

GMB ANNUAL CONGRESS

held on

SUNDAY 14TH JUNE – WEDNESDAY 17TH JUNE 2009

at

THE WINTER GARDENS, BLACKPOOL

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

PROCEEDINGS

DAY TWO

(MONDAY 15TH JUNE 2009)

(Conference reported by:
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SECOND DAY'S PROCEEDINGS

MONDAY, 15TH JUNE 2009

MORNING SESSION

Congress assembled at 9.30 a.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning, colleagues. Congress, you are about to hear the safety announcement for the Winter Gardens. Please pay attention.

SAFETY PROCEDURES ANNOUNCEMENT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Could I ask all delegates and visitors to check that you have switched off your mobile phones or make sure they are on 'silent' because, otherwise, you will be going home very light. Is that agreed? *(Agreed)*

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 3

THE PRESIDENT: I call Helen Johnson to move Standing Orders Committee Report No. 3.

SIS. H. JOHNSTON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): Congress, as Chair of Standing Orders Committee, I move SOC Report No. 3.

Congress, withdrawn motions. The SOC has been advised that the following motions have been withdrawn: Motion 134 – Nationalisation of Banks, standing in the name of London Region, has been withdrawn in favour of the CEC Statement on Manufacturing. Motion 21 – GMB Pensions and the General Fund, standing in the name of Birmingham & West Midlands Region, has also been withdrawn. So Motions 134 and 21 have been withdrawn. President and Congress, I move SOC Report No. 3.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Helen. Are there any questions on the report, colleagues? *(No response)* All those in favour, please show?

Standing Orders Committee Report No. 3 was adopted.

REGIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT: NORTHERN REGION

NORTHERN REGION

1. MEMBERSHIP AND RECRUITMENT

FINANCIAL MEMBERSHIP	74,418
Section Financial Membership (by each Section):	
COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION	19,464

MANUFACTURING SECTION	28,003
PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION	26,951
Grade 1 members	47,208
Grade 2 members	10,237
Retired, Reduced Rate & Others	16,974
Male Membership	46,801
Female Membership	27,618
Total number recruited 1.1.2008 – 31.12.2008	8,517
Increase/Decrease 1.1.2008 – 31.12.2008	757
Membership on Check-off	40,931
Membership on Direct Debit	14,856

Response to Organising Agenda

Our organising strategy is locked into the GMB@Work organising agenda strategy, with the initial training and support mechanisms directed, in the first instance, to our newly appointed shop stewards, with recruitment at the top of the Agenda, and the training delivered by our Organisers. To date, approximately 255 have received the benefit of the training.

This is to be extended to existing shop stewards and union learning reps. In line with the GMB@Work strategy we are training organisers to deliver the further training of shop stewards, with four officers in the process of achieving the necessary qualification.

Consolidation of members, where we have union recognition, is our priority. Our well trained workplace representatives we are confident will deliver a higher density of membership.

Breaking new ground and extending GMB spheres of influence is running in tandem with the consolidation strategy through the recognition regulations. Officers are encouraged to identify potential targets for building up the membership above the 10% requirement. Organising a petition to pass the 50% requirement, then lodging the application. This has proved extremely successful in securing new recognition agreements.

Officers have dedicated two days per week to the consolidation of membership in organised workplaces, wherein we have potential to recruit.

Recruitment Targets and Campaigns

We continue the planned approach to recruitment in the National targeted organisation, in conjunction with the National Organising Team in Southern Cross, Schools, Security and ASDA.

We managed to secure recognition in a workplace ballot at ASDA Distribution, Teesport, this, despite the best efforts of the ASDA propaganda machine and more recently at Walkers Logistics, part of the Pepsico Group, which represents a major coup. Again, we beat the propaganda well oiled machine of this multi-national, anti-union company. We continue to recruit in Wilkinson stores with a level of success, which can be improved. Our next major target is another ASDA Distribution site RCD8, Washington, Tyne and Wear. This is our second attempt. Previously we lost by a whisker but won a massive compensation claim for inducement from the employer to drop union membership with compensation near the million mark. We are confident we will win on this occasion.

Overview of Region's Economic and Employment Situation

The credit crunch and economic slowdown is affecting all sectors of the economy.

The service provider and public sector are all affected by the downturn.

Administration is the only area of growth, with company after company going to the wall, representing a dramatic change from our last report.

However, there are some positive signs on the manufacturing sector, in the longer term, with the prospect of 6,000 jobs through the construction of windmills for farms offshore, bigger than the Eiffel Tower, so we are told, to be built on the ex-shipyards on Tyneside.

This work is likely to commence in 2010.

In the meantime, there are a lot of hard times ahead and further challenges to meet. It is imperative, therefore, we remain focussed and we will prevail.

2. GENERAL ORGANISATION

Regional Senior Organisers	5
Membership Development Officers	2
Regional Organisers	17
Organising Officers	2
No. of Branches	127
New Branches	1
Branch Equality Officers	15
Branch Youth Officers	0

3. BENEFITS

Dispute	NIL
Total Disablement	NIL
Working Accident	3,777.90
Occupational Fatal Accident	3,870.00
Non-occupational Fatal Accident	970.00
Funeral	51,379.00

4 JOURNALS & PUBLICITY

Over the last year Northern Region have continued to contribute extensively to the Regional Media. We engage at every opportunity to raise the profile of our union and the services we provide for our members.

We contributed to the three GMB magazines, with a variety of stories including health and safety, education and political. This is a very important way of communicating with our members.

We also produced various newsletters and flyers covering a variety of different workplaces and events.

5. LEGAL SERVICES

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

.Applications for Legal Assistance	Legal Assistance Granted
964	964

Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Court	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
1,149	424		£6,874,338.85		£6,874,338.85
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2008		2,955			

(b) Employment Tribunals (notified to Legal Department)

Claims Supported by Union	223
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Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Tribunal	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
241	31	5	155 £326,213.40	38 £233,800.00	£560,013.40
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2008		340			

(c) Other Employment Law Cases

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

(a) Social Security Cases

Supported by Union	Successful	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008
95	56	36

GMB Northern Legal Services 2008

Throughout 2008, GMB Northern have worked closely with our lawyers to promote GMB Legal Services and raise awareness amongst members of the perils and pitfalls of using non-specialist law firms and claims management "farmers". These dangers were graphically illustrated in the case of GMB Northern member

Andrea Crook. Following her road traffic accident, Mrs Crook was contacted by her insurers who put her in touch with lawyers who got her to sign an authority to “accept no less than £1,600.00.” After contacting GMB for a “second opinion”, Mrs Crook was put in contact with specialist GMB Northern lawyers who subsequently recovered substantially higher damages of £6,500.00.

Through Northern Star and membership campaigns, GMB Northern have worked to increase awareness of the benefits of the Union legal services, and have seen an increase in the numbers of members seeking the assistance of the union. A satisfaction survey was carried out amongst users of the legal service and this revealed widespread satisfaction with the quality of legal advice and representation provided by GMB Northern with more than 90% of members saying they would recommend the service. The survey also showed that over 70% of referrals were via Branch Secretaries, Shop Stewards or as a result of the materials distributed to promote the legal service, demonstrating the effectiveness of the awareness campaign. We aim to build upon the positive findings of the survey by further developing legal services to members in the coming year.

GMB are a campaigning union. One of the legal decisions which we, and our members, find utterly bewildering is the 2007 decision of the House of Lords to deny compensation to those who have developed pleural plaques – permanent damage to the lungs – as a result of their employers negligence. During 2008, GMB continued to campaign for the rights of pleural plaques victims. A parliamentary lobby in October was particularly effective and GMB Northern will continue to actively campaign for the rights of those who suffer injury as a result of asbestos exposure. There are many other battles to fight as the insurance industry continue to attack asbestos victims and deny them compensation for their blighted lives. The GMB’s activity as a campaigning union and its legal services are crucial to delivering justice for asbestos victims.

6. EQUALITY & INCLUSION

The last year has been a year of change in the organisation in how we handle the whole equalities agenda.

Four people from Northern Region attended the Equalities Champions Event in Nottingham last year. This was a very useful event where we explored how we could take the equality agenda forward within the GMB.

The establishment of the national equalities forum gives us the opportunity to look at the whole equality and diversity agenda in one place, and this will make a huge impact of the effectiveness of the work we do.

The region are currently planning to launch an Equalities Forum in 2009. This should re-engage members to be involved in what is such a crucial area of our work.

7. TRAINING

(a) GMB Courses Basic Training					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Introduction to GMB (2 days)	14	145	28	173	346
GMB/TUC Induction (5 days)	9	88	9	97	485
GMB@WORK	14	145	28	173	346

(b) On Site Courses (please specify subjects)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days

3 Day Grievance & Disciplinary	2	21	1	22	66
1 Day Dignity at Work (KP Foods)	1	4	12	16	16

(c) Health & Safety Courses (please specify subjects)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
5 Day Health & Safety	5	54	10	64	320

(d) Other Courses (please specify subjects / weekdays/ weekends)					
Northern College	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
5 Day Advanced H & S	1	2	1	3	15
4 Day Employment Law	1	5	0	5	20
5 Day Stewards Refresher	1	5	0	5	25

(e) TUC (STUC & ICTU) Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL

8. HEALTH & SAFETY

The Regional Health and Safety Officer is now Chair of the regional TUC Health & Safety Forum and the North East Asbestos Support Group. This has contributed to raising the GMB profile on health and safety issues throughout the region. Four health & safety training days were held in 2008 with an average of 80 Safety Representatives in attendance at each event. The RHSO made interventions in a number of workplaces using health and safety issues to help consolidate and enhance membership. In a recent case in Cumbria, in a workplace that we gained recognition in last year, a member had a claim taken up by Thompsons solicitors after having dust in his eyes through faulty eye protection. The outcome was that he was awarded £5,000 compensation. This has helped to increase the membership in this company as well as forcing them to improve their health and safety culture.

The RHSO chaired a very successful Workers Memorial Day event in Gateshead and will chair the event in April 2009 in Hartlepool.

(Adopted)

BRO. T. BRENNAN (Northern Region): I formally move my report. There is nothing further to report.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Are there any questions on the report? *(No response)*
Do you agree to adopt the report? *(Agreed)*

Regional Secretary's Report: Northern Region was adopted.

CONGRESS LOCAL GIFT: THE PEOPLE'S KITCHEN, NEWCASTLE

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, the Local Gift for the Northern Region is the People's Kitchen in Newcastle. The People's Kitchen was founded by Alison Kay to provide friendship, food and support to the needy, lonely and homeless in and around Newcastle upon Tyne. It is a registered charity run entirely by volunteers. Tommy, I ask you to speak to it, please.

