### **Olympics**

The project continues on time and the team running the construction site of the Olympics led by Howard Shipley can be proud of the fact that accidents are at an all time low due to the health and safety regime that has been introduced on the site. Our members who work on the Olympics are subject to health tests and there is an occupational health regime that is second to none.

The construction of the stadium is well on its way and on time and if work continues over the next two years as it has done over the last two years we should see facilities that the UK can be proud of.

### **Remploy Ltd**

At the time of writing this report it is now nearly 12 months since the dismissal of over 3,000 Remploy employees most of whom were disabled. Our members in GMB have reacted to the new challenges with great enthusiasm. The GMB members on the Trade Union Consortium have rebuilt our organisation. We have replaced sacked shop stewards and introduced five senior stewards who have 100% facility time. Training for the stewards is now taking place and we have set up working groups to review and strengthen the terms and conditions.

We have started recruitment in sections of Remploy that are now being developed: CCTV, Employment Services and the managers group are all being targeted and I am pleased to report that membership is now approaching 2,500. Our target by 2010 is 3,000 direct members employed within Remploy.

The company continues to change its failed senior management and directors. The Chief Executive has been replaced and so has the HR Director but we are still seeing more and more senior managers coming into the company who are all being paid high salaries and pensions provided and with the most expensive cars. The trend now is to employ these new senior managers and allow them to work from home. This is ineffective and does not produce high productivity. It is noticeable that most of the senior managers are white males.

Since the mass sackings in March 2008 we have seen a development that Houdini would have been proud of and that is the disappearance of senior managers into what is called the project zone. The PZ is for failed managers and consultants who charge very large fees. Once in the PZ you are given a large, not very environmentally friendly car and an unlimited expense allowance. You can travel the country telling disabled people how to produce. Some of the more important suggestions have been to tell factory managers in Remploy that they need to paint a wall or turn a light off when not in use. This is costing Remploy hundreds of thousands of pounds per year. The latest estimate is £3m per year and when you add this to the £900,000 spent last year on external consultants you can see why the company has already lost £10m in the first ten months since the closures.

The GMB is now in possession of certain documents and we now understand how the dispute over the factory closures was so difficult. It is clear that in late 2004 and during 2006 very careful plans were being laid by the DWP. Ministers were well aware of the closure proposals and in fact it was the DWP that was leading the closure plan. It is clear that a large amount of finance was used to put the plan together. It is not until now that we have clear evidence of a conspiracy to close factory sites. Nearly every month since November 2004 to the closures in March 2008 the Remploy Board of Directors discussed the plans in detail. Senior managers were tasked with delivering the closure plan to the MPs. Six of the main UK charity organisations were contacted and their support was canvassed. We now know that some of these charities who had signed the public letter of support with the Guardian newspaper had been promised free labour. Remploy workers whose factory sites closed but stayed with Remploy on their terms and conditions were promised to these charities with Remploy paying the full employment costs. In fact we now know this to be true with many of our members working in charity shops like Age Concern. Free of charge to the charity shop that has no responsibility whatsoever towards that disabled person. This union can never forgive those politicians who betrayed our disabled members. One MP did however stand up and admit he had been misled and indeed lied to. He had the courage to make this statement to the Minister and was deeply offended that Remploy had misled him over the closure of York Remploy. Hugh Bayley MP for York found out he was misled after the closure of York and has been active in trying to replace the York factory. Hugh is a decent and honest MP who I am sure will receive our support. The facts of the closure programme are: 29 factory sites closed; redundancy took place in 78 factory sites; 37% of the workforce dismissed; 1,736 hourly paid disabled dismissed; 232 hourly paid disabled dismissed; 240 disabled people taken out of factory sites and placed in unsuitable employment or left to sit at home on full pay. Another 400+ employees were made either compulsory redundant, retired early or took ill health retirement. A human tragedy, nearly 3,000 people forced out of employment many never to work again. So what has the government done for these people? The new Secretary of State, James Purnell has introduced welfare reform, a piece of disgraceful legislation to force single mothers, disabled people and those with social needs to work for benefits. Our Remploy members have not only lost their jobs but could be forced to work for their benefits.

One example brought to my attention by an Officer in the Midland & East Coast Region is of a member who worked for Remploy for over 30 years and who was persuaded to take redundancy in 2008. She has

problems remembering anything in detail although she does remember Remploy. She also suffers from epilepsy and her husband suffers mental illness. The closure of the factory has led to them losing their home and they now live with their sister in law who says that Remploy only gave limited help in the last three months of employment. She used to rely on Remploy for her daily meals in the canteen. Remploy let her leave the factory with no life skill and no support and looks towards the GMB to help. In our opinion Remploy still has a duty and responsibility towards her. There are members like this all over the UK who were proud to work for Remploy. Why has this government abandoned them? The GMB and its Officers never will.

The Board of Directors continue to mismanage the company and for the years 2007 to 2008 were paid bonuses in addition to high salaries of £40,000 to £58,000; the DWP's golden handshake for sacking 3,000 people.

The GMB continues to fight for our Remploy members. We are not prepared to abandon what is left of Remploy. At the time of writing this report the company has asked for talks on the closure of more factory sites reducing further the number of the disabled employees within Remploy factory sites. We will not stand for this and no doubt we will report further at Congress. We have to thank all our Regional Secretaries especially Paul McCarthy who have supported our disabled members not only with fine words but financially as well. The General Secretary and the CEC including Mary Turner have always been at the front end of our campaign and we thank them for being there during a very difficult year for our members.

### **British Furniture Industry**

The industry continues to be under pressure; short time and redundancies are the order of the day. The British Furniture Manufacturers (BFM) is trying its best as an employers' trade association to stay in the UK and have introduced a buy British furniture campaign. GMB members should look out for the BFM swing ticket in retail stores when buying new furniture.

We intend to work with the BFM and exchange membership details to enable both organisations to draw up a list of furniture manufacturers that are BFM members and have formal or informal agreements with the GMB. We see this as a very important development and a potential to both organisations to increase members and work together for the good of the workers in the industry.

The British Furniture Confederation (BFC) under the Chairmanship of Martin Jordon continues to lobby and campaign for the industry. Madeleine Moon MP continues to fight in Parliament for our members within the industry and within Remploy. Madeleine has continued to raise dozens of questions with Ministers regarding the government's purchasing of furniture which appears to run at around £250m per year. Again this is another use of public procurement which could provide many additional jobs within the industry.

Technology has now probably reached its peak within the industry and there are some employers who are realising that the investment in skilled people is sometimes much better than spending £2m on a new all singing all dancing machine that may be out of date in two years. Environmental issues continue to be high on the agenda for the industry with many manufacturers reducing waste by up to 50%. The whole furniture industry is worth over £6b per year. British furniture is of a high quality and made by highly skilled crafts people.

While average pay in the industry remains high with many skilled operatives earning £20,000 to £25,000 per year the NLA remains very low. The national rate of pay does not reflect the actual rate of pay that our members receive. Other conditions within the agreement remain low; sick pay has hardly moved within the last 10 years and a 39 hour week remains static as it has done for over 20 years. Holidays are 22 plus the statutory Bank Holidays. When it comes to conditions the employers remain in the 1950s while other

industries sprint ahead. Why should a young person come into the furniture industry if the total package is lower than other skilled industries? This year's pay and conditions (January 2009) negotiations are still in progress with the members having turned down an offer of 2%. We hope that the employers can start to address some of these minimum conditions if they do the industry may well be attractive to the young.

### **Glass Industry**

The industry continues to decline with the major players making redundancies or working short time. The effect of the slow down in the construction industry has forced some well known companies into receivership. The lack of help with energy is also taking its toll. Employers are seeing energy bills double and even treble. Greenberg Glass has gone into receivership with no consultation and our members have to rely on the insolvency fund to recover wages, holiday pay and redundancy pay. Our members are rightfully asking how UK workers can be subjected to treatment that is totally unacceptable throughout Europe. Some of our members did not receive pay for weeks before and turned up for work only to be told to go home. Where is the protection for our members? Workers who have paid tax and national insurance contributions for years were given no notice and have to depend on benefits that are so low that it has forced those who have no choice onto the breadline. Relationships with the Flat Glass Council continue to improve.

This year's pay negotiations were held against the current manufacturing recession but the union negotiators were able to secure an increase of 3% on all rates of pay, an increase in Death in Service to £22,000 and a new first aid payment of £15 per week payable from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009.

GMB members who sit on European Works Councils continue to work for the benefit of UK workers and are active members of these important bodies.

Two major glass manufacturers have disappointed and overreacted to the current difficult economic situation and industrial relations have taken a backward step.

### **Solaglas**

Solaglas has been hit by the recession and have responded in a very strange way to the company making losses. The 2009 pay negotiations have been held up because the French management has instructed their UK negotiators to offer a 2.5% pay increase only to those employees who work within a branch or factory that has broken even or made a profit. This would have the effect of putting worker against worker. We will be meeting the employer to discuss these proposals further. The GMB attitude is that any pay increase should be across the board.

### **Pilkington**

Again another company hit hard by the world recession has decided it must be the workers that have to suffer the consequences of the current economic climate. Redundancies are now taking place where job sharing could be implemented. The company has closed off the final salary pension scheme to new starters and in doing so has created a two tier workforce. Our members in the North West and Irish Region have reacted in a positive way by voting in favour of industrial action to stop this attack on the terms and conditions of the future employees of Pilkington. The Region, local Officer and shop stewards have shown real leadership in trying to provide decent pension facilities for all.

### **British Sawmilling Industry**

One of the oldest industries in the UK with a national agreement that dates back in one form or another for nearly 100 years is going through the worst recession in its history. The construction industry obviously affects how much timber we use. The home improvements industry also has an affect on the use of timber

not to mention the furniture industry. As all these industries are deep in the grip of recession the sawmilling industry is at a standstill. Sawmills and timber importers with order books are being stopped from trading because of the insurance companies bad debt policy. Again high energy costs are proving to be another reason for closures and receiverships. Unfortunately the Employers' Association has reacted in the way that most UK employers do by introducing a pay freeze. The 2009 pay and conditions negotiations resulted in a nil increase. Consideration is being given to withdraw from the agreement and negotiate plant by plant which will increase our membership and lead to a flurry of activity.

### **Co-Op Funeralcare**

From a workers point of view the Co-op is probably the worst company in the UK founded by the Rochdale pioneers to give working people a decent place to shop. Nearly every large town and city in the UK has a Co-operative. The Society used to boast that it could look after working people from the cradle to the grave. Travel shops, banks, biscuit factories, furniture factories and every sort of production of UK goods was once part of the Co-operative's portfolio. Its own adverts on the TV each night congratulates itself on caring about the environment, caring about African farmers rights and helping the less well off people in the world. You would think that a simple right to belonging to a UK trade union of your choice and have that trade union recognised would be enshrined in the principles and policy of the Co-op Funeralcare. Well the so called caring Funeralcare Division of the Co-op derecognised the GMB in March 2007. By doing this the company has broken ILO conventions and took away the rights of workers to belong to a recognised trade union. The reason the Co-op give is that they want to deal with fewer unions so why do they still recognise UCATT a union that only has around 30 members in Funeralcare and no other influence in the funeral industry. At the time of derecognition the GMB had around 500 members working in most parts of the UK but mainly in London and the South East. The real reason was that the GMB wanted to see proper pay and conditions for its members. The GMB was not prepared to see its members being bullied and intimidated. Managers within Funeralcare are well paid while those decent and hardworking employees who arrange the funerals and conduct the funerals are given the lowest of wages in an industry where Funeralcare makes massive profits. These profits are never shared equally with those workers at the sharp end and when mistakes are made because the workers are overworked and underpaid manning levels have dropped and more work has been put on the arrangers who not only have to deal with the bereaved but now have to chase up any bad debts with their own community this development must have repercussions within their own area of work. Finally the consumer in this case the family and those responsible for arranging funerals are vulnerable to exploitation and organisations that are independent are needed to monitor the activities of large funeral companies such as Funeralcare. The GMB will continue to support its members and will continue to fight against injustice within the industry.

### **Institute Of Organ Builders (IBO)**

The industry is fairly buoyant and some organ builders have at least two years work. The problems for the industry is keeping skilled workers and making sure that enough young apprentices come through the industry each year. This year's pay negotiations produced an increase of 4.6% on all rates of pay. In light of inflation for 2009 this is looking to be a very good deal. In addition to this we secured an increase in sick pay of 10%.

### **Textiles**

The industry is still buoyant but most productions have now gone offshore. The greed of some very profitable companies is very apparent when you look at Burberry and its closure of the Rotherham plant on the back of the closure in South Wales of another Burberry factory. The Employers seem to have no compassion for British workers and if there is no union present in plants where we are still producing garments in the UK then exploitation of workers takes place on a massive scale. You only have to look at the two factory sites in Manchester exposed by the BBC. Third world conditions and pay were present. Two textile factory sites that supplied household names in the retail industry were paying less than the UK

minimum wage; no health and safety and no holiday or sick pay. Why has no one been brought to account? There are registered directors of these companies. What is the Inland Revenue doing? What is the Health & Safety Executive doing? What is the local authority doing? Answer: nothing. For far too long women skilled workers have been exploited in this industry and it is time we did something to help.

We are pleased to report that as a result of Sheila Bearcroft's endeavours we have now set up the GMB Brick Pakistan Fund account to help our brothers and sisters in Pakistan build a future for themselves.

The BCIA pay negotiations took place against a grim economic background but nevertheless we were able to secure a 3% increase. Thanks must be given to our Lay Negotiating Team for all their hard work.

Finally we must register our appreciation to Sheila Bearcroft who is this year's President of the TUC. Well done Sheila we know you will have a brilliant year.

### **International**

We continue to be affiliated to:

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

During the last year we have played an active part when appropriate in all the internationals. We have only attended meetings and conferences when there have been clear benefits to our members. The European office has again given tremendous support to all the Officers and members during the last year. Kathleen Walker Shaw is working closely with Remploy on public procurement and is also helping the British Furniture Manufacturers (BFM) with projects that involve the protection of UK jobs.

### **Keith Hazlewood, National Secretary**

Since last year's report, we have experienced closures, job losses and pay cuts brought about by the current recession. We are faced with announcement after announcement in industry after industry with companies and unions working together to minimise the job losses and cut backs. We also have companies that are using the current recession as an excuse to make people redundant, cut backs, closures and attacking final salary pension schemes.

### **NAECI**

In 2007, we had a major review of the Engineering Construction Industry because clients were questioning the validity of the National Agreement and said that we needed to maintain a future for the Industry. An Agreement that was fit for purpose was required.

This was a very lengthy process in order to conclude an acceptable Agreement for the employers, the clients and the workforce throughout the industry. The Agreement as expected, had teething problems because of the changes made and after working with the previous Agreement for so long through this review which was part of the 2007 pay negotiations which resulted in a three year deal taking us into 2010.

In year one there was an increase of 4.4%, in year two an increase of 4.4% and in 2009 an increase of 5.5%. With the current recession and RPI at 1.3% (at the time of writing) it turns out to be not a bad deal.

The Industry like others is suffering from a shortage of skills and employing a substantial amount of non UK labour. This along with increasing and demanding order books can only be addressed by attracting fresh blood and apprentices to the Industry. We currently have across the industry non UK contractors working on various sites up and down the country undermining the negotiated terms and conditions under the National Agreement which we need to address if we are going to maintain the Engineering Construction Industry and the National Agreement. This is also a problem for the employers because these companies are coming in and undermining their positions by undercutting them when bidding for work. So it is an Industry problem that needs resolving by the Industry. We need to put together a strategy for survival of the Industry with the shop stewards and officers.

### **Thermal Insulation Industry**

In 2007 we negotiated a three year deal working out at 20.02% increase and five day's extra holiday over a three year period.

The negotiations demonstrated that there is future work for the Industry including the current new build and maintenance contracts in Engineering construction, the aircraft carrier and type 45 work for the Royal Navy and the 2012 Olympics to name but a few.

The problem in the Industry is much the same as in the Engineering Construction Industry in attracting apprentices which has resulted in companies increasingly having to use non UK labour which in some cases is causing competency issues. Companies from other EU countries are also refusing to give local labour the opportunity to work. This was raised with the Thermal Insulation Contractors Association at a national meeting which was attended by shop stewards, local officers and the employers for which an agreement reached helped address this problem.

The Thermal Insulation Industry has potential for future growth but we need to attract more young people.

### **Offshore Industry**

Last year, I reported on the long standing issue with regards to the interpretation of the Working Time Directive and holiday entitlements for people working in the Offshore Industry being resolved to the 2007 negotiations. I can now confirm that although the Agreement was negotiated with the Offshore Contractors Association and a resolve to the issue of the holiday entitlement offshore, we still have to date, some companies that are not complying with the Agreement by not paying the full holiday entitlement to its employees.

In 2008 we negotiated a one year deal of 4.3% on the basic rate and improvement to sickness benefits. We would not go beyond a one year deal giving the OCA members the opportunity to comply with the agreement reached. I can now confirm that we have submitted the 2009 pay claim and at the first meeting the employers offered us a 0% increase. Our first response was to go back to their members and review the position and put forward a realistic offer; in the meantime we should put the negotiations on hold until such time as all the OCA member companies comply with the 2007 arrangements regarding the Working Time Holiday entitlement and until the current recession buys us a bit of time when things begin to improve and when we start coming out of recession.

The Offshore Industry like many other industries is feeling the effect of the skill shortages and an aging workforce. To address the issue short term we have negotiated an agreement to use Phillipino labour on a top up basis and not instead of UK labour with a couple of companies. The agreement is that the Phillipinos are paid the industry rate and this agreement has worked well so far with no reports of it being abused.

We are constantly trying to increase the membership offshore which so far has been successful mainly at the heliports. We are in the process of arranging other meetings to progress with the 2009 pay negotiations further.

## **Engineering Industries**

As reported in past Congress reports, in general engineering, not a lot has changed; the same sad stories of redundancies, pay cuts and pay freezes to save jobs which this year has been accelerated by the current recession. There is a substantial impact in UK manufacturing. We need to work together with the UK government, employers and the DTI in an attempt to stabilize UK manufacturing and to formulate a survival strategy but until we come out of the recession, this looks almost impossible. We need to still keep working at it.

We are still having to compete on an uneven playing field when tendering for some orders and having to compete with countries like China, Japan and India. We still have the issue of it being easier and quicker to close UK establishments than in other parts of Europe with less impact.

As in the engineering and construction related industries, we are experiencing skills shortages which need addressing by investment in training, and the re-introduction of apprenticeships for the engineering related industries to survive. We also have the problem of the age profile with people leaving the Industry or retiring and not being replaced. There is an ever increasing use of companies employing non UK labour in some cases exploiting our European colleagues by paying under the rate for the job making them a cheaper alternative which we need to address to maintain our current terms and conditions and to make sure our European colleagues are not being exploited.

## **Shipbuilding**

The Shipbuilding Industry is one of mixed fortunes. Firstly, we have the demise of commercial shipbuilding in the UK with only one yard operating and that is on the verge of closure which is a sad day for commercial shipbuilding. On the other hand we in the UK defence shipbuilding industry have the biggest order book ever with the ongoing build of six type 45 destroyers, two super aircraft carriers, and beyond that a programme of ships called Mars all for the Royal Navy and further orders that are being placed. These orders will maintain and create jobs in the UK Shipbuilding Industry for the next decade and beyond. We have companies like BAE systems that is employing apprentices year on year to try and meet this demand which is not only good news for the Industry but also the apprentices and the local community.

The Industries' two major companies, Vosper Thornycroft from Portsmouth and BAE Systems has now joined together calling the company BVT Surface Fleet. It is now working under an alliance between the UK yards in conjunction with the Ministry of Defence under the UK Defence Industrial strategy. This will stabilise the Industry and eliminate the cut throat competition between the yards which has resulted in too many casualties in the past.

The aircraft carriers are being built in five blocks, the reason being because they are too big to be built in any one yard. These five blocks will then be assembled at the Rosyth yard in Scotland. Although the start of this order has been delayed they are still anticipating meeting a completion date of ship one by 2012 and ship two by 2015.

## **Steel**

Last year I reported that the Indian steelmaker Tata outbid a competitor, a Brazilian steelmaker CSM for the UK steel maker Corus. The fierce competition between the bidders causes concerns as to the future investment in the UK. Future bargaining and pension arrangements were also the topics of concerns.

After a meeting with Tata, no decisions had been made of intended changes to existing arrangements at the time of the meeting; we are watching the situation very closely.

Events have now overtaken us and with the current recession, Corus has recently announced the loss of three thousand and five hundred jobs in their steel industry of which two thousand and five hundred are in the UK plants up and down the country. We are in discussions with Corus in an attempt to try and mitigate the situation and will be opposing any compulsory job losses.

Corus are looking at every opportunity in which to make savings. i.e. contractors, sub contractors, bonus payments, shift patterns, closure of blast furnaces running at a capacity of 50% of their normal output, closure of various parts of the plants and of course general closures.

The National Steel Committee is in consultation with the company in an attempt to minimise the impact of these announcements. Pay negotiations last year was of a joint nature for the first time ever with Corus Strip Products and Corus Long Products who sat down together to carry out their pay negotiations. This resulted in a 4% pay increase for a one year deal.

## **Aerospace**

Since my last Congress report there has been very little change within the Aerospace Industry. We are constantly lobbying the UK government to try and save the UK industry by giving it a level playing field and we will continue the lobbying to save jobs across the related aerospace industries.

We have the sad story of some factories closing and work being sent to other locations of the UK and some work being sent outside the UK.

Companies like Airbus, Bombardier and BAE Systems all have to fight hard to maintain current work and equally as difficult in trying to get new work. Bombardier have secured the long awaited 'C' series which in the short term has brought with it difficulties. The long term for the site looks pretty good. The Aerospace Industry is a global Industry and all we have ever asked for is a level playing field when competing for orders which we are finding very difficult to achieve. We will continue to lobby and do whatever we can to secure a presence in the UK for aerospace related industries.

## **UK Car Manufacturing**

Since my last report about the car industry which is serviced by the Birmingham region, there have been major changes made. I reported the closures of MG Rover, Jaguar and Peugeot, all in the West Midlands region. This Industry along with many other industries has been severely hit by the recent recession. Over the last six months both the car manufacturing industry and the supply chain which employs thousands of British workers have been hit with devastating blows and announcements of closures, redundancies, attacks on the pension scheme, changes in working patterns, shift patterns; all in an attempt to try and maintain jobs within the UK car industry.

The manufacturers of cars and their components in this country are in an industry of long significance and remain vital for UK manufacturing. It's been a year of announcement after announcement of the way that this industry has been hit as much or if not more than any other industry in the UK.

### **International and Europeans**

It is imperative to keep a presence internationally and in Europe because in the main we deal with multi-national companies and more and more legislation is coming from Europe in industries like shipbreaking. It is important that we have international standards across the world when we see countries like India running ships up on the beach to strip them. We need to work together and formulate ILO working standards.

### **EMF**

The GMB Brussels Office keeps us updated on progress of issues raised at EMF and keeps GMB input on issues like EU green paper on shipbreaking and the Posted workers directive as to which we are looking to get changed to accommodate and protect UK working conditions.

Kathleen Walker Shaw and Sarah King work very hard on all EU issues on behalf of the GMB and use their contacts and influence to do so.

### **Allan Black, National Officer**

#### **Introduction**

Since the last Congress the manufacturing industries on my sheet have suffered to one extent or the other from the effects of the current recession. Particularly since the autumn quarter of last year, I have been deluged with HR1 forms telling me about proposed redundancies. This has been against a background of lay offs (sometimes for 21 week periods) projected pay freezes and a small amount of short time working. The depth of the crisis varies somewhat from industry to industry but the pattern is unrelenting and at the time of writing this report, shows no sign of reversing or even slowing down.

Whilst there is some evidence that some employers are using the recession to address long standing issues – emboldened by a demoralised and frightened workforce – there is little doubt that most of the doom and gloom is genuine and reflects plummeting demand for the goods made by GMB members in the beleaguered UK manufacturing sector.

#### **Building Materials**

Congress will not be surprised to hear that on my sheet the worst has been borne by those companies in the building materials industries. Given the virtual collapse of the house building market brought about by the greed of the financial institutions, the effects on the materials sector have been disastrous. Dozens if not hundreds of small and medium size companies have simply gone out of existence whilst the large multi-national operators have slashed UK capacity in an attempt to follow down demand and avoid cash being tied up in brick mountains, unsellable cement or whatever. The most worrying aspect of all of this, is of course, that in my experience of building materials when a plant or a part of a plant is "mothballed" (a term used because it has tax advantages) it never comes back on stream, even when the recession ends. The new gap that appears is filled by imports of these basic high bulk/low value goods, imported at a huge environmental cost. A further aspect of this is that as the EU tightens up, no doubt for all the right reasons, on environmental controls, we are seeing the early signs of the greedy multi-nationals looking to export entire plants (and the jobs that go with them) to regimes throughout the world where the EU remit does not run and pollution controls are negligible or non-existent.

Thus since the last Congress GMB members have lost their jobs at Accrington Brickworks (Heidelberg), Westbury Cement (Lafarge) and Todhills Brickworks (Wienerberger) and at others too numerous to identify

individually but known to the officers and activists in Congress confronted with the individual human tragedies that each closure implies.

Many of these plants have been operating in these locations for more than a century, location determined by deposits of the necessary minerals. Often they are in rural areas and represent the only manufacturing jobs for miles around. Our members' patiently acquired skills are now either unused or, if they are lucky deployed in national minimum wage jobs in different largely non union sectors.

### **Process Sector**

The Process Sector has in general, fared a little better than building materials although there are still ominous signs of things that may be to come.

The pharmaceutical sector enjoys a little protection from the economic streams because of protection from its patents and because buyers of its products (largely the taxpayer) are not making discretionary purchases. Nonetheless even in this sector job losses and production rationalisation are the order of the day with GMB members impacted in the North West and Northern regions in particular.

Our membership in the paper and package sector has been hit with reduction in hours of work, removal of shifts and so on as the industry is hit by the double whammy of recession induced demand reduction and concerns by all of us to reduce packaging in the food industry for instance.

In industrial gases which I recently assumed responsibility for at national level, we have had a small number of job losses reflecting depot rationalisation and reduced hours in a traditionally high overtime industry.

### **Food Manufacturing**

In this sector where the GMB is the second largest Union with membership in all of the major (and a host of the minor) companies, the picture is more mixed. Apparently the UK population in times of economic recession indulges in comfort eating to a greater extent than usual. Thus sales of snack foods, chocolate, crisps, nuts and biscuits are holding up well. On the other hand impacted by an orgy of national belt tightening high end volumes are being affected as we all trade down in a quest of value for money. This is being worsened as the supermarkets exercise their questionable market power to attack the margins of suppliers as in the tragic loss around Congress last year of the GMB members' jobs at Fenland Foods despite the best efforts of the Midland and East Coast region.

I now want to report briefly on some of the key pay and conditions agreements I am responsible for on behalf of GMB members and particularly on changes since last Congress.

### **Pay and Conditions**

In the light of my general comments on this sector, Congress will not be surprised to hear that those of our members who are fortunate to retain their jobs face a tough time in pay bargaining. Fortunately, in a few instances the 2009 pay rise has been protected as the second (usually RPI related) part of a long term deal. Thus we have had increases of 4% in Hanson Aggregates and around the same in Lafarge Cement. On the other hand and at the other extreme, a couple of companies where we do expect to negotiate in 2009 have made it clear that they will be seeking a pay freeze. Monier Roofing (formerly Redland) and Aggregate Industries (quarries) fall into this category. The rest of the sheet – Building Brick (settlement due May 09), Hanson Brick (settlement due 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009) and so on will lie somewhere in between but as already mentioned many employers are seeking to “mark our cards” by even more dire predictions as to future levels of demand for our members' products.

## **Pay and Conditions - Process Industries**

There are only a few nationally negotiated collective bargaining agreements left in the whole of this sector. In most cases bargaining is at plant or local level and is therefore, ably dealt with by our local officers and shop stewards. The major national level agreements are:

### **Astrazeneca**

We are, at the time of writing at the end of a long term pay and conditions settlement. Negotiations with the Company on a joint union basis are expected to commence in April/May this year and a verbal update on progress should be available at Congress.

### **Corrugated Paper and Board**

We achieved a reasonable settlement for our small but loyal membership in this industry for 2008/09 of 3.9% effective from 1<sup>st</sup> September. However, this is one of those industries where at the time of writing and in advance of formal negotiations opening the employers are carrying out a PR exercise to stress how difficult their trading position actually is.

### **Industrial Gases – Air Products**

After a difficult pay round in 2008, brought to an acceptable conclusion by colleagues from the North West region, we are due to embark on an ambitious overhaul of the pay and conditions package. It is my intention to take this on as part of a GMB recruitment initiative in this company.

### **BOC**

A pay deal has been put in place for our BOC membership which protected the real standard of living of existing employees with a 5% increase but created a two tier workforce with new starters being subjected to lower rates of pay.

Whilst our members did vote to accept this offer it leaves a rather bad taste in that apart from its moral flaws it stores up problems for the future.

## **Pay and Condition – Food Manufacturing**

In this sector, with one exception, local bargaining is the order of the day. The exception first.

### **United Biscuits**

A pay settlement was due from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009 and at the time of writing there is no offer on the table, the company having withdrawn an offer of 2% when the NNC failed to agree to recommend it to our members. Further meetings/consultations with members are planned and a verbal update will be made at Congress.

Other companies in the sector have tended to engage at national level only on specific issues. Thus for instance RHM (Premier) has been in dialogue about a new sick pay scheme with significant progress being made. Nestle continue to seek agreement on the impact of the EU Temporary Agency Workers Directive on their business and so on. All of these companies and indeed all the other major ones in food manufacturing reserve the right to bring issues to national level if they cannot be resolved at plant or factory level and this inevitably leads to a "fire fighting" role for the National Officer.

## **Recruitment and Retention**

Since last Congress I have had several discussions with our colleagues from the National Organising Team based at Edgware. I believe that there is room for recruitment by the GMB in several areas of my sheet. In spite of some concerns about the potential sell-off of building material plants to other parts of the world (see above) it will remain generally the case that these products will be made close to their market to avoid costly

transport. I believe that in the quarrying and concrete sectors it is not unrealistic for us to recruit a further 5,000 members and I have drawn up detailed proposals for further NOT consideration as to how this might be done. Similarly but involving larger numbers and by deploying different tactics, I see real scope for membership growth in food manufacturing. Again because of the nature of the product these plants will always be close to their markets. This exercise would be largely one of consolidation of membership where we already have recognition, reps and check off. There ought to be perhaps a further 10,000 membership growth potential here and again this is under discussion with the NOT.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, I would like to thank all GMB officer colleagues working on the above sheet at regional level. Their commitment, support and comradeship are second to none. Even more importantly I would like to thank the lay members' reps on my sheet who actually make the operation work and who put in endless effort on a voluntary basis for their fellow workers. Their dedication and commitment cannot be overstated. Finally, I record my appreciation of the help, support and humour I get from Marilene Smith at Worple Road, and from Charlie King – soon to enjoy a well deserved retirement – and of course, from my colleagues and friends Keith Hazlewood and Phil Davies.

*(Adopted)*

THE PRESIDENT: Could I now call Phil Davies to move his report, pages 59-71.

*The report was moved formally.*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Phil. Page 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, and 71. Bingo! Any questions? Agree to accept the report, colleagues? *(Agreed)* Thank you very much.

*Manufacturing Section Report (pages 59-71) was adopted.*

## **INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY – MANUFACTURING CORUS STEEL TEESSIDE EMERGENCY MOTION 3**

### **EMERGENCY MOTION 3**

### **CORUS STEEL TEESSIDE**

CONGRESS IS CALLED UPON TO SUPPORT THE CAMPAIGN TO SAVE  
STEEL MANUFACTURING ON TEESSIDE FOLLOWING AN  
ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE 8<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2009 TO CEASE THE PRODUCTION OF  
STEEL SLAB AT ITS SITES IN THE NORTH EAST.

THIS DECISION WAS ARRIVED AT FOLLOWING THE DISGRACEFUL RENEGING BY A CONSORTIUM OF INTERNATIONAL CLIENTS TO PURCHASE STEEL UNTIL 2014.

THIS WOULD HAVE A DEVASTATING EFFECT ON THE TEESSIDE COMMUNITIES WITH THE LOSS OF SOME 10,000 JOBS AND DELIVER ANOTHER BLOW TO THE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY.

**STOCKTON ENGINEERING BRANCH  
NORTHERN REGION**

*(Carried)*

BRO. P. SAWDON (Northern): Congress, the announcement last month that Corus were to stop production of the steel slab came as a devastating blow with the potential loss of 10,000 jobs. Although there was an existing agreement with the international steel consortium headed by the Italian company, Marcegaglia, with the Corus Teesside cast products they simply announced it was coming to an end. The agreement, although reached a number of years ago, had until 2014 to run. The termination of this agreement meant that Corus lost 80% of the order book overnight. The company issued the trade union with an HR1 soon after putting 2,600 direct employees at risk. There is an estimated 1,000 jobs at risk in other parts of the business. Then the other businesses affected in the area are some 240 local businesses at Redcar alone. This represents a massive blow to the North East manufacturing base and follows the loss of 1,000 in the offshore and construction section. At the time when we are crying out for apprenticeships there are about 70 engineering apprentices due to come out of training school and go onto the sites at Corus. The likelihood of these young people completing their apprenticeship at Corus is virtually nil. All the trade unions involved in working with the MP Vera Bird are trying to bring the consortium parties back to the negotiating table before it is too late.

The government need to understand that the closure or the mothballing of the site will have a devastating effect on the businesses and communities of Teesside. In the last few years the consortium has made a massive profit out of the productivity of the members of Corus on Teesside. Now, when the demand has taken a dip due to the recession, the consortium seems to be prepared to let Corus Teesside go to the wall. That is loyalty for you. Congress, please support the campaign to save Corus on Teesside. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

BRO. R. SPEAKMAN (Northern): Congress, while I am not a steelworker I will let you into my family background. My father worked at Corus for 51 years as a boilermaker and member of the GMB until he retired 16 years ago at 65. You do the maths. His father, my grandfather, also worked there. I have other connections. Ian, my brother-in-law, is a fitter working in the blast furnace. I urge you, brothers and sisters, to support

the motion as closure would devastate the whole area of Teesside and surrounding towns. I proudly but sadly second this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

## **REMPLOY COMPOSITE 8**

### **C8. COVERING MOTIONS**

96. REMPLOY (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region)

97. REMPLOY FACTORIES (North West & Irish Region)

169. ARTICLE 19 PUBLIC PROCUREMENT (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region)

### **REMPLOY**

Congress calls upon the Labour Government to support Remploy Factories that are still open, to be used to provide additional training facilities to assist able and disabled people back into employment. It's been 18 months since 28 factories were closed. Many of our members still have no job and this is people with disabilities.

The factories were closed by a Labour Government and a fat cat greedy employer, we can't ever forget what these people have done and let this Labour Government know we are not going away.

Where are the jobs in open employment that a Labour Government said there would be in open employment? The factories that are left remain as manufacturing units.

Congress calls on the CEC to do everything possible to pressure the Government to re-open as many units as possible such as Remploy, York where we need to continue to have a manufacturing unit, but it not only applies to York.

The award of public procurement contracts would allow this to happen, and this was the Labour Government's promise that they have failed to keep.

Congress calls on the CEC to lobby the European Parliament on Article 19 where it currently stands that a government department council or service may offer a reserved contract. This wording under European Directive needs changing to allow organisations with 50% of disabled people to bid for reserved contracts.

Very few management personnel have been removed and the top heavy senior management structure is crushing the company which will impact on our members.

This has been a very hard 3 years for all our members who have been treated with disrespect by the Government and the management.

Many of our members, activists and officials put up an excellent fight and campaign to keep Remploy open. We call on this Congress for a message of thanks, as some of these people will have departed Remploy and our organisation.