BRO. T. BRENNAN (Regional Secretary, Northern Region): President and Congress, let me tell you about the People's Kitchen which is situated in the centre of Newcastle upon Tyne and run entirely by unpaid workers/volunteers, with no contribution towards the upkeep of this facility. We must maintain this facility for the homeless, so that they can have at least one full square meal a day – actually, it is a full three course meal - in a canteen that I call “the biggest restaurant in Newcastle” and it is absolutely free. Colleagues, sometimes the homeless are categorized as society drop-outs, junkies and alcoholics, when in most cases there is a reason for the personal decline of the individual. But many of these people are mentally disabled and victims of the misguided policy of ‘care in the community’. The People's Kitchen also goes out into the community with food, in the cold winter months. The People's Kitchen also donates clothes, shoes and much needed other support which is appreciated by the disenfranchised groups. You can imagine, colleagues, the response when I rang their organizer offering a donation to their worthy cause, and their delight when I advised how much we were going to give. The first response was on the answer phone, and it said, “Sorry, we do not wish to receive any more season tickets for Newcastle United.” (*Laughter*) Seriously, you can well imagine, in the present economic climate the response I received when charities are getting squeezed and struggling for funds at this present time, to receive a phone call offering a donation of two thousand pounds. Conference, it was the very first time I have experienced a kiss through the telephone. The response I got when I actually met the organizers and the people involved was absolutely fantastic. They are fantastic people who have put a lot of time and effort into helping the most vulnerable people within our society. It is an excellent cause. The GMB Northern Region is extremely proud to be associated with The People's Kitchen in Newcastle. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Tommy. You would think we were still back in the 18th Century, wouldn't you? How sad. Colleagues, the Northern Region's worthy president asked me to announce that they are organizing a raffle. The prizes are Mama Mia tickets, an overnight stay in Newcastle, a book, a Nintendo Wii, an Nintendo DS, a digital camera, an I-pod and Newcastle United tickets. Tommy has relinquished his membership. (*Laughter*) To help you get to Newcastle, one of the prizes is a satnav system. Prizes also include a mobile phone and, if you want to drown your sorrows with Tommy, a bottle of whisky, a bottle of vodka, a bottle of wine and, if you want to know the time the match is ending, a gent's and lady's watch, £20 worth of M&S vouchers, £40 worth of Argos vouchers, a large Slazenger sports bag, a classics 15 CD box set and another Slazenger watch. Did you get this from Alan Shearer? (*Laughter*) Please give generously.

Did you hear what he just said: “Is the mobile phone so that you can ring Samaritans?”
(Laughter)

Let me say to all the regions which had their receptions last night, thank you very much. We all had a great time. It was London, Midland, South West, North West & Irish Region, and then Yorkshire and Southern Regions. Thank you very much. Of course, Tommy was doing his usual dance when I arrived at the Northern Region. Thanks a lot. I thoroughly enjoyed it. Mind you, the worthy President had gone a bit before I got there. I couldn't find his room number.

EMPLOYMENT POLICY: PENSIONS & RETIREMENT

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, can we now move to Employment Policy, Pensions & Retirement. Composite 2, Final Salary Pension Schemes, will be moved by South Western and London is to second. Then I will call Motions 41 and 42 and Composite 3.

FINAL SALARY PENSION SCHEMES

COMPOSITE MOTION 2

C2. COVERING MOTIONS

- 39. FINAL SALARY PENSION SCHEMES (South Western Region)
- 40. PENSIONS (London Region)

FINAL SALARY PENSION SCHEMES

Congress is well aware of the present tough economic climate the UK and the global economy is experiencing and many companies are now considering, or have already made a decision, to close their final salary pension schemes to current employees and new entrants. Congress is totally opposed to the closure of final salary pension schemes and calls on the CEC to oppose all such closures so that both existing and new members of such schemes can enjoy dignity in retirement

Also under consideration is the transfer of employee's pensions to money purchase schemes, which are associated with a higher degree of risk, because of exposure to stock market precariousness, obviously the implementation of this option would take away the protection that final salary schemes offer to our members.

We believe that many companies are using the down turn in the economy as an excuse to close final salary pension schemes and we call on Congress to give maximum support to our members whose pension schemes come under threat and call upon the Government to legislate to give greater protection to all workers' pensions' schemes.

(Carried)

SIS. A. LEADER (South Western): I move Composite 2 on Final Salary Pension Schemes. President and delegates, all of us here this week are well aware that we are now in the trough of an economic recession, globally as well as in the UK. It is something we have not experienced at this level since the 1980s. No sector, whether it be in manufacturing, public services or the private service sector, has been unaffected by this downturn in our economy. Not only do many of our members fear that job cuts can happen at any time, but many who are fortunate enough to have a pension scheme are experiencing the worrying threat to the future of these schemes. Many companies are making, or have already made the decision, to close their final salary pension schemes to current employees and new entrants. Barclays are planning to stop 18,000 staff from contributing any more money to its final salary scheme, arguing that managing its cost was a top priority, and it was in the best interests of all Barclays' employees and shareholders for them to do so. Some are also looking at transferring employees' pensions to money purchase schemes, which are subject to the vagaries of the stock market fluctuations, which in this present climate does not bode well.

As the recession has intensified, pressures on defined benefit schemes, which is the technical word for a final salary scheme, as well as having an impact on overall company finances, have also led to a dramatic fall in the value of the assets, shares, bonds and property that pension funds hold, and these funds are faced with growing deficits. This is a worrying time for those employees nearing retirement who are seeing the value of their schemes being eroded and their everyday finances being squeezed. This, however, should not be a short-term panic as pensions are for the long-term, and we believe that many companies are looking for an easy way out to the detriment of our members' financial futures.

BP, which is one of the largest employers in the private sector, whose pension fund is in surplus, is to close its UK final pension scheme to new recruits. By providing new staff with a money purchase or defined contribution scheme instead it will be saving about £120 million a year within ten years, and they are not the only ones. Just before we came away, Morrisons, despite seeing an increase in their market share, are looking to move away from a final salary pension scheme. We all know that once a final salary pension scheme or defined benefit scheme has gone, it is highly unlikely that it will come back. All the more galling is that those individuals who have put us on the slippery slope of economic decline have not suffered any reduction in their pension allocations. The average employee probably will not earn in their lifetime some of the payouts that we have seen reported to those who were and still are in charge of our financial institutions, who have played monopoly with our financial sector. Doesn't Sir Fred have a conscience when he collects his inflated pension, when others are seeing theirs being snatched from them? Obviously not. At least, St. Andrew's Golf Course had the courage to blackball his application to join their establishment. So there is some little bit of justice in the world when money cannot always buy your way into some organizations. He will have to queue up for a round on the nearest municipal golf course like the rest of us.

We are calling on this Congress to give the maximum support to any of our members who find their hard earned pensions being whittled or whisked away by unscrupulous

employers who are only interested in shoring up their empires. We call upon the Government to legislate to give greater protection to all workers' pension schemes, but we draw the line at further enhancements of the pension pots of people like Sir Fred and others of his ilk. I move.

BRO. V. WEST (London): I second Composite Motion 2 on Final Salary Pension Schemes.

Congress, let's be crystal clear. Pension schemes, which are often portrayed in the media as an employer's gift to its workforce, are in fact deferred salary. When our members' most basic terms and conditions – their pay – comes under attack, we, rightly, do all we can to defend them. So the same must apply to their final salary pension schemes as well.

During the past ten years we have seen many employers using the increasing age of the population as an excuse to close final salary schemes. Now they are using the recession as a further excuse to accelerate and increase this trend. At the same time, we see and hear the Government telling us that we must all make personal provision for our old age. We are in danger of creating a situation of acute pensioner poverty if the trend of closure continues, thereby placing a huge burden on the State in future years to come. Let us also be aware that if the Tories are elected next year, David Cameron has made it perfectly clear that they will turn their attention to final salary pension schemes in the public sector as well. Our members did not cause the financial crisis. Greedy bankers like Fred Goodwin did that but, as the previous speaker said, they have walked off their schemes in tact. Let's make sure that our members walk off into retirement with their schemes in tact. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I now ask Yorkshire & North Derbyshire to move Motion 41.

PENSIONS

Motion 41

41. PENSIONS

Congress asks the Government to introduce legislation to ensure that company directors are in the same pension scheme as their employees.

YORKSHIRE COAL STAFFS BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

SIS. P. ROSS (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): President and Congress, recently, when the Speaker stepped down, I read in the *Telegraph*, so it must be true, that he would be receiving a pension of £77,000 a year. I am particularly interested in such matters because I will be retiring next year, too, although I will be lucky if my occupational pension manages to provide me with £3,000 a year. Obviously, we are not in the same

pension scheme, which brings me to Sir Fred Goodwin, who is not in the same pension scheme as me, either. It is a pity. I really should have chosen my career path a bit better.

Despite the rules on not debating the same subject matter at every Congress, I actually spoke on this issue some four years ago, but on that occasion the CEC, in its wisdom, had wanted the motion withdrawn because we had referred to a specific amount, so this time the branch has re-submitted a much slimmed down version, carefully avoiding any references to specific amounts, so as not to upset the CEC, but in fact it is now so streamlined that it gives no indication of the rage, anger and frustration we feel at the way at which company executives can build themselves such huge nest eggs while their employees have to make do with peanuts. As has already been said, we can't earn in our lifetime what some of these chief executives get as an annual pension.

Four years ago when I last spoke on this issue, I quoted from a newspaper report, and at that time a survey of the ten largest companies showed that the average pension pot of chief executives totalled £7 million. MG Rover management, who had creamed off £40 million in salary and pensions, had refused to share their pension fund with workers as they said it was an 'independent fund'.

When I worked for UK Coal I was a pension trustee on the money purchase scheme that they had set up for the non-TUPE'd workforce. On that trustee board, making decisions on employee contributions and benefits, were three directors of a company who were, of course, in a different and much better pension scheme, not slumming it with the likes of us.

One of the issues with companies turning from final salary to money purchase schemes is that they do it to save money, obviously, but they can use it as an excuse to have more than one scheme for the company. That is quite a useful way to ensure that those at the top can have a much better pension scheme than the underlings who toil to make their profits for them. In one sense, I am fortunate in my current job. We are all top-to-bottom entitled to join the same pension scheme. In an ideal world, the Government would introduce pension legislation to ensure that all employees of one company would be entitled to be in the same company pension scheme. In that way, those at the top would be determined to make it the best possible scheme and, in turn, those at the bottom would benefit. Just imagine if you or I had been entitled to be in Sir Fred's scheme. Now, wouldn't that be a grand start to your retirement?

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

SIS. R. KNOWLES (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): President and Conference, I am seconding Motion 41. This Government has done nothing for the normal working man as regards pension schemes, except to allow companies to close final salary schemes and continue to do so until last week. Also, they have not penalized the directors of companies who have plundered company pension schemes themselves. It is about time that these directors come and live in the real world and not walk away with huge pensions coming from having had another level of contributions. I ask the Congress to call on the

Government to introduce legislation that company directors contribute to the same scheme as their own workforce. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: I call Motion 42. London Region.

STATE PENSIONS ONLY

Motion 42

42. STATE PENSION ONLY

The collapse of the world financial institutions has led to a serious underfunding of private sector pensions. This situation has been further exacerbated through the policy of companies replacing their Occupational Final Salary pension schemes with Money Purchase pension schemes.

Congress calls upon the Government to commence the gradual phasing out of these private sector pension schemes by introducing a National State Pension scheme built upon employers and employees contributions linked to earnings.

Across the European Union and in new member states pressure is being applied to replace their National State Pension schemes with private sector schemes. The Trade Union movement must resist this pressurising and demand that Britain and all EU States have National State Pension schemes linked to earnings.

MILTON KEYNES CITY BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. P. WALLIS (London): Congress, this is my first time at Congress and I am a little bit nervous.

THE PRESIDENT: Don't worry.