*(Carried)*

BRO. J. STRIBLEY (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): This Congress calls on the Labour Government to support the factories that still remain, to give proper help to the ex-employees to get back into employment, not the poor excuse of Remploy shops that in the main have not produced the jobs as promised. These 28 factories were closed by a Labour government. We need this Union to do everything it physically and financially can possibly do to support our members and reopen as many Remploy factories within the community as possible. What has happened to York is just deplorable, making our members work in charity shops sorting out dirty clothes. That is not a job; that is existing. The only problem we have is the management that are incapable of making it happen and a Labour government allowing this to happen, where the government give a commitment to Remploy and the factory network, even set aside the sales team where commitments have not been given, we have a sales team and senior management who expect to turn up to get a contract, just be given it and not put effort into achieving it. This is under Article 19 of the European Directive. We also call on Congress for the GMB to lobby the European Parliament to make changes to Article 19 where the words need changing from “may” to “will”, to give contracts to organisations with 50% of disabled people or more. The senior management structures are still in place and have not been modernised like our members’ jobs. This has been a long struggle for our members for many years now, and this continues. To many of our members, activists and officials, who are not with Remploy any more, I ask this Congress to send a message of support and a message of thanks, for those who were involved in Remploy and are still struggling. Only last week we were told at national level that the company is going to be using a solicitor for collective bargaining. Only a few weeks ago the Chief Executive, Mr. Matthews, said that he is going to change the terms and conditions. We have news for you, Mr. Matthews, we are keeping an eye on you, not because you are important but because you are an irritation. *(Applause)* All we want is justice for the Remploy workers being allowed to work. We do not want a sympathy vote. I move. Thank you. *(Applause)*

BRO. B. DAVIES (North West & Irish): I would just like to say thanks to the GMB. If it were not for the GMB there would be no Remploy here now; that is a fact. *(Applause)* We might have lost 28 factories but we are still here, we are still fighting, and we ain’t gonna go away! *(Applause)* I have been in Remploy for 30 years and I am proud of it. I am not ashamed but proud of being able to get up in the morning and go to work with my colleagues; to me that is a success, and for thousands of other people. Shame on this government that want to stop it. Even now, today, there are people who want to shut Remploy. Two weeks ago we heard they have started thinking about merging factories: over our dead bodies. It ain’t gonna happen. *(Applause)* Remember, united we stand, divided we fall. There is one thing I have always realised, that if it is together we fight, and we fight, and then after that we fight a bit more, we will win. Let’s put this to bed once and for all. Let’s make sure we have a Remploy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Can we tell Mr. Matthews that Remploy are “bootiful”? We are not turkeys voting for Christmas! Thank you.

**SCOTCH WHISKY – SAFEGUARDING OUR FUTURE  
MOTION 100**

**100. SCOTCH WHISKY – SAFEGUARDING OUR FUTURE**

Congress, The Scotch Whisky Industry depends on the “bottling” of Scotch Whisky in Scotland. Jobs will be decimated should this vital part of the Scotch Whisky process disappear.

What has been tradition for hundreds of years will be lost if companies use cheap labour worldwide to bottle Scotch for them.

We ask all concerned, ie, the Scottish Government, the UK Government and all Trade Unions to start safeguarding the Scotch Whisky Industry and prevent our future from being taken away from us.

“We need this protection”.

DUMBARTON 2 BRANCH  
*GMB Scotland*

*(Carried)*

SIS. M. MOOHAN (GMB Scotland): Congress, the Scotch whisky industry depends on the bottling of Scotch whisky in Scotland. Jobs will be decimated should this vital part of the Scotch whisky industry disappear. What has been traditional for hundreds of years will be lost to companies who want to use cheap labour worldwide to bottle Scotch whisky. We ask all concerned, the Scottish Parliament, the UK government, and all other trade unions concerned, to start safeguarding the Scotch whisky industry and to prevent our future being taken away from us. We need this protection. I move this motion. *(Applause)*

SIS. B. CARSON (GMB Scotland): Our industry depends on Scotch whisky being affordable to all who savour the taste and the value, and the passion that is put into making our national drink. It has been our national treasure and tradition for hundreds of years. The cost of tax per bottle has been on the rise over the decades. As we are in a recession this increase in the tax will certainly hurt not only the pockets of people who enjoy a wee dram but countless jobs will be lost. We ask all trade unions to approach both the Scottish Parliament and the government to reduce the tax on our favourite tippie, our heritage. I second. *(Applause)*

**MANUFACTURING  
MOTION 101**

**101. MANUFACTURING**

Congress calls upon the Government to ensure that all defence contracts and projects are manufactured and constructed within the UK including logistical supplies and support.

SUNDERLAND NO 9 ENG BRANCH  
*Northern Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. C. THOMPSON (Northern): Congress, all the aircraft carrier contracts have been delayed which has, I believe, meant that workers in this region have lost out on jobs. There are still many jobs in the pipeline to be had from these contracts. It has always been important that all of these aircraft carrier contracts are both built and assembled in the UK. We have as a trade union lobbied on this point for many years with many ministers. It is vital for the future of UK manufacturing that this continues to be the case. It is also vital for the skills to be retained in this region by securing employment on these contracts and hopefully offer apprenticeships to young people. But it is not only aircraft carriers that have to be built and assembled here; there are massive opportunities in the public sector procurement to help provide contracts to the UK manufacturing. This is both morally right and also makes good business sense as having goods made near the point they are needed makes economic sense. The military have massive requirements at the moment in all areas, clothing, armaments, food packaging, and military hardware. There is no reason why all of these things cannot be manufactured here in the UK. In other areas of the public sector, for example local government, stationery and office supplies, gardening equipment, building and maintaining equipment, food and drinks. As before, there is no reason why all these things cannot be manufactured here in the UK. Congress, I hope I have given you a couple of examples of how manufacturing in the UK can be supported by what would be a simple and straightforward decision taken by the government and the public sector. Congress, please support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

BRO. P. WILOWSKI (Northern): You notice the surname, I am half-Polish and proud of it. Some of the old Polish brigade, the ones we were pleased to see that flew your Spitfires, fought in North Africa, Italy, Montecassino, as my father did; they fought fascism and when it raises its ugly head I will fight it, and I am sure my son will follow me. *(Applause)* Sorry, President, I digress. I will get on with the business.

THE PRESIDENT: No problem.

BRO. P. WILOWSKI in seconding the motion said: For many years now we have talked about defence contracts being wholly fulfilled in the United Kingdom. It is important that we keep saying it so that the government never get the idea that they can build part of contracts abroad. It is important that all defence contracts and projects are manufactured and constructed within the United Kingdom, including logistical supplies and support. In the current economic climate when jobs are becoming scarcer it is even more important than ever that this be the case. With defence procurement I am sure there can be opportunities to create more employment. We must ask the government to look carefully at all areas where it may be possible to award contracts and thus create jobs. In times of economic downturn we look to the government and the public sector to invest and spend to help bring us out of the economic problems. The French government decided to re-equip its forces as a way of coming out of recession. We say “re-equip” now, we cannot say “re-arm”; it is not politically correct. Let the government look to their order book and

see what projects can be identified to bring forward to help secure work for our members around the country. Congress, please support this motion. I thank you. (*Applause*)

MR. L. WOODWARD (South Western): An immensely proud Remploy worker speaking on Motion 8. I am also proud to be supporting Emergency Motion 3 with the Corus workers. Comrades, we lost our Remploy factory in Hartlepool. The Remploy workers are not going to stand by and let us lose another major manufacturer on Teesside. Comrades, the Remploy workers will always support workers in struggle and we would be proud to support the Corus workers. (*Applause*) Let's make no mistake about it, things have got worse in Remploy, much worse, since the factory closures and they are set to get worse still. We have an unholy alliance now on the board of people that are, if you can believe it, more viciously anti-union, more viciously disdainful of disabled people and, worse still, they are even more inept at running manufacturing. The campaign that we started goes on. We have major problems. We have threats to the code, our terms and conditions, and as Brian (who pinched half my speech) said we have mergers on the horizon. Comrades, let's just say this, the Remploy workers will never surrender our factories. We will fight every inch of every yard of the way and as Brian said we will fight some more.

Let me finish by saying a few thanks to people. Remploy workers would like to thank the General Secretary, all the regional secretaries, and the CEC, for the support they have given us in our campaign. We have a major vote of thanks to our leader here, Phil Davies. Make no mistake about it, if it was not for Phil there would not have been a campaign. Last but not least I want to thank my Regional Secretary of the South Western Region for his support in the Remploy campaign. Alan has been doing sterling work with the Welsh Assembly and he was instrumental in getting the first framework agreement that gives Remploy work in furniture and in IT recycling.

Comrades, the fight goes on. We will never surrender our factories. We will fight to the death. As Che once said, "Hasta la victoria siempre!", until the last battle is won. We will stand together, we will fight together, and by Christ we will win together. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Les, I do not have to tell you, or the Remploy workers, that we will stand shoulder to shoulder, as we have done in the past and will do so in the future. Thank you. (*Applause*)

MR. L. WOODWARD: Thank you very much.

BRO. D. JOBSON (Midland & East Coast) in support of Composite 8 said: President, Congress, the government still want to reduce the number of people claiming Incapacity Benefit by getting those who can work into work, and yet the Labour government stood by and watched the closure of Remploy units across the country which would have been an ideal vehicle to assist in the desired employment drive. Our government can still do the right thing and help to reopen many of the sites which were closed and forced the people back on to benefits. Congress, I support. (*Applause*)

BRO. A. MILLS (North West & Irish): President, Congress, it is 12 months ago I last gave a speech here at Congress and it was on the fact that our factory in St. Helens closed with the loss of 250 disabled jobs. I just want to give you an update of what happened and what is happening to our Remploy employees. They closed the factories telling us there was going to be modernisation and they were going to place all disabled employees into fulltime mainstream employment. To date over 80% are still out of work, 80% who were in fulltime employment before, many of them now looking forward to a life of benefits and life on the dole. Why, because in some cases the company, this is the company that has employed them for many a year, are now deeming them to be unemployable outside supported employment. I am sorry, but you closed the employment down. Where do they go but on the dole? Some of them are so vulnerable they will not leave their front doors. They are festering indoors.

There is only one group of people that is actually standing up for them, and that is the GMB. Whenever there is a problem or they need anything, they cannot turn to anybody else but the GMB, and that is why we are here to support them. Some have found jobs and they found the jobs working with agencies where there are no terms and conditions, where there is no proper pay, where there is no pension scheme. This is modernisation? It is not my modernisation. We can say to Remploy and we can say to the government, it is their fault, they allowed it. I have a minister in my constituency and we can say to them, "No, we're not going to go away," and I will say this to our chairman as well, "I'm going to be a thorn in your side." *(Applause)*

MR. R. SLADE (London) in support of Motion 100 said: I was on holiday a little while back, a few weeks ago, at Dornoch in Scotland. We were due to go and visit a distillery called Glenfiddich, which I sampled out of a bottle and out of a glass, quite good. Anyway, they would not allow us in there because of the type of people we had on the coach; a lot of them were disabled, a lot of them were unable to get up and down stairs. This is a French-owned firm. They have cut the workforce by half and made no provision for visitors to go and see that place. When I read about bottling plants being placed abroad by companies like this, I get very, very annoyed. It is business we are losing in the construction industry again and I urge you to support that motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

BRO. J. HILLS (GMB Scotland): I have been with Remploy now for 40 years. I started in 1970. When I started in 1970 it was a good company, it was well run by our directors; it was well run in every way. Remploy then actually made a small profit because it was well run, etc. Over the last 14 years I have seen the demise of Remploy by this government. We were on the hit list two years ago. We had a long, hard fight and thankfully we managed to save Remploy Lanarkshire. We were told it was only for a short term. In the factory just now there are people who are really nervous about what is going to happen. If they do decide the factory is going to close, there will be another fight. I ask you all, please, to support this motion. I would also like to thank the GMB, Phil Davies, Mary Turner, etc., and Paul Kenny, for all the work they have done regarding Remploy. We do need Remploy. Be assured, the disabled in this country do

need Remploy. If they do not have Remploy, God help this country and the disabled. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone else wish to speak before I call Paul Wheatley? (*No response*) Paul.

BRO. P. WHEATLEY (CEC, Manufacturing): Congress, I am replying on behalf of the CEC on Motions 100 and 101 and Composite Motion 8 on Remploy.

The CEC is supporting Motion 100 on Scotch Whisky – Safeguarding Our Future. The whisky industry is important to the UK economy and nothing should be done to dilute the manufacture, processing and bottling of whisky in Scotland.

In relation to Motion 101 on Manufacturing, the CEC is supporting the motion with a qualification. The GMB has raised the issue of UK manufacturing in defence contracts on projects in the UK and our submission to the MoD and the Defence Industrial Strategy. The qualification is that not all defence contracts can be undertaken in the UK, as the UK does not manufacture certain types of arms. Additionally, some contracts, such as the RAF transporter planes, are joint ventures with other countries and the contract has to be shared across the participating nations.

On Composite Motion 8 – Remploy – again, the CEC is supporting with a qualification. GMB has been pursuing greater public procurement within all Government departments, and GMB MPs have asked questions in the House to establish which Government departments are placing orders with Remploy. The GMB has also surveyed ex-Remploy workers to see how many have found suitable work, and it is scandalously few, and this is under a Labour Government. The proposal to use the expertise from Remploy factories to provide training facilities to assist able and disabled workers into employment is a sensible proposal, which the GMB has also pursued in its submissions to the Government and in response to consultations on welfare reform and improving specialist disabled employment.

Motion 169 asks for reserved public contracts for organizations with a 50% disabled workforce. This is covered by European Directive 17, which applies to organizations where the majority of employees or people with disabilities, which is set at least 50%. The GMB will continue to campaign on behalf of Remploy and pursue our policy of encouraging public bodies to take up contracts and provide work for our Remploy members.

Please support Composite 8, Motion 101 and, with these qualifications, support Motion 100.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Will Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region accept the statement and qualification? (*Agreed*) Will Northern Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) In line with that, Congress, I ask you to vote on Emergency Motion 3,

Composite Motion 8, Motion 100 and Motion 101. All those in favour, please show? Is there anyone against? That is carried.

*Emergency Motion 3 was carried.*

*Composite Motion 8 was carried.*

*Motion 100 was carried.*

*Motion 101 was carried.*

## **EMPLOYMENT POLICY – RIGHTS AT WORK**

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, we now go on to Employment Policy, Rights at work. I will call Motion 52, Southern Region, to move.

### **EUROPEAN CASE LAW MOTION 52**

#### **52. EUROPEAN CASE LAW**

Congress urges the GMB leadership to lobby in the UK and in Europe to reverse the judgements in recent European Case Law giving a greater emphasis to the free movement of goods and labour and freedom to carry out cross border contracts, in preference to the rights of collective bargaining and the right to protect negotiated Terms and Conditions. The Trade Union movement has been placed in the invidious position of having to withdraw from potential dispute as the test between the two fundamental rights is vague and subjective and the potential for damage is too great in this uncertain environment. European Directive must enshrine the fundamental right to strike and protect collective agreements and negotiated Terms and Conditions.

DOVER FERRIES X23 BRANCH  
*Southern Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. P. GOODACRE (Southern): I move Motion 52 on European Case Law.

Congress wishes the GMB leadership to lobby in the UK and in the European Union in order to reverse the number of decisions made by the European Court of Justice. The cases considered by the ECJ are a result of the tensions created by the rights of trade unions to make collective arrangements and, where necessary, defend them with collective action, and with freedom of business to operate within and access the single European market. Where these interests have clashed, case law by the European Court of Justice is, at best, vague. For example, in relation to one piece of advice, trade unions must justify the proportionality of the collective action. What does that mean? The vague and subjective nature of this advice caused BALPA – the British Airline Pilots' Association – to abandon industrial action through fear of a legal challenge. Other judgments, such as Laval, Refurt and Luxemburg have demonstrated a propensity to favour the interests of business and the freedom of markets. Congress considers that internal market restrictions are not sufficient to offset the fundamental right of trade unions to defend workers' interests. It must be a fundamental right for trade unions to make collective arrangements and to defend them where necessary. Please support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Seconder? *(The Motion was formally seconded)*  
I now call Motion 53 and Northern Region to move.

**BRITISH JOBS  
MOTION 53**

**53. BRITISH JOBS**

This branch calls upon congress to support our leadership in their efforts to ensure that UK workers should be given equal opportunity to apply and be considered for employment on UK contracts based on UK located sites.

SUNDERLAND 9 ENG BRANCH  
*Northern Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. J. WINTER (Northern): I move Motion 53 on British Jobs. Congress, events earlier this year and, indeed, yesterday at the Lindsay Oil Refinery brought to our attention a problem which has been festering away for years. The very volatile situation that occurred was handled by the leadership of the GMB with exceptional skill. The problem occurred when British workers were not given the opportunity to apply for the jobs on a contract. That situation triggered a huge amount of protest both on site and then around the country. No one wants to stop people travelling to work. In fact, many of our members from the Northern Region travel far and wide around the UK and Europe. Indeed, I worked recently for some ten months at the Waterstone Refinery in Milford Haven, so I am well aware of the situation that has gone on.

Congress, what we want is to stop the ridiculous situation where a British company let a contract, which was then sub-let, which led to workers coming from mainland Europe, probably on lower rates of pay and then given accommodation as part of this contract. It may not have been illegal but, by God, it was wrong! What we need in this age of travelling labour is fairness and transparency.

The situation in this case is that more jobs were created which were offered to local labour. The long-term solution is to bring in legislation to make sure that all jobs are advertised in the area where they are to be fulfilled. Beyond that, employers are free to advertise as they wish. Congress, this would have stopped the situation that occurred at Lindsay and give the local workforce an opportunity to apply. Let us support our leadership in working to get this unfair and unacceptable situation put right. Please support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I call the seconder for the motion.

BRO. R. SPEAKMAN (Northern): I second Motion 53 on British Jobs. Congress, everything we do as trade unionists is to fight for equality and fairness. The situation we find ourselves in is one where contracts are made in the UK to be carried out in the UK, yet British workers are not allowed to apply! This is a disgraceful situation and we must

do everything we can to get it changed as soon as possible. The GMB has always led the way when it comes to equality issues. We have a proud history of setting the agenda in this area. The law needs to be changed to make it a necessity to advertise jobs in the local area where those jobs are to be carried out. It is clear at the moment that some unscrupulous employers are using gaps in the legislation to get around this basic fairness. They often let a contract and then they sub-let the contract and so on. Then what happens is that often labour is brought in from abroad, and often not at the rate for the job, and with often extortionate charges for food, lodgings etc. This is exploitation of labour coming from abroad and discrimination of labour from the UK. Neither of these are acceptable to us as trade unionists. Our leadership of the GMB has led the way in a sensible and rational way. Decisions on this issue have to be handled sensitively. We do not want any of the far right political agitators jumping on the bandwagon of what is a very serious issue.

Congress, this motion will make a real difference to people's lives if it is carried. Please support the motion.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I call Motion 57, Employment Protection. Southern Region.

## **EMPLOYMENT PROTECTION MOTION 57**

### **57. EMPLOYMENT PROTECTION**

Congress instructs the GMB leadership to mount a campaign within the European and UK labour movement to encourage governments to regulate the employment market and create far reaching protections for employees at work. In view of the failings of unfettered capitalism, creating the credit crisis and deep recession, as with the bail out to the banks and other industry to boost confidence and underpin the economy, so should workers enjoy the same support. Fear of unemployment is the greatest driving force in deepening the recession and possibly bringing depression, therefore governments must act to make redundancy an expensive option and the last possible choice.

DOVER FERRIES X23 BRANCH  
*Southern Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. P. GOODACRE (Southern): I move Motion 57, Employment Protection. Congress, we are immersed in the worst economic environment for decades. The architects of the current crisis, the bankers and the heads of financial institutions, the proponents of unfettered and unregulated markets, the enemies of State intervention, have been swift to secure state assistance in the form of re-capitalisation and state guarantees for debts. We have seen our own Government underwrite, at the taxpayers' expense, a scenario where profits remain private and where losses incurred by private sector greed, recklessness and incompetence have been socialized. The real victims of the crisis of capitalism are the working people of this country. As well as picking up the tab for the mistakes of business, we face greater job insecurity and an erosion of terms and conditions as a result of the economic downturn. Congress wishes the GMB to use all

means available to it and whatever influence it may have with the Labour Government to enact reforms to protect the employment rights of working people in several key areas.

Given the importance of the European Union in employment law, these efforts must also be mirrored in Europe. Job insecurity is the major fear of most British workers. Over a decade into a Labour Government it remains shamefully easy to make British workers redundant. An employer need only satisfy a set of instructions that fit comfortably onto a sheet of A4. Contrast this with the minefield that is the procedure to take strike action. Penalties for failing to satisfy redundancy laws are far from punitive or dissuasive. Employment law must be altered, forcing employers to satisfy a more rigorous set of conditions, with failure to do so attracting a proportionately heavy penalty. The final compensation for loss of one's job through redundancy remain pitiful. The minimum state statutory payments must be increased significantly. Redundancy law in this country must place us on a par with the best model in Europe, making redundancy truly a last resort. Lack of regulation does not deliver prosperity. Evidence suggests it makes the UK the prime location for businesses when it comes to destroying jobs. A couple of years ago car executives went on record as saying that the UK chose itself when we were closing down factories because it was so easy to do so. How absolutely criminal!

Reforms must also be enacted in other areas to protect employment, such as dismissal, contract law and TUPE. Congress calls upon these measures to be enacted with urgency. The current Government promised us fairness not favours. Experience has taught us not to expect favours and we don't expect them. However, we do expect the long promised fairness. It was right-wing, free market policies that got the country into this mess. The current Administration is in dire trouble, not because it sided with the labour Movement and prioritized the interests of working people, but it faces electoral humiliation because it has betrayed its roots in the labour Movement that built it. It has taken the side of business and those who regurgitate the fallacious mantra of free market and unfettered capitalism. Congress, please support this motion. I move.

SIS. E. SPENCE (Southern): I second Motion 57 – Employment protection. I am new to this so I will be short and sweet. I have seen, and I am sure that you have seen, unscrupulous employers using redundancy as a threat to push through measures that would not dreamt of in more stable times. The law makes it all too easy for them. Paul has put the motion very clear and I just ask you all to support it. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleagues. Colleagues, Motions 53 and 57 are being supported by the CEC but with statements. So I will now call upon Dave Clements to give the CEC Statement on those two motions.

BRO. D. CLEMENTS (CEC, Commercial Services): President and Congress, the CEC is supporting Motion 52 and supporting Motions 53 and 57 with the CEC Statement on the Economy and Manufacturing.

Turning, first, to Motion 53, the CEC stands firmly behind the principle that no worker should be discriminated against on the basis of their nationality and that UK workers

should be given equal opportunities and access to employment in the UK and elsewhere in Europe. The aim of the EU law of Posting of Workers was to stop exploitation of workers moving to another country on a contract, and equally to protect workers in the host country from under-cutting.

Recent European Court Judgments, namely, Laval, Rufert and Luxembourg, have undermined these protections and will threaten our collectively agreed terms and conditions if unchallenged. GMB is calling for the auditing of contract tenders prior to awards to ensure terms and conditions are not undercut for the proper implementation of the Posting of Workers' Directive in the UK and a stronger revised directive at EU level.

Turning to Motion 57, GMB has long warned of the danger of light touch or no regulation for the business financial markets and the employment market. But today there is no satisfaction in saying "We told you so", because it is our members who are suffering the effects of this casino capitalism. UK workers remain the easiest to hire and fire across Europe and now need solid protections and support through these difficult times. The Government must keep our workforce active, trained and skilled to see us through and beyond this economic crisis. GMB will campaign for the same support and investment in our jobs that the thankless financial sector was given all too freely.

Congress, the CEC is supporting Motion 52 and supporting Motions 53 and 57 with the CEC Statement on the Economy and Manufacturing. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I call for the vote on Motion 52. The CEC is supporting. All those in favour? Anybody against? That is carried.

In relation to Motion 53, does the Northern Region accept the statement? (*Agreed*) All those in favour? Anyone against? That is carried.

Does Southern Region accept the statement in relation to Motion 57? (*Agreed*) All those in favour? Anyone against? That is carried.

*Motion 52 was carried.*

*Motion 53 was carried.*

*Motion 57 was carried.*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Malcolm. I have a couple of announcements to make. One is to thank Birmingham Region for a lovely 'do' last night. Thank you very much. The other is to thank GMB Scotland for their party last night. We have a birthday announcement. He is a visitor and he is in this hall and has been throughout the Congress. Keith Mills, happy birthday today. That is from Dorothy as well, but you won't see much of her. (*Applause*) Just to let you know, I have caught my first culprit with his phone. He didn't see me sitting down *there*. Barbara, I've got the first tenner.

## CEC STATEMENT ON THE ECONOMY & MANUFACTURING



### GMB CONGRESS 2009

#### CEC Statement on Manufacturing and the Economy

The global financial crisis has triggered the deepest recession since the 1930s. World output is contracting for the first time in 60 years. The British economy slumped 1.9 per cent in the first quarter of 2009 and continues to deteriorate. Manufacturing is undergoing its severest decline since records began in 1968. Over 1 million jobs have been lost and another 900,000 are expected to go this year. Unemployment is already well above 2 million and heading for 3 million. The negligent and profiteering banks that caused the collapse are now dragging the rest of the economy down with them.

The Government and the wider labour movement must ensure that the lessons of this systemic failure are learned.

Three decades of deregulation, privatisation and liberalisation have seriously destabilised the world economy. GMB is among the few to have consistently warned of the dangers. We have argued that our manufacturing base is being foolishly neglected; that our public utilities have fallen into the hands of profiteers; that private-equity groups are asset-stripping British companies; that economic policies focussed exclusively on the City of London are untenable; that the unregulated financial markets have been out of control; that the corporate bonus culture is obscene; and that working people are paying the price for the unrestrained greed of the financial elite.

The rising debts of working people provided the banks with the raw material for the recent financial boom. Now that the boom has bust, GMB is calling for immediate aid for UK manufacturing and far-reaching economic reform.

The current recession originated in the irresponsible and sometimes downright fraudulent practices of the banks, which blew up a vast bubble in the financial sector. London and New York financiers led the way in developing new and temporarily lucrative ways of trading in consumer debt. They bundled together people's mortgages, credit-card debts and car loans into new financial packages known as 'collateralized debt obligations'. The packages promised large profits for investors because of the high rates of interest charged on consumer loans. The back-breaking 'sub-prime' loans made to poorer households had potentially the biggest profits of all. Some of these packages were sold on to gullible investors; others the banks retained. They enabled the banks to skimp on their capital reserves while expanding their balance sheets and market share.

Financial ‘innovation’ had the effect of hyper-charging the normal process of company mergers and acquisitions. Flush with funds, the banks backed the unprecedented, debt-ridden buyouts of major British companies by private-equity groups. GMB members suffered as a result: in the AA, the new management first derecognised the union and then dismissed 3,500 staff, changed the terms and conditions of remaining employees, and restructured the pension fund. In sum, our consumer loans have been pumping money into a perverse system which encourages job cuts, asset-stripping and profiteering.

The banks have been exploiting growing consumer debt. Debt has mushroomed partly because of lax lending, but more fundamentally because of stagnant mass incomes. Over-mighty corporations have exerted downward pressure on real wages in Britain and abroad, especially in non-unionised workforces. Multinationals have been gifted enormous power by labour-market reform, outsourcing, privatisation and anti-union legislation. To compensate for wage repression, working people increasingly resorted to debt-fuelled consumption.

It was an unsustainable system. Debt repayments could not be maintained without decent earnings growth. Mortgage defaults were bound to go up. When American ‘sub-prime’ loans began to turn sour, investors realised that the banks had been peddling faulty goods. Their bundled loans had no easily traceable source, nor reliable rating of credit worthiness. Investors could not possibly sort the good loans from the bad. They now fled even the supposedly safest packages. The bubble burst.

Of course, our bonus-chasing bankers could behave so carelessly because of a lack of oversight. The financial deregulation begun in the US in 1975 was brought to Britain by Thatcher in 1986. It was said that the banks could regulate themselves. It has proved a terrible mistake. Like other sectors of the economy in thrall to monopolies or cartels, the banks have acted as Adam Smith predicted: they have perpetrated ‘a conspiracy against the public’. They ought now to be held to account for their misdeeds, and the Government should take immediate action to recover the huge bonuses given to bankers as rewards for total failure.

### **The crisis in manufacturing**

After the bankers’ boom comes a bankers’ recession. Despite the public bailouts, for the past two years the banks have hoarded their cash and starved the real economy of the credit needed to finance its operations. Credit-worthy companies seeking standard leasehold arrangements and the funds to buy and install new plants—and thereby create new jobs—have been turned away by the banks. Where banks are actually lending money, they are doing so at higher interest rates despite unprecedented rate reductions by the Bank of England.

The financial sector has essentially abandoned British manufacturing, the culmination of the City’s long neglect of domestic industrial investment. As a result, the crisis that began

with the banks has steadily spread across the economy, decimating highly productive workforces.

An initial blow came in the construction sector, where a decline in property prices prompted firms to cut projects and jobs with devastating effects on suppliers. The Government has had to inject £2bn to make up for a shortfall of bank lending for its PFI school and hospital projects.

Lack of credit from the banks, the construction downturn, and the collapse of export markets, have had appalling repercussions for British industry. Manufacturing output is predicted to drop by 11 per cent in 2009. JCB, a usually successful industrial outfit, has announced 1,700 redundancies, blaming the banks for withdrawing the credit its customers need. Steelmaker Corus has cut 2,500 jobs and mothballed its plant at Llanwern. Royal Worcester Spode and Waterford Wedgwood have collapsed, threatening heavy job losses despite fresh investment.

The UK automobile sector, which employs 800,000 workers, has been particularly hard hit. Car and van sales fell 30 per cent over the past year. Vehicle manufacturers—among them Ford, Honda, Jaguar Land Rover, Nissan, Toyota and Vauxhall—have cut jobs and suspended production. Job losses in the supply chain are mounting, at GKN and other firms.

The Government has promised support, including £1.3 billion from the European Investment Bank and £1bn in Government loans, but the schemes are overly complex and companies are struggling to unlock funding. There are reports that the Treasury is stalling agreement on loan conditions. Van-maker LDV, refused a £25 million short-term loan to adapt its lines to green production, has been forced into receivership. LDV's 850 workers have been made redundant and many more will follow in supply companies.

Rising job losses in manufacturing, as well as other sectors, have contributed to a fall in consumer spending and a high-street rout. MFI, Rosebys and Woolworths are among the firms to have gone under. The difficulties in retail and services have had a further downward effect on manufacturing. Reduced demand for air travel has caused a delay in orders for aircraft, jeopardising jobs at Airbus, Boeing and Rolls Royce. Thousands more jobs are at risk in industrial towns across Britain.

Amid the dreadful wasting of British industry, there have been shocking instances of corporate opportunism. In February, BMW sacked 850 agency workers at its Mini plant in Cowley without notice, consultation or compensation, taking advantage of the Government's lamentable failure to give equal rights to agency workers.

Unscrupulous employers in construction, energy and other sectors have also exploited flaws in the European Posted Workers Directive, which covers situations where a worker is temporarily sent by an employer in one EU member state to work in another member state. The Directive has become unworkable following recent European Court of Justice decisions (the Laval, Viking, Rueffert and Luxembourg cases). These have created

loopholes for labour suppliers, emboldening them to use continental workers in order to undercut union agreements on terms and conditions, and to exclude local workers from jobs. This disgraceful practice has provoked disputes at the Lindsey oil refinery, the South Hook liquefied natural gas terminal in Milford Haven, and elsewhere. Contrary to some media reports, the disputes were motivated not by racism or narrow protectionism but a need for fairness, a level playing field, open access to jobs, and the safeguarding of union agreements.

### **Rescuing manufacturing**

Since the failure of Northern Rock, the Government has invested trillions of pounds in bailing out the banks and taking on their liabilities. It was right to act to stabilise the financial system, but it must now compel the banks to start lending again. The crisis in manufacturing needs the same level of attention that the Government has given to the financial sector. The Government should take direct control of the nationalised banks so that they can be properly managed, with financial support channelled to areas of greatest need. It must ensure that lending resumes to credit-starved industry.

It is imperative that we act to prevent further closures and redundancies in manufacturing and other sectors. Providing short-term finance to help bridge cash-flow gaps is essential for the protection of jobs during the worst of the downturn. The Government should invest in wage subsidies to prevent mass redundancies and the consequent loss of essential skills. Subsidies for short-time working have saved thousands of jobs in France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands. Some unions in these countries have secured agreement from companies to increase the amount paid during shutdowns to the full equivalent of net salaries. GMB supports the TUC and Federation of Small Businesses proposal for a short-time working fund directed at British companies where jobs are on the line. Such a scheme would help keep the UK competitive with its European counterparts, and it would mean that redundancy was no longer the first choice for cost-cutting firms.

Immediate action is required to stop repossessions. Many families are struggling to meet mortgage payments because of layoffs during the economic downturn. They deserve Government protection.

GMB has consistently urged the Government to recognise the importance of manufacturing to the British economy. The service sector cannot replace the loss of export earnings that has resulted from manufacturing decline. The riches of the financial sector have turned to dust overnight, whereas manufacturing delivers lasting benefits. Allowing manufacturing to 'wither on the vine' is doing immense damage to the whole UK economy.

After much pressure from trade unions and manufacturers, the Government set up a Ministerial Advisory Group on Manufacturing which includes GMB. A manufacturing strategy was published in September 2008, but the Advisory Group was in danger of not continuing until protests from trade unions and other members. So far, the Government

has only paid lip service to the needs of British manufacturing, when the sector urgently needs strong action.

We want a manufacturing strategy that invests in British industry to deliver a low-carbon economy. Our manufacturing strategy should link Government policy on procurement, energy, transport and climate change to the needs of UK manufacturing. Other European countries including France and Germany have a strategic approach to their manufacturing sectors, and we need the same level of commitment here.

GMB welcomes the Government's commitment to build up to five clusters of coal-fired plants fitted with facilities for carbon capture and storage. We also support the construction of a new generation of efficient nuclear-power stations upon existing nuclear sites, as well as investment in renewable power such as offshore wind farms.

We believe that a national investment bank should be introduced as the centrepiece of a reformed financial sector, in order to rebuild a strong and competitive manufacturing base. The bank would provide funding for research and development, and the construction of full-size plants. Without it, manufacturing will continue to be the poor relation in the British economy.

Public procurement can and must promote the Green agenda. The Government should be gearing up and re-equipping Remploy factories to meet the low-carbon challenge, instead of forcing 3,000 Remploy workers out of employment and closing 29 sites, just as the recession gathers pace.

These opportunities for British manufacturing will be lost if the Government leaves responsibility for industrial investment with an unregulated and indifferent market.

### **Safeguarding public services**

Climbing out of recession will also require strong public services. Government spending plans for this year and the next are protected, but the Chancellor has revised downwards his projection for 2011 onwards, fixing annual spending growth at 0.7 per cent. Frontline services should be safeguarded, with additional investment for schools and hospitals. But lower spending and a new efficiency drive targeting back-office staff means that the situation across the public sector is certainly going to be tight.

Of course, Labour deserves praise for investing heavily in education and health over recent years, compensating for Conservative neglect. Other services have been less fortunate. Chronic low pay, overwork and lack of resources have created an urgent crisis in social care which requires sustained Government attention. Social care is one of the public services denied anything approaching adequate funding by the many Tory-controlled local authorities.

Without doubt, the greatest danger for the public sector is a Conservative victory in the next general election. Under the guise of 'thrift', the Tories are preparing swingeing cuts

in public spending. They threaten a new ‘age of austerity’, re-enacting the disastrous policies of the 1930s which set economic recovery back a generation.

Only a strong public sector enables a society to absorb the impact of recession and sustain jobs, and at the same time help to stimulate the looked-for upturn. The demand for public services is expected to grow as the downturn worsens: for example, high unemployment particularly among younger people will increase the pressure on education and training places. This would be the worst possible time for public-sector retrenchment.

### **A new economic model**

A strong manufacturing base and strong public services can lay the foundation for a new economic model capable of generating real gains for working people. We need demand-led development, with well-paid workers able to stimulate demand for goods and services. Only such demand-led growth can end the cycle of job cuts and consumer debt.

It will require a more even distribution of income through progressive taxation and the abolition of tax havens.

It will require substantial increases to the basic state pension—currently a pitiful £95.25 per week. Pensioner households are the poorest in the UK with over two million pensioners below the poverty line. Raising the state pension would massively increase pensioner purchasing power, and could be funded by reforming the regressive tax relief applied to pension contributions.

It will require tough regulation of the energy sector, and price controls on energy companies. GMB will oppose future efforts at privatising public services, including marketisation in the NHS and the nonsensical sell-off of Royal Mail. The British people do not want the predation on public goods by narrow private interests to go on any longer.

It will require a major new homebuilding programme to tackle the chronic housing shortage, ease house-price inflation, and ramp up demand in the construction sector. We need to focus on social housing and investment in decent homes.