SIS. WALLIS: But I have really enjoyed, though. It has been awe-inspiring. You are such great people. I will get on with it now. *(Applause)*

I move Motion 42. The collapse of the world financial institutions has led to a serious underfunding of private sector pensions. The situation has been further exacerbated through the policy of companies replacing their Occupational Final Salary pension schemes with Money Purchase pension schemes.

Congress calls upon the Government to commence the gradual phasing out of these private sector pension schemes by introducing a National State Pension scheme built upon employers and employees contributions linked to earnings.

Across the European Union and in new member states pressure is being applied to replace their National State Pension schemes with private sector schemes. The trades union Movement must resist this pressuring and demand that Britain and all EU States have National State Pension schemes linked to earnings. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Well done.

BRO. M. FOSTER (London): I second Motion 42. I believe that this is a good motion because it looks at an issue which should concern us all. This motion is not just about us, but it is about our children, our grandchildren and their future. We have a duty to those who follow us to campaign, protect and improve their lives, just as our forefathers did for us. I believe that changes must take place in our Parliamentary system to give the people of Britain a real opportunity to demand that their MPs listen and recognise that there is a serious situation in the funding of our pensions. They must do what they are elected to do, and bring in a State National Pension Scheme which is free from the rises and falls of the stock market. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I ask Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region to move Composite 3, North West & Irish Region to second.

RE-ESTABLISH THE PENSIONS EARNING LINK COMPOSITE 3

C3. COVERING MOTIONS

43. EARNINGS – LINK PENSIONS (North West & Irish Region)

44. PENSIONS (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region)

RE-ESTABLISH THE PENSIONS EARNINGS LINK

Congress calls to bring pressure to bear by whatever means on the Labour Government to reviewing the date (2012) for re-establishing the link between National Earnings and the State Pension and restore the earnings link to pensions this year.

(Carried)

BRO. J. SHIELD (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I move Composite 3. President and Congress, we call on Congress to put pressure on the Government to bring about a review of the 2012 date for re-establishing the link between National Earnings and the State Pension. This is probably one of the most important single issues which affects us all, if not now then some time in the future. In real terms, the value of the State Pension has fallen because there is no link to earnings. Decisions on the State Pension at present depend on inflation. Pensioners need the link between what earnings are nationally and what they get from the State to ensure a good standard of living. Why should this be reduced just because they have retired? We see more and more pensioners working after retirement age because they cannot afford to live. Many pensioners cannot afford to keep their homes warm in winter and rely on getting wrapped up in jumpers and blankets. One of the biggest killers in old age is hypothermia.

Many companies have closed their company pension schemes and many of our members have lost and will lose company pensions in the future. It is more and more important now, than ever before, to have the link between national earnings and State Pensions.

Why should pensioners have to take a huge cut in income? It is only right that their contributions over 50 years should be recognized and rewarded, so let us not wait until 2012. Let's sort it out now. I urge you to support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. After this motion has been seconded, I will be calling Motion 48.

BRO. C. ASHCROFT (North West & Irish): I second Motion 43. Today the basic State Pension is just £95.25 a week. For millions of older women the figure is even less. At least one in four pensioners still live below the official poverty line, and the current Government policy appears incapable of tackling the problem. Relying solely on means tested benefits for today's pensioners and occupational pension schemes for future generations simply will not work. Means testing is unpopular, demeaning and ineffective at reaching nearly two million pensioners who need it. The occupational schemes are facing a wave of closure as pension pots have lost billions in the current economic crisis. The answer, however, is simple. As a matter of urgency, the basic State Pension should be raised to above the poverty level, estimated at £165 a week, paid to all in retirement and re-linked to earnings or prices, whichever is the greater. I thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: I call London Region to move Motion 48.

GMB CAMPAIGN FOR ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTMENTS

Motion 48

48. GMB CAMPAIGN FOR ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTMENTS

Congress welcomes the Prime Minister's announcement in response to the "credit crunch" to create 100,000 new jobs via public works and public investments in sustainable, technological and environmental industries.

However with the economy facing the worst financial conditions since the depression of the 1930's, this is not enough. Government and trade unions at all levels must use this crisis as an opportunity to re-shape the industrial landscape of Britain.

To this end the CEC pledges that GMB will campaign to –

1. Lobby MPs and local councilors on the investment of Pension Funds to ensure that investments are environmentally and financially sustainable.
2. Inform and educate GMB members on how pensions can be invested to deliver strong financial returns and environmentally sustainable industries.
3. Educate and encourage GMB members and trustees of pension funds to influence investment opportunities proactively and in line with GMB policy.
4. Train GMB representatives on the benefits of responsible investment.

Obviously this will involve a commitment of internal resources but Congress recognizes the importance of dealing with both the changing industrial landscape and the need for sustainable employment across the UK.

CAMBRIDGE 2 BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. K. ROBERTS (London): I move Motion 48. This motion is about investing in the future. At the moment we are in the worst financial crisis since the 1930s. The private finance initiatives are in real problems due to the banks' lending restrictions. There is a need to find investments for green jobs from somewhere; green jobs in manufacturing of renewables, such as wind turbines, housing and advice on insulation, etc. This motion asks the union to explore the alternative sources of funding at a local level, such as local authority bonds or superannuation funds. We need to make sure that our members understand that by being proactive and investing in pensions in the right way and in line with GMB policy we can secure the future of our pensions and build a sustainable future for communities. This will also highlight, basically, the GMB being pro-active in the communities, which will help grow the Union. It will also give the country the opportunity to go back to where it once was, as a leader in manufacturing in industries.

The CEC has put a qualification on regional delivery. The CEC must make sure that this takes place. The region will be looking at next year's report at Congress for an update. Please support this motion. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Kevin. Can I have a seconder?

SIS. P. WALLIS (London): You will think I have a megalomania, but I haven't.

THE PRESIDENT: You have got to like it. So you are an old hand now.

SIS. WALLIS: I second Motion 48. I am seconding this motion because I believe that this is a great motion. We have a duty to future generations to safeguard the environment, and I have worked it out. I am going to have to work until I am 72 before I can get a pension that is good enough to live on. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Do any delegates wish to come in on the debate?

BRO. R. REEVES (Southern): Congress, I am speaking to Composite Motion 2. Congress should be aware that the closing of final salary pension schemes to new employees has spread to the public sector. It has happened in a Government quango – the Crown Estates and under a Labour Government! They may not realise this, but it should be reinstated by them. I support this composite motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Is there anyone else wishing to speak? *(No response)* In that case, I call Mary Hutchinson to reply on behalf of the CEC.

SIS. M. HUTCHINSON (CEC, Manufacturing): President and Congress, the CEC is supporting Motion 41 and supporting Motions 42, 48 and Composite C2 and C3 with the following qualifications.

Motion 42 calls for the phasing out of occupational pensions. Whilst the CEC appreciates the intention of this motion, the GMB's existing policy is to support and promote good quality occupational pension provision. The GMB advocates a radical improvement of the State Pension and will resist any threat to occupational pensions. Many thousands of our members have fought to protect their workplace pensions and we have and will continue to support them.

Motion 48 calls for training on the benefits of responsible investment. The CEC recommends that this is incorporated into each region's training structure, following national briefings on the issues.

In Composite 2, the CEC supports the protection of all good quality defined benefit pension schemes, including those based on career average earnings, commonly known as "care schemes". To clarify our position on Composite 3, the CEC supports the reintroduction of State Pension indexation to the better of price inflation and average earnings increases, as reflected in current GMB policy.

Congress, your GMB continues to resist attacks on members' pensions, be they in manufacturing, commercial services or the public sector. These attacks take many forms and are continually evolving. Recent examples include compulsory salary sacrifice and bribes to give up pension rights. We believe that everyone should be able to save for their retirement and be confident of a secure pension. The GMB continues to expose the propaganda emanating from the right wing media designed to stir up pensions envy between private sector and public sector employees. GMB knows that the real pensions divide in the UK is not between public and private sectors but it is, as always, between rich and poor. One section of society gets rewarded for years of failure with multi-million pound pensions. The rest struggle to put enough by to avoid poverty in retirement. This pensions polarization remains a national disgrace and GMB will work to provide decent secure retirements for all our members. Congress, please support these motions with the qualifications outlined.

THE PRESIDENT: Does South Western accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Does London Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Does Yorkshire & North Derbyshire accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Does London Region accept the qualification on Motion 48? (*Agreed*)

Colleagues, the CEC is supporting all the motions and the composites. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against. They are carried.

Composite Motion 2 was carried.

Motion 41 was carried.
Motion 42 was carried.
Composite Motion 3 was carried.
Motion 48 was carried.

BUCKET COLLECTION: BIRMINGHAM KIDNEY KIDS' APPEAL

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, before I move on, I have an announcement to make. The bucket collection for Birmingham Kidney Kids' Appeal yesterday raised £334. Well done. *(Applause)* In our true tradition, we will double that. *(Applause)*

BUCKET COLLECTION: ZOE'S PLACE

THE PRESIDENT: I now move on to the next bucket collection, which is Zoe's Place. As advised yesterday in the SOC Report, there will be a bucket collection as you leave the hall at lunchtime in aid of Zoe's Place, a hospice for terminally ill babies. There are only two of these hospices in the country. One is in Liverpool and one is in Middlesbrough. Congress, you will now see a short video of the work of the hospice.

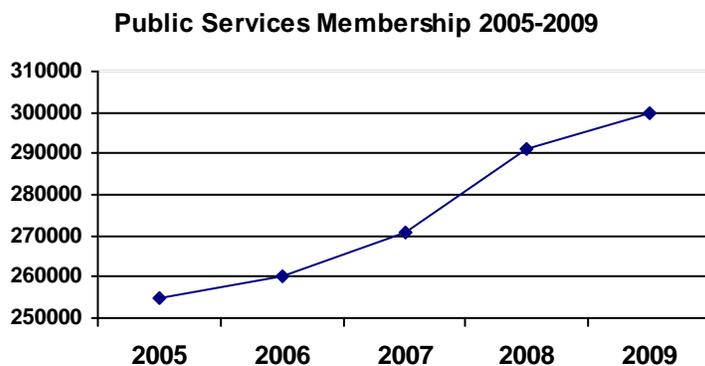
(Video shown to Congress)

Congress, there but for the grace of God go we. Let me say to North West & Irish Region, I know that this bucket collection means a great deal to you and I know about the work that you put into Zoe's Place, and particularly Dougie Henry. Let me say to Congress, please give generously. Thank you.

PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION REPORT PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION

1. Public Services Section Membership

The membership of the Public Services Section of the GMB is now significantly above 300,000 and the chart below shows that the Section has a consistent track record of sustainable growth.



The public sector will come under pressure during the economic downturn but it will remain a trade union stronghold and it will continue to offer excellent opportunities for recruiting and organising new GMB members.

In 2009/10 we can expect to go on from strength to strength

For sure there will be a wider range of issues to confront than at any time in the last decade but our shop stewards, branch secretaries and other lay activists supported by their full-time Officers are well placed to deal with those issues working closely with our members.

2. National Committee

The role of the National Committee is to consider and determine policy issues and Public Services Section activities at national level. The Section is fortunate in having an active and committed National Committee chaired by GMB President, Mary Turner. Our National Office staff are Brian Strutton, National Secretary; Sharon Holder and Rehana Azam, National Officers; Mick Hubbard, Productivity Services Officer; Angela Sayer, Section Administrator and PA; and Rita Compton, PA. The Section has been well supported by National Office departments (legal, pensions, political, health and safety, communications); the NAU; the National Organising Team; and the GMB Brussels office; all have contributed to help the Section grow and deliver its objectives.