It will require effective labour-market regulation. There can be no justification for the fact that laying off workers is easier in Britain than in any comparable European economy. GMB will campaign for improved labour standards. The Posted Workers Directive needs urgent and thorough revision and extension to prohibit the exclusion of workers from jobs, contracts and subcontracted work on the basis of their nationality. The Temporary Agency Workers Directive should be revised to cover redundancy notice and pay, and introduced without delay. We have to guarantee equal access to work for all. Employers must no longer be permitted to play off one group of workers against another.

The Government should apply pressure on firms to stop shipping jobs abroad, and our free-trade agreements with developing countries ought to be revised to incorporate robust clauses on labour rights.

### **Holding culprits to account**

There is a real danger that in the run-up to the next general election, politicians in the major parties will have a vested interest in not admitting that their blind faith in free-market ideology contributed to the near-collapse of the economy. There is also a risk that vested interests in the financial and utilities sectors will seek to obscure their errors, so that their profiteering can continue. The bankers bailed out by taxpayers are already preparing to resume their speculative excesses.

If lessons are not learned, we may yet stumble into an even more disastrous crisis. For this reason GMB is calling on the Government to set up a Royal Commission into the systemic failure that lies behind the credit crunch.

This Commission would scrutinise the actions of bankers, regulators, policymakers and employers to identify the serious mistakes that were made. It would commission studies, summon witnesses under oath, and take evidence from a wide cross-section of practitioners, commentators, critics and whistleblowers. It would look at company abuse of the privileges of limited liability, and whether the derivatives markets should be allowed to continue. It would draw up proposals for a new global regulatory framework to replace the failed Financial Services Authority. It would consider the merits of a permanent ban on the practice of short selling shares to prevent the needless destabilisation of listed companies. It would look at ways to rein in the credit card providers charging extortionate interest rates. And it would proceed with a commitment from Westminster that its conclusions and recommendations would be progressed into legislative change.

We would recommend to such a Commission that the banks are public utilities and should be kept under the strict control of the state. The part-nationalisation of the financial sector has created the momentum for developing a public-utility banking system. Only this can return finance capital to its proper role of supporting rather than frustrating the real economy.

GMB believes that the present crisis is the ultimate legacy of that particularly destructive variety of capitalism known as Thatcherism, or neo-liberalism. Its encouragement of unrestrained corporate greed has skewed our economy in favour of the super-rich and super-irresponsible and left working people vulnerable and insecure. The system has been totally discredited by the financial collapse. We now need immediate help for British workers as they reel from a recession that the banks have brought down upon them. Government support for manufacturing is the essential first step towards a new economic model that puts working people first.

*(Adopted)*

THE PRESIDENT: I ask Tommy Brennan to open the debate by moving the CEC's Statement. Tom.

BRO. T. BRENNAN (Regional Secretary, Northern Region): President, Congress, I move the CEC Statement on Manufacturing and the Economy. Congress, this Statement outlines in the clearest of terms the causes and creators of this terrible economic crisis. Just as importantly, if not more importantly, it makes recommendations for our great country to get back on track. This crisis has led to thousands of redundancies in just one week, and dozens of major firms, including Caterpillar, Philips, Pfizer, Corus, GKN, Thames Water, Astra Zenica and Pilkington, to name a few, and thousands more are on layoff and short-time working. One million jobs have been lost since the start of this particular recession, and further losses are in the pipeline, at Corus, for example.

I, therefore, stand before you this morning both angry and frustrated. I am angry because it is our members, GMB members, who are feeling the brunt of this recession and paying for it with a loss of jobs, a reduction in living standards and, in the worst cases, the very roof above their heads. I am frustrated because it appears that we have learned absolutely nothing from previous recessions. The employers, in the main, have followed the same old beaten track when, at the first sight of storm clouds on the horizon, they batten down the hatches, make people redundant, attack workers' terms and conditions of employment, then call a halt to investment, new techniques and training, with health, safety and welfare placed on the back burner. It is as though it becomes fashionable to downsize, and they say, "Let's have a bit of that". I could have written the script.

When the upturn comes, and it will as sure as night follows day, and when the all clear sounds, those businesses which have been in suspended animation will emerge rubbing their eyes, still half asleep and ill-prepared to take advantage of the opportunities which have been knocking on the hatch doors while they were fast asleep. Then we will hear the same old cry: "There's work out there. Contracts are to be won but, wait a minute, we've a shortage of skilled people and our systems require upgrading." It is the same old story by the same old employers.

Congress, I put it to business and, indeed, to Government that now is the time during this recession to invest in the future. Now is the time to invest in new equipment, in new techniques, in new technologies and, most important of all, now is the time to invest in people. We must upskill now in preparation for the upturn. Industry needs to be fit and fine-tuned to respond to the starting pistol, to be first out of the blocks, and primed to accelerate from the other contestants in the competition to win new business and to create more jobs. In the meantime, short-time working should be a legal requirement and not an option, with the downtime used for training and up-skilling, subsidized by the taxpayer, with no loss of earnings. All the better is to subsidise people in work rather than pay them benefits to sit at home.

Of course there will be a cost, but no less than it costs to bail out the banks and irresponsible bankers who got us into this mess in the first place, but responsible, yes, for this 'winter of discontent', which will be followed by a summer of discontent with the

prospect of a further winter of discontent ahead. I can well remember the last so-called Winter of Discontent when members of local authorities were taking legitimate industrial action within the law and those leaders were labeled by a certain Tory leader as “Reds under the bed”. No doubt they would have had their phones taped and tailed by M15. Contrast that with the greedy irresponsible bankers who received massive and indecent gold parachutes wrapped in gold-plated pensions. And those other perpetrators of crimes against ordinary working people. Yes, I am talking about the private equity companies, praying on British companies, loading them with debt and selling off their assets. In the meantime, City bonuses are still soaring, while workers are being lectured on pay restraint. Wages are being depressed thereby causing consumer debt to rise even further, but, Congress, beware and be careful. Don’t fall for the crocodile tears of that scheming chameleon Cameron, who is deregulation crazy and didn’t do anything on their particular watch. He has been planning a massive assault on public services and our members’ jobs. I can assure you on behalf of CEC that we will fight every step of the way.

Congress, these are, indeed, difficult and worrying times for our members. We, therefore, need to get this Government, a Labour Government, our Government to act now before the economic situation deteriorates even further. This Government should take heed of this CEC Statement.

The Statement calls for immediate aid for manufacturing and far-reaching economic reform, not next week but now. I hope, Congress, that this is a message we can all endorse. Please support the Statement. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I ask Mary Hutchinson to formally second the Statement.

SIS. M. HUTCHINSON (CEC, Manufacturing): I formally second the Statement on Manufacturing and the Economy.

THE PRESIDENT: I now move on to the debate. I call Composite Motion 11, to be moved by the Northern Region. Then I will call Motions 130, 131 and Composite Motion 12. Then I will call Motion 134. Thank you.

**INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY – ECONOMY  
UK ECONOMY AND PUBLIC SCTOR FUNDING  
COMPOSITE MOTION 11**

**C11. COVERING MOTIONS**

128. UK ECONOMY (Northern Region)

129. PUBLIC SECTOR FUNDING (Northern Region)

**UK ECONOMY AND PUBLIC SECTOR FUNDING**

Congress recognizes that the UK economy is facing the worst recession since the Second World War, with the UK on course to be bottom of international growth league amongst the major advanced economies, according to the latest figures from The International Monetary Fund.

The IMF predicts that the World Economy will nearly stand still with only 0.5% growth, the UK economy in 2009/2010 will shrink by a staggering 2.8%, with dire implications for jobs, house prices and public finances.

Congress condemns the sheer greed and irresponsibility of the banks and financial institutions that are the sole reasons for the current economic meltdown.

Whilst we acknowledge the Government has a responsibility to intervene to assist in the overall economy, to bail out the banks with billions of pounds of tax payers' money is not the right way to intervene.

Congress calls for central Government to reconsider this strategy and invest some of this money earmarked for fat-cat bankers in local government. This, coupled with the 3 billion in extra savings from efficiencies will assist in improving services sustaining jobs and stimulating local economies.

Congress calls on the CEC to campaign to ensure that the UK Government fights the recession with every weapon at its disposal. Without Government intervention the consequences of the recession will be enormous for GMB members and our communities.

In particular, Congress calls for substantial and sustained investment in public works and public services to halt the spiral of decline; to ensure that economic growth is maintained and to provide the essential boost to ensure that the UK economy is lifted out of recession.

*(Carried)*

**BRO. G. MURRAY (Northern):** I move Composite Motion 11 on the UK Economy and Public Sector Funding.

Congress, I don't need to spell out to you the extremely difficult economic times that we are experiencing, so I won't. Being blessed with 20:20 hindsight, we can see that there are things that the Government could have done and perhaps should have done in areas such as stronger regulation of the banking sector, but that would still not have been enough to stave off the recession. The recession started with the sub-prime mortgage market in America where irresponsible lenders were giving mortgages to people when the payments were more than their monthly wages. You do not need to be a genius at maths to work out that this is a recipe for disaster. It simply doesn't add up. This practice then spread with cases in this country where you could borrow money with no requirement to prove income, and some of the crazy lending practices that companies like Northern Rock were engaged in, when they were lending 125% of the value of a property. The result of these stupid practices has led to the worldwide economic crisis that we have today. It is the worst in living memory.

Many thousands of people have been made homeless and jobless in America, which impacts massively on the UK. Many banks went bust, only to be nationalized by our Government to save our economy from total collapse. What a mess we have got ourselves into? What can the Government do to help us get out of it? One of the things

they could do is to invest in public services. The Government is doing the right thing by spending its way out of recession. The Government has to keep the money flowing in the economy by doing the following: putting more money into people's pockets, starting with me, I hope, by freeing up the monies from the banks to lend to businesses and by bringing forward capital projects in the public sector. All of these things stimulate economic growth.

Congress, our CEC must continue to campaign and lobby Government to spend our way out of the recession to keep as many people in work as possible, to ensure that the recession is as short as humanly possible. I move. Please support. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:** While the seconder is coming to the platform, I have a correction to make. Motion 134 has been withdrawn in favour of the CEC Statement. So, London, you will not be called.

**BRO. A. GIBSON (Northern):** Congress, I second Composite Motion 11 on UK Economy and Public Sector Funding. The amount of money the Government have had to invest in the banks to stop them going bust is nothing short of scandalous. The banks were badly managed with their irresponsible lending policies and overpaid bankers. The people at the top of the banking system have been overpaid for years with massive bonuses which, it could be argued, led to the irresponsible lending policies, whilst at the shopfloor end of the banking business staff were badly paid, overworked and with unrealistic targets so that their bosses could achieve their inflated bonuses.

One of the areas the Government needs to look at is the payments to failed bankers when they leave their posts in disgrace. The Fred Goodwin situation must not be repeated. The money being spent on Sir Fred and the like is not money well spent. It is money wasted. If that money was redirected into the public sector, it could be put to much better use. It could be used to improve services, to sustain jobs and stimulate local economies.

Congress, this is not rocket science but straightforward common sense. By investing in keeping people at work and at the same time improving the local infrastructure, the economy will soon ease out of the recession. Let's see some common sense. Please support this composite. *(Applause)*

## **GLOBAL RECONSTRUCTION MOTION 130**

### **130. GLOBAL RECONSTRUCTION**

Congress notes that as the Global Economy spirals into deep recession, it is now universally recognized that the global institutions that were meant to regulate the world economy were neither robust nor fit for purpose.

Congress further notes that as world leaders meet to construct the new world order, the new institutions that will regulate the world economy, it is ordinary working people, in many cases the

victims of the failed world order that will be paying for reconstruction through a burden of debt which will last generations.

Given the above Congress demands that the UK Government seeks to establish a new Social and Financial Global Regulatory Framework.

That will put an end "free market" global exploitation of workers and the environment.

That will put workers rights and protection of the environment before speculation and exploitation.

That will safeguard the interests of the many not just the few.

MIDDLESBROUGH 5 BRANCH  
*Northern Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. A. HARDY (Northern): I move Motion 130 on Global Reconstruction. Congress, it is now clear that we are in the deepest global recession ever known. Banks have gone bust, insurance companies have gone bust and millions of people's lives have been negatively affected through no fault of their own. They have been affected because the global institutions that were meant to regulate the world's economy have failed. They were neither robust nor fit for the purpose. We applaud our Government for taking the lead and setting the agenda for the way forward.

The agreements that were made at the recent G20 Conference in London were the right ones to reach. In agreeing the way forward on regulations to ensure that, just as the old regulations did not work, the new ones will, they must be both robust and fit for the purpose.

They also reached agreement on continued financial support for the Third World. It is vital that even in such difficult economic times we do not forget those who are the most vulnerable in the world. Let us hope that the Government use the opportunities that the recession create to make the economy work for its people, thereby putting the benefits of an economy when thriving back to its people, to our members. We must ensure that in future years when the economy is stable and growing that paying back the debt does not unfairly impact on working people. We must do what we can to ensure that investment in public services continues to maintain standards, to maintain jobs and to continue improvement on service delivery. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Alan. Secunder?

SIS. L. AVERILL (Northern): I second Motion 130 on Global Reconstruction. Congress, we find ourselves in an economic climate that none of us could ever have imagined. It is far worse than even the experts could have dreamt of. That is why none of us really know where we will be when we come out of it. It is in that context that this motion came into being. It is important, Congress, that the UK Government seeks to establish a new social, financial and global regulatory framework. What do we mean by that? We mean that when things are starting to pick up, when the economies of the world start to grow again, then the workers and the environment must be the first

considerations not the last. The free market which has led us into this position must come to an end. Never again must we hear from our politicians of all political persuasions, “Let the market decide”. The rights and protections of workers must be paramount as well as the protection of the environment. These must always come before speculation and exploitation. If a global, social and financial regulatory framework is introduced, it will safeguard the many, not just the few. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Lynn. I can Southern Region to move Motion 131.

## **CREDIT CRISIS AND CITY BONUSES MOTION 131**

### **131. CREDIT CRISIS AND CITY BONUSES**

This Congress recognizes that the Labour Government was right to nationalize Northern Rock and Bradford and Bingley banks and was also right to take a majority shares in other UK banks such as the Royal Bank of Scotland as a way of protecting savers and as many jobs as possible. However, this alone does not address the financial crisis that was caused through a culture of greed and dishonesty in the city of London. Financial institutions over the last 20 years have paid bonuses to senior managers way out of proportion to the work that they have produced for the banks and the UK economy. These high bonuses have even been paid after the banks have failed.

This Congress believes that the banks should now remain in government hands and a new regime of lending that benefits ordinary people and UK companies should be the order of the day. The government should set the maximum salaries of the directors. Bonuses should be of a suitable size that ordinary people can identify with them and be paid on merit and not automatically.

This Congress also believes that recipients of these bonuses should make a contribution to the rest of society. Therefore the Chancellor should introduce a tax rate of 50% on all bonuses above £50,000 and a tax rate of 80% on all bonuses above £150,000.

CROYDON C60 BRANCH  
*Southern Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. E. THEAKER (Southern): Congress, I move Motion 131 – Credit Crisis and City Bonuses. I support the Government for the way they have dealt with the credit crisis in the banking and finance sector but I believe that New Labour’s love of the free market was partly responsible for this crisis. Instead of introducing regulations and controls into the de-regulated free market created by Thatcher in the banking and finance sector, they stood by and turned a blind eye to all the wheeling, dealing, false accounting and City bonuses, but as we have now found out they were built on sand and washed away in the fast moving tide of failure after failure. It was right to nationalize Northern Rock to protect investors, savers, house owners and workers, but why did they take three months to do it. The delay allowed the directors who made those bad investments not only to get away with it scot-free, but also to collect their big bonuses. Six months later we allowed the same thing with the Royal Bank of Scotland, Britain’s biggest ever corporate failure, costing us, the taxpayer, billions and billions of pounds to rescue it. We allowed Sir Fred

Goodwin, better known as “Fred the Shred”, to collect his pay, bonus and on-going pension of £750,000 per year. That is an entire life-time’s pay for somebody on the minimum wage. What should we do about these gross unsustainable bonus payments? I always believed that bonus was paid on results. Failure at my workplace usually ends in dismissal. President Obama has said in public that the banks which have taken public money must not pay bonuses. Why haven’t we done the same? If we can’t stop these payments, then we should tax them to the hilt. In that way at least we achieve something to make the bankers pay. “Bankers” is not the title that I would give them. I would remove the “B” and replace it with another letter from the tail end of the alphabet. The bankers and certain politicians must be told that the train has left the station, has been derailed and is now obsolete. I am talking about the gravy train. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Eileen. Secunder?

SIS. C. FALCONER (Southern): I second Motion 131, Credit Crisis and City Bonuses. Colleagues, the payment of City bonuses is not confined to the financial sector. It is endemic across the whole of the country’s company boardrooms. It not only applies to banks and financial institutions but it applies to British Airways, Network Rail and, even yesterday, or should I say last week, it was announced that it also applies to Remploy. Yes, Remploy, that public service company that sacked more than 2,000 disabled workers and closed 28 factories last year. This is a classic case of £1.7 million worth of public money paid for failure. Yes, failure; not success! Now this bonus must be as obscene as those of the bankers who created the biggest corporate failures in history, and still asked “Where’s my bonus?” We have seen million pound handouts for what? Robbing the public and sacking ordinary workers! You only have to look at the two announcements last week by Lloyds Bank. Last week on Thursday they announced that they would give back the money, the millions of pounds which they have borrowed from the Government. However, less than 24 hours later – yes, it was 24 hours later – we heard them say, “Can we have it back, please?” They announced that they would be closing all the Cheltenham & Gloucester branches. That is another loss of what, 16,000 jobs? Yet again the workers will have to pay for the failure of the big bosses while the bosses get off scot-free. We can complain, rant and rave about the City bonuses, but it will take a long time to get rid of this culture. It does not matter that President Obama and Chancellor Angela Merkle are all against them. We have even seen that Mr. Brown has done nothing to change the culture. The only way to get rid of City bonuses is to tax them.

This motion calls for a moderate redistribution of bonuses back to the people of Britain. Tax rates should be 50 pence on bonuses over £50,000 and 80 pence, which is not that much, on bonuses over £150,000. Make the bankers pay! Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Let me make a comment on that point, Colleagues. The culture of bonuses is not just in the City but it is now creeping into the schools which have opted out of local authority control where heads and others have been getting bonuses, our money for our children. So watch this space.

THE PRESIDENT: I now call on Composite Motion 12 – Short Selling Shares.

**SHORT SELLING SHARES  
COMPOSITE MOTION 12**

**C12. COVERING MOTIONS**

132. SHORT SELLING (Birmingham & West Midlands Region)

133. SHARES (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region)

**SHORT SELLING SHARES**

Congress agrees that the practice of short selling shares on the stock market, which is the selling of a security which the seller does not own. In the expectation that the share price can be forced down and then bought back at a lower price then sold thereby making a profit, is immoral and dangerous to the health of the country.

Immense damage can be done to sound companies by this practice, it puts jobs at risk, contributes to firms closing and jobs being lost, leading to untold misery and hardship for the workers thrown out of work - all so profiteers can make money. Congress directs the Central Executive Council to campaign for the ban on short selling of shares and equities and hedge trading.

Congress therefore calls on the Government of the day to make such activity illegal, thereby protecting the interests of the majority against the greed of the few.

*(Carried)*

BRO. M. AMIN (Birmingham & West Midlands): I move Composite Motion 12 on Short Selling.

Congress, the purpose of this motion is to send out a signal to the powers that be that we, the working people of this country, have had enough of the spivs and shysters who have been manipulating the finances of the country to line their own pockets, regardless of the damage they do to the economy, the ruining of some companies and the loss of jobs that follow. There are those who will try to justify the practice by saying that it is a necessary evil. Well, it is not, and it should be stopped. A Labour Government should act like a Labour Government. They must stop cow-towing to the fly-boys of the City and put a stop to this practice. I urge you to support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Well done. I call Yorkshire & North Derbyshire.

BRO. T. POLLARD (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I second Composite Motion 12. Congress, if this country of ours is to make a sustained recovery then the activities of the short selling of shares and equities should be made illegal and this puts the welfare not only of the working man but the economy of this country at risk. I, therefore, call upon Congress to support this motion so that the Government can make such dealings illegal.

This, in turn, will aid the recovery of the recession and strengthen the future for our children and our children's children. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## **BANKING AND FINANCE INDUSTRY COMPOSITE MOTION 13**

### **C13. COVERING MOTIONS**

135. BANKING & FINANCE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region)

136. BANKING INDUSTRY (Birmingham & West Midlands Region)

### **BANKING AND FINANCE INDUSTRY**

Congress is called upon to lobby this Government to set up a national watchdog to strictly control the banking industry, so that they are run for the benefit of UK citizens and not some fat cat director/share holder who could not care less about the credit crunch. These fat cats should be sacked and not rewarded with huge bonuses.

Congress directs the Central Executive Council to campaign that those banks in which the Government has more than 50% stake should be brought under direct public control ensuring a democratic use of capital within the UK.

*(Carried)*

**BRO. D. SPARKS** (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I move Composite Motion 13 on the Banking and Finance Industry. As most of us in this room are aware, we have been suffering in these major recessions, which is global, but the cause of the recessions are clear: the unbridled and poorly regulated finance industry. Those are the main culprits. How to make a fast buck at the expense of ordinary men and women across the country? But out of every bad situation comes opportunities and we now have the opportunities to make sure that this disaster is never allowed to happen again. That is why we are calling for a national watchdog to be set up which will monitor and, more importantly, control the banking industry so that excesses of the recent past are never repeated. We have seen the major High Street banks on the brink of bankruptcy. The banks are bankrupt. We would never have believed it could happen had we not seen it for ourselves. What has happened to those who are in-charge of those banks, which have collapsed and have had to be bailed out. They have been rewarded with millions of pounds of bonuses and pensions. If any of us or our members fail to the extent that we were responsible for the collapse, we would pay for it with our jobs. Why should the fat-cat bankers be any different. They should be sacked without any payoffs.

Colleagues, the Government now have the opportunity to take those banks where we have a 50% stakes under direct control. This should assist the industries which are currently threatened due to the reduced cashflow because of the credit crunch. Our publicly controlled banks would then be able to provide loans to the industry to stimulate the economy. I move. *(Applause)*

SIS. A. SMITH (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I second Composite Motion 13. President and Congress, after listening to the debates during the past two days about heat or eat, children on the poverty line and Remploi factories shutting, this Government has used our money to bail out banks run by greedy fat-cats. We have allowed these fat-cats to get away with failure, and not only that have they been rewarded for it.

We call upon the Union to campaign to the Government to bring these banks that we own under direct public control. Thank you.

## **HOUSE REPOSSESSIONS AND MORTGAGE PROTECTION COMPOSITE MOTION 14**

### **C14. COVERING MOTIONS**

137. MORTGAGE PROTECTION (London Region)

138. HOUSE REPOSSESSIONS (North West & Irish Region)

## **HOUSE REPOSSESSIONS AND MORTGAGE PROTECTION**

More and more workers are losing their jobs and having their homes repossessed because of the economic crisis and weak financial regulations.

Congress calls on the Labour Party to end repossessions of houses that have mortgages with banks that are owned or partly owned by the Government and to act urgently to:

- (i) Legislate that all mortgage lenders must include unemployment and sickness protection insurance in the mortgage terms
- (ii) Set up a Regulatory Authority to protect the borrower from excessive insurance premiums and to arbitrate in disputes between lender and borrower

*(Carried)*

SIS. P. WALLIS (London): President and Congress, this composite motion is moved by the London Region and it is calling for mortgage protection. Everyone has been going on about council housing and the lack of it. We know about families which are forced to buy. I will not go into any detail. Because of the global crisis that weak regulations within the banking industry has placed the country in, people are now losing their jobs and having their homes repossessed.

This 2009 Congress calls upon the Government to act urgently and legislate that all mortgage lenders must include in their mortgage terms unemployment and sickness protection insurance. We ask that a regulatory authority be set up to protect the borrow from excessive insurance premiums and to arbitrate in disputes between lender and borrower. I move.

BRO. J. LACY (North West & Irish): I second Composite Motion 14. We have already seen the misery being caused by the economic recession, and that misery is far from over. Lessons have to be learned. There is scant protection for workers who are made redundant. Life is difficult enough without this sorrow of losing your home.

The Government must act to ensure that legislation is put into place which stops any financial institution that gives mortgages from repossessing properties and also set-up regulatory authorities which will ensure that borrowers are protected from being exploited by the use of excessive insurance premiums. Please support. *(Applause)*

## **FINANCIAL INDUSTRY MOTION 139**

### **139. FINANCIAL INDUSTRY**

The financial industry always claims to be responsible lenders, but the action of the credit card companies are at odds with this mantra. When credit card companies find out that a customer is getting into financial difficulties, they immediately increase the interest rate on an individual's credit card (for example from 19.9% on a debt of £4000 to 36.6% with two weeks notice, customer at MBNA). This is not only ethically wrong, but again proves the greed of the financial sector. Therefore, we call upon the government to immediately legislate to force credit card companies to end the practice of increasing interest rates on balances created at a previously agreed rate in order to help those financially stretched and in difficulty from being exploited further.

GMB HOLBORN BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. M. SAYWELL (London): Congress, I move Motion 139 – Financial Industry. It does not take too much imagination to understand the difficulty in managing budgets in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Britain. Yet again the rich are getting richer and the poor are becoming used to choosing between food or heating their homes. They call it “heat or eat”. What a phrase for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Britain! Against this background, overstretched families are failing to repay debts which many were encouraged during to take out during the boom years, constantly targeted by bankers and risk-takers to borrow more and more on credit cards, unsecured and at low interest rates. However, life is testimony to the fact that nothing stays the same for ever, but the banks and credit card companies seem to be immune and are still increasing their profits through the misery of ordinary working people. Though companies like Citibank, Capital One, MBNA and Barclaycard, to name but a few, claim to be responsible lenders, I have to question how such a mantra can be accepted when the moment that the customer seems like a credit risk they increase the APR interest rate by mammoth proportions on a balance amassed at a previously agreed interest rate, instead of freezing the balance and interest.

Take the case of a friend of mine. He has an MBNA card and was paying 19.9% on a balance of £4,800, working but finding it tough financially to make ends meet. His balance was stable and he was making slightly over the minimum repayments and not

using the card beyond one or two food bills over four months. He then started to get into difficulties and had a loan which defaulted. Trying hard to repay everything, he had just sorted himself out when a letter from MBNA stating that within 14 days his interest rate would increase to 36% on his existing balance, thereby increasing his interest payments to a whopping £139 per month. This was like a kick in the teeth. When he complained he was told that due to a change in his circumstances, the bank, MBNA, were entitled to do this and would not discuss it any further. Again, this is an example of why banks are so in contempt for ethics and thinking purely of their own greed. This is not the only case.

Capital One credit card customers have been hit with an interest rate hike, despite recent cuts in the Bank of England base rate. Around 4 million credit card customers of Capital One face an interest rate increase of much as 7%, leaving customers on the highest rates paying 26% on their balances.

Debt counselling services are concerned that many borrowers are paying too much interest on their borrowings in the light of recent interest rate cuts, and that the Government are not doing enough to regulate the credit card companies. Recent research by AXA states that over 3.7 million people are struggling to pay credit card bills and that the situation will only get worse. Yet it is the people who are not in difficulty who get their rates cut. This seems to me to be illogical. In February of this year, Barclaycard announced that its low risk customers will pay less interest, but for everyone else a temporary freeze until June will be applied when they will be hit with more interest rate increases. I don't know about you, but if someone is getting into difficulties, surely it is better to help them out rather than pushing them further into debt.

This motion calls upon the Government to make a real difference to real people's lives by helping to protect us all from the illogical and greedy policies of credit card companies. These companies are behaving like loan sharks. People like my friend have normal lives just like you and me, and then one day things change. It could happen to anyone at any time. I urge delegates to support this motion. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder? *(The motion was formally seconded)*  
I call Motion 140.

## **TAX HAVENS MOTION 140**

### **140. TAX HAVENS**

Congress believes that Tax Havens are a clear and present danger to democracy. The GMB should campaign for their abolition on the international front.

NORFOLK PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. C. KERR (London): I move Motion 140 – Tax Havens. Congress, tax is a foundation of good government and a key to the wealth and poverty of nations. Tax

havens which offer secrecy, low or zero taxation or a combination of all three are allowing multi-national companies and wealthy individuals to benefit from the on-shore benefits of tax like good infrastructure, education and the rule of law, while using the offshore world to escape their responsibilities to pay for it. Congress, the rest of us shoulder the burden. It is estimated that tax haven cost the UK economy £10 billion per year and the world economy £200 billion. This corrupted international infrastructure allowing elitists to escape tax and regulations is also used by criminals and terrorists. As a result tax havens are heightening equality and poverty, corroding democracy, distorting markets, undermining regulation and curbing economic growth.

Developing countries suffer disproportionately from the existence of tax havens which prevent them receiving the much needed tax revenue which they should derive from within your borders. The ending of tax havens is necessary, not only for reasons of justice but also to support good governance and the robust management of finances in poor countries.

Congress, we believe that the consensus reached at the G20 represents an important milestone in a way to reforming and fully implementing international taxation standards. The Labour Government deserves credit for ensuring that this issue was given appropriate priority at the Summit, but the momentum now needs to be maintained. The Government has an opportunity to make amends for its failure to address the issue by taking urgent steps now to ensure that British overseas territories cease to be tax havens. We do not believe that the Prime Minister writing to the territories concerned is sufficient. More direct action must be taken.

Congress therefore instructs the GMB to lobby the Government for the abolition of tax havens, not only British territories but on an international front. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Colin. Secunder?

SIS. V. THOMAS (London): I second Motion 140 – Tax Havens. Madam President and Congress, banking offshore is only for criminals and those seeking to escape fair taxation. About £8.2 trillion of private wealth current sits in havens undeclared by its owners in their country of residence. That represents £180 billion in lost tax, which is more than double the world's global aid budget. Tax avoidance costs the UK Treasury £25 billion a year. In a debate in the House of Lords on tax evasion it was said that tax havens are sunny places for shady people. No one sends their money to Monaco or the Cayman Islands because they are centres of excellence for fund management. You use a tax haven because you have something to hide, be it from the taxman, the authorities where you live or even your family. Low tax and low disclosure is the polite way in which the apologists, the tax havens, put it, but if you are Mobutu or Mugabe, Imelda Marcos or a Colombian with a big brief case, a brass plate company in an anonymous office block means that your millions leave no trace and tell no tails.

It has taken the Freedom of Information Act to impose transparency on MPs, but this is a microcosm compared to what bankers have been up to. MPs undermined the system;

bankers very nearly brought the whole edifice down. Tax havens undermine democracy. They attack the fabric of our society. Tax havens are a clear and present danger. They must be eradicated. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. I call Motion 141. Colleagues, I will be closing debate after this motion, so I will take the composite this afternoon, and I will give you the reasons in a moment.

## **A COUNCIL HOUSE BUILDING PROGRAMME MOTION 141**

### **141. A COUNCIL HOUSE BUILDING PROGRAMME**

This Congress notes that the economic system we live under, based on greed and deception, has once again failed and as a result hundreds of thousands of building workers have been, are being and will be, thrown out of work. Many millions in other industries will face the same fate. Families are facing more and more repossessions and many more pensioners are facing death as a result of food and fuel costs being far too expensive for the State Pension to cope with.

Greedy bankers, landlords and financiers have made a bad situation worse by extending credit, putting off the recession but guaranteeing that it would be longer and deeper when it arrived.

Congress therefore calls on the Labour Government to:

- i) Support a massive Council house building programme, to put builders back to work and provide alternative, affordable accommodation.
- ii) Ensure that their promise to re-link the State Pension to earnings in 2012 is adhered to as a minimum and that if possible this date is brought forward.
- iii) Starts training publicly employed and directly accountable regulators and enforcers to ensure that in future, if Government money is handed over to the Banks and other financial institutions effectively nationalising them, they will be run for the overwhelming majority of people in this Country.

Congress expects every elected official, at every level in the Union, to pursue such an approach at all levels in the Labour Party and encourage the paid staff to do likewise.

SOLO BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. S. McKENZIE (London): Congress, I am speaking to Motion 141 on A Council House Building Programme to fight our way out of the recession.

Comrades, it is really hard to believe that in this day and age, in one of the most advanced industrialized countries in the world, we still have a situation where hundreds of thousands and maybe millions don't have their own roof over their heads, they are homeless or in shared accommodation or still living with their parents into 30s and 40s, because they simply cannot afford to get on the housing ladder, and there are no affordable council houses left and housing waiting lists are absolutely and utterly

abominable. It is only in an economic system like ours that you can have a situation like this where people are suffering without a roof over their heads while at the same time tens of thousands of building workers are being thrown on the dole each and every month. It is utter insanity.

Our New Labour Government put billions, tens of billions, into the banking system. They had to do it, and I acknowledge that. The gangsters, the spivs and the button counters in the City of London and Canary Wharf had messed the system up with their obnoxious greed. Mary referred to them as “reptiles” the other day. Mary, I think you owe an apology to reptiles. They are nowhere as bad as these people. *(Applause)*

Comrades, if we look at what has happened here, back in the 1980s Thatcher and her Tory Government started the process of selling council houses. You had a situation where you knew something was wrong because people were getting their little pot of gold for selling their council house but the councils couldn't use the money that they got from it to build new council houses. That just doesn't add up, does it? They were deliberately forcing people into the housing market because they knew that once you had a mortgage over your head and you had to pay that every month or you and your family were on the streets, they had you in a state of fear, they had you under control and that was part of the plan of the Tories and the ruling class to break the backs of the trade unions and enslave the working class population of this country, which is what they have effectively done. You just look at the massive profits which the banks have made when people are suffering the most horrendous wages and conditions at work. It is almost unbelievable. But that process of selling council houses has led to this situation, and it should have been corrected long before now. It is an obscenity that three Labour Governments have failed to address this issue.

We have got a marvellous chance to do so now, and Gordon Brown is coming to speak to us this afternoon. I read in the paper the other day that they are expecting £20 billion worth of cuts for ten years, for a decade! They cannot trust the second 11 staying in to bat any longer, so they want the Tories back in to administrate it. We face £20 billion worth of cuts every year for at least a decade unless we come up with an alternative strategy! Well, here's an alternative strategy. Put the money into building council houses, put the roof over people's heads, put people back to work, put some money into the economy and let's create a truly civilized society. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Steve. Secunder?

SIS. P. ROBINSON (London): I second Motion 141. President and Congress, I am proud to have the opportunity to second this motion, a motion which illustrates the state of Britain and British society today. Corporate greed has ensured that the few can weather the recession by virtue of their obscene payoffs for failure and their pensions, whilst the majority risk hunger, fuel poverty, repossession and homelessness.

Colleagues, there can be no greater indictment of British society than the fact that hundreds of thousands of families are forced to live with their parents, friends or in bed

and breakfast or in hostels because of a deliberate policy not to build affordable council houses. This policy has been addressed at Congress year after year without success, but in the current economic situation doing nothing is not an option. We have hundreds of thousands of homeless and many thousands of skilled building workers out of work and billions of pounds given to bailed-out banks.

Let's put these billions to good use and get the builders back to work and the homeless housed. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Penny. Congress, we will continue this debate after the lunch break. Please note that we are going to break early today and we will be resuming earlier as well, as 1.15 sharp. Please be back. Make sure you have your credentials with you at all times.

*Congress adjourned for lunch.*

## **AFTERNOON SESSION**

*Congress reassembled at 1.15 p.m.*

THE PRESIDENT: First of all, Congress, I ask everyone who comes to speak to use the rostrum on my right-hand side. I would now like to invite Laura Walsh to the platform. Laura is a talented writer and performer, and she is going to perform a short piece for you now. Laura.

SIS. L. WALSH: Thank you. Good afternoon everyone. My name is Laura Walsh. I am the resident poet for BBC Radio Merseyside. This piece I have written is to inspire the youth of today to turn away from a life of guns, crime and gangs and to inspire them to be a voice, not to be a sheep but to find their own path in life, a path that doesn't lead to deprivation, a path that doesn't lead to kids being killed and it doesn't lead to be seeing flowers on lamp posts and friends of mine crying because they have lost children through tragic circumstances. This piece is entitled *No Respect* and I perform it throughout Merseyside to many schoolchildren. Hopefully, it will inspire them.