The National Committee decides actions arising from Congress and Section Conference decisions; receives and scrutinises reports from the National Secretary, National Officers and GMB Regions; as well as matters raised by Committee members themselves. Current issues in national negotiations are discussed in particular detail. Minutes of National Committee meetings are approved by the CEC and distributed to branches via Regions and posted on the GMB website for all members to see. The main points dealt with by the Committee in 2008/9 included:

- Section membership and growth
- Local Government pay negotiations
- NHS Agenda for Change
- NHS Pay Review Body and settlements
- Single status in local government
- Local Government Pension Scheme negotiations
- Equal Pay and Discrimination issues
- Police staffs pay and organisation
- MPO membership
- Higher Education single-table Bargaining
- School Support staff Negotiating Body
- Two-tier workforce issues and training
- Free school meals and Government commitments
- Public Sector Pay Policy
- Industrial Action in local government
- Council Housing campaigning
- The Rent Service restructuring and transfer to VOA
- Further Education national pay implementation
- Public Prisons and the Probation Service restructuring
- The Care Sector including Southern Cross
- Academies, PFI/PPP and Privatisation
- Executive pay in the public sector

The National Committee membership is:

Mary Turner – President	-	London Region
Elizabeth Blackman	-	Midland & East Coast Region

Dana Bruno	-	North West & Irish Region
Linda Clarke	-	Birmingham & West Midlands Region
Gary Doolan	-	London Region
George Fraser	-	London Region
Gordon Gibbs	-	Birmingham & West Midlands Region
David Hope	-	North West & Irish Region
Pamela Hughes	-	Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region
James Jones	-	Northern Region
Kevin Jones	-	South Western Region
Evelyn Martin	-	London Region
June Minnery	-	GMB Scotland
Peter Murphy	-	Southern Region
David Noble	-	Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region
Lorraine Parker	-	Southern Region
Vivien Smart	-	Birmingham & West Midlands Region
Billy Tonner	-	Southern Region
Michael Widdison	-	Midland & East Coast Region
Peter Dow	-	MPO
Heather Starr	-	MPO
Steve Rice	-	ASU Representative
Richard Passmore	-	NHS NAG Representative
Barry Lambert	-	HE Representative

3. School Support Staff Negotiating Body

As reported at the last GMB Congress, the government had finally agreed to establish a school support staff negotiating body (SSSNB) to design and implement a national pay and conditions framework for all support staff in maintained schools in England. However the need to ensure that schools comply with national pay and conditions has meant that the body had to be established with statutory authority in primary legislation.

The primary legislation is the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill 2009. The formal mechanism to set up the SSSNB is contained in Chapter 4 and Schedule 15. The negotiating body encompasses all support staff (approximately 400,000) across all maintained schools (approximately 20,000) and its remit covers all pay and conditions. The members of the body are the three support staff unions (GMB, Unison, Unite) and employers (local government employers, self governing schools employers, faith school employers) and there is an independent Chair.

Agreements reached following negotiation by the body are, on ratification by the Secretary of State, given statutory force. The Secretary of State has the power to refer agreements back if they are not satisfactory and, in extreme situations, could enforce his own agreement. Whilst unlikely to occur this is a risk - the price for statutory effect.

The Bill setting up the SSSNB is currently going through Parliament and is due to receive Royal Assent (become law) this autumn. It will be an amazing achievement for GMB.

But of course, the real work will be in negotiating the new pay and conditions for support staff. That will be no easy matter across such a huge workforce with such a diverse range of practices to start from. Nevertheless, the SSSNB will be able to establish a common core contract of employment and national pay scales to ensure that all support staff are treated fairly.

4. Health Sector

NHS staff remain under constant threat from privatisation and progressive marketisation. The incontrovertible evidence shows the Government no longer wishes NHS service delivery to be provided solely by directly employed public service workers, but by staff employed by a Foundation Trust, Social Enterprise, private or voluntary organisation.

GMB remains opposed to all forms of privatisation. Members, however, are most annoyed at the way reforms are being implemented at local level. Re-organisations and posts being frozen, but not being replaced, are resulting in a huge increase in the amount of workload NHS staff are now expected to sustain, symptomatic of the Government being driven by dogma by the use of the private sector in delivering public services.

The impact these changes appear to be having on staff is most likely to manifest at election time, coupled with the downturn in economy and the possibility of unemployment, for example bank staff, and repossessions hitting low paid public service workers, being of grave concern.

GMB's campaigning efforts to seek more time and flexibility for NHS organisations to achieve financial balance and ensure cuts are not made which damage local health provisions, have been recognised by the Government and implemented but then dressed-up by them whilst still achieving the objective to continue with their programme of privatisation and marketisation.

GMB remains a key stakeholder, along with other NHS unions and patient groups. However, this level of consultation has little or no influence unless we are engaged at the early stages of health policy development, as we have managed regarding workforce issues associated with:

- Healthcare Acquired Infections
- Implementation of Agenda for Change
- NHS Constitution
- Transforming Community Services

Health Service Group and Ambulance Committee

The role of GMB's Health Service Advisory Group and the Ambulance Committee is to provide detailed advice on the implications of proposed NHS policy in each of these divisions of Health Services and act as a primary consultation forum at regional level.

Both the Health Service Advisory Group and the Ambulance Committee have met twice since last Congress.

Current membership consists of:

Health Service Advisory Group

Phil Baldwin	-	North West & Irish Region
Alan Chetwynd	-	Midland & East Coast Region
Neil Collinson	-	Northern Region
Mick Coppin	-	Midland & East Coast Region
Mary Finn	-	GMB Scotland
Joss Guittard	-	North West & Irish Region
Jean Garside	-	London Region
Tony Hackett	-	Birmingham & West Midlands Region

Martin Jackson	-	Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region
Gary Lock	-	South Western Region
Lynne Myers	-	Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region
Jill McCarthy	-	South Western Region
Alan McKinney (temp)	-	North West & Irish Region
Richard Passmore	-	Birmingham & West Midlands Region
Alma Stewart	-	Northern Region
Ray Stewart	-	Southern Region
Maya Venkatasawmy	-	Southern Region
Keri Thompson	-	London Region

Ambulance Committee

Mo Akbar	-	London Region
Dan Ackroyd	-	Midland & East Coast Region
Ally Barron	-	ASU
Ray Carrick	-	ASU
Alan Giles	-	ASU
Kevin Lyons	-	ASU
Ben McGachy	-	ASU
Dave Midgley	-	ASU
Sean Mulligan	-	ASU
Malcolm Parker	-	ASU
Mike Quirk	-	ASU
Steve Rice	-	ASU
John Roberts	-	North West & Irish Region
Tony Stephens	-	ASU
Sharon Thorpe	-	South Western Region
Keith Wellsbury	-	Birmingham & West Midlands Region

Since Congress 2008, the Advisory Group and Ambulance Committee have discussed the following issues:

- NHS Pay
- The NHS Pension Scheme
- Agenda for Change implementation
- Terms and Conditions
- The National Ambulance Partnership Forum
- NHS Contractors staff in England
- NHS Policy/Government Consultation responses
- Skills Pledge
- Apprenticeships in the NHS
- The Annual Staff Survey
- Recruitment and Organisation
- NHS Pilots
- Public Sector Policy, which impact on the Health Service Sector
- NHS Equal Pay claims

NHS Pay

Following a decision by GMB not to sign up to the NHS multi-year deal reached in 2008, plus the financial difficulties experienced by members, caused by rising prices shortly after the deal was signed, GMB sought, along with other constituent unions, for the three-year deal to be re-opened by the Government. The NHS Pay Review Body, in December 2008, declined to recommend the re-opening. The Review Body concluded that, while the wider economic and labour market situation had changed significantly, the changes had not materially affected the relative position of NHS staff. NHS staff will, therefore, receive a 2.4% pay increase from 1 April 2009 and a further 2.25% increase from 1 April 2010. Changes to the pay and grading structure means that staff on Bands one, two, three, four, five and six -- pay points 1 – 13 and 17 – 25 -- will receive higher percentage uplifts.

5. Care Sector

A comprehensive trade union position on social care has been produced by the TUC in response to the 'national debate' on care and support reform. The TUC written submission incorporated a significant contribution by GMB.

A Social Policy Forum event held in November 2008 saw GMB share the platform with Phil Hope MP, Minister for Social Care, at which the National Officer, Sharon Holder, emphasised the impact workforce issues had in creating the problems the 'national debate' was attempting to address: The number one problem being the huge turnover of social care staff because of low pay, overwork and poor career prospects, all of which directly impact on the quality of services.

Care and support in the UK remains woefully under-funded. The TUC event was used also to call on the Government to make a large increase in funding and support a NHS model for social care.

GMB has also submitted responses to the following consultation documents:

- Cabinet Office Adult Social Care Skills Study
- "The Case for Change – Why England needs a new Care and Support System"
- "Putting People First – Working to Make it Happen:" Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy.

Priorities in the area of social care and, more specifically, the private care sector, still remain that of recruitment, retention and organisation of Southern Cross Healthcare employees, working closely with the National Organising Team in developing a campaign strategy framework and an implementation plan in conjunction with regions.

In spite of lengthy discussions on the harmonisation of terms and conditions for the same occupations working in different homes, Southern Cross has only recently agreed a timetable to implement the proposed changes.

Meanwhile, a survey of GMB members on the application of meal/rest breaks, conducted over the summer of 2008, found staff shortages a big factor as to why employees received a lack of proper break entitlement, setting out a comprehensive campaign agenda for all regions.

A lay representative National Negotiating Committee has been set up. Since Congress 2008, the Committee has met three times.

Current membership consists of:

Southern Cross National Committee

Elizabeth Charlton	-	Northern Region
Brian Hockley	-	Southern Region

Brian Jenkins	-	North West & Irish Region
Paul Kelly	-	London Region
Joanne Laurie	-	GMB Scotland
Alan O'Connor	-	North West & Irish Region
Helen O'Connor	-	Birmingham & West Midlands Region
Sharon Rawlings	-	South Western Region
John Ryan	-	Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

6. Ministry of Defence

In 2008, Ministry of Defence membership officially transferred to the Public Services Section. Key areas of work since last Congress have centred on the Normalisation programme arising from peace in Northern Ireland and the reduction of civilian staff in the armed forces.

However, Pay remained the top priority. GMB industrial staff employed by the MOD Centre, overwhelmingly voted to accept a three-year pay deal in January. The deal covers the period August 2008, 2009 and 2010, and includes:

- Increases in pay ranging from 14.2% to 17.6% for the lowest paid
- Shorter pay scales, including a 3% pay step each year.
- Faster pay progression
- 2% non-consolidated pay for those on the top of the pay scale
- An increase to the minimum of each skill zone and craft entry point
- Revision to the Apprentice rate
- An increase in London Weighting: £200 for inner and £50 for outer
- Work to commence on addressing non-pay issues, like the position of women in the industrial workforce and the learning and skills agenda to improve career progression

7. Legal Services Commission (LSC)

The GMB's strong organized membership and workplace organiser structure will be significantly challenged in the coming year(s) as the LSC embarks on a major transformation of their business delivery. A major announcement was made in October 2008 to reorganise the business with a significant reduction of the current workforce. Up to 600 LSC employees are currently at risk of redundancy. Upon announcement all the key GMB national departments including the press office and political department were secured to ensure relevant assistance and support is in place during this challenging time, and a detailed plan of work is being undertaken to progress through this period.

Key meetings with senior government department representatives have been secured to ensure all appropriate support is established and achieved. The Welsh MP's have played a significant role in challenging the English Government over their lack of consultation with the Welsh Assembly on the decision to reduce the presence of the LSC and the significant reduction of staff at its Cardiff office. A recent debate in the commons on this subject has now led to the Welsh Affairs Select Committee arranging a meeting in March 2009 inviting key stakeholders including the GMB to give evidence on the decision, with specific reference to the Cardiff office. At the time of writing the GMB will be looking to submit evidence in two areas, one specific to the Cardiff office and the other specific to the overall national position. The GMB South Western region has played a significant part in securing regional support through the Welsh Assembly and other key stakeholders.

All GMB LSC site visits are being planned together with a detailed strategy to consolidate membership. At the time of writing the Leeds, Brighton, Birmingham and Cardiff offices have been visited. Each region has been given a list of LSC employees with a request to consolidate. We secured support from the LSC to fund a joint GMB and FDA conference in January on the restructure.

The national GMB Chair Peter Earley from South Tyneside has continued to lead the representatives and members and offered much support through this challenging time. Rehana Azam recently took responsibility for the sector in the last quarter of 2008.

8. The Prison Service

Negotiations are conducted through the Prison Service Joint Industrial Council (PSJIC). Our members in the service include maintenance, catering, cleaning and other relevant occupational groups within an industrial setting.

The Ministry of Justice has requested the service consider workforce modernisation. A major modernisation in this context could have implications for our members. We have pursued avenues that could have realised some benefits for our members but our initial involvement and assessment has concluded that this may not be successful. Mick Hubbard GMB Policy officer has led all the discussions around the Job Evaluation proposal and submitted a detailed critique on the areas that concern our PSJIC members. In addition it has been recognized that the Trade Unions side needs to fully participate in discussions to offer appropriate representation of our members, despite the conclusion that modernisation is not going to realize benefits for our members.

Due to historic reasons the trade union side has had a disjointed approach within the PSJIC environment. This lack of discipline has only exasperated the frustrations of the union representatives and unfortunately a culture of apathy has followed. Certainly this culture has to be acknowledged before unnecessary resources are applied to organisation. However there is an engagement with the stewards to strengthen their participation and a commitment to develop a robust internal shop steward structure with a strong emphasis on communication, aiding the challenge in addressing apathy.

Initial discussions with the GMB's shop stewards committee has generated the understanding that they need to fully participate in key industrial issues affecting their members and a clear direction on priorities and the continued culture of dependency is not an option. In addition there has been a clear steer to the TU side in how certain priorities surrounding the workforce modernization need to be managed and pursued. It is fair to say some of the apathy is understandable, as pay settlements have been imposed on our members over the years which have directly resulted in undermining the trade unions. Rehana Azam, took responsibility for the sector in the last quarter of 2008.

9. Higher Education

The last year has continued to be a challenging time within the HE Sector. The Public Sector Conference offered much welcomed support to the sector in its efforts to secure single table bargaining arrangements. The opportunity for some of our HE Reps to participate at the conference reinforced their enthusiasm and commitment that the HE Sector is a key priority within the Public Services Section.

GMB HE sector retains its position to explore opportunities in building a strong organising culture within the sector. It is fair to say the success of the national pilots are under the spotlight and every effort is being made to understand the challenges we need to overcome to better organise in the sector. Some HE Reps participated in the GMB @ Work consolidation training which offered a much needed focus on the methodology that needed to be applied in coordinating activity within their workplaces. Nationally there is a commitment to work with any institution locally to build and support GMB organisation. Such local activity

will secure a better understanding of the challenges faced in the sector and assist in building a generic organisation plan for the sector.

Regular HE Briefings have been circulated within the sector together with visits to some regions to discuss key HE priorities. One area that requires some consideration and action is the production of a detailed document for officers who take responsibility for the sector that will offer a detailed insight to the sector. This material is currently in draft format and it is anticipated to be published later this year.

The three year pay deal concluded with the final uplift of 5% implemented in October last year. The 3 year pay deal equated to an overall increase of 15.88%. Although the overall settlement equated well in comparison to other sectors of the economy it needs to be recognised that the level of settlement was much needed to fill the void of previous pay settlements. The priority is now to preserve the terms and conditions of our members and build on previous pay settlements in what is a challenging time ahead for all in the labour market. At the time of writing it is well documented that applications to academia are rising in an environment that is providing uncertainty.

The GMB fully participated in the Review of HE Financial pay data which assessed and evaluated financial pay data within institutions. The review group considered commonly accepted data; universities' and HE colleges' income and expenditure in 2006-07, 2007-08, and forecasts for 2008-09 and later years; the outcomes of the Framework Agreement, the earnings of HE staff following its implementation; and relativities to the earnings of other UK employees. The review drew on independent data sources and published its findings and key recommendations in December 2008. This data could inform subsequent negotiations in the JNCHES machinery for academic year 2009-10 and beyond. Gerry Carr GMB Policy Officer supported the National Officer with this exercise and it is appropriate to record our appreciation to Gerry for his work in the sector. The full report is available on the GMB website. The current signatories to the JNCHES agreement recently submitted key headlines to the 2009/10 pay round. Full details can be found in the January HE briefing.

The New JNCHES agreement has now been signed and went live last year. UCU continue to remain outside these arrangement, however all parties have recently secured the support of ACAS with the aim of identifying a resolution. Although the Trade Unions currently party to the new agreement could remain outside any discussions via ACAS we anticipate an involvement central to these discussions. The new agreement has taken considerable time and negotiation and the current signatories to the agreement do not want to see this unraveled or for UCU to secure a stronger bargaining arrangement at the detriment to others. The GMB has played a significant part alongside the current signatories in an attempt to encourage UCU to enter in to the new arrangements.

The GMB HE Committee have met regularly and supported all the activities around single table bargaining and all issue relating to pay and conditions. The focus to develop support regionally and the sharing of best practice have been central to all activities.

10. Further Education

In England the vast majority of colleges are members of the Association of Colleges (AOC), an employers' organisation which negotiates with the GMB alongside other recognised trade unions to produce recommendations for individual colleges to adopt. In my last report I highlighted the difficulties of settlements that only carry a recommendation to implement. As a result many colleges in England have fallen behind the nationally agreed pay scales.

GMB FE Reps discussed some of the obstacles they face in challenging their employer on pay and membership development. Over the last year a strong co-ordinated focus by the trade unions has led to a

national campaign being launched in January 2009 titled 'Time to Pay Up'. The campaign is simple as the title suggests; no longer can we accept colleges not honoring national settlements. Nationally we wrote to each college under the authority of the Freedom of Information Act requesting details of their positions on pay settlements. The 'pay up' campaign encourages each college rep and union to begin some local activity to discuss the issue of pay, and if used appropriately it will be a fantastic tool to organize membership locally. Union density in colleges is patchy and this campaign is the opportunity we have needed to begin coordinating local activity. All regions have been informed of the campaign together with full details of how the campaign can be applied locally. The trade unions launched a website for the campaign and full details can be accessed either through the GMB website or directly to www.timetopayup.org.uk.

On pay the 2008/09 settlement achieved a 3.2% increase on all salaries and allowances, or the sum of £550 (whichever is greater) in the form of an underpinning.

The £550 underpinning meant that everyone below scale point 15 (£17,469) on the harmonised pay spine received a larger increase than the recommended 3.2% from 1st October 2008. It also meant that the minimum hourly rate of pay increased by 4.32% to £6.91 per hour. However, all this is meaningless if GMB Colleges are not implementing the recommendation. Therefore it is essential the GMB take an active role locally to secure the national pay settlements and begin local membership organization. The National Officer Rehana Azam and National Reps Rory MacQueen and Mick McGarry will welcome any invitation from a region to go through the details of the campaign.

11. Environment Agency

The majority of GMB membership is held by the Southern Region and the two national reps Terry Sadler and Mike Sutton are also based within the region. National negotiations on pay and conditions are carried out through the National Negotiating Group (NNG) where the GMB has one seat occupied by the national rep. The national officer supports the NNG in its discussion on generic issues affecting Environment Agency members.

2008/09 pay negotiations were technical as they were linked to the introduction of a new pay and grading scheme for staff and a basic up to 2% increase for the operation side. Members who participated in the pay ballot returned an acceptance to the offer. At the time of writing the 2009/10 pay claim has been formulated by the trade union side and will be submitted to the Employer shortly.

The National Officer working alongside the national reps have tried to secure engagement across the regions with little success. As a result we have evaluated that until there is a request from regions to organize meetings/forum nationally, our priorities will remain engaging in the NNG and sub groups underpinned by a strong communication strategy with the regions on all outcomes of these meetings.

12. Police Staff

The terms and conditions of Police Staff are negotiated through the Police Staff Council (PSC). The GMB has one seat on the PSC which is currently vacant due to Robert Wright's resignation from the post. This matter will be resolved shortly through the nominations received from regions for the vacant post. The National Officer working alongside the national rep progresses issues through the PSC.

Much of the year's work was taken up with the pay claim and the final outcome of these discussions led to a 3 year deal agreed by GMB members who participated in the ballot. The 3 year pay deal for 2008/10 offered a 2.6%, 2.6%, and 2.58% increase on all PSC pay points and allowances. Year 2 would see the deletion of the pay point 1 and Year 3 would see the deletion of the pay points 2 and 3. The deletion of the bottom pay points has been seen a significant step to end low pay in the sector. A re-opener clause was

included in the deal but current indications on inflation will mean that this will not be applied. In addition to this a strong statement was agreed by the PSC on the view to develop a strategic approach to explore a national grading structure for all Police Staff in England and Wales.

Nationally the GMB are seeking to work with regions locally to strengthen GMB force organization. Midlands and East Coast region invited the National GMB Police Forum to hold their first meeting in the region. It will also be appropriate to record our thanks to Robert Wright, Yorkshire Region of his unfaltering support to the GMB nationally in particular during the period where Yorkshire region was leading the sector nationally.

13. Local Government

The three key issues for local government have been and remain pay, pensions and single status. In addition there has, in 2009, been pressure on local authority finances and consequent effects on jobs.

Local Government Pay

2008 NJC pay negotiations, covering 1.7 million council workers, proved just as challenging as 2007. Local government employers offered 2.2% which, after negotiation, resulted in a formal offer of 2.45% plus bottom loading - at GMB's insistence - making it worth 3.3% for those on the bottom three spinal column points. After much deliberation and an affirmative vote of all members GMB accepted this offer. Unison and Unite took strike action but it could not be sustained. GMB brokered an arrangement whereby pay was referred to ACAS arbitration and in the meantime the final offer was paid "on account". An arbitration hearing took place on 10 February 2009 and at the time of compiling this report the outcome remains unknown.

There is a consequential effect on 2009 pay negotiations which, in any event, take place against the backdrop of tumbling inflation. 2009 negotiations will again start late and many local authorities are using the economic recession as an excuse to lower their budget for pay. 2009 will again be a tough year for local government pay and GMB will, as ever, consult carefully with members over any offer.