*(Laura Walsh recited her poem No Respect) (Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, Laura works with some of the most vulnerable who need help and she is a great promoter of the GMB. She uses her radio programme to tell the whole of the world who will listen what the GMB does and what she does. Well done and thank you very much. *(Applause)* I thank the Region for finding the little diamond. I now move on to finish this morning's Industrial & Economic Policy – Manufacturing debate. Composite Motion 6, Support for Manufacturing. I ask Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region to move; South Western Region to second and priority in debate to Birmingham & West Midlands Region.

### **SUPPORT FOR MANUFACTURING COMPOSITE MOTION 6**

#### **C6. COVERING MOTIONS**

91. THE DECLINE OF MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY (South Western Region)
92. MANUFACTURING (Birmingham & West Midlands Region)
93. SUPPORT MANUFACTURING NOT FAILED BANKS (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region)

### **SUPPORT FOR MANUFACTURING**

Congress, during the 1980's and early 1990's, the Tories tried to destroy British manufacturing and the towns manufacturing firms were based in.

Many towns however survived and maintained their industrial base. One example of this is Rotherham. However, in the space of 10 days in January 2009 it was announced that Burberry

would be closing its factory in the town and Corus announced 718 job losses from its Rotherham plants. These are victims of a recession caused by the banking industry.

Congress notes with anger the lack of support given directly to Manufacturing as a whole during the downturn in the economy. The UK Government should wake up to the fact that the previous policy of allowing manufacturing industry to “wither on the vine” has proven to be a total failure. The Government must reverse this policy.

This Congress is alarmed at the rate of job losses within the manufacturing industry and calls upon the Government to devise a robust policy to halt the decline of manufacturing companies within this very important sector of the British economy

Redundancy and short time working created by the near economic meltdown in the financial markets, driven by the irresponsible “money for nothing” bonus culture of the city speculators and their ilk has brought our system to a virtual collapse.

Whilst workers in manufacturing are punished by losing their jobs, the banks have been given billions of pounds by the Government. Instead of using this money to give credit to companies, it has been sitting in bank vaults or used to pay massive bonuses to chief executives of the banks – a reward for failing in their jobs. We urge the Government to stop subsidising the banks and use the money to help the genuine wealth creators.

Whilst the Dutch Government is guaranteeing the wages of Dutch Corus workers, Britain’s Labour Government is failing to support the very people who are its core supporters. It has taken months since the onset of the credit crunch for the Government to act in response to industry.

The CEC should continue to campaign for a Government Manufacturing Strategy that would halt and reverse the decline in employment in the Manufacturing Sector.

Therefore this Congress now calls on the Government to widen the support to British Manufacturing to protect jobs.

*(Carried)*

**BRO. I. KEMP (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire):** I move Composite Motion 6. President and Congress, here we are in 2009 and history is repeating itself. As in the 1930s and 1990s we are in an economic meltdown caused by the finance industry. Once again, it is manufacturing that is bearing the brunt of it. Despite the best efforts of Thatcher in the 1980s manufacturing survived, albeit battered and bruised. Now thanks to the greed and incompetence of bankers, we are being brought to our knees. What is the Government’s response? It is not to assist manufacturing by loans, guarantees and helping ordinary workers, as for example they are doing in the Netherlands, but to give billions to the banks in the hope that they will start lending. What have the banks done? They have stashed it away in their vaults or used it to pay massive bonuses and pensions, not to the ordinary bank workers but to their executives, the very people who have dropped us in it. Whilst these failures are being rewarded, tens of thousands of ordinary workers are facing an uncertain future. Many, including myself, are taking a pay cut to try and save our jobs. All too often this is not enough. Burberry, LDV and Vauxhall are just a few of the casualties of this so-called ‘credit crunch’. As a Corus employee, I stand here not

knowing whether I have got a job, a job I actually love doing, to go back to, or even if there is a job still waiting for me how long I am going to be in it. That is the reality of working in manufacturing. For far too long workers in manufacturing have had to make sacrifices. Yes, we have had to change; yes, we have had to reduce money; yes, we have had to accept new working practices, but we have increased output, productivity and quality. Other countries actually want to buy our products. Now, through no fault of our own, even more sacrifice, including the ultimate sacrifice, is being demanded of us. It is now time to say “No more”. We have had a Labour Government which has spent the past 12 years trying not to upset them at the top. It is now time to give us down at the bottom something. We are the ones who kept the faith; we are the ones who kept voting for you. We are not actually asking for the world. We just want to keep our jobs and to help create even more wealth for this country.

Colleagues, Karl Marx said: “History repeats itself twice. The first time as tragedy, the second time as farce.” Far be it for me to criticise Karl Marx, but I think he got this one wrong, because every time history repeats itself, it is not farcical. It is catastrophic and catastrophic for us, the working class. We are the ones who suffer the consequences. Congress, support Composite 6. Tell the Government we want our jobs. The country needs our skills. It needs manufacturing. Thank you. (*Applause*)

SIS. J. SMITH (South Western): I second Composite Motion 6. President and Congress, manufacturing has been allowed to decline over the years. Britain was once a world leader in manufacturing of all goods. Every day we see well-known names withdrawing from the UK to manufacture in other countries where wages are lower in order to keep the profit margins up, or disappearing completely. What future do our young people have when they leave school looking for gainful employment? Not everyone is willing or capable of going to university. We need apprentices, plumbers, carpenters and mechanics to build for the future. The Government has pushed “Education, education, education” to the limit, but even university graduates struggle to find employment.

The Welsh Assembly piloted a scheme called PROACT, a major extension to the Workforce Development Programme that will provide additional training and assistance to businesses which are suffering during the downturn, which is a complement to the existing REACT programme. This enables the Welsh Assembly to provide support for business and additional financing for employees’ training and help towards wage costs in order to prevent redundancies. This scheme is flexible and designed to meet the needs of individual businesses and, hopefully, many companies will be able to ride out the hard times. By extending this scheme nationwide, the Government could provide manufacturing enterprises with help when needed.

We call upon the CEC to continue to campaign for a Government Manufacturing Strategy that would halt and reverse the decline in this important sector. Let’s get back on the road to recovery and back to basics, to core Socialist values. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Birmingham & West Midlands to support.

BRO. G. RICHARDSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): I am speaking in support of the composite motion. Congress and President, the Government's Manufacturing Strategy Review set out the vision for the future and its global opportunities to support manufacturing. Firstly, it did recognise the excellence of UK manufacturing, its value and its overall importance to the future. We could have told them that without them taking six years to find that out. So it would be assistance well spent. The Strategy has provided help to companies investing in India and China, which is filtering through as we speak. Help to protect the intellectual property in key emerging markets is available now. Advantage West Midlands is going to invest £30 million in the Coventry Technology Centre, and throughout the country innovative grants are to be made available. There is also a drive to resurrect apprenticeship schemes, even apprenticeships for adults and improving the image of manufacturing as a whole.

Finally, there is a need to promote opportunities in the exploitation of the low carbon revolution and the green agenda to provide real sustainable jobs.

We applaud the work, but it has taken six years and it is nowhere near enough. Manufacturing and engineering is already on the endangered species list and could be extinct if we wait another six years. I wish you all support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gordon Richardson. Gordon works at JCB and, as you know, we have problems there, so good luck in your fight.

Congress, as you can see, our guests have joined us on the platform. It gives me great pleasure to have with us today the Prime Minister and Leader of the Labour Party, Gordon Brown. Gordon, it is fantastic to have you back at the GMB Congress. *(Applause)* We are also delighted, for the first time ever, that the Prime Minister's wife has attended our Congress on the platform. Sarah, welcome to Blackpool and welcome to the GMB. *(Applause)*

Prime Minister, we would like to invite you to address Congress and then answer some questions from our delegates, if you would be so kind.

#### **ADDRESS BY RT. HON GORDON BROWN MP, PRIME MINISTER**

THE RT. HON GORDON BROWN MP, PRIME MINISTER: Let me say, first of all, what a great pleasure it is to be here at the fastest growing Union in the country, and I want to start by congratulating Paul Kenny for his leadership of this Union, for what he has done to build up the Union and the role that the Union plays in our society. Paul Kenny, we are grateful for everything you do. *(Applause)*

I want to thank the best President of any union, Mary. Four years re-elected, a member of the Labour Party's National Executive, she does a wonderful job on behalf of all your members, and I want to say that your school meals campaign shows that you can achieve far more than any celebrity chef. You have put school meals on the agenda in a way that

no other union has every done. Thank you very much for what you are achieving there. *(Applause)*

I want also to thank Malcolm Sage, re-elected for four years as Vice President and now, because of the increasing size of your Union, a member of the TUC General Council. That is just another example of the weight and strength that this Union has because of its advocacy of the great causes.

Let me say, on behalf of Sarah and myself, thank you to you for what you do in all of your communities, for what you do working week after week on behalf of people who need your help and support, for your organizing and campaigning activities and let me thank you also for the work you have done in exposing the British National Party as a racist party, a prejudiced party and a discriminatory party. We will not rest until they are removed from any democratic office in this country. They have no role to play in democratic politics in Britain. *(Applause)*

I wanted to come and thank you and to talk about the big issues facing our country. I am going to be very happy to answer all the questions you have later about manufacturing, about what is happening to our public services, about what we need to do in relation to plural plaques, in relation to Cammell Laird and in relation to many of the other issues that you will raise with me, and I am very happy to answer all your questions.

First I wanted to explain what is happening, what we have got to do and how we are going to move forward with your support. People will look back and say that we are living through the biggest economic crisis that we have had since the Second World War. It is not just a British crisis. It started in America. It is a global crisis and it has affected all of us. It has made people insecure; it has made people worried about their homes; worried about their jobs and worried about their businesses. It has made people think about what Government should be doing to help them and also about what we as a society should do to make things better for people who are hurt by this crisis.

On top of this, we have had something else. We have had the biggest Parliamentary scandal that we have seen for two hundred years. I want to apologise to you on behalf of the Labour Party for the behaviour of some of our Members of Parliament. I believe it is right to come here to say to you that when people have let you down we should apologise and we should say sorry. We should do everything in our power to sort out these abuses. I just want to explain to you in a few minutes from now what we are going to do. Our role is never to defend people who do not do their best by their communities and constituencies. Our role is to make sure that every councillor, every Member of Parliament and every community activist can give of their time in public service and do the best for their community and not just for themselves. *(Applause)*

Sometimes in Downing Street you get letters from people all over the country. Recently, there have been a lot of letters, and not all of them have been critical. I had a letter not so long ago from a woman called Diane. She wrote to me to say that she was 46 and she said that, as a result of the change that we had introduced in the Health Service, she had been

able to get breast cancer screening, previously available only at the age of 50. As a result of the help that she had received, the screening that happened and then the advice of her doctor, she got immediate treatment, seeing a surgeon within two weeks. Now what she realized would not have been spotted or diagnosed otherwise was now cured as a result of the National Health Service. She said “I owe my life to the Labour Government’s decision to ensure that there is proper breast screening in the National Health Service”. Then I got a letter from a man who had heart disease. As a result of the new equipment that we have brought into the Health Service, what was a problem that could not have been solved a few years ago without that equipment was now solved and he was totally recovered. He said, “I heard you speak at the Labour Party Conference about people who would be able to walk their daughters up the aisles as a result of being cured or disease as a result of the work of the Health Service. I will be able now to walk my daughter up the aisle where previously I thought I was going to die.”

Twelve years ago what we are talking about in the National Health Service, more nurses, more doctors, more staff, more radiotherapists, more people in all the different areas, many of which you, as a union, are involved, would not have happened. Twelve years ago we did not have the equipment and the hospitals to do the things that I have just talked about which have saved lives. Twelve years ago we did not have the investment in the National Health Service that we now have and can be seen in other hospitals, and we want to do better in the next few years. But I have to tell you that two years from now we may see things growing worse if we have a Conservative Government bringing in 10% cuts in our public services. (*Applause*) I have a duty to come to say to you today that we must fight as we have never fought before for our public services. We must expose those people who would impose 10% cuts. We must expose the dogma that says that you must cut public services in order to fund Inheritance Tax for the richest people in this country. These are the wrong priorities and we will expose them every day. (*Applause*)

I also received a letter from someone who said to me in that letter, “This is the first letter I have ever written.” She was in her thirties. She explained to me that she had never been able to read or write or to admit to people that she could not read or write before we introduced, as you have been involved in, the Trade Union Adult Learning schemes. She was telling me that she was writing her first letter to thank a Labour Government for being able to give people the opportunity at a later age than school to get the benefits of education, and now she was able to read and write.

I met another guy, a six year old guy, who came into Downing Street to see me. At five years old he had been unable to read, but because we have got *Every Child a Learner*, *Every Child a Reader*, *Every Child Counts*, *Every Child a Writer*, because we have introduced these new programmes for thousands of young children who otherwise would be left behind, then at the age of six and seven, instead of being left behind, he was reading. He wrote me a letter, and he said, “I want every child in the country to have books.” Then he wrote at the end of it, “I also want to be Prime Minister”, and I said to him, “Not yet.” (*Laughter*)

Again, what are we looking at? We are looking at a massive expansion in opportunities for college, for education, for apprenticeships; a massive expansion in opportunities through *Learn Direct* but also through *Train to Gain*. We are talking about 300,000 people two years, a million people this year and we are talking about a vast expansion in opportunities which should be available not to the few but to everyone in this country. I say that 12 years ago these opportunities were not available. In two years time, they could be taken away unless we fight as we never have for the sake of our public services, our education services, in which you are so involved.

I want to thank you. Many of you represented here are teaching assistants working in our schools. The investment that we will continue to have in education is going to be vital for the future. Every member of our education staff from cleaners to those people who are doing every job in the educational service is important if we are going to be a successful country for the future. So we must fight as we have never fought before for our public services.

Then I got a letter from a guy called Dave. Dave is now a youth worker. He told me that he had been involved in gangs, he told me that he had been involved in criminal violence, he told me that he was going on the wrong path and was in trouble with the law, but then through his trade union, yes, the GMB, he was able to get the chance of a scholarship. He went to Ruskin College in Oxford. He is now a community leader organizing young people against gangs, against violence and against knives and against guns. Again, that would not have happened 12 years ago. It can only happen with a combination of the work that you as a Union do and we as a Government do, to give people opportunities that they have never had before. But two years from now, if we had let things happen, we could be deprived of the public services that make it possible for us to have the policing, the Health Service, the education, the social services, the social care and the rights that we take for granted at the moment.

I will just give you one more story about someone who wrote to me about the Tax Credit system. She was telling me that she was a single parent and she had fostered a child at the age of five. She thought that it was incredible that she could get the Child Tax Credit, get the Working Tax Credit, she now had flexible working to enable her to meet that young boy when he came back from school, and now at the age of seven she was adopting that child. She said it could only have happened with Child Tax Credits, with flexible working, with the Working Tax Credit that boosted the minimum wage. These are all changes that have happened during the last 12 years. In two years time if we do not act and do not wake up to the problems that will be faced by a Conservative Government cutting public expenditure by 10%, then many of these services would be going or gone.

Why do we come to this Conference? Why do we organize in our trade unions? Why do we campaign for some of the great causes? Why do we work through a Labour Government to try and make changes? Why do we give up hours volunteering to do things, to help our communities? Why do we work with other people who are wanting to change our communities? Why do we do all of these things? It is because we believe in a society that is fundamentally different from the one that the Conservatives would

propose. We believe in a society where we care for each other, support each other, help each other. We come to the aid of each other. We believe in a society where, when people are in difficulty, we do not walk by on the other side. We believe in a society where, if there is a injustice, if there is an inequality, if there is an unfairness, if opportunity is denied, if talent is not given its chance, if people with potential are not given hope for the future and if there is unfairness anywhere, then we feel bound to take action. That is what I believe is the mission of this trade union, the mission of the Labour Party, the mission of our Labour Government and the mission that we all, as a country, have to follow through this difficult economic crisis.

I can see why people are angry at the moment. I can see why it was difficult during that local and European election campaign. I can see why the public want answers that we have not yet been able to give them to some of the issues. I can see why people have responded in the way they do. If you take the economic systems, the banks and bankers, what do people hate most about what happened? What people hate most is the obvious thing, that offends you, me and everybody else. They think, rightly, that there were many bankers who were operating in a way that was totally irresponsible and that what they did was unfair. That is what people think. Then when it comes to politics, what do people think about some of our MPs. We have got to be honest about this. People think, quite rightly, that while they were going about their business and doing everything, volunteering for this and for that, some MPs were acting in a way that was irresponsible and people thought was unfair. Wherever there is irresponsibility and wherever there is unfairness, we have got to act and we have got to say that it is wrong. We have got to change it. We have got to make things better. Unfairness is no part of our society. Irresponsibility cannot be tolerated, and that is what we are going to do. (*Applause*) So, yes, we are right to be angry about what has happened, both in our banking system and in our political system. But the duty of people like us, all of us together, is to clean it up, to change it, to improve it so that it is better so that the highest of standards are followed, and that is what we are going to do.

Let me just tell you the conditions we have got to meet as a labour Movement to advance and then to win the next General Election. When we fought these elections two weeks ago, let's be honest, the economy was not in the right place. We had implemented a number of changes but the results were not yet seen by the people of this country. Yes, we have taken over three of the biggest banks in this country; yes, we have forced these banks to lend money. For the first time in history, they have to lend to businesses and they have got to meet a target of £70 billion extra that has now been agreed with the banking system. Yes, we have intervened with public works so that we can keep people in work where otherwise they would lose their jobs. Yes, we have a Mortgage Rescue Scheme so that instead of what happened in the 1990s when thousands of people lost their homes and there were mortgage repossessions, we are halting mortgage repossessions in this country. And, yes, at the same time, we have helped more than 120,000 businesses in this country by giving them support of one kind or another with their affairs so that they had more money to be able to survive.

Yes, also, there is a lot more to do. We have got to deal with some of the problems of the car industry, we have got to deal with some of the problems that I have been talking about today with workers from Corus in the steel industry. We have got to deal with some of the problems that arise for businesses that need help so that they can have their innovative products moved forward even although the banks have not yet given them the support they need.

Yes, we have got to do more. A September guarantee for school leavers, so when school leavers leave school this summer there is something for them to do. Apprenticeships: yes, we want to increase not contract the number of apprenticeships, and these are all the things that we have announced that we will do. But it does take time for people to see the results. But I tell you that there is no country in the world that would be coming out of recession if they followed what the Conservatives wanted to do. They wanted to do absolutely nothing. They wanted to walk away. They would not have helped you at all. *(Applause)*

Take the expenses crisis. People know that there were mistakes, mistakes made by Members of Parliament, mistakes made that some people will have to pay very heavily for and should. Mistakes that will lead to disciplining and we have had to suspend people from the Labour Party as a result of that. But we are trying to take action to deal with that, but until people see that it has been dealt with I can understand people saying “Prove that you are going to clean up the system, show that you have done it and then we will believe what you are doing.”

Then there is a third thing that has to be in place that was not in place two weeks go. We have got to be able, above the noise, to talk to people about our vision of the future. I want a Health Service that does not just provide curative cure. I want it to help prevent illness and prevent disease. I want to make progress on beating cancer. I want to give people the opportunity to get better standards of care from the National Health Service. I want, at the same time, to be able to deal with the challenge that almost every family faces of social care where you have got to care for relatives who are elderly and these relative who are elderly are worried about the cost of the care that they will have to have.

I want to deal with education. Like everybody else. We have introduced nursery education from aged 3. You can now stay in school, college or learning until 18. we want to give lifelong opportunities for people to be able to use our education system. We want to be able to improve social housing. There is a lot more that we have got to do on housing. We have got to get local authorities building again and we have got plans to do so. But we have got to have the chance to be able, above the noise of expenses and the economic recession, to explain that there are real choices for our country. 10% cuts in housing, health and education if the Tories could have their way. Us, continuing to invest in the future of our public services.

There was a fourth condition that was missing two weeks ago as well, and that was unity. Everybody here knows, members of a union, the importance of solidarity, the importance of standing together. The lesson has to be learned by every member of the Labour Party

from top to bottom that unity matters and unity means that people work together and continue to work together through difficult times.

I will tell you the four conditions for us moving forward and winning are there. We will get the economy moving forward. Everybody knows that the progressive policies we are following, while difficult and while not able to deal with every problem of redundancy, are working to get the economy back to work, and everybody knows when they look round the world that Britain is doing better in trying to get out of this difficult recession than any other country. It was caused by a world banking crisis and we, too, are determined to reform the banks so that never again is a reward system so out of touch with what ordinary people believe is the right way of rewarding people in this country. *(Applause)*

On expenses, I tell you, before the summer we will pass legislation, that is the Labour Government will put legislation to the House of Commons that will mean that all MPs will be under statutory regulation for their behaviour, it will mean that there will be a code of conduct for MPs that they will have to follow, and it will mean that every MP will have to have their expenses reassessed over the last four years and if there is any discrepancy, if there is any repayment, if there is any discipline required, that will be done. We are determined to clean up for good the politics of this country and what abuses have been identified that none of us knew about, what abuses have been identified have to be dealt with immediately.

In the next few days we will publish our prospectus for Britain's future. We will set out our plans, our vision of how we can be a decent, compassionate, and prosperous society in the years to come. I will just give you an example. Today we launched our digital revolution and what we want is every family in this country to have access to the best and fast broadband that will enable them to get services from broadband in the future. Just like there is an obligation for a universal service for telephones and for postal services, there should be a universal obligation for broadband. We will invest in the future because if you do not invest you do not have a future. Let us remember the Tories will be cutting by 10%, at least, the investment in that future. So, the conditions, an economy that will move forward, cleaning up politics for this country, putting forward our vision of the future, a cooperating and a caring society as well as an economically successful society, and the unity of our party, these are the things that we will do.

I started with some letters that had been sent to me. I was in Africa a few months ago and over the years I have tried to follow the fortunes of people who are less well off than even people in this country who are suffering at the moment. When I was in Tanzania a few years ago I met a young girl called Miriam. She was only 12 years old. She explained through an interpreter what had happened to her. She explained that her mother had died from Aids, and then her father had died from Aids. Then she explained to me that she, too, had been diagnosed with Aids. She explained also that she had tuberculosis. This was a girl of 12, an orphan, bare foot, with hardly anything other than disheveled clothes. You looked into her eyes – and if you think of a 12-year old they are always looking forward with some anticipation and hope about the future, looking forward to better times

ahead - and in her eyes there was an unreachable sadness. It was almost as if she was suffering not from just tuberculosis or Aids but from a broken heart.

After that visit to Tanzania we were determined we would do everything we could to help her. The opportunities for her were very limited indeed, as an orphan, as someone with HIV Aids, as someone who was suffering from tuberculosis. But as a result of the money that we, Britain, have provided, that one girl and thousands others, indeed millions of others, are at school, are getting education about their health, are getting fed when they are at school, and she has a chance now of surviving through her teenage years and into her adult years. Let us never forget that when it comes to it we can change the world by changing the life of one person and making it better.

My message to you today is, facing difficult times, with big causes we have to fight, increasing the minimum wage, making sure that there is protection for part-time workers in work, making sure there is proper childcare facilities for parents, making our health service and education service better for the future, making sure our manufacturing sector is modern and can survive all the competition from other countries, making sure that in the world that we can trade with other countries to the benefit of jobs here, but as we do all these things do not stop ever believing in the basic truths. Do not stop ever believing in the goodness of people. Do not stop ever believing that together we can make a difference. Do not stop believing that working as one we can change our society. Do not stop ever believing that we can create a good society in this country in the years to come. Believing in these things is what created our movement. It is what brings the trades unions and the Labour Party together. It is the reason that you are at this conference because you believe in a better future by working together. Do not ever stop believing that we can make a difference and do not ever stop believing that we can and we will win. Thank you very much. (*Standing ovation*)

## **QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

THE PRESIDENT: Interrogation time!

THE PRIME MINISTER: Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: Gordon, can I say thank you for a wonderful speech and for coming to address us. I am not going to say anything about the MPs' expenses because you have already heard it at the NEC. Yes, we were entitled to be angry against the Labour MPs because we are the Labour Party and we are the people that put them there. What I want you to do, somehow we have to expose the Tories and what they have done, "Mr. Duckpond", "Mr. Wisteria Clearing", "Mr. Four Houses Maud", living in mansions that we are paying for, flipping their homes. Well, if they want to flip, then let them pay for it. If they want to live in a mansion they can live in it and maybe we will offer them a council flat, but then that would be depriving our people. Let's go. (*Applause*)

I am going to lay out the format that we are going to follow. I will be calling regions in turn so that delegates can ask their questions. I do not want too many questions on the

same subject. There will be three standing mikes in the aisles and each one is numbered. I will direct you to those microphones. Once I call you to speak, please make our way there and ask your question. Please make sure you clearly state your name and your region. Keep to your questions and do not make speeches or statements and then we will get more in. Do not, Congress, waste this opportunity. We will take questions in groups of three and if we have time we will go around again. Firstly, can I have a question from Birmingham, from mike one, which is over there, London, mike two, and North West & Irish Region, mike three.

BRO. M. AMIN (Birmingham & West Midlands Region): Prime Minister, the Government announcement of assistance to the automotive and manufacturing sector was welcome. However, it is a fact that not one company that has actual financial assistance under the scheme has received a penny. Also, LDV was refused a short-term loan for its production process. 850 workers have now been made redundant with many thousands more in the supply chain, at least. What is the Government going to do to speed up the loan process and make sure another LDV is not left to flounder? *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. London Region.

SIS. V. THOMAS (London Region): Prime Minister, since the creation of the party the GMB have supported the Labour Party and Labour governments in many positive ways. We now believe it is time for reciprocation and for Labour politicians to urgently address the need to re-establish and rebuild trust between themselves, the trade unions, and the working people so that the BNP extremists and their like can be pushed back to where they belong, irrelevant, impotent, and in the wilderness. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Vivien. Eddie.

BRO. E. MARNELL (North West & Irish Region): World media, going out live, I could say anything I want, but I won't because I have integrity unlike a lot of MPs. Gordon, at Congress 2007 I asked you a question regarding Cammell Laird 1984 under the Freedom of Information Act. You said you would get back to me personally with an answer. You have not yet. When can I expect an answer? *(Applause)*

THE PRIME MINISTER: I know the case in Cammell Laird. I went back immediately and asked for all the papers on it and we continued to look at this issue of whether we can actually compensate. I know that the issue is not simply compensation but the issue is about getting all the information, and we are looking at the question of compensation. I am very happy to meet you at the end of this session to talk about that.

On the motorcar industry and the automotive industry, we have helped 120,000 companies across the country; many of them are in the automotive industry. What you are referring to, Mohamed, rightly so, is the special car scheme. We are talking to Jaguar at the moment. We are talking to General Motors in relation to what is happening at Ellesmere Port and in Luton. Obviously, we are talking to Honda, Nissan, and Toyota about things there. We put £4m into LDV to try to save it but we could not in the end

find a buyer on the terms that were necessary for the company to keep going. So, we are ready to support companies in difficulty. We have done more with a larger number of companies than before. The motorcar industry is an issue that goes right across Europe and I am talking to the Germans and to the other governments about it, but I can assure you that we stand ready to help the companies of this country and want to do more to make sure that they can come through this difficult time.

There are still in the economy 2.5 million more jobs than there were in 1997. I think we have to recognise that we are going through a very difficult time and that some of our industries are facing problems that we cannot easily solve. If people are not buying cars then it is a difficulty. If people are not able to buy homes then the house-building and the construction industry contracts. But what we are trying to do all the time is create enough activity in the economy that we can actually get jobs returning. So when markets fail and banks let you down, the government has to step in and that is what we do, and that is what we will continue to do.

The BNP, and Vivien has got a very important point about that, the BNP are exploiting grievances. Some of them are to do with the supply of social housing and, as I said when I spoke, we have plans to do more about that. Some of them are in relation to jobs, some of them are stoking up people's fears about immigration, but I think the most important thing to remember about the BNP is that they are a party that are against mixed race marriages, they are anti-Semitic, they are against the whole of the Jewish people, they are a party that is shrouded and clouded in violence that they have conducted against people, and we have to expose that extremism everywhere we go. Now that we face up to a future General Election we must ensure that there is not one BNP Member of Parliament ever elected for any constituency of Britain. (*Applause*) Let us get them out of the council chambers as well.

THE PRESIDENT: While I am calling the next three, Midland & East Coast (mike one), GMB Scotland (mike two), and South Western (mike three), Gordon, I know what you said to Eddie but it is not just about compensation for these Cammell Laird individuals, it is about the clearing of their name; they were unlawfully imprisoned by a Tory government without trial. (*Applause*)

BRO. P. SOPER (Midland & East Coast Region): Gordon, recent European Court judgments, such as Viking and Laval, and Ruffert and Luxembourg, exclusively meant that employers can undermine collective agreements and dump workers causing social unrest and disharmony, a feeding ground for the BNP. It also led to unofficial strikes across the UK. A simple way to eradicate this is for the UK government to amend domestic legislation and bind employers to collective industrial-wide agreements. This would stop the undercutting and prevent employers paying the national minimum wage. Can you commit to delivering this to us? (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

GMB SCOTLAND: Gordon, the Calum Commission findings in Scotland have recently been announced and offer recommendations on how to improve Scottish devolution and how it works. The main recommendations are for tax raising and borrowing powers for the Scottish Government. Do you see these recommendations derailing the SNP's plans for a referendum on independence and what is the timescale set by the government to engage with the Scottish political parties and the terms of the Calum recommendations?

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

BRO. L. WOODWARD (South Western): Gordon, Les Woodward, incredibly proud Remploy worker, South Western Region. (*Applause*) As our Prime Minister, will you instruct the board of directors of Remploy to stop the appalling waste of money in the company? For example, the outrageous £1.7m that was paid in bonuses for the bosses which could have kept two factories going open for a year, or the black tie bash that is going to happen on Thursday, estimated to cost £50,000 for the bosses to get their noses in the trough in Leeds. Will you stop the bosses of Remploy wasting money? Will you make sure that the money spent will be spent on keeping the Remploy factories sustainable? (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Les. Gordon?

THE PRIME MINISTER: The first question was about Viking and Laval and these judgments that have come out of the European Courts. I tell you, we will not allow these judgments to affect UK law. We made it absolutely clear that we believe that our UK law should not be affected by any of these judgments, Viking, or Laval, and we are determined to protect our domestic law against them. What we have done actually in Europe is we have put it on the agenda in Europe. The employment ministers are discussing the implications of this but the fact is we do not see these judgments as affecting the implementation of UK law and we are determined to make sure that that is the case.

I realise at a time of unemployment that there is a huge amount of uncertainty about jobs and I know that there are certain disputes taking place, including disputes about people from other countries coming in and being part of contracts for jobs. We tried to negotiate and I think this is what the current dispute is about, we tried to negotiate an employers' agreement that they would go for local labour. They did sign up to an agreement that involved the use of local labour when it was not their own company labour that was coming in. I believe that the reviews that we have carried out on this are part of our determination to make sure that that is the case. I will look at any particular instance you bring to bear on that but that is our determination.

On Calum, let me just say on the devolution, what we want to do is to build a future for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland inside the United Kingdom that people feel comfortable with. We are prepared to make changes in the devolution arrangements that recognise that the world has moved on over the last 12 years since we originally planned devolution, but our determination with all the proposals we are making, including the tax

proposals, is that Scotland wants to and remains part of the United Kingdom. If you look at what happened over the last two years, when the Royal Bank of Scotland went down and the Halifax Bank of Scotland went down, two of the biggest banks in the world that were based in Scotland went down, there was no way in the world that a Scottish nationalist government in Edinburgh could have solved that problem. They did not have the resources to do so and of course the comparison of the past was with Iceland, and you know what happened when Iceland was faced with these problems and could not deal with them.

I think people in Scotland are seeing that it is better to be part of the United Kingdom, to have the strength and the solidarity of being partners working together, working on our economic policies and jobs, working for climate change in the environment, and if you talk about a border for climate change or boundaries that separate countries over security issues, in an island like ours we actually have to work together. So I think the bigger argument that is going to come through and the SNP will be exposed is when people see that it is only by working together, which is a good trade union principle, only by working together that we can solve the economic, social, and environmental challenges that we face.

We will continue to put the case for Scotland working together, a partnership, part of a union, for the common good. I believe that people will see as they saw in the Glenrothes by-election a few months ago they will see the error of supporting a Scottish National Party that would cut people off from the rest of the country and in the end make Scotland less prosperous, not more prosperous.

Remploy, as you know, we want to invest in Remploy for the future and we want to help people who are workers in Remploy, both who work there and people who want to work in other industries. We are trying to continue to invest heavily in Remploy and there is a huge amount of public money we are continuing to spend. I will look at what you say certainly about events I know nothing about and certainly none of the people I know are going to, and I will look at this expenses issue that you have raised with me about remuneration and bonuses. But we are trying still to make sure that people who are workers at Remploy or people who have been workers at Remploy have the best future possible. I assure you that our commitment is to the workers of Remploy and people who have been workers that are looking for other job opportunities.

I will just tell you, we are spending £3bn more on work and jobs, the creation of jobs, over the next few years. I just have to point out that if the Conservatives put 10% cuts on that, that would be almost all the money that we have been spending taken away. I just want you to know of our commitment to Remploy, our commitment to opportunities for people who have disabilities in the workforce so that people can use their capabilities to best effect, our commitment to training, and our commitment to Remploy, and any abuses that exist within Remploy I will be looking at as a result of your information. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Gordon, I have three questions here, and then three more if you have the time.

THE PRIME MINISTER: Absolutely.

THE PRESIDENT: That is good. He is the governor now. Northern, mike one, Yorkshire & North Derbyshire, mike two, and Southern, mike three.

BRO. P. SAWDON (Northern Region): Prime Minister, what help is the government prepared to give to avoid the closure of the steel works on Teesside to prevent the loss of 10,000 jobs? (*Applause*)

SIS. I. WALTERS (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region), and Vice Chairman of Leeds Central CLP: Gordon, GMB's campaign to ensure that current exemption to EU competition law enjoyed by the Pubcos is referred to the Monopolies Commission. GMB believes that this exemption has allowed the Pubcos cartel to be protected exploiting tenant landlords and forcing up the price of a pint so the middlemen can take their cut. Will the government be supporting our campaign to end the exemption and do you not agree it would be electorally popular to reduce the cost of a pint of beer by 50 pence? (*Applause*)

BRO. R. REEVES (Southern Region): Gordon, government workers are very worried about what might happen if Labour was to lose the next General Election and the impact this will have upon their pension schemes. The Tories and the Lib Dems have pledged to slash public sector pensions. Could you give any assurance that you will back the GMB campaign to maintain good quality defined benefit public sector pensions for millions of workers who will depend on them in retirement? It could make all the difference to us winning the next election. (*Applause*)

THE PRIME MINISTER: Thank you very much. I just met a delegation of the Corus workforce just before I came to speak to you and Peter Mandelson has been talking to the Chief Executive of Corus about these events. I know what happened, it was a contract that involved four other companies. It was broken off. Corus is suing that company but we want answers from both Corus and these companies about what can be done for the future. I have been talking to various people about how we can move this forward. I will talk to Tata, the head of Corus, in a few days time and we do know the legitimate grievance that you have about having this work, it then being taken away, Corus then getting compensation for the loss of the contract, and what happens to the workers themselves. It is a circular set of negotiations that we the government are determined to break into by seeing whether we can get the justice that you are looking for.

There has been an issue, of course, in the Middlesbrough Gazette when the consortium blamed Corus and where Corus is blaming the consortium. We have to find a way of sorting this out. I have taken up this issue and I will report back to you on that and I will talk to Paul in the next few days.

The second issue was about Pubcos and about the terms of leases. There is a report that has been done on this that I think will be published by the summer. If there is any

evidence about this that people have, then at any time you can refer this to the Office of Fair Trading or come to me and I will refer it to the Office of Fair Trading. So, if people see the abuses happening and they have the evidence, give it to us and we will refer it to the Office of Fair Trading to look at their bad practices. The issue is a subject of a report that is going to come out by the summer.

We made our announcements about the future of public sector pensions. I think you have seen what we have done. We are trying to protect people having decent living standards. I have said we are also willing to look at the problems that people face when faced with the bills for social care and we are determined, as you know, to keep raising the pensions. I think the difference between our commitment to the future of the elderly and the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party is very big indeed. As I say, do not stop forgetting that over the last 12 years we have introduced the pension credit, introduced the winter fuel allowance which is worth several hundred pounds, particularly to the over-80s, that is paid every year, introduced free television licences for the over-75s, and of course introduced huge increases in the health care services that are available to people. Our determination to support the elderly who served our country all their life remains and that will be one of the big issues on which we will fight our opponents at the next General Election.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gordon. I know that you are short of time now. The governor said I could do the last three. Northern Region, one, Yorkshire, two, and South Western, three. Thank you.