Local Government Pension Scheme

The new LGPS that we negotiated and was introduced in April 2008 has been bedding in with the only serious concern being around the application of the 3-tier ill-health pension arrangements. GMB has been monitoring this closely. Most significantly, we have seen general attacks on public sector pensions and that has included the LGPS. This was expected and the government officials, unions, employers and advisers involved in the LGPS have been preparing a sustainability plan to demonstrate the scheme's viability. It is essential that we simultaneously win the debate on pensions - that public sector pensions should not be dumbed down to private sector levels, rather the latter should be levelled up - and be able to show that the LGPS has a responsible, affordable cost structure.

Single Status/Equal Pay

Achieving single status/equal pay in local government continues to be by far the greatest demand on our resources. Single status negotiations with only limited funding have proved very difficult as some traditional bonus earners have found their pay capped or even reduced by imposition - and considerable numbers of administrative and clerical jobs have also been downgraded. There have been great gains for 'manual' women's jobs and significant pay rises plus large equal pay compensation payments have resulted.

GMB backs up its negotiating position with litigation and we lead the union movement with 30,000 equal pay claims for our women members. This is a staggering achievement and shows beyond doubt our commitment to equal pay. But all this has come at a cost as unscrupulous no-win-no-fee lawyers have sought to exploit the situation and persuaded our own members to take cases against us alleging discrimination in collective negotiations.

The Courts upheld one such case dating back to 2004 (the 'Allen' case). Although some others have been dropped or dismissed there are still many outstanding. The final resolution to these cases is critical to the future of collective bargaining in the UK.

(Adopted)

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to the Public Services Section Report. I call on Brian Strutton to move his report, which is pages 71-80 of the General Secretary's Report. Brian.

BRO. B. STRUTTON (National Secretary): I formally move my report.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Are there any questions on Brian's report? Page 71? Page 72?

BRO. M...(No surname or region given): Page 72. In the light of the recent resolutions carried and the concerns our members have with them, could I ask for a commitment from our National Public Service Officer to review the constitution of the School Support Staff Negotiating Body, with a view to ensuring that both GMB and UNISON have an equal proportion of representatives, whether a voting system or not is applied?

THE PRESIDENT: Page 73? 74? 75? 76? 77? 78? 79? 80? Brian.

BRO. STRUTTON (National Secretary for Public Services): Congress, the constitution for the new School Support staff Negotiating Body has been set by the Secretary of State. It is not in our gift to be able to change that. I think that Martin's question, actually, refers to the TU side constitution of that body. The constitution says that different unions have different numbers of seats. Votes have to be by consensus of the three trade unions, irrespective of the number of seats that are held. I am happy to enter into a debate with the other unions about the number of seats on the trade union side, but I am not prepared to jeopardize the power sharing arrangement that we have for voting because that could actually turn against us. So with that qualification, I am happy to take up Martin's suggestion.

THE PRESIDENT: Is that okay, Martin? *(Agreed)*

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY – PUBLIC SERVICES

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to the Public Services Section Report – Industrial & Economic Policy. I will be calling Motions 123, 124 and 126. Will the movers from South Western Region, North West & Irish Region and GMB Scotland come to the front of the hall.

LOCAL AUTHORITY CARE HOMES

Motion 123

123. LOCAL AUTHORITY CARE HOMES

In the current economic climate a number of private care homes across the South Western Region are facing closure. With many local authorities in the process of closing their residential care homes how will this impact upon our elderly population?

We already know in the UK we have and will have in the future a growing aging population. The Government proposal is that we should all stay in our own homes. Sounds good in theory but what about in practice? Many home care services are provided by the private sector who need to make a profit rather than a not for profit services provided by local authorities.

One council in the South Western Region has put forward it's 'Futures' plan over the next four years whereby many of their elderly person's homes will close and a third will be refurbished from the money generated from the sale of the other homes. The intention is that many of the older people will be placed in private sector residential care provision. Taking away their choice of local authority home v private sector home.

Obviously there is a problem with land prices plummeting and whether or not they will have the required resources to carry this through. In the meantime some 500 residential care workers are in a state of limbo not knowing what will happen about their 'future'. This is even worse (if it can be) as it is a Labour Council who is hell bent on taking away local authority residential care provision!

We therefore call upon Congress to continue to support the campaign to keep residential care services in house.

BRISTOL PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH
South Western Region

(Carried)

BRO. K. JENKINS (South Western): I move Motion 123, Local Authority Care Homes. President and Congress, one indicator of a civil society is when it looks after its most vulnerable members, including those at the beginning and the end of their life cycles. Yet in this country child poverty still has not been eradicated. In many areas, standards of care for the elderly have failed or are under threat. It is a fact that people are living longer and this larger and ageing population will have moral and financial implications for us all.

The Government would like to see the elderly looked after in their own homes by carers who can deal with their day-to-day requirements, or by relatives who do their utmost but sometimes end up suffering pressures which seriously disrupt their own quality of life. They keep going because of their love and dedication to those who depend on them. That may be appropriate for some, but what if you do not want to be a burden on your family or have no option but to go into a care home? In locations where the local authorities are closing their care homes, there may be no choice but to go into a private home, but some of these companies, even with a low paid workforce, currently have high levels of debt.

The consequence of them failing could jeopardize the future of their residents, with the possibility of them losing their homes. On top of this, how many ageing patients are taking up much needed hospital beds because there are no care home vacancies?

Help the Aged and Age Concern are deeply worried about the looming crisis, as are the member of this Union whose jobs are under threat in those local authority homes targeted for merger or closure. Care homes for the elderly must not be subject to market forces. It must be incumbent on the Government and the public sector to provide modern homes run by qualified and accountable staff who have a commitment to and respect for the people under their care. We need homes where residents can grow old with minimum worry, with their dignity intact and in an environment where they feel safe. It is a tragedy that the perception of many voters, especially the young, is that the Labour Party has become the party of war, privatisation and immoral self-interest. Here is just one opportunity for the party to rediscover its traditional role in society.

We call on the CEC to ensure that the Government regains its socialist conscience and supports and invests substantially in local authority care homes. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Is the motion formally seconded, South Western Region? *(Motion 123 was formally seconded)*

PRIVATE SECTOR CARE HOMES

Motion 124

124. PRIVATE SECTOR CARE HOMES

This Congress recognises the invaluable commitment of private sector care workers, especially in Southern Cross Care Homes. A fair days pay for a fair days work is not an unreasonable request.

Traditionally, the private sector health care workers are low paid. The pay doesn't reflect their professionalism in dealing with residents, nor the hard work they put in.

Congress calls on our National Officer to bring about better terms and conditions for our members, so they feel appreciated for the job that they do.

104 BRANCH
North West and Irish Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. SUTCLIFFE (North West & Irish Region): President and Congress, I, like many of you, work for a local authority. My authority has outsourced personal care provision to the private sector. We all know there are good and bad employers in the private sector, but they all pay insubstantial wages. The workers in the private sector do an invaluable job for very little pay, work all hours for that little pay. The GMB has extensively recruited in Southern Cross Care Homes and in the private sector as a whole. The GMB expects a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. This is not an unreasonable request. The care sector has always been a low paid area. This motion calls on the National Officers to do everything in their power to give our members in the South Cross

Care Homes and in the private sector as a whole the reason to be a GMB member. The GMB has always been the champion of low pay, given that they are mostly low paid women workers. Let's get them the pay that they deserve and for the professionalism that they show the residents of this country, many of whom are our family and friends. But the employers, as we expect, are not wanting to be a good employer. We must do more to secure our aims for our members. The members in Southern Cross Care Homes and other private sector care workers are looking to the GMB and staying with the GMB while we get on with our jobs. But if we do not do our job and we do not get what we promise, how can we keep our members, retain them and continue to recruit in the service if we don't deliver. Please support this motion. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Seconder? (*Motion 124 was formally seconded*)

I call Motion 126, which is to be moved by GMB Scotland.

STAFFING LEVELS IN MENTAL HEALTH AND LEARNING DISABILITY
Motion 126

126. STAFFING LEVELS IN MENTAL HEALTH AND LEARNING DISABILITY

Congress, we bring to your attention inconsistent treatment of Mental Health and Learning Disability Specialist Nurses in respect of Pay and Continuity of Patient Care, which is of utmost importance within these areas, due to the conditions and vulnerability of the patients and service users.

The use of NHS Bank Staff who are unfamiliar with the services leave patients undervalued and staff at an increased risk of violent attacks and disruptive behaviour. Staff bank systems are expensive to run, yet reduce regular staff's overall earnings.

We call on Boards and Trusts to fill substantive posts and build better career pathways and ask Congress to endorse this approach within this Sector.

GLASGOW NE & SW HEALTH SERVICE BRANCH
GMB Scotland

(Carried)

SIS. A. DEAN (GMB Scotland): I move Motion 126 – Staffing Levles in Mental Health and Learning Disability. Congress, GMB Scotland calls on you to support mental health and learning disability staff throughout the NHS who are finding that they are facing rising levels of violence and stress within their workplace due to changes in the way that the long-term care units they work in are staffed. Traditionally, the specialist staff employed in these units provided cover for any sickness absences on a needs must basis, the advantage being that patients were familiar with their care staff. The downside to management, of course, was the added cost due to staff of all levels being paid at overtime rates.

In recent years the NHS has operated staff banks whereby staff are employed on a pro-rata basis to temporarily cover for such absences. Not surprisingly, most bank staff will be paid at the lowest possible rates. Bank staff will not necessarily have the level of experience, knowledge or, indeed, the competencies or commitments to meet the needs of the patient groups that they are being temporarily assigned to. What is more worrying is that like is not always replaced with like. Because of the availability of specialist staff being reduced due to lack of training places offered by the universities and also poor retention and the retirement of older staff, really, this is a no-brainer for those who work in these fields for the following reasons. People working in these specialist areas have found that the temporary staff do not have the knowledge or the familiarity required to recognize changes in people's conditions which has led to situations whereby patients who have become ill with acute physical conditions have suffered neglect with dire consequences because no one recognized these changes as being new or different for them.

Bank staff do not necessarily have the right coping strategies, either, to de-escalate potentially volatile situations, which is a regular feature of this type of work. It is, supposedly, only the most challenging patients who are now provided continuing care by the NHS rather than be a voluntary social care organization, resulting in a further rise in violence levels between patients and also towards staff. The whole situation creates what is known in the trade as a cycle of poor care. Essentially, it is a downward spiral of diminishing returns. Patients become more ill and staff, quite quickly, become demotivated with team work going to the wall and people turning on each other. What should be a supportive and therapeutic environment turns into a cauldron of despair. Once the rot sets in, it becomes really difficult to turn it around. It does not take a Philadelphia lawyer to work out that in the end this must be costing the NHS more than the previous arrangements did.

More staff are off sick due to rising stress of working in this atmosphere and more staff suffering violent injuries at work. Patients' families do not want to see their loved ones experiencing these difficulties. They do not need or deserve this level of treatment. As we know, divide and conquer is a re-design strategy. It is a major part of Government policy. In this case, it has gone a step too far and GMB Scotland demands that NHS organizations look long and hard at the way they staff these specialist areas. The NHS should remember one basic rule: you only get what you pay for. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Do we have a seconder?

SIS. K. McINTYRE (GMB Scotland): I second Motion 126. People who suffer from any of these conditions are already very vulnerable and often become very frustrated. Continuity of patient care is vital to them as they feel more protected when they are being cared for by people who they are familiar with and trust. The decrease in numbers of permanent posts of specialist nurses is unacceptable. The use of more and more bank staff to care for these vulnerable people is unacceptable. Bank staff are paid a lower rate than permanent staff, yet are more expensive systems to run. Boards and trusts must fill substantive posts not only for the sake of patient care but also to enable staff to have

better working conditions and not to leave them feeling under-valued but also at a lower risk of violent attacks and disruptive behaviour. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Do any delegates wish to come in on the debate on Motions 123, 124 and 126? (*No response*) Colleagues, as there is no CEC speaker, can I put Motions 123, 124 and 126 to the vote. The CEC is supporting them. All of those in favour, please show? Anyone against? They are carried.

Motion 123 was carried.

Motion 124 was carried.

Motion 126 was carried.

SOCIAL POLICY - NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to Social Policy – National Health Service. I call Motions 194, 195, 198, 199 and Composite Motion 20. Will the movers and seconders please come to the front. GMB Scotland to move Motion 194.

WORK ENVIRONMENTS IN COMMUNITY NHS AND SOCIAL WORK

Motion 194

194. WORK ENVIRONMENTS IN COMMUNITY NHS AND SOCIAL WORK

Congress, significant increases in investment are required to be made by the UK and devolved Parliaments to improve the built environments to allow the required and proposed expansion of community care staff in health and social services to take place.

For many years there has been an intention to radically redesign acute and primary care services to enable the care to be provided as close to the patient's home as possible. Premises are cramped and lacking in facilities, many of which have been in use since the earliest days of the NHS.

In an effort to remain within tight budgets, Health Boards and Local Authorities have gone to great lengths to maximise the potential of traditional, environmentally unfriendly buildings, refurbishing and renovating where possible. For many of these buildings the point has come whereby, rooms have become cramped, too many staff being expected to function within them. The time has come whereby, staff should be properly resourced, and advantage taken of cheaper land prices and high unemployment in the building industry due to the economic downturn, thus providing much needed work in the short-term, and appropriate facilities for the 21st Century.

Congress therefore calls on the GMB to lobby Government.

SCOTTISH PRIMARY CARE NURSING BRANCH
GMB Scotland

(Carried)

SIS. A. DEAN (GMB Scotland): I move Motion 194, Work Environments in Community NHS and Social Work. President and Congress, GMB Scotland demands significant increases in capital investment to enable those in health and social work services to

function better and bring together the human resources required for the needs of the 21st Century. NHS acute services are being radically altered with transfers of staff being made from hospitals to community work. Hospital stays are now being counted in hours rather than days. We have a proliferation of policies directing the patient's journey with the intent of bringing the care closer and closer to the patient's home. The NHS car parking fiasco is just one example of the pressure that this is putting on resources. More and more people are being treated as out-patients with community staff being left to pick up the pieces when the patient returns home, often in the later hours of the evening, when GPs are tucked up in bed with their cocoa. This situation creates a bottleneck in the out-of-services when people seek reassurance and advice and when access to records is dependent on IT systems functioning, and we all know how reliable that is at times.

Some NHS and local authority areas seem to be getting their act together and doing fairly well. They have been well provided for over the past 12 years, thanks to the investments made through the enactment of Labour policies. Those areas have, in the main but not exclusively, been in the poorer socially excluded areas, which, quite rightly, needed major overhauling over infrastructures to facilitate all the social inclusion developments during this period of time. Really, we are not criticising such long-awaited progress. But this is all good and well for those working in those areas. Land(?) was always cheaper and the work was considered of high value, bringing with it the promise of getting health and social care targets met, and with it feathers in the caps of all those concerned. This has not been the story in the better-off areas where things were always better, anyway, and just seemed to be getting better and better without too much effort on the part of policy makers. In fact, they always seemed desperately surprised. There was no need to worry about targets that were met a long time ago and where people are already living well over their three score and ten. They almost sound disappointed as if they don't want this group to move up in the longevity stakes in order that the sluggish progress in the SEPS(?) groups can look as if they are catching up.

The emphasis in these better-off areas is more on how to reduce dependency and long-term care which is of concern to the local authorities affected, rather than dependency on drugs and welfare benefits. But, really, it does not make headline news for the politicians.

Workers are, therefore, left to make the most of what has been good enough for decades. In some areas the buildings were used as clinics pre and post World War II, and have been altered, adapted and shaken all around until, quite frankly, on some days it is like trying to see how many people you can squeeze into a phone box. This is not the way to get the most of workers' time. Health and safety is an issue, as you will all realise, when buildings are overcrowded. More accidents and more cross-infections occur while people hot desk and lunch at their desks due to a lack of canteen facilities.

Always one to take a negative and turn it into a positive, I am certain that, despite the economic downturn, now is the time that we should be looking to take advantage of the cheaper land prices within these areas and create future-proof resources. Capital investment has become a thorny issue in public services. In Scotland the current SNP Government does not want to take this hit. There is no short-term benefit to them. It

takes years to plan and build such facilities. Elsewhere the story will be similar but with different political dynamics and, let's face it, the dynamics from one news flash to the other differ in these days.

GMB Scotland asks for your support in this motion to bring better standards to working environments and facilities for all in Community NHS and social work areas. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Can I have a seconder?

SIS. C. LAVERY (GMB Scotland): In seconding Motion 194, the mover has set out the case in detail. As called for, we are asking for your support to lobby Government. This motion is calling on a twin track approach to the problem, improving staff levels and making sure that they are properly resourced and by calling on Government to start now by investing new facilities fit for purpose in the 21st Century. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: I call Motion 195, to be moved by North West & Irish Region.

NEW LABOUR'S HEALTH PLAN – UNDERMINES FOUNDING PRINCIPLES OF NHS
Motion 195

195. NEW LABOUR'S HEALTH PLAN – UNDERMINES FOUNDING PRINCIPLES OF NHS

Congress is deeply disturbed that New Labour's plan to give patients money to buy their own health care is diametrically opposed to, and fundamentally undermines the founding principles of the NHS.

Congress recognises that patients should have a right of input into the treatment that they may receive, however, giving people money and then asking them to choose and determine what is the most effective treatment to pursue, is fraught with danger to the health and well being of the lay person.

Congress agrees that giving patients vouchers to pursue health care may well sound the end of the NHS as we know it and could eventually create a two tier NHS no longer free at the point of entry to all.

Congress instructs the CEC to use all its resources and influences, both financial and political to build an alliance with other like minded groups and Unions, to mount an effective campaign to get this obnoxious plan scrapped and consigned to the dustbin of history where it belongs.

252 BRANCH
North West and Irish Region

(Carried)

BRO. W. McLINTON (North West & Irish Region): I move Motion 195. President, General Secretary and Congress, the NHS is one of the finest and most enduring achievements of the labour and trade union Movement. A simple illustration of this is that when I was a boy there was an old man who lived in my street who had a badly damaged leg. I asked my mother what had happened, and she explained that when he was a boy he had an accident and in those days if you could not afford to see a doctor you were just left as you were. I later discovered that our Movement set up the NHS and this had consigned the story I have just told you to the Dark Ages. The NHS abolished this type of thing because it delivered healthcare on the basis of need. Essentially, it is a socialist institution, paid for on the basis of ability to pay, delivered on the basis of need. Thatcher attacked it and damaged it but could not kill it because it is in the life blood of the people. Now New Labour or neo-Liberal Labour, for that is the ideological underpinning of the New Labour project, has come up with a gimmick which has a superficial seductiveness about it. Who, after all, does not want to have a say over their healthcare? However, hidden within this proposal is a cash nexus. Giving people vouchers for healthcare will inevitably lead to a two-tier system of healthcare. The well paid and wealthy will top up their vouchers with their own money and, as a result, the level of healthcare you will receive will be based on not your needs but your wealth.

We heard yesterday about our partnership with the Child Poverty Action Group and the desperate plight of lots of families living in poverty through no fault of their own. This policy, if enacted, will make their position even more difficult. It will also be the slow death of the NHS which has saved so many of us over the years. The NHS needs our love and respect, not gimmicks which will totally damage it. New Labour will say, “No, no, no, you’re wrong. This is about increasing choice.” The late Gilbraith said about this sort of thing: “The modern Conservative is engaged in one of man’s oldest exercises in moral philosophy – the search for a superior justification for selfishness.” There is an alternative. It is called “fairness”. They say it doesn’t work, but they are wrong. I urge you to read the paragraph recently published by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett. They demonstrate, by using World Bank data, that in fairer societies even the wealthy are more healthy. So we need to stop this now. I move the motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Can I have a seconder? *(Motion 195 was formally moved)*

I now call Motion 198, London Region to move.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR THE TREATMENT OF LOWER BACK PAIN Motion 198

198. GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR THE TREATMENT OF LOWER BACK PAIN

This Congress calls on the government to allocate funding so that those suffering chronic low back pain can choose to access treatment by healthcare professionals such as chiropractors working outside the NHS, as specified in the NICE (National Institute of Clinical Excellence) Guidelines 2009. This would reduce waiting lists for physiotherapy and allow chronic back pain sufferer's

speedy access to therapeutic care, thus improving the health of the nation by reducing the number of working days lost, and dependency on painkillers and anti-inflammatory medications."

MCA BRANCH
London Region

(Referred)

SIS. D. PETERSON (London): President and Congress, chronic lower back pain is a very common complaint, as one in three adults will suffer from low back pain in their life. It is very painful and can be quite disabling. For some unfortunate people, it can lead to long-term problems. Recently, the experts at the National Institute of Clinical Excellence looked at the evidence for therapies like chiropractic, and they decided that there was a benefit in offering this type of help to some people with lower back pain.

Our brothers and sisters from the MCA branch are chiropractors, and welcomed the news that GPs can now offer patients a choice in managing their back pain. What is not clear from NICE is how this development will be funded.

Congress calls on the Government to allocate funding so that those suffering from chronic low back pain can be treated within the NHS. This would actually save the NHS money in the long run. There would be less GP visits, no long waiting lists for physiotherapists, less need for pain killers and anti-inflammatory tablets, both of which have side effects. Think for a minute about the self-employed taxi driver who sits in his cab all day driving and waiting for fares. If he or she is not out on the streets, they don't earn. Worse, they still have to pay for the cab and the business overheads. So it costs them money to staff off work with a bad back.

Think of the factory workers who leans over a production line for hours on end. They are lucky if they get more than statutory sick pay if they cannot work due to back pain. If they are off for too long, they might not have a job to go back to in these hard economic times. These are the people who chiropractors want to help, people like you and me, people who simply cannot afford to pay to get their backs right and return to work quickly.

Congress, I ask you to support this motion, to change the way that low back pain is dealt with on the NHS and give the ordinary people on minimum wages a chance to live, work and play with a healthy back. Congress, I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder.

SIS. K. HOLLAND (London): I second Motion 198. I second this motion because, as you may be aware, you can be treated in a private hospital if a waiting list is too long. Then why should back problems be different? As the mover stated, physio often does not work and waiting lists are long for treatment. This can have all the effects of dragging out people's sickness with the possibility of capability looming. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I now ask GMB Scotland to move Motion 199.