BRO. W. HUGHES (Northern): Good afternoon, Prime Minister. Welcome to the family circle. It was in October 2007 that the House of Lords ended compensation for asbestos-related pleural plaques. Since then there has been consultation and thousands of our GMB members across the UK have been waiting, they have been waiting, and they are still waiting for the government's response. There have been whispers, hints, wink-wink, nudge-nudge, about restoring the compensation but no resolution. There has been nothing.

THE PRESIDENT: Billy!

BRO. W. HUGHES: I am sticking to the script! (*Applause*) You know, worthy President, I am the last person to veer away from the written word! (*Laughter*) There has been nothing to take this worry away. I know because I have got that condition after spending 47 years man and boy in the shipbuilding industry. This is not about theories or medical niceties, Prime Minister, it is what is morally right. It is pure politics. Our members have pleural plaques and they are worried about pleural plaques, and quite rightly so, just because nobody ----

THE PRESIDENT: Billy! Billy!

BRO. W. HUGHES: Nobody can tell you that pleural plaques will not develop into full-blown asbestosis. Our Labour Government must deliver compensation for those suffering pleural plaques. (*Applause*) I ask you ----

THE PRESIDENT: Billy, please, please, we get the message.

BRO. W. HUGHES: Give us a short, simple, honest answer, will this government say yes?

THE PRESIDENT: Billy, that is enough. I am moving on to the next mike. (*Applause*)

SIS. P. ROSS (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region): Yorkshire Coal Staff's Branch, complete with my lump of coal. Gordon, I would like to thank you for the support you have given to the coal industry in the past in terms of subsidies and funding. In order to continue that support and to ensure that we have no gap in our future energy supply, I would like to ask whether the Government will implement the recommendations of the TUC Clean Coal Task Group Report. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Pam.

BRO. E. BRODRICK (South Western Region): Prime Minister, the Labour Government, that is our government, has just recorded some of the worst election results ever in its political history. Hundreds of our Labour councillors lost their seats, the number of Labour MEPs has also reduced, and two BNP MEPs have been elected. Now, when out on the streets GMB Labour Party supporters were clearly informed by the electorate of their opposition and bemusement of the Labour Party privatising the Royal Mail. Can I ask why are you continuing with this unpopular policy and will you give a commitment here today to not proceed with this needless privatisation? (*Applause*)

THE PRIME MINISTER: These are all very big questions. I want to give them the justice they deserve, so I will write to everyone who has put a question.

On pleural plaques I share your concern about what has happened over pleural plaques in the House of Lords Judgment. I instructed the issue to be re-opened. We have got a number of industries like the ex-British Shipbuilders who are part of this liability. That is what we are looking at, at the moment, to see if we can get a settlement on that, and there will be a report before the summer recess, before the end of July. So, we are dealing with the issue in the best way we can. I, too, have friends who have suffered from this terrible disease and I know of the problems that result when it becomes fully-blown mesothelioma. So I do know the problems. In fact, my next door neighbour, John McDougal, who many of you will know as a member of the GMB died as a result of it, so we will report back by the summer.

On coal, we are trying to invest in clean coal because I do believe that coal has a big future in this country. I do not believe those who say that you can have an unbalanced supply of oil, relying on energy from Russia or from the Middle East or simply nuclear.

You have got to have the right balance of nuclear, coal, renewables, including wind and wave power, where we are doing well in this country, as well as oil and gas. Coal is very much a part of this. I will look at the detail of the TUC report.

On the Royal Mail, let me refer to the problem of the Royal Mail so you understand the difficulties that we face. The Royal Mail has a £9 billion pension deficit. It is £9 billion which has got to be funded from somewhere. Is it from the Health Service? Is it from education? Is it from somewhere else? So the Royal Mail is not in a position to meet all of its liabilities in its present form, so we have got to look at how we can (1) make the Royal Mail successful; (2) make sure that we can get the right regulatory environment so that we have a universal service obligation, so that everybody can get mail; in America they are thinking of reducing it and not having the six-day obligation for letters; (3) we have to make sure that the 280,000 pensioners who are depending on their Royal Mail pension fund, make sure that the commitments which have been made can be honoured to them. So it is not a question just of what happens to one part of the Royal Mail industry. It is a question of the Royal Mail, the Pension Fund, the Post Office network and the regulation that governs the system. We will come forward with our proposals in legislation and I am happy to write to you about them.

I am telling you that we have a big financial hole and it could amount to £9 billion and we cannot just walk away from that and say there is nothing we can do other than simply take money out of other services that you depend upon simply to put into that pension fund. I will write to you about all the details of it.

Look, what we have been talking about today, and all your questions, and they are questions which reflect this central issue about what is fair and what is responsible for a society like ours. I know that there are many causes that we have got to further and advance over the next few weeks and months. I know that people have got to see the results of what we try to do to get the economy out of the mess as well as solve the problems which have been raised by, and I just stress, expense problems from MPs of all parties, not just the Labour Party but all parties, and I feel I have a particular responsibility to make sure that the Labour Party has everything in order before we go to the electorate.

But I do think from our conversation today that we should have confidence. We should have confidence in our values because the belief that we have in fairness is clearly shared by the British people, that we have the confidence to reflect these values and confidence that if we work together in unity with discipline and sharing the problems that we have by working through them together, we can win forward.

I want to thank you for the reception you gave to Sarah and to myself. It has been a great pleasure and privilege to be with you this afternoon. I believe the common causes that we share, that we work on together, can lead to results over the next few months and I look forward to continuing to work with you to deal with all the challenges ahead. Together and united we can change the world. Thank you. (*Applause/Standing ovation*)

THE PRESIDENT: Gordon, before I let you go, and I do not want an answer because I will get it from you soon, you spoke about the Royal Mail and privatisation, when are we going to stop privatising our public services and bring them back to our people, that is one, and bring children out of poverty by free schools meals for everyone? (*Applause*)

*(The Prime Minister and his wife, Sarah, then left Congress)*

THE PRESIDENT: Will congress come to order, please?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Congress, I would like to complete the debate on Composite 6. Does anyone else want to speak in that debate? No? We will move on. I invite Gordon Richardson from JCB to contribute to the debate on the CEC Statement and tell us about his experience at JCB. (*Applause*)

BRO. G. RICHARDS (Birmingham & West Midlands): President, Congress, I will start off by thanking all the excellent speakers that have contributed to this debate so far. They have clearly spelled out the damage this unprecedented recession is doing, jobs lost, plants closed, and thousands made redundant which I have witnessed firsthand at JCB. We made the decision last year to reduce our working week to four days in an attempt to save 400 members' jobs. At the time we did not realise this was a groundbreaking effort but, unfortunately, it did not save everybody's job and it still meant redundancies. We had tireless work behind the scenes, Mark Birdman, Mark Jones, Keith Hodgkinson our senior rep, Janet Dean our MP, someone who is definitely not on the take, all helped us behind the scenes, and the work carried out by our shop stewards was extremely professional but unbelievably traumatic. We had death threats, we had people attacking our cars, we had people upsetting our families, people ringing me up in the morning at 3 o'clock, and we were the ones that were trying to help our members. We were desperate for government intervention to help us - well, any intervention would have done - but it has not come quickly enough and over 1,000 of our members have had their employment terminated throughout Staffordshire and Wrexham in North Wales. Throughout last year the workforce has been under immense pressure to perform under the threat of redundancies, seeing their workmates disappear one after the other in six different waves. Last week another 19 were announced, they had to go. They will lose their jobs in the next few weeks. So, we are still not safe and will not be safe until the economy is resurrected. Who knows when that is going to be? Make no mistake, despite talk of green shoots of recovery, our manufacturing sector remains in serious trouble.

The indicators tell us in 2010 we may see some orders. However, this year is still very sparse compared to the record-breaking 2007. Even the Chancellor said unemployment is probably going to rise well into the next year and the CEC Statement makes absolutely clear how we can turn things round. Firstly, we have to save manufacturing. We have to clean up the banks and give the manufacturing sector the same attention that the government has afforded the financial sector. We need to take direct control of banks already in public ownership and primarily the government must ensure that lending to the industry is resumed. It should also invest in short-time working to keep people in jobs rather than allowing them to be dismissed. We seem to be lagging behind our major

competitors worldwide who are providing support to their industries. We need to stop this appalling haemorrhage of jobs and the devastation it causes not only to families but the local communities.

The CEC is already calling for a Royal Commission on the financial crisis to unearth what went wrong and to come up with a specific proposal for reformation of the banking system. Within that new financial sector we believe there needs to be a national investment bank in order to address the present chronic lack of investment in British manufacturing. We want to embrace the green agenda and the challenge of climate change to provide sustainable jobs in our innovative British-made low-carbon technology. We need to reverse the destruction of Remploy and put it at the heart of procurement process that delivers for this project, not out of sympathy but because they are bloody good at the job they do.

The CEC Statement sets out a new economic model to replace the free market policies discredited by the present shambles, a market for demand-led growth, through strong public services, social housing construction, with decent labour standards across all sectors: decent standards for decent people, a model that delivers equality and prosperity, not extravagant profits for irresponsible elite. The government should not pander to greedy banks who have leeches on the life of our society for too long. At a time when people are losing their jobs and their homes on a daily basis we need to stop all lenders, whether owned by the government or not, from repossessing our houses.

The Union has spoken in previous conferences about the decline of manufacturing engineering in the Birmingham & West Midlands Region, the home of the industrial heritage of Gt. Britain. It gives me no pleasure to tell them, I told you so. But we ask the government to start listening and give us some action. Although the Prime Minister promised a government of all talents, we got Digby Jones and Alan Sugar. Digby came into our company after being paid a load of money. He announced he thought the trade union was too strong. Well, I am chuffed about that. So, let's not forget the interests of our working people who we represent. They are the Union. They are the people who are bearing the brunt of this awful recession. On top of the recession three of our members have committed suicide. We are desperate to work with our government and let's hope we can start this hard work today. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gordon. Colleagues, we will now return to the economy section of the economy and manufacturing debate carried over from this morning.

## **UK MANUFACTURING COMPOSITE 7**

### **C7. COVERING MOTIONS**

- 94. UK MANUFACTURING ECONOMY (Northern Region)
- 95. MANUFACTURING CAMPAIGN (Yorkshire & N Derbyshire Region)

## UK MANUFACTURING

Congress notes that the current terminal decline of the UK Economy clearly demonstrates the madness of building an economic around financial services without a sound industrial base. Manufacturing needs the same or similar help as Northern Rock and many other banks and institutions

Congress calls on the Government to recognize the facts; to accept that our future and the wealth of our nation depends upon a strong and competitive manufacturing sector.

Congress further recognizes that real wealth depends upon real products made by real workers selling for real pound notes.

We need to stop employers shipping jobs abroad using the economic crisis as an excuse, when in reality it is because it is easier and cheaper to shed jobs in the UK than anywhere else across Europe.

Companies such as Remploy, Honda, Burberry, Rover, Kodak, Motorola, SR Gents, Northern Foods, JCB and Christie Tyler to name a few have all gone to the wall.

Congress calls on the CEC to set up a national campaign group 'to save manufacturing jobs' before the word manufacturing becomes a thing of the past and to plan and implement a campaign to change Government policy and to secure a comprehensive industrial policy designed to rebuild our manufacturing industries.

*(Carried)*

**BRO. G. MAYFIELD (Northern):** President, the Northern Region has a long and varied history of manufacturing. Although it has declined it is still a very large part of our regional economic structure. However, Congress, in the current economic situation we must look for positives to come out of what is a difficult time. Manufacturing is an area that we can take advantage of during the downturn and as we come out of recession we need a comprehensive industrial policy which will rebuild our manufacturing industry. The government needs to seize the moment and invest in training, research, and development. The wealth of our nation depends on a strong and competitive manufacturing section. Although the world of work is changing and will continue to change, there will always be a need for things to be manufactured. There are massive opportunities, particularly in the area of green energy. The government need to invest and support British industry during these times in order that when the upturn comes we will be best placed to take advantage of the opportunities that arrive.

Congress, it has been a massive mistake to build an economy around the fickle areas of financial services. It does not make economical or industrial sense. Therefore, Congress, we are asking the CEC to plan and implement a campaign to change current government policy, a campaign for the government to develop and implement a comprehensive industrial policy which is designed to rebuild and strengthen our manufacturing industries, to invest in research and development to ensure that our manufacturing

industries remain at the forefront of manufacturing, so that they may remain the most efficient, producing the best quality goods that we are world-famous for. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

BRO. B. GOLDING (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I am back.

THE PRESIDENT: He is back in the fold!

BRO. B. GOLDING: President, Congress, this motion is very dear to me as I work at Nestlé and I have had firsthand experience over the past few years of work leaving our site and going elsewhere. November 1<sup>st</sup> 2006 is a day which remains clear to me as though it was yesterday. At the time our site was losing 645 jobs, British Sugar was closing and Norwich Union was to lose 500 jobs. That day I had a meeting with Tony Blair - I was allowed to speak to Tony then – to look at saving manufacturing jobs. His response was that the way forward for Britain was in finance and banking and that manufacturing needs to stand or fall on its own endeavours. What words of wisdom, eh? What words of wisdom. How the world has changed. How much money has been thrown at the world of banking and how many billions have been put in, and what rewards for incompetence? What was the wealth of the nation built on; manufacturing. From the Industrial Revolution to the factory gates Britain was a world leader. Now is the time to say enough is enough, we need a national campaign to enhance manufacturing and secure the future of generations to come. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Just to show how sorry I am I will invite you tonight to my President's do. Okay? Well done.

## **RETAIN BRITAIN'S JOBS IN BRITAIN MOTION 98**

### **98. RETAIN BRITAIN'S JOBS IN BRITAIN**

Congress we call upon you to lobby government to change their attitude with regard to more and more British jobs going abroad. This government doesn't seem interested at all in encouraging any sort of manufacturing business to stay in this country. It is time the government started providing enticements and subsidies to encourage business to not only stay in this country, but to invest and expand and to build up a manufacturing sector as this country was once so proud of, as a world leader.

BRAINTREE AND BOCKING BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO.D. RIGBY (London): Congress, my branch calls upon this, our Union, to lobby this government to stop the loss of our jobs and work going overseas. As we are all aware, lots of people are losing their jobs and not all because of the recession. We are being told it is cheaper and more viable that our work is carried out abroad, call centres being just some of the jobs. We are now told that an arm of the Post Office is going to go overseas. Why? Is it going to be better? Are the people employed in these jobs going to move? I

doubt it. Who manufactures Dyson's, is a good example. We used to make them in this country but we are told it is too expensive to produce here so they are now being made elsewhere. We used to be a world leader in nearly everything. We had lots of exports, coal, steel, clothing, now we import and close down the factories as we are told that it is cheaper to import than to produce. Well, we need to have the factories and the industries so we can return to exporting and producing, so we can put people back into work. This government must start to put the work back into this country and not export our jobs. We must go back to producing things in this country as we always have done. We are an island, we need to be self-sufficient. Congress, the only thing this country needs to export is some of our MPs but Australia and America are no longer taking convicts. Congress, I move.

SIS. C. HOLLAND (London): It is very nice to talk to India about the weather in Mumbai, even the state of the price of gas, but with unemployment rising isn't it time to bring back jobs to our country? There needs to be investment to help our own manufacturers to be viable again. I am sure some of our bankers and MPs would like to forego some of their bonuses to help get the country on its feet. I urge Congress to lobby government to put the "great" back into Britain. I fully support and urge Congress to support this motion. I second. *(Applause)*

## **MANUFACTURING OF WINDFARMS MOTION 99**

### **99. MANUFACTURING OF WINDFARMS**

Congress recognises the value of offshore windfarms in making a positive contribution in reducing carbon emissions and is mindful of the potential for manufacturing in providing quality added value employment in those former UK shipbuilding areas.

NORTH TYNE MANUFACTURING BRANCH  
*Northern Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. T. BARKER (Northern): Congress, everyone knows how manufacturing and heavy industry has declined in the North East in recent years. Even before the current economic problems, which have only made matters worse, there had been some areas of growth over the years to replace jobs that were lost, in particular in the car industry and call centres. These are in the main semi-skilled jobs and they are suffering within the current economic climate. That is why we should look ahead for opportunities to present themselves. The problems we are facing with the climate changes present us with opportunities. Green energy supplies are here to stay. Developments are happening all the time and we must take advantage of these developments to create well-paid, skilled and semi-skilled jobs, and crucially apprenticeships. The initiatives that are happening on the Tyne riverside are very exciting. They are to create a centre of excellence in the production of green energy installations. The facilities and opportunities on the sites on the north side of the Tyne are exceptional and perfect for the production of wind turbines. The size of the proposed turbines is huge and they will have to be transported on barges

by sea. They are too big to travel by road, rail, or air. Local business people are investing heavily in this project which is to be applauded, but support from government agencies is needed in areas of training and apprenticeships. For years we have talked of the skill shortages looming in the region. Whereas I accept this will not solve all the problems in the area it will go some way to help. The current economic problems create an opportunity to support the workforce in this region by supporting them in up-skilling and retraining. We are calling on Congress to lobby government to support employers in the current credit crunch, stop panic, and give financial support to avoid redundancy situations. It has to be cost effective and beneficial to all to pay people in work rather than pay them to be out of work. Congress, please support the motion. (*Applause*)

BRO. P. SHULTS (Northern): Congress, in recent weeks the only UK-based company manufacturing windfarms closed with a loss of many jobs. This means that in Britain there is currently nowhere to take advantage of the worldwide demand for windfarms. The challenge of slowing climate change makes it inevitable that this demand will rise. Transporting such large structures makes a waterside location the only practical choice for a manufacturing facility and such a location exists on the north bank of the River Tyne. Utilizing this former shipyard will move Britain to the forefront of this developing industry as well as direct employment and indirect jobs would also be created, especially in the supply chain. Congress, please support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I understand that London Region wants to put a speaker in on Composite 7 before I move to the next business. Okay, Steve?

BRO. S. MCKENZIE (London): Right, comrades, brothers and sisters, I am sure now that we have had the Prime Minister, Big Gordon, down to speak to us we are all absolutely in the clear about how we got here, how we are going to get out of it, and that we are going to win the next election. I think not. Comrades, brothers and sisters, I am talking to the report on manufacturing and the economy which, quite frankly, is one of the best reports I have ever read since I have been in the GMB. I would recommend everyone here actually reads it because whilst Gordon did not explain to us precisely how we got in the mess that we are in and we are no wiser as a result of that, I tell you what, you read this and it gives an in-depth analysis of precisely how this economy has been messed up. I could not believe it when I read it the first time out. I thought it was me getting over-excited again and being silly so I read it again, but, no, this really is a good in-depth analysis. The only thing that I would question is the conclusion as to how we get out of it. In my mind, it was a little bit weak. It was saying we ought to be having a Royal Commission to look into this. Well, what a feudal institution is going to do to help us sort out a crisis in capitalism when the only damned answer is socialism and the sort of policies that we have been debating all blasted week, is something I do not understand. So, with those reservations, I would support this report and ask people to read it, vote for it, and to vote for the resolution I am meant to be speaking to. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Steve. Just to let you know, we have made sure Gordon has a copy.

**INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY – ECONOMY  
REDUNDANCY & SHORT-TIME WORKING  
COMPOSITE 15**

**C15. COVERING MOTIONS**

143. REDUNDANCY (Birmingham & West Midlands Region)

144. SHORT TIME WORKING ASSISTANCE (Midland & East Coast Region)

**REDUNDANCY & SHORT TIME WORKING**

Congress

We ask the CEC to facilitate assistance from the Government for employers to enable them to keep our members in employment during economic downturns where dismissal could be the only alternative, as is the case in many of our European counterparts.

We believe that one of the ways to assist the fight against the Credit Crunch is for the GMB to urge the Government to adopt the 'short time working assistance' policy which was worked in the same way as Statutory Sick Pay, last used in the 1970's that would help keep some industries afloat.

*(Carried)*

A DELEGATE (Midland & East Coast Region): President, Congress, and visitors, we urge the CEC to facilitate assistance from the government to enable employers to keep our members in full employment. For too long now during this recession employers have been taking the easy option of redundancy. In an area of belt-tightening it seems that the option of redundancy or downsizing is becoming the norm. Surely this is the wrong way of getting through this difficult period. In the 1970s Britain was forced into a three-day week brought about to help save the electricity stock. This short-time working was not in response of economic frailty, it was in response to our brothers and sisters in the coal industry taking a stance for what they believed in. At this time wages lost were supplemented by signing on. To do this these days would, of course, carry a heavy monetary burden to government. Surely, the government think tank could produce figures to show how much is needed to keep all the books open and men and women working. It costs on average £16,000 to make a British worker redundant. If you multiply this figure by the thousands on thousands of people made redundant, it comes to a hefty figure. But this is not the only price. Redundancy affects people's health, people's marriages, and people's outlook on the future. Costs of redundancy are not purely financial. Statistics show that of the top ten cities suffering the most on rising unemployment four of the top five are in my own region, Midland & East Coast. The British Chamber of Commerce statistics show that 39% of businesses are planning to cut staff and hours. What happens when we turn this corner? Most businesses will have lost core staff and skills. These people have been offered easy redundancy, lost jobs, or simply been forgotten. At the time of recovery businesses will need this skill base, a skill base that has been slowly eroded. New staff means new training, which of course is time lost during recovery. Would it not be better to subsidize industry through this hard time

so as to maintain a loyal and trained workforce? Congress, please support this composite. I move. *(Applause)*

BRO. G. RICHARDSON (Birmingham & West Midlands) in seconding the composite said: No matter how much an employer sings the praises of their workmanship, no matter how much they say the company respects their commitment, no matter how much they promise to re-employ when the economy picks up, being made redundant adds up to the same thing, you are redundant. Your pay is so much and your employment ceases on a certain date. However, there is something you can assist employers to minimize the blow. The shorter week which we adopted in the hope of saving our workforce jobs as an alternative to redundancy was on the whole unpaid except for the statutory layoff pay but there is other assistance available throughout Europe to enable employers to keep their workforce employed on the books instead of short-time with no pay or redundancy. That is the reality and some of our friends took redundancy anyway rather than have a short-time working week. Who am I to say whether they are right or wrong? What I am saying, though, is the fact that European governments have enabled companies to retain their workforce and enjoy a decent wage in return for their loyalty. In Belgium, there is assistance for up to 12 months. The French adopted a system which gives assistance for 12 months and is currently at use in Renault and Toyota. In Germany they use “Kersenvitagal”, that is helping workers in Chrysler, BMW, and Daimler to save their jobs. There are two different forms of compensation in Italy. In Holland there is assistance for six months. In Spain there is a change of contracts so instead of being terminated you can put your contract on hold, with pay.

What do we get in the UK? What help do we have? The answer in the short-term is very little. Our inclusion in Europe is sometimes difficult for certain people to understand when some of the better methods of working are not filtered through the Channel. Therefore, Congress, we ask the CEC to facilitate assistance from our government to enable employers to keep our members in work during the downturn where dismissal would be the only alternative. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, Congress, does anyone wish to come in on the CEC Statement or the composites and resolutions that we have debated today? Short, sharp, and sweet.

BRO. P. SOPER (Midland & East Coast): I fully support this statement and it is a fantastic statement. I could have wrote it myself, tell the truth. Just a couple of points that were not mentioned concerning Bombadier our only surviving train manufacturer who lost the IEP contract and the government gave it to a Japanese company. Then the matter of apprenticeships, I am all for setting on apprentices, great, train as many as you can, but do not close all the factories down before they have finished their training. The fact is that the world can recover from the loss of banking jobs, anybody can do that, but to get years of experience in engineering to keep the manufacturing going takes a lot longer.

I just have a concern on the policy or the existing policy. I do not want manufacturing to be put into existing policy so I hope the General Secretary's department and the Standing

Orders Committee keep manufacturing at the top of the agenda at every conference. We are being filmed. Mary said today we are on the internet. Well, our craft members out there who are unemployed are looking at this Congress and they want to see the manufacturing people in the industry fighting for their jobs because I guarantee other unions will be, so it is a window for advertisement. Please do not put this policy in on manufacturing. *(Applause)*

BRO. B. BRITTAN (Southern): Congress, I am speaking to Motion 99. Please back this motion because I understand what Northern Region is saying. Two factories in the Southern Region have just been put on three months' notice of closure for building these wind turbine blades at a loss of up to 1,400 jobs. It goes beyond that. It goes to other factories that do the templates and everything like that. Please back this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

BRO. F. ALEXANDER (GMB Scotland): Congress, I am supporting the CEC Statement on Manufacturing and the Economy.

President and Congress, with regard to the economy, the Confederation of British Industry is forecasting that economic growth will grow from January 2010. However, unemployment figures due out tomorrow are tipped to show that the number of people claiming unemployment benefit will jump by 63,000. Present forecasts estimate a figure of around 3 million by the end of the year. Let me put that into some sort of perspective. The population of Scotland is around 5 million and we have a forecast of 3 million unemployed within the United Kingdom. Where did we go wrong?

Yesterday our General Secretary, Paul Kenny, gave examples of where the GMB had, during the past few years, been warning of issues which had been ignored by the Labour Government. Whatever happens at the next election in 2010, we must know what went wrong in order to put it right. The CEC Statement contained within the document points that the Labour Government could take to improve the lot of people who might be thinking about how to vote next year. This Union should, in conjunction with like-minded trade unions, call on the Government to set up a Royal Commission to examine the failure that lies behind the economic crisis. The countdown to the next election has started and we want a vision and, more importantly, action to make the Labour Party electable for a further term. GMB Scotland supports. *(Applause)*

BRO. T. FLANAGAN (London): I am supporting the CEC Statement on Manufacturing and the Economy, but I have got a couple of queries here. They are talking about the way the people who run the banks corrupted the system. But we are short of building work. Isn't it time we built a prison to lock them up in? Isn't it a serious offence that these people committed? It was like insider dealing. I think it was complete and absolute corruption. I think we are not looking at it seriously enough. This was a conspiracy. Surely, there is a way of dealing with it? At the moment the banks are running it again. We've given the money back to the same cowboys to have another go at it. I don't think that that's a solution. Gordon did not seem to have the solution. I think the solution is to

get our people running the economy and taking it away from the capitalists. Thank you.  
*(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Terry. Is there anyone else? *(No response)* Colleagues, this is how I intend proceeding now. Tom, was there anything you need to answer?

BRO. T. BRENNAN (Regional Secretary, Northern Region): Just to respond to something that Phil said and I think that Frank touched upon it. That is the need to maintain the skill base. I would argue that there is a need to rebuild the skill base, not maintain what we have got but indeed to rebuild in terms of bringing in more apprenticeships. Whether it be shipbuilding, aircraft manufacture, washing machines, fridges or the manufacture of steel, there is an area where we can bring new apprenticeships into the system. When you consider the prospects of building new power stations, the jobs in engineering and construction, when you consider the amount of jobs that will be created in relation to wind power and wind farms, where we are ideally placed within the UK with the biggest coastline within Europe, massive opportunity and potential exists. We should ensure and argue most forcibly for building not maintaining. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I move to the vote on this morning's Economy motions and this afternoon's Manufacturing motions.

First of all, could we take a vote on the CEC's Statement on Manufacturing and the Economy. All those in favour? Anyone against? That is carried.

*The CEC Statement on Manufacturing and the Economy was adopted.*

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to the motions on the Economy, which are Composite Motion 11, Motion 130, Motion 131, Composite Motion 12, Composite Motion 13 and Composite Motion 14, Motions 139, 140 and 141. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

*Composite Motion 11 was carried.*

*Motion 130 was carried.*

*Motion 131 was carried.*

*Composite Motion 12 was carried.*

*Composite Motion 13 was carried.*

*Composite Motion 14 was carried.*

*Motion 139 was carried.*

*Motion 140 was carried.*

*Motion 141 was carried.*

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to the Manufacturing motions, which include Composite Motion 6, Composite Motion 15, Composite Motion 7, Motion 98 and Motion 99. All those in favour, please show? Against? Those are carried.

*Composite Motion 6 was carried.*  
*Composite Motion 15 was carried.*  
*Composite Motion 7 was carried.*  
*Motion 98 was carried.*  
*Motion 99 was carried.*

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I have two announcements. One is very important. It might be Gordon's but I do not know. A credit card has been found and it has been handed in to the Halifax Bank next door. I do not know the name on it but it may belong to a delegate. Please check that you have got your Halifax bank card. Please check.

We are running a little bit behind and I do not know whether they are still in the hall, but we have had some guests in the balcony who I have just been made aware of. The TGWU Executive Member, Dave Mattison. Dave, are you here? Wave to Mary, if you are. *(No response)* Oh, he's gone to Unite. *(Laughter)* National Officer, Peter Allison. I welcome Peter, but I don't think he is in the balcony either. I think they have both gone to Unite. Anyway, I have mentioned them.

I now move on to the rest of the business.

## **REGIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT GMB SCOTLAND**

### **GMB SCOTLAND**

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

<b>FINANCIAL MEMBERSHIP</b>	
Section Financial Membership (by each Section):	
COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION	9,939
MANUFACTURING SECTION	13,626
PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION	36,690
Grade 1 members	41,753
Grade 2 members	13,832
Retired, Reduced Rate & Others	4,670
Male Membership	32,429
Female Membership	27,826
Total number recruited 1.1.2008 – 31.12.2008	7,198
Increase/Decrease 1.1.2008 – 31.12.2008	1,482
Membership on Check-off	7,468
Membership on Direct Debit	48,335

2008 resulted in a number of changes being implemented within the Region in order to create a new impetus for Growth.

A detailed examination of our performance was undertaken with support being provided from other Regions in implementing best practice in terms of ways of working by introducing new systems and processes. Also involved in this change programme in providing additional support was Martin Smith from the National Organising Team whose input was valued.

GMB@Work was implemented in the Region throughout 2007 however the changes we made at the beginning of 2008 were to embed the process, engage the wider GMB membership base and to ensure that GMB@Work was our new DNA. These changes combined with the delivery of new short based and focused Training Programmes, has resulted in our ability to ensure that GMB@Work reaches out across the Region and into the workplace.

Starting off 2009 we have seen an increase in our Shop Stewards Training with a significant throughput of Shop Stewards and Safety Representatives in these early months of the year. Restructuring the Education Department and engaging the TUC in Scotland into the GMB way of working has significantly assisted our delivery programme. We are now able to deliver on a much more flexible approach across a geographically diverse Region.

All of our Organising Team are now fully trained as Co-Tutors and added to this we have an additional number of Organisers trained in the delivery of GMB@Work Training. This now allows us to deliver specific courses in areas of Scotland where previously we had problems holding training courses and attracting Stewards. Innovative approaches have been in agreeing with co-operative employers that we deliver these short 2 day GMB@Work courses on their premises. The integration and planning of this training combined with our National and Regional Targets will be vital for successful growth within GMB Scotland.

Organisation and Retention within existing workplaces is a key focus for Organisers during 2009 which we all know will be a difficult year as we move deeper into recession. Scotland will not be immune from this Global Economic Recession and while at this point we are not feeling the impact to a great degree there is no doubt that indication across all sectors look set to be affected.

The National Targets of Schools, Southern Cross and Asda are fully implemented into the planning and delivery process, with Regional Targets being developed and targeted on an ongoing flexible basis.

GMB continue to be involved in working with the Commission for Equality and Human Rights in pushing the agenda for the recognition of Classroom Assistants in Scotland (School Support Staff).

The Security Sector across Scotland continues to be an area of focus within the Region using specialist knowledge to develop and implement fully GMB@Work Training.

All new Shop Stewards and our existing Shop Stewards have been informed of how to access the Plain English Rule Book carried at 2008 Congress via the GMB Website and many have now undertaken the GMB@Work Training Programme. As has been the case with Contributions, Benefits Increases and Rule Amendments.

Communications is the vital link with our members across the Region and in particular with our key Activists.

Equal Pay continues to be an ongoing area within Public Services for Recruitment opportunities within GMB Scotland where we are seeing the benefits of local initiatives within and around the Inverness and surrounding areas.

GMB Scotland is developing its Sport Section extending beyond Scottish Professional Football Players into Managers and Coaches where we have targeted all Scottish League Managers. We have also extended our scope to cover Football Coaches within the Community opening up new opportunities which we hope to capitalise on during 2009/10. A new initiative within the Sports area has been the creation of a Greenkeepers and Groundsmen Branch as scope exists across a wide range of opportunities from Golf Clubs, Football Clubs and interest has been shown from ex-members of the International Greenkeepers Association where we have been able to recruit some of their key Scottish members who are working at Branch level encouraging their network to join GMB. This initiative is being supported by the Organisation Team.

Migrant Workers - Post Congress 2008 the Region has set about ensuring that GMB Scotland recruits, organises and provides an improved level of service to Migrant Workers. This key area has been integrated and mainstreamed through the Regional Organising Team with one of the Team leading in this initiative. Initiatives taken to date via the setting up of a Migrant Workers Branch have been wide ranging across the Central Belt of Scotland and up to Inverness in the North.

Membership gains have been achieved through our Officer engaging with community based groups. In Falkirk, inroads have been made with firms working in Partnership with the Intercultural Forum Falkirk to gain access to Migrant Workers within the area. We have also provided some limited funding to the Forum and have advertising at the Forum's premises and we have recruited the workers employed by the Forum providing us with the key linkage to the GMB. Bakkavar also have a plant within the travel to work area where we have secured access to meet with the Migrant Workers again using our members employed in the Falkirk Forum to support us in any language barriers we encounter.

Inroads have been made in the Fife Polish Association who will promote GMB within their Polish/English newspaper. The paper reaches out to a potential 5,000 migrant Polish workers and allows us to provide information in Polish into the community. Interest from Migrant Workers employed in businesses local to Fife is being actively followed up.

Dundee, Aberdeen and Inverness are also communities where we have been able to make contact with Migrant Worker groups through the Networks already developed in the Central Belt. These Migrants are mainly employed within Food and Fish Processing and links have been forged with the Fraserburgh based Migrant Workers Association to gain access.

These initiatives are all based on attracting into membership Migrant Workers and by supporting them via the creation of community and workplace leaders supported by ourselves to deliver GMB@Work and to ensure that we create a quality and delivery of service to this group of workers who can and indeed are exploited in many ways.

Our strategy is now to convert these contacts into membership growth supported by workplace and community leaders as stated above. One recent example in one of our traditional Distribution Sites occurred when one Polish Migrant member was facing dismissal and the Branch paid for the services of an Interpreter to assist in the Disciplinary Appeal against dismissal. The outcome was to win the appeal and reinstate our Polish member. This is only a small example of initiatives being driven at local level to ensure that GMB's employment policy on Migrant Workers is delivered.

It must be added that we have received support and an understanding of these situations from our colleagues in Southern Region who have visited GMB Scotland providing an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the potential problems. The opportunity to discuss and debate these issues with Southern Region's Project Workers was invaluable in setting out our Regional Objectives.

GMB has made contact with Polish Associations in Glasgow and Aberdeen and have been part of our approach to ensuring access to Migrant Workers entering into employment within Scotland.

The majority of the companies employing Migrant Workers in Scotland tend to be within Food Processing and therefore within the Commercial Services Section. This of course is not to say that Migrant Workers don't work across all sectors of the Scottish Economy, although, to date the largest concentrations of Migrant Workers are employed within Food and the Tourist Industry as will be seen through the following overview of the Scottish economy.

Having an SNP Devolved Government within Scotland has been a difficult transition, engagement with the SNP has been significant at the level of the Scottish Trades Union Congress however, that is not surprising given that they want to appear very open to discussions with the Unions.

We are now witnessing the reality of the SNP Government as they have now turned away from one of the fundamental manifesto commitments to introduce a local income tax. This combined with less monies being made available to local authorities under the Concordat Settlement will undoubtedly result in cut backs in local government services and impact on jobs.

Scotland is still struggling to deal with the persistent economic inactivity resulting from the recessions of the 80s and 90s and the ineffective labour market policies of the time. The Scottish SNP Government has now set their Economic Strategy and set these out to be achieved by 2011 and are focused on raising the Scottish GDP Growth Rate to UK levels and to reduce emissions by 80% by 2050 (The sustainability Golden Rule).

- GMB as a major affiliate within the Scottish Trades Union Congress has been significantly involved in developing the response to "The Future of Manufacturing Industry in Scotland". Providing significant inputs into:
- **Skills and Productivity** - Demanding from Government that a Scottish Skills Strategy needs to be developed and creating a Scottish Skills Forum to oversee the process.
- **Investment** - GMB has been at the forefront of calls on the Scottish Government to establish a Scottish Investment Bank – to support in overcoming market failures and to assist in stimulating new investment.
- **Public Procurement** – To be viewed positively in that Public Procurement Policy assists and supports indigenous manufacturing to support Remploy and other sheltered factories given the current EU legislation and also that the Scottish Procurement Directorate needs to work to identify opportunities and develop supporting strategies.
- **Maximising Opportunities** – The implementation of a modern Scottish Industrial Strategy ensuring the development of new sectors and the maximisation of employment opportunities. This to be combined with State Aid to manufacturing matching the EU average.
- **Monetary Policy** – The state of Scottish Manufacturing Industry to be considered seriously within the Bank of England remit when setting UK interest rates.
- **Scottish Manufacturing Exports** – To ensure Scottish Government Agencies develop expert strategies and to secure the implementation of new regulations at EU level allowing producers of origin sensitive products to benefit from the association with Scottish production. That Scottish Employers together with Government need to recognise and address some of the poor employment practices and low pay that continues to exist within areas of Scottish Manufacturing.

- **Energy** – Scotland requires a Balanced Energy Policy based on diversity of fuel sources critical in this approach is the security of supply. Scotland is well placed to be able to provide an Energy Surplus and also through investment in Renewable Sources create high quality jobs.

The SNP continue to be opposed to any new Nuclear Build in Scotland which will undoubtedly impact in the long term.

Commission on Scottish Devolution (The Calman Commission) - The remit of this Commission is to review the provisions of the Scotland Act 1998 and to recommend any changes to the present constitutional arrangements and Better Serve the people of Scotland, Financial Accountability of the Scottish Parliament and continue to serve the position of Scotland within the United Kingdom. GMB Scotland will be attending a meeting with the Commission in March.

Equal Pay - Equal Pay still dominates our work with our legal support team from Digby Brown Solicitors in co-ordination with our Regional Legal Officer. This work closely involves the Senior Organiser for Public Services and a close liaison with the National Secretary and National Legal Officer.

The recent decision by the Scottish Courts that the “no win no fee” arrangements set up by Stefan Cross Solicitors are void, and have no force or effect in Scotland. This in effect means that the monies deducted by Stephan Cross from individual member’s compensation paid out by the Local Authority can now be claimed back from Cross. We have now instructed Digby Brown, the Region’s Solicitors, to pursue these claims against Cross on behalf of our members for the sums of monies he has deducted. Should he fail to return the individual’s files with a cheque for the sum deducted in terms of his contingency fee agreement, we have instructed Digby’s to institute proceedings against him and to hold him liable for the expense of this action.

This is a significant breakthrough in Scotland and may well lead to significant proceedings against Cross and the return of the monies he has deducted from his clients. We are at the time of this report making our Public Services members aware of this development and would anticipate significant activity from our initiative.

### **Commercial Services Section**

#### **Scottish Power – Energy Networks, Working Time Directive Regulations – Joint Statement**

The business and the trade unions jointly recognise it is in the interests of Energy Networks staff that excessive additional hours working are avoided. All parties recognise the importance of staff being fit for work and that periods of broken rest can have an adverse effect. It is also recognised, by the essential nature of our business operations there will be situations that will require excessive additional hours to be worked. In summary, Energy Networks working arrangements will operate within the framework of the Working Time Regulations 1998 which also takes account of the essential nature of the service we provide. Derogations will only be applied on occasions where abnormal circumstances present a threat to continuity of service or production. In all such circumstances, safety will remain paramount. The business risk assessment process will be utilised where extended periods of work are required to ensure that a necessary review has been undertaken. This is a joint responsibility between staff and manager. Records of the risk assessment require to be kept together with an individual’s agreement to undertake the necessary work patterns. Staff should ensure that their working time is recorded and that they are sufficiently rested before any period of duty. Managers are responsible for monitoring working time to ensure that staff do not work excessive hours and for taking action to reduce working hours where necessary in order to ensure compliance with the Regulations.

- There are two particular areas within the Working Time Regulations that have been extensively discussed since implementation. The Business and the Trade Unions have agreed to monitor and guide these areas specifically.
- **Weekly Working Time** - Significant improvements have recently been made using the following continuing initiatives. Accuracy improvements to "hours worked" recording system. Previous systems only recorded hours paid information. Implementation of work patterns that effectively "share the load" amongst all operational staff such as improvement of standby rotas. Close management of out of hours working. Compliance in this area will be reviewed jointly at the quarterly HESAC through examination of management reports.
- **Rest Periods** - It is envisaged that normal work patterns within Energy Networks will enable the majority of employees to take rest entitlements specified in the Working Time Regulations under normal circumstances. Although it is recognised that on most occasions line management and employees are able to agree appropriate rest periods following an extended period of work, the business and trade unions have agreed that the provision of specific guidelines for every situation is impractical. It has been agreed that "rest periods" will be added as a standing agenda item to each of the North and South HESAC forums. Under this agenda item, examples (proposed by either staff or management side) of real "rest period" situations will be discussed, with jointly agreed guidelines for handling future examples then recorded under the minutes and shared with staff involved.

We believe this provides a practical and effective way of ensuring we deliver against the spirit of the working time arrangements that we will continue to review under the auspices of the national HESAC.

**British Energy** - Our colleagues in the other unions did not want to raise with management any other issue except the best pay rise that could be obtained, with a one year deal and flow-through to the allowances. This put the GMB negotiating team at a disadvantage, as if we had insisted on putting all our items into the pay claim, it was made clear to us that the other unions would not support those items. It would have also created disunity, which we did not want to show in front of the company. A decision was taken that we would withdraw our other items on the following:

Emergency Scheme Payment, Fire Team Leaders Payments, Standby Payment, to receive an increase on top of the agreed flow-through; with parity taking place on shift payment and increase in rates above the agreed flow-through.

Our claim on other conditions for a shorter working week, with no loss of pay and an increase in annual leave, with provision to take into account new starters and existing full-time employees, whilst ensuring no breach of age discrimination legislation. However, we did say that we would do a further campaign amongst our members, and if necessary amongst the workforce as a whole, to see if there was general support for these other item. If so, we would list them for inclusion through the company procedures or for next years pay claim. We were rather taken aback that our colleagues from the other unions did not want to progress or support the inclusion of these items, as some affected their own members and also all unions were asked to do a consultation exercise amongst its members and stewards which GMB carried out in good faith. The joint pay claim from all unions was submitted, and an excellent case was made by the staff side chair for a pay rise that tried to meet the aspirations of the members. A further meeting was held where we were offered 4.2%. This was resoundingly rejected by all unions. Management then offered 4.4% and again this offer was resoundingly rejected by all unions. After much deliberation and many adjournments, the company made their best offer of 5% and flow-throughs to the allowances, with no strings attached, for one year. It was agreed that we would put this offer to our stewards and members, with a recommendation to accept, as this was the best offer achievable through negotiation.

**Scottish Power** - Redeployment & Regrading - Joint Statement – Company Negotiating and Consultative Council (CNCC) Policy Development Sub Group, 30 June 2008 The Company's proposals for a consistent Policy on Redeployment, Re-grading and Provisions for Personal Protection of Terms and Conditions have been the subject of detailed consultation and consideration by the Policy Development Sub Group. At a meeting of this Group held on 30 June 2008, it was jointly recognised that the Company had submitted its final draft of this Policy and that there had been significant amendments to the Policy as a result of the feedback from Trade Union and Employee representatives. Accordingly the Company advised the Sub Group of its intention to introduce the Policy without agreement with effect from 1 July 2008. However for employees who had some form of existing personal protection this would be subject to review by their Business/Function and in the event they remained within the scope of the Policy the effective date would be 1 July 2009 for the provisions of the Policy to apply.

In addition where employees were considered to be affected by this Policy from 1 July then this would be subject to review for the period up to 30 September 2008. In the meantime the Policy would be communicated to employees. The Trade Union and Employee Reps indicated that arrangements would be made for a meeting of lay/employee reps to consider in detail the introduction of Policy and their response to it. Further meetings of the Policy Sub Group will be held on 21 August and during December 2008 to consider issues arising from the Policy and receive an update on the progress of the Business/Functional reviews of those employees on existing personal protection arrangements. The Policy was introduced in February 2009.

**SMW LTD, Daldowie Site** - Pay & Conditions Settlement 2008/2009 The settlement will operate from 1 April 2008 to 31 December 2009 (21 months) and applied to all staff at the Daldowie Site covered by the existing GMB Collective Agreement. The next pay award will not be before 1 January 2010.

- **Year 1** - All salaries and flowthroughs will be increased by 4.1% effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008. This increase is based on the highest published RPI figure for January/February/March 2008. The bonus scheme will continue to be based on a new SMW Ltd balanced scorecard. The level of bonus paid will be a maximum lump sum payment of up to 5% of individual basic salaries (applicable to Year 2 also).
- **Year 2** - All salaries and flowthroughs will be increased by RPI (based on the highest published figures in January/February/March 2009) effective from 1 April 2009 and an additional percentage increase will be payable, linked to the Generation Scorecard performance for 2008, as follows: 3+ rating 0.1%; 4 rating 0.2%; 4+ rating 0.3% and 5 rating 0.5%.

**General** – The GMB collective agreement will be superseded by a new GMB collective agreement for SMW Ltd effective from 1 April 2008 which will incorporate the ScottishPower Company Agreement dated 1 January 2008 and all employees covered by the new GMB collective agreement will be covered by all Scottish Power policies and procedures (as published on the HR Intranet).

**Scottish Power** - Joint Job Evaluation Steering Group Meeting. At the Joint Steering Group Meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> October 2008 it was jointly agreed that the Job Evaluation System was robust and fit for purpose. It was also agreed that the Job Evaluation Process that had been recommended by the Job Evaluation Working Group were fit for purpose. The Full Time Officers made the following requests for information to be discussed at the next Job Evaluation Steering Group meeting:

- Management to provide a proposal on the alignment of the Job Evaluation scores to a pay structure.
- Number of employees in each of the benchmarked jobs to be provided
- Number of male/female split per role and grade

- Date proposed for backdating any regrading claim
- Numbers who may be affected by the Redeployment and Regrading Policy
- Proposal
- Management propose to align Job Evaluation Scores to existing pay structure. The proposed breakpoints against the benchmarked roles have been proposed at the mid point between grades. This also incorporates previous agreements on the removal of the bar for the Darts and the live linesperson agreement.
- Numbers of employees provided.
- Male/Female Split provided.
- Management propose to backdate any claim that has been lodged through the negotiating bodies to April 2007. This will only apply to any outstanding appeals which have not been re-evaluated. Any other claims will be backdated to the date the claim has been submitted to the Job Evaluation Working Group.
- Management believe that by proposing the alignment to the existing grading structure the number of employees impacted by the Redeployment and Regrading Policy will be 91 as currently agreed.
- Management propose that once agreement is reached by the Joint Job Evaluation Steering Group on the way forward then ACAS will be contacted to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment.

**Oil Sector** - OIL companies may soon begin delaying projects in an attempt to take advantage of an expected fall in services costs, senior executives have told. Several executives at exploration companies have predicted that the cost of oil services - such as well drilling - could fall by as much as 50 per cent in large open markets such as the North Sea. Since peaking near \$150 a barrel in late July, crude oil prices have fallen by around two-thirds, a move that is expected to lead to a fall in exploration levels. This in turn is likely to force oil services companies - which carry out the projects to explore for oil and bring projects into production - to drop their costs to win projects, industry figures believe. Graham Stewart, chief executive of Faroe Petroleum, said it was a "likely scenario" that the cost of drilling wells in the North Sea in 2010 and 2011 could fall by 50 per cent as demand for wells drops and oil services companies slash their prices.

**Scottish Power** - Coal deal Warms Industry - The Scottish mining industry has won a three-year, £40m deal to provide ScottishPower with coal from an open cast mine in Fife. ATH, which is based Doncaster, will supply 800,000 tonnes of coal from its new Muir Dean mine to the energy firm's nearby Longannet power station starting in April. ScottishPower is currently finalising the commissioning of flue gas desulphurisation equipment at Longannet, a project that will significantly extend the operational life of the power station and increase the capability to burn more locally-produced coal, which has a high sulphur content. A ScottishPower spokesman said the desulphurisation equipment will cut emissions that damage the environment by 98%. The Muir Dean mine is expected to produce 500,000 tonnes of coal a year and create more than 100 jobs at full production.

**Nuclear Power Study** - Alex Salmond, First Minister, agreed to an independent study into whether Scotland needs Nuclear Power. However, the leader of the SNP stressed that the party's stance on atomic energy had not changed.

**ASDA Retail** - This continues to be the largest opportunity within the Region presenting significant potential however, this has to be balanced against an employer who gives the impression of providing the GMB with access for New Stores at their Best Welcome for new employees however, in reality they are still

the same anti-union employer who are owned by the American retail giant Walmart whose practices in the US continue to be challenged by Communities and Unions in the Courts and by Corporate Campaigning. We are slowly making progress by appointing new Shop Stewards and Safety Reps and with Cathy Murphy the Senior Seward for Asda within GMB Scotland we are getting GMB more publicity however, we need to convert all this effort into members and that will be one of our 2009 priorities.

Equal Pay for work of Equal Value continues to be an issue when examining the comparators of the predominance of our female members within Stores when set against the predominantly male workforce in Warehouse Distribution. These cases are being driven by our North West and Irish Region at present as are the claims against Asda's imposition of top rate of pay. These areas continue to be significant in creating the view in Asda colleagues minds that we are a campaigning union and that by joining us we can make the difference they want.

**Scotch Whisky Industry** - Scotch is and continues to be a major exporter and contributor to the Exchequer in revenue. Over the years the industry has been by and large immune from Global Economic matters with only issues arising from time to time within some volatile political countries however it is now clear that the Global Economic Recession is impacting on the industry. The industry is still a growing market however there is a significant shift resulting in a slower growth rate.

The industry has seen significant changes in ownership over the course of the last few years with Moët Hennessy taking over Glenmorangie, Pernod Ricard owning the Chivas Allied Group, Bacardi owning Dewars and Whyte and Mackay being owned by the New Delhi liquor baron Vijay Mallya and decisions within Diageo, the largest and most profitable spirits company, increasingly being made outwith Scotland. These are significant shifts within Scotch Whisky and are driving the pace of change in a traditional industry at significant speed. These mergers and acquisitions continue to impact on decisions being made by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission ruling that certain product ranges need to be sold off resulting in major changes across these companies.

GMB continues to be the largest Union within the Scotch Whisky industry however the merger of T&G and Amicus to form Unite has resulted in a more aggressive approach within the Industry.

Whisky is also providing clean renewable power as a consortium of the Distillers build a biomass fuelled combined heat and power Plant near the heart of the whisky industry in Speyside in the North East of Scotland benefiting these companies and local communities.

The acquisition of Whyte and Mackay cost £595 million in May 2007 however the Indian businessman who now owns it looks set to divert up to a 49% stake in his United Spirits Ltd UK based subsidiary which will spark off a new bidding war in the Industry.

At the time of writing this report negotiations with Diageo, the Worlds largest and most profitable spirits company, have been suspended due to difficulties in moving to an acceptable offer. This is a company who recently posted half year results of delivering 3% organic net sales growth, 6% organic operating profit growth and maintained it's financial strength, the Company claim this has led to a need in moderating any significant increases in wage rates.

The gap between Diageo and the Unions is problematic at the moment and when combined with some of the major Bottling Plants going on reduced time working it will be a difficult set of negotiations once they restart.

**DHL** - This group has now been adopted by the Regional Organising Team who are focused on growing this group and delivering within the workplace. This combined with the work being driven at the level of

National Negotiation Committee is resulting in reaching out to DHL Depots across Scotland with the dedicated member of the Organising Team liaising with Scotland's National Rep and an active Branch.

**Security** - Within the Region we have been building on the National Campaign of CIVT attacks, lobbying politicians in the Scottish Government and a Cross Party basis and in particular focusing on meetings with the responsible Government Minister. This has been combined with approaches to Glasgow City Council and Strathclyde Police in particular where parking restrictions and lack of access to pedestrian precincts has meant that our members have been exposed to walking into these areas to collect cash from major high street banks and retailers and in the process being exposed to significant danger to themselves and we believe the general public. This ridiculous situation has arisen due to parking bye-laws prohibiting Cash-in-Transit vehicles accessing these areas, as to do so means that they are fined, the Security Guard then being potentially taken to court for non-payment of these silly practices and losing their job. This can only be described as bureaucracy gone mad however, Calne Waterson has played a significant role in campaigning on this matter with Richard Leonard, GMB Scotland's Political Officer raising this high on the agenda.

Airport Security has also been a target area for growth across Scottish Airports with inroads being difficult but we are now seeing breakthrough in our Northern Airports and the Highlands and Islands where recent negotiations with OCS resulted in an offer of 4.8% which in the current climate should provide a platform for more recruitment.

Major venues where Security is required continues to be a focus of our Commercial Services in Scotland supported by the Regional Organising Team.

**Norbert Dentressangle** (*previously Christian Salvesen*) - GMB Scotland has one of the largest composite site Distribution Centres in the UK within the Company. The recent TUPE transfer discussions that resulted in the full integration of what was previously Christian Salvesen into Norbert Dentressangle in January 2009 led to a series of National Consultation meetings involving GMB, Unite and USDAW. GMB led these consultation/negotiation meetings which arose due to the issues surrounding Pensions. A whole series of these National Meetings resulted in an outcome which had not been the preferred outcome of Norbert and directly resulted in the provision of an improved pension provision being negotiated. Significant support was provided by Naomi Cook from GMB National Pensions Department throughout this process and resulted in adding significant value, expertise and direction to these difficult discussions. The Bellshill Site near Glasgow has in excess of 1,000 people working on Site.

We now have a Site Agreement covering Warehouse Operators, Drivers, Clerical Admin and Supervisory Grades and this has provided a major profile on Site. The GMB has an excellent Branch Structure on Site with the Branch Secretary being pivotal to recruitment and retention.

This site is a dedicated Morrisons Distribution Site and since moving from a dedicated Safeway Site some years ago as a result of the takeover relationships with the then Salvesen Management and more recently Norbert Management have at times been pretty difficult. The most recent issues being as a result of increased Absence on Site. However, a joint working group are due to report back in a few weeks time as to expected improvements following a joint approach. However the threat of change to the Company Sick Pay Scheme is still a distinct possibility at the time of writing this report.

It has to be said if all our Sites across Scotland were organised as tight as this one by the local Branch we would be growing our membership in this area.

**Asda Distribution** - We are still having problems in trying to move T&G members at the Falkirk Depot back into the GMB as their only means of gaining recognition, bargaining rights and an opportunity to have

representation at the GMB National Structure for Asda Distribution. The Grangemouth Depot while having a significant membership base has potential for growth and will be reviewed very closely as a key growth area during the course of this year as it is clear there are some organisational issues we need to deal with at local level within the Depot.

**Asda Stores** - The Landscape within Asda Stores continues to be somewhat a war of attrition. The arrangement to access New Stores whilst being provided, still presents problems as it becomes clear from Officers doing these presentations that staff within Stores do appear to have been briefed by management prior to this process making the whole approach become more of a cosmetic exercise. They invite us in we don't get as many or any members signing up leaving Store Managers to claim that their employees are catered for via the Colleague Circles. We are however as a result of increased levels of discipline within Stores being able to create a higher profile as colleagues seek to join for representation and protection. The continuing approach within the Region has been directed primarily across the West of Scotland where we have a higher density membership base. Gaining more Shop Stewards/Safety Reps and building our organisation base from within.

### **Manufacturing Congress Report**

SGL - Following discussions on this year's pay offer the Company nor the GMB Organiser approved of plans to meet members in 2 large groups, and would rather pursue a more appropriate route of addressing smaller groups, which was considered a more effective means of seeking feedback on the details of the offer. The recent pay negotiations between the GMB and SGL management have now been concluded, with a proposed overall increase of 3% over a 12-month deal. In real terms, this results in an overall cost to the business of 7.5%, after consideration of the additional aspects of the offer, as outlined below. Of all the options discussed in process of these negotiations, the GMB support this offer as the most beneficial to our members and, as such, recognise this as the Company's full and final offer.

The outcome of these negotiations led to the following proposals being made for the 2008/09 pay and conditions offer:-

- Offer of percentage increase across basic pay and shift allowance.
- Addressing of DTL differentials.
- Added incremental benefits for use of FLT Licence and First Aid certificate.
- Considers attraction and retention issues, specifically for Elec & Mech trades within the Maintenance Dept.
- FLT/First Aid Certificates
- An annual payment of £200 per person will be paid for holding a valid FLT licence or First Aid Certificate (£200 per certificate) in January of each year.
- An additional £100 will be paid on completion of a refresher or new certificate.
- This will not apply if a FLT Licence is a primary requirement of your position (e.g. FLT Drivers).

**Asbestos – Pleural Plaque** - Insurance companies are planning a legal challenge to a Bill in the Scottish Parliament that would allow workers exposed to asbestos to claim damages under Scots law if they develop pleural plaques. These are small areas of scarring on the membrane surrounding the lungs. Pleural plaques do not generally cause symptoms or disability and do not cause, or develop into, asbestos-related disease. Compensation for the condition is no longer available in England and Wales following a decision by the law lords last year. The House of Lords judgement is not binding in Scotland but is regarded as highly persuasive. Ministers in England and Wales, as well as Northern Ireland, have been consulting on whether to reverse the House of Lords decision or to set up a compensation scheme, but either option would be massively expensive and changes are not thought likely. However, the Scottish Government has

decided to amend the law and the Scottish Parliament is currently debating the Damages (Asbestos-Related Conditions) (Scotland) Bill, which would make asbestos-related pleural plaques an actionable personal injury. In an associated policy memorandum the Scottish Government says: "Although plaques are not in themselves harmful, they do give rise to anxiety because they signify an increased risk of developing very serious illness as a result of exposure to asbestos. In areas associated with Scotland's industrial past, people with pleural plaques are living alongside friends who worked beside them and are witnessing the terrible suffering of those who have contracted serious asbestos-related conditions, including mesothelioma. "This causes many of them terrible anxiety that they will suffer the same fate. The Scottish Government believes that people who have negligently been exposed to asbestos and who are subsequently diagnosed with pleural plaques should be able to raise an action for damages as has been the practice in Scotland for over twenty years. In line with normal procedure, the Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Justice, Kenny MacAskill MSP, and the Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament, Alex Fergusson MSP, has certified that the Asbestos-Related Conditions Bill is within the Parliament's legislative competence. However, an Act of the Scottish Parliament is not law if it is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights, and the Association of British Insurers says its members have been advised that the Bill is not compatible with Article 6 of the convention — the right to a fair hearing — or Article 1 of the First Protocol, which protects property rights. It is a little hard to see how the insurers plan to justify these claims and officials could offer no guidance. Since the Bill would merely restore the law in Scotland to what it had been before the law lords' ruling — and still is, on a strict view of precedent — it is difficult to argue that the insurers are being deprived of a "fair and public hearing within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial tribunal established by law". Similarly, it does not seem that being required to pay claims in Scotland that they would not have to meet in England and Wales is denying these companies the "peaceful enjoyment" of their possessions. It might just be possible to argue that it is not "in the public interest" to deprive them of their possessions — another requirement of Article 1, Protocol 1 — but this, too, seems a little far-fetched. Challenging a Scottish Bill in this way is virtually unprecedented and it is not clear what procedure would be involved. Under the Scotland Act, a law officer can ask the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council to decide whether a Bill is within the Parliament's legislative competence.

**CVF Carrier Project** - History has been both made and uncovered at Babcock Marine's Rosyth Dockyard over the last few weeks, as Rosyth continues to prepare for the arrival of the next generation of aircraft carriers. A multi-million pound contract has been signed with Shanghai Zhenhua Port Machinery Co Ltd (ZPMC), securing the order for a 120m span, 1000t capacity 'Goliath' crane. As the name suggests, the crane is one of the largest in the world and will be a notable addition to the coastline of the Firth of Forth. Standing at 80m tall it is scheduled to arrive at the Rosyth dockyard in Autumn 2010. The huge crane will play a vital role in the delivery of the largest ever aircraft carriers to be constructed in the UK. After assembly it is anticipated that the crane, the biggest single investment at the dockyard for over 10 years, will begin work during winter 2010. Further upgrade work continues throughout the yard, increasing capacity to accommodate the arrival of the new carriers which will arrive in huge blocks at Rosyth. Originally built at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Number 1 Dock was extended in the 1960's to accommodate the super sized ships we recognise today, but advances in naval architecture mean that the cross section of the dock is unsuitable to build these state of the art ships. The changes being made to Number 1 Dock have meant that parts of the dock have been uncovered for the first time in 90 years and the teams involved have found themselves making good use of photographs taken almost 100 years ago to assist them in planning these massive alterations. Work to widen the entrance of the dock is able to begin, now that an extensive cofferdam wall has been put in place. The cofferdam, a real feat of engineering, is a watertight wall constructed to withstand very high pressures. Attached to the seabed, this construction provides a dry working environment in an area which is normally submerged in water. Once that work is complete the direct entrance to the main basin at the yard will be widened by 4m, involving the construction of two further massive cofferdams. There is a vast amount of preparatory work being carried out on the dock ready to start building HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales. When the Goliath crane arrives at Rosyth in

2010, it will tower above the yard and represent the scale and enormity of this prestigious project, inspiring all those involved.

**Walker Timber Bo'ness** - Since November 44 blue collar and 27 staff have been made redundant because of the downturn in timber frame work, as from this week the company will go onto a 4 day week for a period of 5 weeks and then an assessment will be made as to whether it continues.

**Burntisland Fabricators** - Meeting held with Management and the Trade Unions (FTOs – GMB & UNITE) on the way forward. It is understood that the Company have won an order for 400 windmill bases.

**NAECI Scotland** - Problems across the UK (including Scotland) on the use of foreign labour on projects when our members are on the dole. Babcock is using non EU labour on a project in Montrose; talks are ongoing to stop this happening. Other areas in the UK are staging unemployed member's protests at the gates of the projects to highlight the problem. Fighting funds and lists are being drawn up in Scotland to defend the jobs.

### **Public Services Section**

The Public Sector Section has been really active this year in representing members through Wage Negotiations, negotiating for Equality, and the introduction of Single Status in Local Government. As well as this GMB Scotland were heavily involved in developing the new Pension Schemes for both the NHS and Local Authorities.

There appeared to be a mood within our membership not to accept further wage awards that were below the rate of inflation and that lead in reality to a drop in Public Sector workers standard of living.

There were disputes that lead to Industrial Action in the Local Authority Craft Agreement which resulted in an improved Pay Offer and a Framework for reducing the working week.

This was followed by a major dispute involving the Local Government workers covered by the Single Status Agreement and again following Industrial Action we secured improvements to the Employers' Offer that matched the rate of inflation in 2008 and is ahead of the rate of inflation for 2009.

Finally, there was also industrial action in Scottish Water following an imposition of a pay award by the Employers'. This action resulted in a significantly improved Offer being achieved for our members.

These disputes were well supported by GMB members with a lot of time and effort being put in by Organisers, Branch Secretaries, Conveners, and Stewards in making the strike days successful. This action spread across the Section was the first time in a long while that members have taken Action and hopefully it will give them confidence in the future not to accept all that the Employer says, confidence to challenge decisions that not only affect their Terms and Conditions, but also affects the way they are treated at work, the type of society they want to live in, the power to change things for the better.

While these disputes are now settled we still have unfinished business in terms of Low Pay within the Public Sector and in particular Scottish Local Government where many thousands of workers are still paid less than £6 per hour. GMB Scotland will be involved this year in a Working Group to look at this issue. We are keen to see this matter dealt with and to see the establishment of a living wage within Local Government. Low Pay affects many part-time women workers in the Public Sector as does pay inequality and GMB Scotland is playing an active role in trying to remove pay inequality in Scotland's Public Sector. We have lodged many Tribunal cases for our members within NHS Scotland and we lead the way in Local Government with more cases lodged than any other Local Government Trade Union.

We are the only Union in Scotland that have taken up second Equal Pay Grievances in Councils that have failed to introduce Single Status on time.

GMB Scotland will continue campaigning on this matter until inequality is removed from not only pay structures, but also from access to training, career progression and the opening of opportunities for all for advancement through promotion and the breaking up of the current gender segregation that currently exists within the Public Sector.

## 2. GENERAL ORGANISATION

Regional Senior Organisers	3
Membership Development Officers	0
Regional Organisers	19
Organising Officers	3
No. of Branches	171
New Branches	2
Branch Equality Officers	26
Branch Youth Officers	0

The process of Reviewing Branches continues across GMB Scotland ensuring that these Branches produce Development Plans and ensure that GMB@Work is integrated into all Branches.

This is an ongoing process.

GMB Scotland during 2008 implemented an Organising Team in line with the other Regions with a number of our new Officers moving into the Team.

These changes have resulted in ongoing reviews of Officers remits which will continue during the course of 2009.

## 3. BENEFITS

Dispute	45,650
Total Disablement	0
Working Accident	4,823
Occupational Fatal Accident	0
Non-occupational Fatal Accident	1,100
Funeral	27,876

## 4. JOURNALS & PUBLICITY

- 2008 – Campaign Workplaces GMB@Work
- Migrant Workers Campaigns across Central Belt and into the North of Scotland
- Asda Mailings
- Equal Pay Information Campaigning
- Public Sector Pay Dispute Publicity
- Classroom Assistants “Valuable Assets” Campaigning tool in Schools
- CIVT Scottish Parliament, Glasgow City Council
- Local and Free Press Coverage on all major Scottish issues.

- Campaigns support of cuts in Ambulance Service
- Council Expenditure on Temporary Workers Scotland
- Low Pay Public Sector
- Media Coverage Public Sector Pay Dispute
- Lobby Scottish Parliament – Corporate Killing
- British Airways Campaign, Scottish Airports

## 5. LEGAL SERVICES

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

Applications for Legal Assistance	Legal Assistance Granted
589	589

### Cases in which Outcome became known - Digby Brown Solicitors/Thompsons Solicitors

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Court	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
550	180	0	368* £2,684,304	2 £24,670	£2,708,974
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2008		863			

\* of which 284 were settled after Court Proceedings were raised.

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

Claims supported by Union	1,967*
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\* of which 1,817 are new equal pay cases.

### Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Tribunal	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
190	53	4	125	8	£569,381.13* £3,082,385.13**
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2008		4,909***			

\* excluding equal pay

\*\* including equal pay & part settlements received 2008

\*\*\* 84 fixed fee and 4,825 equal pay (this includes some multiple job claims for single members)

(c) Other Employment Law Cases

Supported by Union	Unsuccessful	Damages/ Compensation	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008
3*			

\* Two cases before Scottish EAT and one case before Inner House, Court of Session

(d) Social Security Cases

Supported by Union	Successful	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008
18	7	14

GMB Law – Extended Legal Services – 0800 027 22 33

The summer edition of Insight Magazine saw the re-launch of GMBLaw, GMB Scotland's extended legal services scheme, in association with Digby Brown Solicitors. Over 60,000 new GMBLaw membership cards were forwarded to members. GMB membership already provides legal cover for employment law matters and work related personal injury claims which meet membership criteria. The GMBLaw scheme now provides a free phone service [0800 027 2233] to members, and their families, giving access to immediate, free legal advice on any range of legal issues.

The scheme is easily accessed. Calls are received on a designated line run by Digby Brown Solicitors. Callers are put through immediately to a solicitor who will provide advice. If advice is required on specialist matters, such as family law or criminal law advice, then calls will be put through to one of their associate firms who specialise in such matters.

Legal enquiries need not be work related. Digby Brown will pursue non-work related personal injury and motor accident claims for GMBLaw enquirers on a "no win no fee" basis.

If Union members require legal representation then the scheme will entitle them to discounted rates on a full range of legal services including criminal advice and representation, domestic conveyancing, estate agency, family law and divorce, will and executry services as well as free independent financial advice.

Since the re-launch of the GMBLaw scheme in July 2008, the Solicitors have received over 500 enquiries covering a wide range of legal issues some significant and complex to more straight forward ones.

The provision of free wills to members is an important feature of the scheme and has been hugely popular. Importantly it offers a significant financial saving to members.

An innovative benefit of the GMBLaw scheme is the provision of a series of workplace legal clinics. GMBLaw card holders or those within the household are invited to attend these clinics to receive direct, face to face legal advice.

Clinics have already taken place at various workplaces and have been very well received, covering legal matters like wills, power of attorney and financial planning.

In 2009 we shall actively continue to encourage take up of the benefits of the new GMB Law scheme by members and their families and we are working closely with our Organisers and Activists to ensure its success.

To that end we have included details of the new GMB Law scheme in the initial support training materials and the scheme features in the GMB@work training programme.

**Equal Pay** - The mass public sector Equal Pay Act (EPA) litigations continued to take up the majority of time and resources in 2008 and by the end of the year GMB (Scotland) were supporting some 4,825 members with Employment Tribunal claims - an increase of just under 2,000 from the previous year.

The Scottish claims continued to be bedevilled by preliminary points relating to the soon to be repealed statutory grievance procedures and all are proceeding through the Scottish Tribunals at a painstakingly slow pace.

**Preliminary Points – Comparator Issue** - In 2008 GMB (Scotland) supported 3 appeals to the EAT and the Inner House of the Court of Session relating to the array of alleged non statutory grievance procedure compliance preliminary points advanced by Local Authorities. The appeals have become known as the Highland Council Test Cases.

In January 2008, the EAT issued its Judgment in the case of Highland Council -v- TGWU, UNISON and GMB, UKEATS/0020/07. This Appeal related to the Councils' argument that a Tribunal did not have jurisdiction to hear a claim under the EPA if comparators set out in grievances differed from those in the Tribunal applications. The EAT agreed and, amongst other things, stated that the naming of a comparator was a fundamental prerequisite in any claim under the EPA.

All 3 unions appealed the EAT's decision to Scotland's highest civil court, the Court of Session. The Appeal was heard by the Inner House of the Court of Session who issued their Judgment in June 2008 (Cannop and Others v The Highland Council CSIH 38) which held that a Tribunal does have jurisdiction to hear EPA claims so long as the complaint underlying both the grievance and the Tribunal application were "essentially the same". There is now conflicting EAT authority on this point and it is hoped that the matter will be settled when the Court of Appeal hears the Sandwell appeal at the end of February 2009.

**Preliminary Point – Collective Grievance Issue** - The second appeal to the Scottish EAT in 2008 related to the Local Authorities' allegations that a Tribunal did not have jurisdiction to hear a claim where members were not specifically named in a union collective grievance. In the case of the Highland Council v TGWU, Unison and GMB UKEATS/0048/07, the EAT upheld the appeal.

Fortunately, the vast majority of Local Authorities Councils in Scotland did not plead this point in their Defences. As such, our Employment Solicitors are arguing that the Authorities are not now entitled to take the point – unless they seek the leave of the Tribunal to amend their pleadings which will be opposed. This issue is now the subject of a further recently lodged appeal to the Scottish EAT in the Glasgow City Council litigations.

**Residual/Interim Equal Pay Claims** - GMB (Scotland) identified in early 2008 that members employed in some 18 Local Authorities had a further entitlement to make EPA claims for residual/interim periods. An Advert was placed in the March 2008 Edition of the GMB (Scotland) Insight Magazine inviting eligible members to make applications for Tribunal assistance on line. Members were asked a series of questions and thereafter the data entered was "exported" collectively enabling Tribunal applications to be lodged with relative ease. This exercise enabled the union to deal with litigations on a mass scale but using far less time and staff resources than the paper method which characterised the administration of 1<sup>st</sup> Wave Claims.

**Setting Up of Employment Advice Surgeries for Organisers** - In 2008 GMB (Scotland) agreed to pilot a Scheme which involves cases of unfair dismissal and illegal deduction from wages. The Scheme commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009 and its objective is to provide legal, industrial and practical support to Organisers dealing with matters which may result in Tribunal proceedings being lodged. Organisers are attended upon at Advice Surgeries by an experienced Employment Solicitor and telephone appointments are arranged for those Organisers located outwith the central belt.

In 2009 we will closely monitor the progress of this pilot scheme, which is receiving much support from Regional Organisers.

## **6. EQUALITY & INCLUSION**

Tackling inequality and diversity across Scotland is one of our key issues within and outwith the workplace.

Following the creation of the single body structure at National level the Region are now in the process of organising a Conference from which we will create the new Regional Structure driving the Equalities and Inclusion Agenda.

Emma Ritch our National Equality Forum member for GMB Scotland plays a prominent role within the Region.

Meetings of the Equalities groups continue to be robust within the Region and continue to debate issues across the wide spectrum of the Equalities and Inclusion debate.

Migrant Workers and Equal Pay have been high on their agenda of Topics as has Sex Workers.

GMB Scotland sent two colleagues to the Equalities Champions Training in Scalby late 2008 who found the whole experience enlightening. One of our Equalities Champions attended the Women's Summit in London on 9 February 2009 and provided a detailed report as to the level of discussions at which Harriet Harman was a keynote speaker.

- Registered Childcare Places
- Increased Maternity Leave and Pay
- Introduction of Working Tax Credits, Child Tax Credits, Pensions and increased Child Benefit
- The Establishment of a Minister for Women

All of the above were areas covered in her speech.

Neena Gill and Glenis Willmott provide presentation at this Summit as did Glenys Kinnock MEP.

The focus of the day was geared to Equality being high on the Government Agenda.

The Region hope to attract a broad diverse spectrum of members to the forthcoming Regional Equalities and Inclusion Conference broadening and stimulating the debate and engaging the activists to carry the message back into the workplace and their communities.

We continue to focus on the Equalities and Inclusion GMB Workplan and the five Strategic Priorities.

1. Increased Membership

2. Drive the Equality and Inclusion Bargaining Agenda
3. Campaign on Equality and Inclusion
4. Enhance the Profile
5. Drive Organisational Equality and Inclusion

We will ensure that Equality and Inclusion is integrated into all aspects of our work within the Region with no boundaries.

## 7. TRAINING

(a) GMB Courses Basic Training					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Introduction to GMB (2 days)					
GMB/TUC Induction (5 days)	1	20	6	26	130
GMB@WORK (2 Days)	8	77	17	94	188
Pilot 5 Day Induction incorporating 2 Day GMB@Work	1	7	0	7	35

(b) On Site Courses (please specify subjects) N/A					
	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
GMB 3-Day Risk Assessment	2	21	6	27	81

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

(e) TUC (STUC & ICTU) Courses - All TUC Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Union Reps Stage 1 (10 Days)	5	4	1	5	50
Stepping Up Advanced Course for Union Reps (10 Days)	4	3	2	5	50
Health & Safety Stage 1 (10 Days)	12	16	0	16	160
Health & Safety Stage 2 (10 Days)	11	19	3	22	220
TUC Diploma in Occupational Health & Safety (36 Days)	2	2	0	2	72

3 Day Risk Assessment	2	7	4	11	33
Accident Investigation & Reporting (5 Days)	1	3	0	3	15
Musculoskeletal Disorders (2 Days)	1	1	0	1	2
Union Learning Reps (5 Days)	3	1	1	2	10
Training for Equality Reps (3 Days)	1	0	2	2	6
Spanish Stage 1 (10 Days)	1	1	0	1	10

## 8. HEALTH & SAFETY

Health and Safety continues to be one of the key issues within the Region for our Shop Stewards/Health & Safety Representatives in a day to day basis. Our Education Training Programme continues to ensure that all our newly appointed Stewards are trained in Health & Safety and the Environment. Our National Health Representatives continue to work within the NHS in ensuring the protection of our members livelihoods and working environment, working particularly closely with our Ambulance Service membership within Scotland.

Pulling together Health and Safety with our political leverage we have been raising key concerns within Scottish Government on behalf of our security membership employed in CITV and as reported earlier in this report with Glasgow City Council in regard to the increasing level of attacks over the past few years from being shot at, assaults and severe beatings.

The Region has also been working with Affiliates through the Scottish Trade Union Congress and continues to do so in the important Health and Safety issue of Pleural Plaques, being involved in the pursuit of justice in regard to Corporate Culpable Homicide against unscrupulous employers with no regard to working people, only the pursuit of profit. Working with Clydeside Action on Asbestos has been a key role within GMB Scotland working with Tommy Gorman GMB leading figure in the fight against Mesothelioma.

Community issues have also been at the heart of GMB Scotland's campaign on Health and Safety with a key role being played in Dumbarton by the GMB in maintaining key acute emergency provisions at the local hospital.

As in line with the 10 Safety Representatives tasks we continually train our representatives that Health and Safety is an integrated part of GMB@Work and that Recruitment and Organisation vital for a safe and healthy workplace.

## 9. YOUTH

This year we have seen an upturn within our youth activists group in particular the role the GMB Youth Delegation played at the STUC Youth Conference.

Drew Smith is currently visiting Palestinian Territories as part of the STUC Youth Delegation. Drew will be part of a delegation meeting with Trade Unionists from Israel and the Occupied Territories investigating the merits of supporting a boycott, disinvestment and sanctions against the State of Israel until it complies with International Law and agreed Human Rights principles. This is a significant opportunity for Drew as part of this delegation. The STUC supports a peaceful two state solution for both Israel and Palestine. This visit will provide an overview as to the current critical situation. A report back to the STUC Congress will take place in April 2009 in Perth. At this point Congress will have the opportunity to take a decision on the issue of boycott, disinvestment and sanctions.

Drew as GMB Young member on this historic delegation will brief the Region on his return from Israel/Palestine. These views and opinions will be based on feedback from Trade Unionists. This highlights the active role that youth is playing in helping GMB Scotland to formulate STUC Policy Decision.

*(Adopted)*

THE PRESIDENT: I would like to call Harry Donaldson to give his Regional Report for GMB Scotland. Harry, will you formally move pages 112 – 129 of the General Secretary's Report? *(Formally moved)* I will now go through the pages of the report. Pages 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128 and 129? Are there any questions? *(No response)* Does Congress agree the Report? *(Agreed)*

*(The Report was adopted)*

THE PRESIDENT: We now move to Social Policy – General Motions. Motion 182 is Financial Elder Abuse to be moved by Southern Region and the CEC is supporting the motion with qualification. I will call Richard Ascough to reply.

**SOCIAL POLICY - GENERAL  
FINANCIAL ELDER ABUSE  
MOTION 182**

**182. FINANCIAL ELDER ABUSE**

Congress is aware of the frailties of older people, including their failing financial nous, causing advantage to be taken.

Congress therefore calls upon HM Government to make allowances in regulation for those affected including:-

- Extending backdating the refund of overpaid tax to when they were able to understand the tax system.
- Outlawing the practice of financial institutions reducing the interest on their accounts and opening up similar accounts to new investors paying much higher interest.

HEATHERWOOD & WINDSOR PARK H25 BRANCH  
*Southern Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. R. REEVES (Southern): I move Motion 182 – Financial Elder Abuse. President and Congress, there is a basic problem. The cause of this widespread abuse of the elderly is competition, but the vulnerable must be protected. Competition is the driver of the economy, but competition relies on the active participation and understanding of the consumer. When they become elderly and not able to understand or keep track of the changes that are going on around them, they are open to abuse by unscrupulous operators. This goes on all the time, from the door-to-door salesman selling double glazing or home improvements to nursing home operators who rely on negotiation to determine the fees

charged. This happened to my mother-in-law. I was able to reduce the last annual increase from 10% to 5%, but what happens to those who are not able to do so, or have no one to help them? They get ripped off. It is the same with savings accounts. We have all seen adverts in the papers telling us of obsolete accounts paying much less than the accounts they are promoting. What is to be done? The rules governing the regulators of the various industries that deal with the public could be changed to include a clause to make it their duty to outlaw financial elder abuse. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Seconder? *(The motion was formally seconded)* Richard.

BRO. R. ASCOUGH (Regional Secretary, Southern Region): Congress, actually it is appropriate that I am standing at this rostrum talking about elder abuse because let me tell you about a couple of shocking examples of elder abuse. Harry was just abused by being out of the hall. Yesterday, I was out of the hall and I heard the General Secretary saying that I was buying a new tie. *(Laughter)* I wasn't but I hope you like this one, anyway.

I am speaking on behalf of the CEC. The CEC is supporting Motion 182 with the qualification that I will now outline to Congress. With regard to financial elder abuse, financial institutions have a nasty practice of setting interest rates on particular accounts to attract older customers and cutting them once people have invested their money with them. Although they are obliged to notify customers of rate cuts, the system varies according to the type of account. It is particularly difficult for some elderly people to keep track of such changes and the CEC fully supports this aspect of the motion that we support. However, the qualification relates to proposals for backdating the refund of overpaid tax. HMRC rules currently allow refunds of overpaid tax for the past five years. It would be very difficult to define when people actually understood the tax system. Many people never understand it. Full stop. However, this proposal would open up a new area for exploitation by those who already take great pains to avoid paying taxes. Imagine the claims from people like Sir Fred 'the Shred' Goodwin, that he did not understand the system so he can have the tax back on his huge pension.

Therefore, Congress, in summary, we ask you to support Motion 182 with the qualification that I have just outlined. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Richard. Does anyone wish to speak? *(No response)* Does the Region support the qualification? *(Agreed)* With that, Congress, I put it to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

*Motion 182 was carried.*

**ADDRESS BY MONICA SMITH, NATIONAL SECRETARY, GMB RETIRED MEMBERS ASSOCIATION**

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, it gives me great pleasure to ask Monica Smith, National Secretary of GMB Retired Members, to address Congress. Monica.

SIS. M. SMITH (GMB RMA): President and Congress, I am proud to be standing here today speaking about the GMB Retired Members Association. Since its inception in 1985 we have seen many changes in our Union and our Association. Colleagues, if you are reckoning up, no, I wasn't a founder member.

At first when I was elected to the RMA National Committee I heard it said that the retired members were just a sop and the rank and file members paid lip service to the Association. I am happy to say, Congress, that that is no longer so, due in no small measure to Steve Pickering, the former GMB Deputy General Secretary, who worked tirelessly for and with the RMA before he retired. For a short while our interests were looked after by Debbie Coulter until she went on to pastures new. In their wisdom, the powers that be decided that Jerry Nelson would be the ideal person to be the RMA National Co-ordinator and look after our interests. That was a wise choice, as Jerry has an affinity with the retired members and knows what makes them tick. I feel it will be onward and upward from now on. At last year's Congress, colleagues, there was a female chair of the Standing Orders Committee, which was a first for our Union. Likewise, at the GMB RMA Conference last year, Liz Blackman was the chair of the Standing Orders Committee. That was also a first. I am not being biased when I say that it was a great conference.

A visit to the GMB Brussels office and the European Parliament had been on the cards since 2007 when Kathleen Walker-Shaw addressed the GMB RMA National Committee meeting at the Midlands & East Coast Regional office. The members were so impressed by Kathleen's knowledge and enthusiasm about the GMB and the European Parliament, the general consensus being that we try as a body to visit Brussels. This was accomplished in December 2008 when most of the National Committee and our co-ordinator, Jerry Nelson, visited the GMB European office for a very intense meeting with Kathleen which was followed later by a visit to the European Parliament. When we were there the debate was about Palestine.

The GMB RMA National Committee continues to meet four times a year with the regional committees meeting regularly. They bring the reports to the National Committee meetings. The National Committee elect delegates to attend the National Pensioners' Convention meetings and also elect a delegate to attend the NPC Executive meetings. The NPC held a Pensioners' Parliament in Blackpool last week but one. I am proud to say that the GMB RMA banner was again very much in evidence, with members from seven of the nine regions walking behind and with it. Jerry Nelson also walked with the banner. Jerry had been invited to attend a workshop with Dott Gibson, the NPC General Secretary at the Pensioners' Parliament on public service cuts. I believe he was very well received.

The GMB RMA Conference will take place in Manchester on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2009. The GMB RMA along with the NPC will continue to fight for a better deal all round for pensioners. We have always had the support of the GMB General Secretary and the GMB National President and the CEC.

What a year it has been with many pensioners still living in 2009 in poverty, not made any better by food and fuel prices going through the roof, then to see and hear about failed bankers' huge pensions. I was appalled by threats of the two Opposition parties claiming they will review public service pensions if elected. That is quite hypocritical as their own pension is more likely to be more than most people's annual salary. The approximate salary of MPs is £65,000 a year, and with expenses it rises to £135,000. That is only their first job! It was reported in the press that MPs were looking for £80 million to top up their pensions, and you get some MPs, like Tory Nicholas Winterton, complaining that he has to contribute £60 per month to his big final salary pension.

Let me see, if I remember when I was in full-time employment and I went to the companies to present a pay claim for my members, and remembering that pensions are deferred pay, what did the company say? They said: "It has to be self-financing." That would be a very good meeting to attend. It looks again, colleagues, that Mr. and Mrs Average are at the back of the queue again when MPs expect preferential treatment along with incompetent bankers who are only capable of negotiating huge pensions for themselves at the expense of people's jobs.

Friends, you may be aware that the Government intends to establish a UK Advisory Forum on Ageing. This forum will provide advice for Government Ministers and relevant departments or committees on issues relevant to ageing and will be co-chaired by the Minister for Pensions and the Ageing Society, Rosie Winterton, and the Minister for Care Services, Bill Hope. I understand that there will be a number of regional forums which we need to get involved in. The National Forum will have 30 seats, filled, as you can guess, with the usual suspects, ministers and local government organizations. It is possible that other members may be drawn from trade unions but this is not a certainty. As far as the RMA Association is concerned, that is not good enough, and we urge our members on the Labour Party and the TUC National Executives to put forcibly, if needs be, our case for a voice in future government policy as it affects retired persons.

The GMB RMA are a feisty lot and are looking to be a more containing association. We want to give something back to the Union which looked after us in our working life. Please use us. Jerry Nelson is a proud man because he has one of the best associations of the GMB, and I modestly have to say I agree.

Now, colleagues, a little poem:

Growing old is not so bad  
Some may say it makes them sad  
We've lived our lives with ups and downs so true,  
But so many sunny moments have helped us through.  
It matters not that we grow old  
We've lived our lives upright and bold.  
We've fought the fight so strong and true  
To make the pensions much better for you, you and you.  
We meet and greet so many friends

Whose lives we've touched with no offence  
With our friends all bonded close  
It's our family we love the most.  
Our lives and paths may cross by chance  
While playing our part in life's merry dance.  
We love you all in GMB  
So strong and true, our lives are busy.  
Thanks to you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Monica. So we have two Poet Laureates in the house today.

### **ANNOUNCEMENT**

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I would like to make an announcement. I would like to welcome our Auditors from Hard Dowdy, Nigel Gooch and Tim Waters. Welcome.

### **ANNUAL ACCOUNTS & AUDITORS REPORT CEC RULE AMENDMENTS (FINANCE & CONTRIBUTIONS)**

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I move to item 6, Annual Accounts and Auditors Report. I call Paul Kenny

### **CECRA8 – CECRA16**

### **CONTRIBUTIONS AND BENEFITS**

#### **CECRA8.**

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

**Line 3: Delete “£2.50”, insert “£2.55”**

**Line 8: Delete “£1.38”, insert “£1.43”**

#### **Clause will now read:**

1 Once they join the union, members will pay a contribution in line with this rule.

Members will pay £2.55 a week and be classed as grade-1 members, unless they are:

- part-time members employed for 20 hours or less;
- young people under 18; or
- recruited as being unemployed;

in which case, they will pay £1.43 a week and be classed as grade-2 members. However, grade-2 members can choose to pay the contribution rate for, and be classed as, a grade-1 member.

The above grades are only used for deciding what contributions members should pay and the benefits they may receive

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

**CECRA9.**

**Rule 46, Clause 2,**

**Line 4: Delete “£2.50”, insert “£2.55”**

**Line 5: Delete “£1.38”, insert “£1.43”**

**Clause will now read:**

- 2 Branch committees will have the power to fix the amount lapsed members (members who joined but later stopped paying contributions) need to pay to rejoin. This amount will be between £2.55 and £10 for grade-1 members and between £1.43 and £5.50 for grade-2 members, except in particular circumstances when we may increase the amount with the approval of the regional committee.

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

**CECRA10.**

**Rule 50 Strike benefit**

**Clause 1,**

**Line 5, delete “grade-1”**

**Line 7, delete “Grade-2 members will receive £5 a day (up to £25 a week), and payments will be linked to the Government’s rates of inflation.”**

**Clause will now read:**

- 1 If members stop working unconstitutionally, no benefit can be paid without the approval of the Central Executive Council. If members stop working as a result of a strike approved by the Central Executive Council in

line with these rules, every full financial member who stopped working will receive £10 a day for 10 weeks (the limit being £50 a week). In any dispute, the Central Executive Council may increase these rates by any amount, at any time, and for as long as it feels is appropriate.

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

**CECRA11.**

**Rule 53 Victimization benefit**

**Clause 2,**

**Line 1, delete “Grade-1”**

**Line 2, delete “Grade-2 members will receive £2 a day or £10 a week for six weeks.”**

**Line 4, delete “grade-1”**

**Line 5, delete “Grade-2 members will receive £1.65 a day or £8.25 a week.”**

**Clause will now read:**

2 Members will receive victimisation benefit of £4.20 a day or £21 a week, for six weeks. If a member needs benefit for another six weeks, they will receive £2.40 a day or £12 a week. In any dispute, the Central Executive Council may increase these rates by any amount, at any time, and for as long as it feels is appropriate.

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

**CECRA12.**

**Rule 54 Disablement grants**

**Clause 1,**

**Line 1, delete “(for grade-1 members) or £2000 (for grade-2 members)”**

**Clause will now read:**

1 The Union will pay a grant of £4000 to any member who is permanently unable to work as a result of an accidental injury, as long as that person, at the time of the accident, had been a continuous member for 12 months and did not owe more than six weeks' contributions.

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

**CECRA13.**

**Rule 58 Fatal accident benefit**

**Clause 1,**

**Line 9, delete “grade-1”**

**Line 14, delete “For a grade-2 member who:**

- **dies in an accident; and**
- **has been a continuous member for 12 months;**

**we will pay £2000, within 12 months of the accident.”**

**Line 18, delete “grade-1”**

**Line 22, delete “For a full financial grade-2 member who has an accident (other than while working at their usual place of employment) from which they die within 12 months, we will pay £550.”**

**Line 36, delete “49.7”, insert “48.7”**

**Clause will now read:**

1 In line with clause 3 below, we will normally pay fatal accident benefit to the husband, wife, child, parent or partner (including same-sex partners) of a member who has died and who was a full financial member. The relative claiming benefit must have completely or partly depended on the member for the ordinary necessities of life according to their circumstances.

We will pay fatal accident benefit as follows.

- For a full financial member who:

- dies in an accident;
- was working at their usual place of employment; and
- has been a continuous full member for 12 months;

we will pay £4000, within 12 months of the accident.

- For a full financial member who has an accident (other than while working at their usual place of employment) from which they die within 12 months, we will pay £1100.

We will only pay one type of fatal accident benefit for any one financial member. The Central Executive Council will have the power to decide which of the above people we will make the payments to. If more than one person is entitled to the payment, the Central Executive Council has the final decision about how the payment should be divided.

We will only pay the benefit if, at the time of the accident and when making a claim, the member had been paying full grade-1 or grade-2 contributions (unless they were paying contributions at a different rate under rule 48.7) and did not owe more than six weeks' payments.

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

## **CECRA14.**

### **Rule 59 Weekly accident benefit**

#### **Clause 1**

**Line 1, delete “grade-1”**

**Line 3, delete “Grade-2 members will be entitled to accident benefit of 80p a day (and up to £4 a week).”**

#### **Clause will now read:**

1 A full financial member who is absent from work because of an accident will be entitled to accident benefit of £1.85 a day (and up to £9.25 a week). We will not pay accident benefit for more than 11 weeks. Also, we will not pay benefit to a member who has an accident when they are not working.

**CECRA15.**

**Rule 65 Political Fund**

**Clause 8,**

**Line 14: Delete “£7.50”, insert “£7.65”**

**Line 15: Delete “£4.14”, insert “£4.29”**

**Line 16: Delete “Rule 49”, insert “Rule 48”**

**Line 21: Delete “£7.50, £4.14”, insert “£7.65, £4.29”**

**Clause will now read:**

8 The Central Executive Council shall give effect to the exemption of members to contribute to the Political Fund of the Union by relieving any members who are exempt from the payment of part of any periodical contributions required from the members of the Union towards the expenses of the Union as hereinafter provided and such relief shall be given as far as possible to all members who are exempt on the occasion of the same periodical payment.

For the purpose of enabling each member of the Union to know as respects any such periodical contribution what portion, if any, of the sum payable by him/her, is a contribution to the Political Fund, it is hereby provided that the annual contribution to the Political Fund of the Union shall, for Grade 1 members be the sum of £7.65, for Grade 2 members the sum of £4.29, and for members paying the reduced rate under Rule 48 the sum of 15p. The contribution to the Political Fund shall be payable in three equal instalments on the first contribution nights of the quarters ending March, September and December.

Any member who is exempt as aforesaid shall be relieved from payment of the said sum of £7.65, £4.29 and 15p respectively. The Central Executive Council shall have power to suspend at any time payment to the Political Fund for any quarter or quarters, in which event, that portion of the member's contribution allocated to political purposes shall be credited to the Central Fund.

## **CECRA16.**

### **Rule 65A Political Fund (Northern Ireland)**

#### **Clause 5,**

**Line 7: Delete “£7.50”, insert “£7.65”**

**Line 8: Delete “£4.14”, insert “£4.29”**

**Line 8: Delete “Rule 49”, insert “Rule 48”**

#### **Clause will now read:**

5 The Central Executive Council shall give effect to the statutory exemption of Northern Ireland members to contribute to the political fund of the Union by making a separate levy of contributions to that fund from those Northern Ireland members who have provided written consent of their willingness to contribute, namely, for Grade 1 members the sum of £7.65, for Grade 2 members the sum of £4.29, and for members paying the reduced rate under Rule 48 the sum of 15p payable in three equal instalments on the first contribution nights of the quarters ending March, September and December. No moneys of the Union other than the amount raised by such separate levy shall be carried to the political fund.

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

*(Carried)*

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: President, I move the Finance Report. That is *that* nice document in your books which covers the Accounts, the Benefit rule changes which I will be covering in my speech and CEC Rule Amendments 8 – 16.

Firstly, dealing with questions on the accounts, Nick Childs from the London Region asked: “Can you give us your assurance going forward that wherever possible our investments are ethical? Further, that the companies we invest in are not anti-union, they do not carry out human rights and environmental abuses, for example, companies like *Daily Mail* and Cable & Wireless?” That is a very, very good question, Nick, and a very helpful reminder to the Union trustees to maintain a vigilant watch over the investment actions of our professional advisers.

The Union has an obligation to safeguard the members’ money but, frankly, not at the price of unethical investments. The trustees insist on receiving regular reports on the background to the investments made in our name. Sometimes, we make a conscious decision to buy shares in a company that our members work in or ones we are in dispute with to use as part of our corporate campaigning strategies or, frankly, to physically support some of our members’ employment.

Nick, we are going to ask the trustees to look at the examples which you have raised, to go through the list again and to remove them from our portfolios if there are any doubts at all about their status. (*Applause*) Thank you – I mean it – Nick, for raising it.

Congress, the Accounts show some important and excellent facts. Membership is up by 11,000 plus, every region of the Union is in growth, contribution income is up by about 7.5% and our expenditure was kept to a 4% increase. Planned new investment was made by the delivery of our magazine to all our members’/everybody’s doors, more frontline officers on the books of the Union and significant new investments in our employees’ pension schemes. Lydia, no. 1, please. (*Slide shown*)

*This* chart shows the history of the Union’s financial management up to a few short years ago. The red tells its own story. I showed *this* to Congress last year for the first time and I think a lot of people were pretty shocked. You can see in the last five years that the Union has stayed on the right side – on this occasion the blue side is the right side – of expenditure. This year we were able to have an operating surplus of about £1.5 million on our budget forecast. When you put in investment income and fund transfers of a further £2 million, it gave us a surplus of £3.5 million.

Lydia, slide no. 2, please. (*Slide no. 2 shown*) You can see our surplus again. It is the same picture each year. We are not just operating within our budgets but actually being able to reinvest in the backbone of the Union, the assets of the Union, the investment income and the money that we made from shares. That is a stark contrast from previous organizational attempts. That gave us a surplus of £3.5 million, and this was, of course, against a backdrop of falling asset values, shares and property prices. But when you keep the Union on the right lines, you do not need to sell your assets to balance your books. So we can ride the financial storm in the equity markets because we are living within our means. We are growing the Union and living within our means, unlike some unions, and indeed in stark contrast, as you see, to the position of the GMB just a very few short years ago.

I want, again, to make a commitment to Congress from the Senior Management Team of the Union and the Executive. They have both vowed that we will never return to the self-indulgent old claptrap which previous General Secretaries peddled to the Finance Committee and to this Congress.

We have also set to one side a substantial sum to ensure that we have sustainable funds to fight our equal pay battles. There is no point in talking about taking these issues on unless you plan to fund them properly. So we have put £2.5 million aside from last year’s accounts to pay for some of that legal process. We will not flinch in that equality battle. We will not flinch in our battles with the employers. I will tell you something else. We certainly will not be backing away from the toe-rag carpet-bagging lawyers who are trying to ride on the backs of our members and our Union.

We are also taking advantage of our strong financial position to strengthen our property asset base. In addition to the purchase and refurbishment of the regional office for GMB

Scotland, which represents, actually, the biggest ever investment in Scotland by the Union, we have just purchased a fine building in Hove for the Southern Region. Say “Thank you”. (*Cheers*) We are looking at the refurbishment of offices in Northern Region and South Western Region, which are also on our agenda.

The commercial property market collapse in the south-east also gives us other opportunities. Because we are sound and solid and we have got a good financial base and we are looking after ourselves again, it is funny, but when the market is at its bottom edge, there are opportunities for those who have actually got sound financial cash reserves. So we are looking in the south-east because it could be an opportunity for us to look for a location in the central London area for organizing and member services. So we are growing, we are being prudent, we are still examining every bit of internal cost and trying to get better and better deals and get them under control.

Because of our strong position we can do a number of other things. Firstly, we can keep contribution increases to a minimum. So the Executive is recommend a 5 pence a week increase for grades 1 and 2. On benefits last year we raised the funeral benefit by almost 100 per cent, and dropped the ten year qualifying period to eight years for a flat payment. We also abolished the differential between grade 1 and grade 2 funeral benefit payments. Frankly, whatever grade you’re on when you die, you need the money.

This year we ask you to abolish the lower benefit payments made to grade 2 members in fatal accident, in total disablement, in weekly accident and in dispute and victimization benefit, making a single tier of payment at the highest level for all members of the Union irrespective of grade. This move goes further along the road to ensure that part-time workers are not second class members in the GMB.

The current levels of benefit for death and disablement are incredibly poor. They were fixed at limits set years ago by the Inland Revenue. Four thousand pounds is a pitiful sum in a benefit for losing your life. If you agree, our recommendation is that we lobby the Treasury to increase, radically, increase the tax free cash benefit that the Union can offer to members who are victims of tragic accidents.

Congress, we are doing okay, but progress is based, as it always must be, on sound and prudent financial management of the Union, not telling fairy stories, facing up to our difficulties and responsibilities and with our commitment, clearly, on growth for the Union through *GMB@Work*. I hope that you will see the benefits of sound growth within the organization and sound financial management by the Executive. Please support the Report and the CEC Rule Amendments numbered 8 – 16. Thank you very much indeed. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Paul. Can I have a seconder for the Annual Accounts and Auditors Report and the CEC Rule Amendments?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I formally second.

THE PRESIDENT: I now ask anyone who wishes to participate in the debate on Rules 8 – 16 which Paul has just moved to indicate. *(No response)* All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

*The Annual Accounts & Auditors Report was adopted.*

*CEC Rule Amendments 8-16 (Finance & Contributions) were carried.*

## **RULE AMENDMENTS**

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to Rule Amendments. The first is Rule Amendment 237. Rule 17b: Organisers. London Region to move.

### **RULE AMENDMENT 237**

#### **RULE 17b: ORGANISERS**

##### Rule 17b Organisers

2 Within five years of being appointed, and at a time decided by the regional secretary and the regional committee and approved by the Central Executive Council, all organisers will take part in an election in line with rule 17f. When elected, these officers will be known as 'elected' organisers

#### **RA237**

Delete:

"2 Within five years of being appointed, and at a time decided by the regional secretary and the regional committee and approved by the Central Executive Council, all organisers will take part in an election in line with rule 17f. When elected, these officers will be known as 'elected' organisers."

*Note Congress calls on the CEC to bring forward rule changes to eliminate the requirement of Organisers to have to face elections within five years of their appointment. This rule is anachronistic, not in line with modern employment practices and could potentially lead to the GMB facing claims at Employment Tribunals for unfair dismissal.*

ISLINGTON APEX BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Lost)*

BRO. V. WEST (London): I move Rule Amendment 237, which asks Congress to delete and remove Rule 17b in the Rule Book. This is not the first time that I have tried to bring this motion to Congress, but in the past it has either failed the Standing Orders Committee test or it has not received the support of the regional delegation. So this year when I received the support of the regional delegation I was very surprised, to say the least. London Region now believes that Rule 17b is out of date, incurs unnecessary costs for the Union and is potentially in breach of employment legislation. In the ten years that I have been a branch secretary, I do occasionally receive nomination papers for officer

elections, and I even return them signed and duly filled in. But during that period there has never, in my experience, been an election. So why do we keep a rule that we never use? Why do we keep a rule that involves the cost of sending out nomination papers unnecessarily for no actual benefit? Why do we keep a rule which could end up with the Union facing claims at an employment tribunal if an officer ever did lose their job as a result of this rule?

I believe in the traditions of the GMB, but I also believe that we need to balance those traditions with a modern and forward-thinking rule book. Why do we have elections for organisers when we don't have elections for regional secretaries, senior organisers or national officers? We have made great strides over the last few years in updating and modernising the rule book, but let's go forward with progress and further reform. I move.  
*(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Can I have a seconder?

SIS. D. PETERSON (London): President and Congress, I second Rule Amendment 237. As my colleague said, we are asking for Rule 17b, clause 2 to be deleted. It does not make sense to appoint somebody as an officer and then, within five years, put them up for election. You would not apply for a post and then find out that you had to be put forward for an election within five years. So why do you have a rule that says that organisers should do this? As my eloquent colleague stated, surely you are laying the Union open to employment tribunals, or at least a breach of employment law. Please support this rule being deleted. Thank you.

#### **RULE AMENDMENT 254**

#### **RULE 55: FUNERAL BENEFIT, CLAUSE 1**

##### **Rule 55 Funeral benefit**

1 If a full financial member, who has been a continuous member for 8 years dies, the regional secretary will, having been given a copy of the death certificate, pay the widow, widower, member of the family or nominated person a funeral grant of £250. (This person will need to show that they are responsible for paying funeral expenses.)

#### **RA254**

Line 2: Delete: "A continuous member for 8 years"

Insert: "In continuous membership for 12 months"

EAST DEREHAM BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Lost)*

SIS. J. SMITH (London): President and colleagues, I move Rule Amendment 254, Rule 55. For more years than I hate to remember, this funeral benefit stood still at a paltry sum of £130. That £130 was if you had got in the maximum of 10 years service. Last year there was, at long last, an increase of £120, making funeral benefit £250. But, Congress,

there was a catch. That catch was that on claiming from the Union you had to be in membership for eight years. Yes, eight years, Congress. At a time of grief, families need all the money they can get as we all know what today's funeral costs are. Also one cannot say when your number is being called, and if we are appearing for our members, as our motto we follow, so please vote and support this rule amendment. We are asking for £250 of funeral benefit after 1 year or 12 months continuous membership. The point is that if you join any form of insurance, how many insurance companies would you pay to get £250 on eight years service? I doubt it. Also the fact is that this rule change would be valuable in recruiting. So please support this rule amendment. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jan. I call the seconder.

BRO. A. McLEAN (London): President, I am here to second the resolution proposed by my colleague. I think that we can all agree that the increasing of the level of funeral benefit which was introduced a few years ago was long overdue. However, one aspect of this rule is clearly unacceptable. To qualify for a payment of funeral benefit, a member must serve the eight years qualifying period. This length of qualification period, in my opinion, is wrong. I will give an example. Nobody joins the Union with the intention of passing away. Surely, it is a basic principle of the GMB to provide support and assistance to our brothers and sisters when they need it. For example, new members to the Union are entitled to support, guidance and legal representation, if it should be required, from day one of joining the Union. I, therefore, urge you all to reflect on the anomalies that are already inherent in our rules and support the resolution to reduce the qualifying period for funeral benefit to a realistic time of 12 months. I second. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? (*No response*) In that case, I call Kevin Flanagan for the CEC.

BRO. K. FLANAGAN (CEC, Commercial Services): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC and asking you to oppose Rule Amendments 237 and 254. Delegates, Rule Amendment 237 aims to end the requirement for organisers to face selection within five years of their appointment. The CEC does not accept that this practice puts the Union at any risk. In fact, if it had, I think we would have been challenged a long time ago. I think we need to reflect on that. We think it is an entirely healthy principle that organisers should be elected by the ordinary members who they seek to represent. This CEC is committed to improving lay democracy. This rule gives that away, in a sense, because if this rule amendment goes through, where is the accountability for officers? Obviously, there has to be an element of accountability to the membership. It has worked well in the past. Why would it not work well in the future?

So we are asking you to oppose the Rule Amendment to 254 because *GMB@Work* is all about trying to increase the democracy of this Union, not reduce it. Therefore, the CEC is opposed to that amendment.

In relation to Rule Amendment 254, where they are asking for an alternation to the service requirement to qualify for funeral benefit, the General Secretary has just given

you a good financial report and it has taken us a long time to get that turned around and sorted out. I hope it continues to do so. Clearly, if you put this rule amendment through it would actually increase some of the costs on the Union but, obviously, it was only last year that we actually changed that rule and started to reduce the qualifying period. So it is important that we ensure that we look at this and do not add too much cost to the Union overall. The CEC does not agree with the proposed massive reduction in service qualification. The funeral benefit is aimed at longer-term members. We have to bear that in mind. That was the original purpose of the rule. We actually do not think that this particular rule helps us to retain or, for that matter, lose members. It is not a recruitment tool.

The General Secretary has had a great deal to say about his desires and wishes as the finances allow for us to look at all benefits. Therefore, we think that this particular rule amendment is probably a bit premature at this particular stage, given the fact that we have only just changed it last year and are in the process of looking at the impact of those changes. Maybe what we should look at is an overall increase in the amount of benefit we give, not the qualifying period which you are entitled to.

Colleagues, therefore, the CEC also asks you to oppose Rule Amendment 254 and, as previously stated, to oppose Rule Amendment 237. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in to speak on the debate? *(No response)*  
Vaughan, do you wish to exercise your right of reply?

BRO. V. WEST (London): Congress, I am exercising my right of reply on Rule Amendment 237, Rule 17b. The reason why we are bringing this rule change forward is that it is a rule that is not used. The CEC has said that they do not believe that they have ever been challenged. Well, one of the reasons you have not been challenged is that the rule is never used. When was the last time there was an election for an officer? There has certainly not been one in London Region for the ten years that I have been active as a branch secretary. I doubt that there has been an election anywhere in the Union for at least double that amount of time. So why do we have a rule that is never used? This is your opportunity. You get one opportunity a year, don't you, to overturn the CEC. This is your opportunity. Use it. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Vaughan, I don't wish to upset you, but I am afraid to say that the rule is used and it is used quite often. All officers have to go out for election. Just because we have got long-serving officers in London Region, it doesn't mean to say that it does not go on anywhere else.

The CEC is asking Congress to oppose. All those in favour of 237, please show? All those against, please show? That is lost.

*Rule Amendment 237 was lost.*

THE PRESIDENT: Rule 254. Does the mover wish to have the right of reply?

SIS. J. SMITH (London): I am replying to the CEC on Rule Amendment 254. Congress, I ask you to vote for this rule amendment. I am asking you to go against the CEC on the basis of what they have said. They say that for recruitment this is not a tool to be used. I can assure you, Congress, in my area that when you are recruiting they say, "What's in it for me?", and the main thing that they want is funeral benefit. I can assure you it is used time and time again as part of our recruitment tool.

Secondly, as a guard against age, we do not have an age limit. We do not know when our number is up. With insurances or any form of policies, please, I know we only moved the years last year, but let's be realistic. Bring it into normal line and have a 12 month qualifying period. Please vote for this rule amendment. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jan. I am assuming that you do not accept our recommendation.

SIS. J. SMITH: No, I don't.

THE PRESIDENT: In that case, I put Rule Amendment 254 to the vote. The CEC is asking you to oppose. All those in favour, please show? All those against. That is lost. That is lost by a mile.

*Rule Amendment 254 was lost.*

## **UNION ORGANISATION – FINANCE & CONTRIBUTIONS**

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, we now come to Union Organisation – Finance & Contributions. Motion 21 has been withdrawn. Motion 23 is Subscription Price Freeze, Yorkshire & North Derbyshire to move. Motion 24 I will be calling next: Membership Fees – Fair Due for All, North West and Irish Region to move. Motion 25 has been withdrawn. Motion 26 – New Youth Membership Rate and Promotion, to be moved by South Western. Motion 27 – GMB Family Membership, to be moved by Northern Region. Motion 28 is on Retired Members Association Contributions, to be moved by the Northern Region.

### **SUBSCRIPTION PRICE FREEZE MOTION 23**

#### **23. SUBSCRIPTION PRICE FREEZE**

Congress calls on the CEC to freeze the union subscription i.e. no increase for our members on low income for one year only, due to the economic crisis.

BRIGHTSIDE BRANCH  
*Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region*

*(Lost)*

BRO. J. STRIBLEY (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, the idea of this motion is to make sure of our ground – we have been very careful before – before agreeing a contribution increase, and this year when times are so hard, especially for our low paid members. We welcome the fact that the proposed increase is only 5 pence a week this year, but even that will be hard to find for our members on the minimum wage. We are struggling to make ends meet. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, James. Seconder?

BRO. J. SHIELD (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I second Motion 23. President and Congress, I support this motion for many reasons, the main one being that I work in the confectionary industry and, contrary to popular belief, we are not all highly paid. Our pay rise was 1% when inflation was 3.5%. Some of our grade 1 packers are paid just above the minimum wage and are made up mostly of women. We have seen jobs and overtime disappear through a lack of orders. Some staff have been taken off shift working which means they lose their shift allowance. With the economy still in recession, surely, it would have been better to keep subs where they were for this year since our members' incomes have reduced substantially. This may stop our members making an easy decision on saving money. Please support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

#### **MEMBERSHIP FEES – FAIR DUES FOR ALL MOTION 24**

#### **24. MEMBERSHIP FEES – FAIR DUES FOR ALL**

Congress is concerned that the current application of calculating Union dues impacts upon and is unfair and unjust to low paid, mainly female members.

The current method whereby all part-time members pay the same amount and all full-time members pay the same, needs to be replaced with a more acceptable and egalitarian system.

Congress notes that all other National Unions use block and/or tapering membership dues, based on annual earnings, which is a fairer way of calculating deductions.

Congress expresses its dissatisfaction at the current method employed to calculate Union dues as an outdated model which needs replacing by a more fairer system.

Congress instructs the CEC and Finance Committee to research this issue and to introduce and implement a more fair and equitable method of deducting membership dues, ensuring equality for all our members.

252 BRANCH  
*North West and Irish Region*

*(Lost)*

BRO. W. McCLINTON (North West & Irish): Congress, I move Motion 24 without the support of the North West & Irish Region. However, I am not flying without wings because this motion has got the support of my branch, if they are watching. When I put my argument to you, you may reconsider your position.

This motion was proposed at my branch by our youngest rep, Stephanie McCaig which she sold to us. In Belfast City Council the differential between our highest paid member and our lowest paid member is £70,000 a year. Me, £18,000! The unfairness is obvious. I hasten to add that there is no reckless adventurism intended in this motion. Quite the reverse. The GMB – the great, the magnificent and the beautiful, as we call ourselves in Belfast – has always been about the creation of a fairer society, the just society and the good society. We know that under Paul Kenny’s stewardship we are advancing on these fronts. If ever there was a time to explore and build a robust business model based on this resolution now is the time to begin. Yes, we are a business. We are in the business of speaking for the fresh and the bone.

This motion, if implemented, would be done through the mechanism of contemporary business practice building the appropriate business model first. We are a professional outfit, not a well-meaning bunch of hopeless dreamers. It will, of course, need to ensure that the financial needs of the Union are met, but it will be a model about the future. This model will be based on imagining the future and we are not going to imagine a future where we are not the big hitters and where our business is not sound.

I know that people have a number of difficulties about the practical implications. This proposal believes in the intellectual capacity of this Union. Other unions do have models, such as tiered models, and do organize in a whole variety of workplaces. One example I can give you is SIPTU, or Jim Waller’s old Irish Transport & General Workers’ Union. SIPTU is the largest union in the Republic of Ireland with 200,000 members and, like us, they are organized across a range of industries and workplaces. I know they are smaller than us, but they still have 200,000 members. There are difficulties surrounding the collection and monitoring of contributions. There is a range of systems in today’s technical age. The work of the organisation’s stratum could be looked at, for example, to explore the possibilities. The aim of this motion was to explore thoroughly all of these avenues and, as I said, the interface.

It has been put to me that changing the current system might mean problems in retention. Fear not! We are a quality union and our members know it. All this is not easy, it is difficult, but as has been said, action is easy, thought is hard and action based on thought is inconvenient. I say it is time to get inconvenient. This is about fairness and the future.

James Connolly, the Irish Labour Leader, once said that the only true prophets are those who carved out their own futures. I have complete faith in the collective genius of this Union. You have been very gracious in listening to me, and I thank you. I would ask you to go one step further. Take this out of the “too hard box” and imagine the future. I move this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder?

BRO. I. LOWES (North West & Irish): I second Motion 24 without the support of the region. The motion is based on a fundamental but simple principle: those who earn more should pay more. In the same way as we argue that the higher earners should pay more tax than low earners. If the principle is sound, then why is the motion being opposed? I can only assume that it is down to the practicality of implementing a tier system, but if something is worth doing then, sometimes, it takes a bit of hard work. Thank you.

## **NEW YOUTH MEMBERSHIP RATE AND PROMOTION MOTION 26**

### **26. NEW YOUTH MEMBERSHIP RATE AND PROMOTION**

Congress recognises the difficulties that the GMB has in getting the younger members of the workplace interested in joining a trade union, we are also conscious that these people are, for the most part on low earnings as a result of their age and the discriminatory element of the 'National Minimum Wage Legislation'. Therefore, Congress calls upon the CEC to give consideration to this issue with the purpose of developing and introducing an appropriate 'Young Persons' rate, that reflects the lesser earnings that the law permits employers to pay people 21 years of age and under.

Congress also recognises that we need to be more proactive in recruiting such young members into the trade union movement and nurture and encourage such youngsters in the hope that they retain membership for life. Therefore, Congress calls upon the GMB to produce campaign literature specifically aimed at the youth member, and actively promote the recruitment of such members via the branch activists within the workplace. Furthermore, to give consideration to using recruitment teams to seek out and take advantage of any College or School based open day to promote the importance of trade unionism within 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

R45 RHONDDA CYNON TAFF BRANCH  
*South Western Region*

*(Referred)*

*(The Motion was formally moved and seconded from the floor to refer)*

THE PRESIDENT: You are going to refer? Congress, the branch has asked for a reference. Do you agree? *(Agreed)*

*Motion 26 was referred.*

## **GMB FAMILY MEMBERSHIP MOTION 27**

### **27. GMB FAMILY MEMBERSHIP**

Would the GMB seriously consider the introduction of a GMB Family Membership.

This would encourage recruitment.

*(Referred)*

BRO. N. COLLINSON (Northern): Congress, I move Motion 27 on GMB Family Membership. Congress, as you are well aware nowadays, whether it is paying entry into a theme park or buying travel insurance, companies now offer family discounts. They are becoming the norm. We believe that it is time that the GMB should be looking at the possibility of family memberships. It would encourage all members of the family to get involved in our great Union. I also believe it would be an incentive to recruitment. As *GMB@Work* says, we must always be looking for new ways to recruit and organize. The opportunities that family membership offers would, I believe, be beneficial to our objectives. Congress, please consider supporting this motion. I move.

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

*Motion 27 was formally moved.*

## **RETIRED MEMBERS ASSOCIATION CONTRIBUTIONS MOTION 28**

### **28. RETIRED MEMBERS ASSOCIATION CONTRIBUTIONS**

We call upon congress to increase the contribution of branches to the Retired Members Association (RMA) by £5 per year.

SUNDERLAND NO 9 ENG BRANCH  
*Northern Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. W. HUGHES (Northern): Congress, I move Motion 28. Colleagues, it is my privilege to move this motion on behalf of our retired members. As you know, the CEC originally asked for this matter to be deferred. To be deferred is just another fancy name to “Leave it on the table. We’ll look at it some other time”. In some cases, it has got to be that because there is nothing wrong with that, worthy President. But in the case of retired members who have more time behind them than what is in front of them, however you may look at it, it is nice to have the support of the CEC even with the qualification. Mind you, never once did I doubt that I would get the support of the CEC. My faith in the CEC was rock solid. Do you know, I have never doubted for one moment – never! My second speech reads: “Be polite. Half a loaf’s better than none.” My friends, I did not come to this rostrum with cap in hand or with the begging bowl. I came to ask for your financial help. I want financial help for your future. Retirement and old age, hopefully, comes to us all. We in the RMA – that is the Retired Members Association – have laid the foundations but now we need your help to start building for the future, and it is called ‘dignity in retirement’. We need your help to keep the voice of the GMB loud and clear.

If anybody in this hall thinks that the RMA nationally, and even at regional level, just sit around and polish their zimmer frames, well, think again, because the GMB retired members are one of the most active sections of the GMB, with lobbies and marches to Westminster, the Pensioners' Parliament, debating disabilities and pension links, free travel and Community Tax. You name it, the retired members are doing it.

Congress, I am a little bit disappointed about the wording of the qualification, President. A lot of thought and soul-searching went into this motion long before it got to this rostrum. We have a good national treasure in Brian Adams. In fact, he spends sleepless nights worrying about the pennies, never mind about the pounds. Travelling costs are always top of the agenda. I can assure you, my friends, that the National Committee of Retired Members has no intention of being the Oliver Twist of the GMB! *(Applause)*

Finally, colleagues, for the first time, with the permission of my worthy President, I have a little commercial break. If your phone goes off, you get fined £10, mind. £10 in her box. As I said, let me give a little commercial break to Congress. When you walk round the many stalls with a little mug here and a stick of candy rock there, a pen or a pencil, you will probably come on to the Retired Members' stall. Just stop a while. Don't think that you are buying a raffle ticket for a pound. Think you are investing a pound for your future with a chance of winning a first-class prize. Support the motion, colleagues. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I call that mental abuse of the Chair. You are taking advantage just because you are a pensioner.

SIS. E. JEFFREY (Northern): I second Motion 28 on Retired Members Contributions. Congress, I want to praise the work that the RMA does. They are an excellent example of how members of our Union can be extremely valuable and still make an excellent contribution when retired. We must never forget what a valuable asset our RMA is, especially in lobbying. This is because much of the work we do as a trade union involves lobbying and campaigning to get a message to the Government. If there is one group of people that the Government are more likely to sit up and listen to is retired people, for the simple reason that retired members vote. That is why we should be agreeing to this modest increase of £5 per branch per year. Let's face it. It is not going to break the bank. It is a small amount to pay to increase the capacity of the RMA to organize and campaign on issues on our behalf.

Congress, please think carefully about supporting this motion and give the RMA the funds it needs to organize effectively. Thank you. *(Applause)*

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

BRO. G. HARVEY (Birmingham & West Midlands): I have just a quick comment on Motion 24: Membership Fees – Fair Dues For All, and Motion 27: Family Membership.

President and Congress, you might think that Fair Dues For All would be a tool for recruitment, but it is certainly not a tool for retention, as several other unions have found out. That is why we are growing and they are losing. That is the thing I would worry about that.

On Family Membership, I would like to say that I have actually brought this subject to Congress regularly in years past. I can remember Paul Kenny as a young bloke having to stand up and tell me “We’re not having it”. I had small children then, I’ve got small grandchildren now and we are still not getting anything from him on it. Thank you.

BRO. S. COUGHLIN (North West & Irish): I would like to come in on Motion 24. I am a bit concerned. Personally, I agree with the concept of it. I work in the nuclear industry. We have good terms and conditions. I would be on the higher echelon and I wouldn’t mind paying more, especially to this Union. Fabulous! The problem I have is that I am a convenor and a branch secretary. *This* is going to cost me members. The other members who we have on site are through Amicus, Unite and Prospect, and I do not want to see my members go to them. If this motion gets passed, it is going to cost us members. If it was worded differently, and it also goes on about “all other unions”, I think that is factually incorrect. It is not quite true. If it was worded differently, I would support, but I cannot support on behalf of the members who have delegated me to come here and represent them. Thank you. (*Applause*)

SIS. C. CLARKSON (Midland & East Coast): I also brought family membership forward. My two young boys, who were with me at the weekend, are both members of the Union. They don’t work so they only pay the 5 pence, and myself and my husband are both members. I think the family membership should be engrossed with that. Once you are a working person, then you should pay your own membership as a full member.

The other point was the 5 pence increase. I work 30 hours a week and I get just under £9,000 a year, and 5 pence to me is very little to pay to get the power of the Union behind me. I think that the members did not fall out with the Union over 5 pence, but when we held back and said, “No, we will freeze the membership money” and then we gave them a 10 pence increase, that was when people started falling out over it. I think little and often is better than a big bunch. Thank you. (*Applause*)

SIS. J. SMITH (London): President, please support Motion 28. I am an active member of the RMA and I was fighting their cause way before I became a pensioner, and I am still fighting the cause today. But, Conference, we need an increase in this money because if we don’t get it we know what is going to happen. The RMA will fall to its death. What will happen then? There will be no funeral benefit for them, so please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Jan, but will you stop talking about death.

SIS. D. PETERSON (London): President and Congress, about the ability to pay for lower paid workers, what I am worried about is that UNISON do theirs on a

proportionate rate. We do ours on a flat rate. So, therefore, our lower paid workers are becoming in danger of having to pay more than what UNISON's members do, because they do it on a proportional rate. That is all. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dott. Does anyone else wish to speak? *(No response)*  
In that case, I call Gary Doolan to speak on behalf of the CEC.

BRO. G. DOOLAN (CEC, Public Services): President and Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motions 23, 24, 26, 27 and 28. The CEC asks you to oppose Motions 23 and 24. We ask you to refer Motions 26 and 27 and we seek your support for Motion 28 with a qualification.

Motion 23 seeks a freezing contribution. Colleagues, last time there was a recession, we tried exactly this. At the end of the freeze period the Union was losing £3 million a year and Congress had to put contributions up by 25%. Let's not make mistakes of the past. The General Secretary has told us how strong management and courageous decision-making has helped us, finally, to achieve financial security, and let's keep it that way. There was also the issue of the increase of the 5 pence which is less than the increase in the minimum wage.

Delegates, Motion 24 is looking for a proposal for a system of earnings related contributions. The CEC understands the argument that this might be a fairer way of collecting contributions. Colleagues will, of course, realise that a change in the structure might mean lower contributions for some, but it would also mean asking very many members for a big increase. Last year we promised to look into this matter, so the CEC carried out a study of the practical aspects of a banded system. We went to UNISON and examined their subscription processes in detail. We concluded that the differences in membership profile, the range of employers who we deal with and the much higher proportion of direct debit members in the GMB meant that this sort of system was just not practical for our Union.

As we mentioned, Conference, the motion refers to all other using block and tapering systems, and this is not factual. We would lose money, we would have less accurate records and we would be increasing our dependence on employers at a time when the exact opposite is needed.

Motion 26 calls for special contribution rates for young people. The Rule Book already contains a lower rate for the under-18s and there is also a facility to set special rates to suit particular campaigns. However, the motion also calls for special recruitment initiatives to be aimed at young people. That part of the motion deserves further consideration, so we are asking for reference.

Motion 27 is for the introduction of family membership. Congress has rejected this in the past but there may be some merit in the CEC giving closer consideration to a special rate which would extend to the benefits of GMB members to other family members. The CEC, therefore, ask that you refer this motion.

Motion 28 proposes that the amount that branches pay to the Retired Members Association is increased by £5. This means that most smaller branches will be paying £15 a year and those larger branches £25. The CEC supports this because of the invaluable work of the RMA. Our qualification is that the RMA carries out a check on its expenditure to make sure that all members take advantage of rail cards and cheap internet fares so that the RMA continues to work firmly inside its budget.

Colleagues, please oppose Motions 23 and 24 and we ask you to refer Motions 26 and 27. We ask for your support for Motion 28 with the qualification about the expenditure. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I will take the vote. Motion 23. Does the mover wish the right to reply? (*Declined*) Thank you. The CEC is asking you to oppose. All those in favour, please show? All those against? That is lost.

Motion 24. The CEC is asking you to oppose. Does the mover wish the right to reply? (*Declined*) All those in favour, please show? All those against, please show? That is lost.

We now go to Motion 26. South Western Region has agreed to reference.

Motion 27. Does Northern Region agree reference? (*Agreed*)

Does Congress agree reference on Motions 26 and 27? (*Agreed*)

Motion 28 with a qualification. Does the mover wish to exercise the right of reply? Oh, my God! I thought you would have given up.

BRO. W. HUGHES: We accept the qualification.

THE PRESIDENT: All those in favour of Motion 28, please show? The CEC is supporting the motion with the qualification. All those against, please show? That is carried.

*Motion 23 was lost.*

*Motion 24 was lost.*

*Motion 26 was referred.*

*Motion 27 was referred.*

*Motion 28 was carried.*

## **REGIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT: BIRMINGHAM & WEST MIDLANDS REGION (Pages 80-85)**

### **BIRMINGHAM AND WEST MIDLANDS REGION**

#### **1. MEMBERSHIP & RECRUITMENT**

<b>FINANCIAL MEMBERSHIP</b>	
Section Financial Membership (by each Section):	
COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION	13,832
MANUFACTURING SECTION	15,224
PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION	25,246
Grade 1 members	38,991
Grade 2 members	11,136
Retired, Reduced Rate & Others	4,175
Male Membership	29,526
Female Membership	24,776
Total number recruited 1.1.2008 – 31.12.2008	9,514
Increase/Decrease 1.1.2008 – 31.12.2008	2,266
Membership on Check-off	36,729
Membership on Direct Debit	13,096

### **Response to Organising Agenda**

I am pleased to report that the Organising Agenda within the Birmingham and West Midlands Region continues to be the priority. All Officers, staff and activists within the region are fully on board with our Organising Agenda which I believe shows in the improved recruitment figures and financial membership. The Organising Team still have the same priorities which are to drive the organising agenda amongst the Officers within the region. Each member of the team is allocated a specific area of responsibility within the national and regional projects. They then ensure that that particular project is driven and has cohesion. The region continues to operate a system where each area team dedicates one week out of every four to solely organising which is still done in addition to general day-to-day organising. Also, with regards to the schools campaign, Officers diaries are accessible to a member of the Organising Team and where there are significant free spaces, school visits are allocated into their diaries and the Officers then visit the appropriate school. The GMB@Work Training for new activists and existing activists continues to be delivered in the region throughout 2008. This has proved quite successful and as a result of that training, we have seen a marked improvement in both our recruitment figures but also in the quality of service provided to rank and file members by shop stewards who have attended the training. The use of lay representatives to assist in the area teams to organise, continues to be a success and the use of accompanying representatives to handle first line grievances and disciplinaries continue to be utilised which allows Full Time Officers more opportunities to devote time to organising and servicing the membership. Again, as with my last report, I am very pleased to report that the Organising Agenda continues to be positive throughout the region and all Full Time Officers and staff are totally committed to the Organising Agenda and the success of the region. In line with Motion 21 at Congress 2007, branches continue to adopt branch recruitment plans in accordance with Rule 37 and where requested, the region assists with funding to assist the branch recruitment plan. As a result of the commitment of all involved in the Organising Agenda, it gives me great pleasure to report an increase in financial membership on the twelve month period of two thousand, two hundred and sixty six which I believe is a credit to all Officers, staff and activists within the Birmingham and West Midlands Region.

### **Recruitment Targets and Campaigns**

Throughout 2008, we have continued to concentrate on the main national targets which were Public Services, where School Support Staff and Catering Staff are providing us with a constant steady stream of members and we are ensuring that when we do make new members in schools, we appoint a person as a contact who we are finding in turn, then become representatives in certain cases. As well as Public

Services, G4S and latterly Asda have been targeted and again G4S has brought us a steady flow of new membership. Asda is slightly more difficult with regards to accessing the stores however we have begun to see an increase in our Asda membership and this will remain a target for organising. The other national target has been Southern Cross Care Homes, as mentioned in last years Congress report we have made the Southern Cross week an annual event and in 2008 we held our second Southern Cross week. The continued activity within Southern Cross has seen us increase our membership at the end of December 2008 to 864 members. The Southern Cross strategy has been so successful that we now intend to conduct the same strategy in Wilkinson's Stores on an annual event. As well as the national targets we also have our Regional Project Board and working progress throughout 2008 have included the following companies or organisations; Egbert Taylor, London M&E Ltd, J Lomas, Tewkesbury Park Hotel, Delwin Centre, James Irlam Transport, Access Technologies, Wells Plastics, Iron Mountain Logistics, Northgate Consultants and WSP/May Gurney. The Greenfield targets continue to be pursued and from January 2008 through to December 2008 the following Recognition Agreements were secured; DSL UK Ltd, Gloucestershire Police Support Services and Stafford and Rural Homes.

### Overview of Region's Economic & Employment Situation

At the time of writing the region's economic and employment situation can only be described as dire. Towards the end of 2008 we suffered a series of major job losses in the Automotive and Construction Sector which in my opinion was brought on by the frivolous actions of the banks which now leaves us in the midst of a severe recession. Manufacturing remains one of the key employers across the West Midlands with 19,000 manufacturing firms which employ over 360,000 people across the West Midlands, generating sales of 45 billion pounds. With such statistics it would be absolutely disastrous if the Government allowed the recession to bite even further without taking precipitive action to prevent the haemorrhaging in the Manufacturing Sector. Unemployment was above the national average in the West Midlands, the claimant count rising highest in the West Midlands in December 2008. As at the end of December 2008 the average number of claims stood at 4.8%.

### 2. GENERAL ORGANISATION

Regional Senior Organisers	4
Membership Development Officers	NIL
Regional Organisers	16
Organising Officers	2
No. of Branches	114
New Branches	1
Branch Equality Officers	17
Branch Youth Officers	9

### 3. BENEFITS

Dispute	NIL
Total Disablement	NIL
Working Accident	1465
Occupational Fatal Accident	NIL
Non-occupational Fatal Accident	NIL
Funeral	9,050

#### 4. JOURNALS & PUBLICITY

During 2008 the regional magazine, Centreport, was transformed into a national magazine with a regional dimension. The magazine continues to be a success in the region and the regional website is also a very popular source of information for the membership. Throughout 2008, press releases have been published in almost all of the regional newspapers with interviews taking place on television and radio on the following subjects; compensation recovered through our legal services, job losses in JCB, GKN, Jaguar Land Rover, TRW and Baggeridge Brick. The regular newsletters continued to be circulated amongst the section membership in Southern Cross, Asda and the School Support Staff. All-in-all I am of the opinion that the media strategy we have established has proven to be very successful in raising both awareness and the profile of the GMB Birmingham and West Midlands Region.

#### 5. LEGAL SERVICES

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

.Applications for Legal Assistance	Legal Assistance Granted
776	776

##### Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Court	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
290	164	1	£3,755,613.91	£1,650,000.00	£5,405,613.91
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2008		486			

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

Claims supported by Union	57
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##### Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Tribunal	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
9	3	0	£278,935.30		£278,935.30
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2008		45			

##### (c) Other Employment Law Cases

Supported by Union	Unsuccessful	Damages/ Compensation	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008
107			3

(d) Social Security Cases

Supported by Union	Successful	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008
11	5	3

## 6. EQUALITY & INCLUSION

Since last year's Congress the Birmingham and West Midlands Region has been working on disbanding the Regional Equal Rights and Race Committees and setting-up the new Regional Equality Forum (REF), with elections to this body conducted in October 2008. The REF members have been allocated into project groups to look at specific issues around equality and diversity, organising, campaigning and communicating with the Region and the wider community. The focus of the REF is to integrate equality and diversity into everything the union does. The projects are being headed up by the REF Officer and the three National Equality Forum (NEF) representatives Sharon Harding, Tony Hughes and Harpal Jandu. The Region yet again staged a very successful Women's Conference in November, which was very well attended. The REF would like to thank the Regional Secretary for the financial support given to this day. Also a special thanks to Sharon Harding NEF rep for all her hard work prior to the conference and her commitment on the day which helped it run so smoothly.

## 7. TRAINING

The GMB@Work basic training and the existing reps training have gone very well in the Region. The Education Department would like to thank all those reps, Officers' tutors and staff for helping put 384 reps through training.

(a) GMB Courses Basic Training					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
GMB @ Work	8	71	37	108	864
GMB @ Work existing reps.	7	27	14	41	287
GMB Induction	7	47	18	65	455

(b) GMB specialist courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Equality & Collective Bargaining (up date)	2	5	8	13	26
Intermediate industrial relations	1	8	2	10	10
Employment law up-date	1	12	0	12	12

(c) GMB Health & Safety Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Health & Safety Stage 1	2	25	4	29	58
Accident investigating	1	9	0	9	9
Advanced health & safety	1	16	0	16	16

Occupational health & safety certificate	1	13	1	14	14
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(d) Northern College					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Advanced health & safety	1	4	1	5	5
Stewards refresher course	1	2	0	2	2
Practical employment law	1	1	1	2	2
Understanding Disability Act	1	0	1	1	1

(e) GFTU Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Dealing with Bullying & Harassment	1	2	0	2	2
Leadership skills	3	5	1	6	18
Basics of health and safety	2	4	0	3	8
Risk assessment	1	2	0	2	2
Intro to Political theory	1	1	1	2	2
ICT course	2	3	0	3	6
Advanced negotiating behaviour	1	1	0	1	1
Building trade union organisation	1	1	0	1	1
Trade unions & environment	1	2	0	2	2
Equality reps	2	2	1	3	6
Understanding company accts	1	1	0	1	1
Self management & personal effectiveness	1	2	0	2	2
Organising migrant workers	1	1	0	1	1
Building self esteem / assertiveness / public speaking	3	2	1	3	9
Management of change	1	1	0	1	1
Time management	1	1	0	1	1
Into intro HRM	1	1	0	1	1
Emotional intelligence	1	1	0	1	1

(f) TUC (STUC & ICTU) Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Health & safety stage 1	3	8	0	8	24
Union reps 1	2	1	2	3	6
Safety reps occupational diploma	1	1	0	1	1
TUC diploma law	3	2	3	5	15

Stepping up	1	2	0	2	2
Using computers	1	1	0	1	1
ULR training	1	1	0	1	1

## 8. HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Birmingham and West Midlands Region has continued to implement Union policy with regard to health and safety. The Region continues to offer advice and assistance to our representatives by providing both an information service and workplace visits when requested. The Department has been instrumental in driving health and safety issues forward and raising awareness amongst Officers and representatives.

In the past year the Health and Safety Department has been involved in a number of workplace organising campaigns. At Walsall MBC the GMB reps ran a seminar for the kitchen staff during induction days on accident and near miss reporting. The reps met with over 80 kitchen staff. There have been safety and environment initiatives at Worcester County Council run by Jane McCann the county's senior GMB representative and safety rep of the year 2007. The Region has also been at the forefront of the National Green Working Party, which was set-up at last years Congress. Workers' Memorial Day was again commemorated with a multi-faith service held at St John's Church close to Regional office and was well attended.

*(Adopted)*

**THE PRESIDENT:** I ask Joe Morgan to move his report, pages 80-85 of the General Secretary's Report.

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

**THE PRESIDENT:** Does anyone wish to speak to his report? I will go through the report page by page. Page 80, 81, 82, 83, 84 and 85. Are there no questions? *(No response)*  
Does Congress agree to accept the Report? *(Agreed)*

*Regional Secretary's Report: Birmingham & West Midlands Region (pages 80-85 of the General Secretary's Report) was adopted.*

## **SOCIAL POLICY – CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

**THE PRESIDENT:** We now move to Social Policy – Criminal Justice. This section includes Motion 173 – Police Cautions with Security Guard on Duty. London Region to move and Second.

### **POLICE CAUTIONS WITH SECURITY GUARD ON DUTY MOTION 173**

#### **173. POLICE CAUTIONS WITH SECURITY GUARD ON DUTY**

This GMB Congress is concerned that police are not giving a full explanation when issuing cautions. Police cautions are labelled by most as little more than a slap on the wrist; their use by police means an offender, while admitting their guilt in minor offences can avoid having to appear

in court where they risk far heavier penalties. A caution may count as a criminal record, likely to end in a fine, or community service. In most cases this may be a simple solution to overcome the crowded Criminal Justice system or custodial prison terms. On other occasions Security Officers employed in public places have been cautioned due to altercation with members of the public whilst in the workplace, thus resulting in caution and penalty fines. This may impact on their employment status particularly if they are working for security providers or at sensitive site locations. Therefore it is our belief that police Officers should fully explain the implications before issue of a caution and that it should be given away from the workplace environment and with time given to obtain legal advice when the individual's employment is in the security industry, as approved by SIA Officer.

We ask that the GMB Union to issue guidance to GMB members, plus contact telephone numbers for lawyers, to seek advice if required.

GMB (LONDON) SECURITY BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. W. SLADE (London): I am speaking to Motion 173 – Police Cautions. We have been down this road before. In 2006 this matter came to the Congress and it is still happening. Our members are still losing their jobs. We want to put forward a motion that is going to help our membership. We want Congress to make sure that regions have got things in place to protect their membership. It could be anybody. You will get a criminal record if you get a police caution, although they won't tell you that. It might be somebody you know, a family member, friend or work colleague. Anyone who is taken into custody on becoming involved with the police can receive a police caution. It is much easier to accept it when you are frightened and scared because that is the easy option. You do not have to go to court. Nobody will see it in the paper. Nobody will know about it, but they do not tell you that it will go on your record! If you seek employment in any industry where the CRB checks are done on a regular basis, it will come back to bite you. You could lose your employment for accepting a caution on the spur of the moment as the easy option. Ask yourself, why should anybody accept a caution when they might be innocent of any wrongdoing in the first place? Is it reasonable for you to be given a caution to assist the police in raising their crime detection figures and clear-up rates without first having to investigate fully if a criminal act has been committed in the first place? I think not. Why should anyone place themselves in the position of being unable to obtain employment if they need a CRB check? Anybody who is arrested might well be disorientated, frightened and confused. They are anxious. They want to get home safely to their friends. They want to put the experience behind them of being taken into a police station. You just want to forget about this bad experience. You want the easiest way out of the situation that you find yourself in at the time. You might well accept the caution when told you will not be required to attend a court hearing. It is the easy option. A police caution is not the soft option it is made out to be. The most important thing to remember is that it is inadvisable for anyone at any time to agree to be interviewed by the police without having a solicitor or someone else in attendance. Basic! It applies at work and it applies with the police. Under no circumstances should anyone make a statement to the police if they are accused of anything unless they have taken legal advice first. No one can make you accept a

caution. You might be kept in custody overnight, but you will eventually be released unless they are prepared to press a charge.

We request that Congress instruct the regions to issue guidance and instructions nationally through its full-time officers to our members through their branch secretaries and representatives, giving the opportunity for our members to be made at least aware of this. We ask that Congress instructs all regions to put in place a similar system to what we have in the London Region, a 24x7 solicitor service available to our members. We ask that urgently. These people who are given cautions are losing their jobs and that has got to come to an end. Thank you. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder?

SIS. T. MORRISEY (London): Congress, I second Motion 173 – Police Cautions. It is a fact that SIA licence regulated jobs are here to ensure that criminals are not employed in the security industry or the care industries. It is easier for the police to issue a caution especially if there is no time to gather evidence or for them to pursue and secure a prosecution in a court of law. By accepting a police caution, an SIA licence holder can be suspended or lose their job. Once accepted there is no right of appeal against a caution issued. The issuing of cautions seems to be becoming standard police practice and, depending on the issuing police authority, these can be on your record for up to ten years.

Here are a couple of examples that have come to light during the past few years. The police, regarding a complaint from an ex-girlfriend, contacted a member. An officer took an interview note and the member just wanted to leave the police station so he accepted the caution. He understood it would only be a slap on the wrist. No further action would be taken. A year further down the line, at his SIA licence renewal time, the paperwork was completed, submitted and his renewal was rejected because the Criminal Records Bureau showed that he had a police caution registered against his name. He was called into the manager's office and suspended without pay. He was also informed that, as his job required an SIA licence, he had made himself unavailable for work and could be sacked. He had continually worked for this company for almost 18 years. Whilst he was suspended, time was taken to check copies of the police paperwork. This showed that the caution had not been signed by himself or the police officer. The date of the caution was registered against him three months after the interview – an administrative error or a clear-up rate? He is now back at work having been with a GMB solicitor and his workplace rep. He is going forward to an employment tribunal to claim his money that was deducted for the period he was suspended, also with the aid of a GMB solicitor and his workplace rep.

I urge you, please, Congress, to accept this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I am aware of a number of other members who have been cautioned. They were cautioned for what they thought were silly things, but they had no right of reply or challenge. So I think we must do a lot of work on police cautions to make the situation aware to our members. Sign nothing and don't accept a caution until

the offence has been proved. Does anyone wish to come in on that motion? *(No response)*  
Then I will take the vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

*Motion 173 was carried.*

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I am just moving off the agenda for one moment. I would like to call Laura Walsh, who will recite a moving poem called *Working Class Hero* which is about the general injustice inflicted on the Cammell Laird workers by the Thatcher Government.

LAURA WALSH: Thank you, Mary. This piece was inspired by the plight of the Cammell Laird workers in 1984. Obviously, in 1984 I was about four years of age. Yes, that is how young I am. Basically, I heard this story, and I am inspired to write about real people. Whenever I see anything that is really unjust, injustice inspires me to put pen to paper and to portray the emotions that I feel inside. I would like to be the voice for these men and to say what they would like to say if Margaret Thatcher was in front of them today. This piece is called *Working Class Hero*.

*(Laura Walsh sang Working Class Hero)*

I give you the shipyard workers of Cammell Laird. *(Applause and cheers)*

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I know that many people have asked us about your CD, Laura, which the GMB helped to sponsor and she sponsors the GMB now. The CD is on the GMB stall outside, so please go and buy it. Laura, on behalf of Congress and the GMB, I present you with a bottle of whiskey and wine glasses to go with it. *(Presentation made amidst applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I want to know if our colleagues from the T&G have come back? *(No response)* No. They are still United. All right. *(Laughter)* In that case, I call Motion 171.

## **CAMMELL LAIRD 1984 MOTION 171**

### **171. CAMMELL LAIRD 1984**

Congress calls on the GMB to start proceedings immediately through the 'European Courts for Human Rights', for compensation from this Government for all members denied their redundancy payments during the strike in 1984 at Cammell Laird Shipyard.

278B BRANCH  
*North West and Irish Region*

*(Carried)*

THE PRESIDENT: I call Motion 171 from North West & Irish Region. Laura threw me for a moment. I understand that there have been some developments. Would the mover please come forward.

BRO. I. LOWES (North West & Irish): I move Motion 171 – Cammell Laird 1984. President and Congress, in view of the discussions which have taken place, we are cautiously optimistic that there will be a positive outcome to this situation, after 25 years. On that basis, I formally move the motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I now ask someone to formally second the motion.

*Motion 171 was formally seconded.*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Eventually we get there. Will Congress accept? (*Agreed*)

*Motion 171 was carried.*

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, let me say a big thank you to Pellacraft, the main sponsors of the President's Night, together with Thompsons Solicitors and the Bank of Scotland GMB Mastercard. The President's Night will be held in the Lancastrian Suite of the Imperial Hotel. The doors open at 7:00 m and there will be a buffet and a live band. Please make sure that you bring your Congress credentials with you.

If anyone has any photos they would like to be included in the end-of-Congress slide show, please see Charlotte in the Congress Office behind the stage.

If anyone is checking out of your hotels tomorrow, there are secure cloakroom facilities in the Floral Hall here in the Winter Gardens, so you can leave your bags and cases there safely.

Congress, this is a final reminder to delegates to pick up your Congress delegates' gift, a GMB@Work T-shirt from the Ethical Threads stand. Again, you need to show your credential badge.

I will now close Congress for the day until 9.30 tomorrow morning. (*Applause*)

*Congress adjourned.*