HOSPITAL PARKING MOTION 199

199. HOSPITAL PARKING

Congress, over the years Health Boards and Trusts have attempted to manage finite space for cars and ensure access for patients and visitors. The needs of staff arriving and departing at times inadequately served by public transportation have not been addressed.

We therefore call on Congress to campaign across the UK to agree a fair and consistent policy which supports staff providing valuable services in the NHS as well as service users through their local, regional and national Health Boards.

GLASGOW NE & SW HEALTH SERVICE BRANCH
GMB Scotland

(Carried)

SIS. J. COOPER (GMB Scotland): Congress, I move Motion 199 – Hospital Parking. I would like to refer you to a news release on 2nd September 2008: “Car parking charges are to be abolished at NHS hospitals across Scotland by 31st December 2008. The Health & Wellbeing Cabinet Secretary states: ‘The NHS should be free at the point of delivery, whether you are a patient, a visitor or a member of staff.’ Exceptions are being made for private finance initiatives. They have been asked to reduce or limit the charges.” Which hospitals are still being affected in Scotland? They are Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, Glasgow Royal Infirmary and Ninewells Hospital in Dundee. They are three of the largest hospitals in Scotland.

These hospitals are dealing with probable terminal illness, the greatest numbers of staff, visitors and patients, many who travel from all over Scotland. Charges for these hospitals can range from £1.10 an hour to £63 if you buy a ticket, which covers 28 visits. 28 visits is just enough for a course of radiotherapy. You could stay after 7 at night for the whole night for £2. I wonder who worked that one out? Private firms have even reduced passing on tax cuts and have pocketed £30,000 at the ERI up until February of this year alone. Who says there is no profit to be made in other people’s misery? Who does it affect? It affects every person who works there and everyone who has a family. Why does it affect them? It is when they are at their most vulnerable, of course. Who does it hit the hardest? The ill and the lower paid.

Last year my son was diagnosed with cancer. There was no prior warning and no indication that things were going to throw his family into an emotional roller-coaster. Time has passed and we are back on track, but we are still angry and disappointed at the added stress caused by the cost of visiting. The cost of trips for chemo, radiotherapy and blood tests were placed not just on my family but on my son. He had to pay for daily visits to Edinburgh for radiotherapy, and parking charges were a disgrace. Yes, as a patient, he had a reduced cost of £1 for a 20 minute visit every day, and they did try to

provide a parking space nearby. Those who suffer from serious illness, whether it be cancer or long-term conditions are usually in hospital or attending various hospitals for extended periods. The costs are borne by families as the patients will, more than likely, have a reduced income or no income at all. Nine out of ten cancer patient households suffer a loss of income and increased costs as a direct result of cancer. When families or individuals are faced with illness like this, they pay up. No questions are asked. Life is far more important than money. Everyone knows this, apart from those who do the charging.

We need to build on the success achieved recently in Scotland and ensure that these are mirrored on a national basis across the whole of the UK. Congress, this is a blatant tax on illness. The principle of a free and comprehensive Health Service at the point of need was and still is a testimony to a civilized caring society. This, however, has been lost on the greedy, demanding excessively high parking charges at the very time when families and relatives are emotionally vulnerable and in need to visit their family and friends in hospital. If this was not bad enough, they had the cheek to charge nurses for parking at the hospital, their place of employment. How despicable! We have a tax on the families of the ill, plus a tax on the nurses coming to work to care for our families and friends. This cannot be right. Please support this motion. Let's hike up the pressure, get the negotiations and the discussions in gear and get rid of the charges for those vulnerable people in care, the fantastic staff and the stressed families.

Please support Motion 199. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Can I have a seconder?

SIS. A. DEAN (GMB Scotland): I am supporting Motion 199, Hospital Parking. GMB Scotland also wishes to highlight the increasing difficulties being experienced by those patients who are increasingly required to access to Community facilities and staff who work in Community settings, health centres, clinics, schools, GP surgeries and, indeed, patients' own homes. With the reduction in hospital beds and the emphasis now being in the provision of out-patient care, more and more consultations are being provided within Community settings to reduce unnecessary and stressful trips to hospital. The downside to this, however, is that because of their disabilities and the difficulties experienced with local transport services, patients cannot safely access these Community clinics due to insufficient available parking. This leads to awkward and undignified arrangements being made by carers at ill-prepared clinic reception areas where they need to abandon the patients who may have significant physical and/or mental health problems while they dash off to find a parking space in some far off corner of the locality. Many carers struggle with their own disabilities and many end up with parking tickets.

Various staff groups and services increasingly provide services in patients' homes. They work together to provide our healthcare for the dying, prevent admission and re-admission to hospital, which reduces not just the risk from hospital acquired complications, but it also reduces the overall costs. The downside to these benefits is that the staff require reliable but readily available transport, ie, cars, to enable them to

visit patients with the vital equipment required to do this work. I am not going into the details as I do not have the time, but there are no alternatives for these Community workers. These areas can be vast and they are heavily built-up in places. The patients requiring care at home now are too numerous and their needs too complex to go back to a time when the green ladies were seen travelling about on their bikes. That is too long ago, you will understand, for me to remember.

GMB Scotland calls on Congress to support a more detailed account of the parking needs of NHS Community services, including projected future needs, with any proposed legislation in the UK. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: We now come to Composite Motion 20, which is to be moved and seconded by Midland & East Coast.

HOSPITAL PARKING COMPOSITE 20

C20. COVERING MOTIONS

- 200. HOSPITAL PARKING FEES VICTIMISE THE VULNERABLE (Midland & East Coast Region)
- 201. HOSPITAL PARKING CHARGES (Midland & East Coast Region)

HOSPITAL PARKING

Congress we wish to highlight the shambolic state of car parking within our hospitals in England; though not in Scotland or Wales, and call upon the National Health Service to abolish parking charges on all NHS properties.

Hospital car parking fees is just another way of exploiting vulnerable people and dedicated medical staff and, therefore, these fees should be abolished. This Government is throwing away billions of tax payer's money at the banking system.

Congress calls on the CEC to lobby Government for the removal of England's hospital's car parking charges.

(Carried)

SIS. M. DAVEY (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I move Composite Motion 20, Hospital Parking. I am pleased to be moving this motion as a lot of my last year was spent at the hospital, not as a patient but visiting my loved ones and friends. Believe me, I spent an awful lot of money on the parking fees. It was so important to visit my husband as he had his hip replaced. Soon after my sister was diagnosed as terminally ill with multiple brain tumours. Every day I visited her and stayed as long as they allowed me, which was often for quite some hours, as none of us knew when her last day would be. At the time I did not think about the cost. How do you put a price on that? It was not until the money got low and I had to borrow money to be able to park my car so I could see

that I thought about how much was going out of our monthly pot, and how much was left for the other daily living essentials. I can tell you that there was not a lot. We were struggling at times. We had Trev's money coming in for some months and other little extras but this made very little difference. If we had been on benefits or a pension or we were in the much lower pay bracket, we would have been really struggling. The stress of not being able to go unless fit and able enough to walk if the car did not work, or if I did not have the car, made me feel quite ill. But what of those who cannot get around themselves, who rely on public transport to get around and cannot afford taxi fares? I live fairly close to the hospital, but sometimes I would have to get a taxi and it cost me nearly £5 each way for taxis on the few occasions that I used them. That would mean, if I had to use them every day, around £70 a week, and for those who do not have any alternative, that is quite a lot of money. Do not forget that when you go and you are spending a lot of time there, there is the food, the drink and if you take any gifts there is the price of that. This comes to quite a bit of money. The parking fees were costing me nearly as much, because every day I would, sometimes, go twice a day or three times a day. This is disgusting. As far as I am concerned, it is classed as extortion and it exploits people when they are most vulnerable. Also do not forget the patients who are lying there wondering if there will be a visitor and knowing that any day could be their last. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I call the seconder.

SIS. C. CLARKSON (Midland & East Coast): I speak in support of Composite 20. Charging the sick and vulnerable for parking! How low can we stoop? The vulnerable are subsidizing backdoor privatisation. Where does this money go? Who is benefiting? Certainly not the sick and certainly not the visitors. What about the workers? Yes, low paid workers, at that. They are being taxed with parking fees. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on the debates? *(No response)* In that case, I call Lorraine Parker to speak on behalf of the CEC.

SIS. L. PARKER (CEC, Public Services): President and Congress, the CEC is supporting Motions 194, 195, 199 and Composite 20, but is asking Congress to refer Motion 198.

Motion 198 calls for the Government funding for chronic lower back pain sufferers to access treatment by chiropractors outside the NHS. Lower back pain is a painful disorder and one of the main reasons for time off work. More than 2.5 million people consult their GPs about back pain and related disability each year, and the NHS spends more than £1.6 billion treating this condition. In May of this year the National Institute for Clinical Excellence, or NICE, introduced new guidelines on complementary therapies. People who have had back pain for more than six weeks can be offered the option of up to 12 weeks complementary therapy funded by the NHS, including chiropractor treatment.

Given that long-term back pain problems will continue to be dealt with by the NHS, this may be a practical step to deal with the early stages of this disabling and painful condition which costs the NHS over £2.5 billion a year. The GMB has always opposed,

in principle, public funding for health services being provided outside the NHS. However, if the use of complementary treatment in the early stages of back problems frees up money to improve NHS services for treating long-term back pain, this may be a worthwhile development. We really need to look at it closely, to assess the benefits and costs to the National Health Service and whether it reduces waiting times for treatment.

Therefore, the CEC is asking you to refer Motion 198 so that we can see if the results of the new guidelines introduced by NICE in May of this year may have a beneficial effect on sufferers from back pain and how it affects our members in the NHS. Congress, please refer Motion 198 for those reasons. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Lorraine. The CEC is supporting Motion 194 and the CEC is supporting Motion 195. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried. Motion 198, will London Region refer? (*Agreed*) Does Congress accept reference? (*Agreed*) The CEC is supporting Motion 199 and the CEC is supporting Composite 20. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? They are carried.

Motion 194 was carried.

Motion 195 was carried.

Motion 198 was referred.

Motion 199 was carried.

Composite Motion 20 was carried.

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY – ENVIRONMENT FUNDING RECYCLING IN THE FUTURE MOTION 146

146. FUNDING RECYCLING IN THE FUTURE

Congress calls on the Government to fund Local Authorities who undertake recycling using GMB members to carry out the service.

Given the price of paper, tin and other types of recycled goods have dropped to an all time low, this can only affect our members jobs in the future, unless the recycling services are price protected.

S02 BRANCH
North West and Irish Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. SUTCLIFFE (North West & Irish): President, Congress, this motion calls upon the future government to look into and fund the extra cost to recycling that will happen in years to come when we have reached the point that recycling glass, tin, bottle, paper, is worthless because the collecting cost will then outweigh the cost of restoring and reusing them. When I started in my authority back in 1976 the authority had bin wagons that towed caged trailers that collected paper and cardboard. It was taken to a paper press and then placed on a conveyor belt which fed into a machine that compressed it into bales. It was then stored and taken away and sold on and the contributions went into the coffers. That was until there was a glut of paper and cardboard, and the price fell; no one wanted

it. There was as much paper then as there was in the butter mountain not so many years ago.

These days most local authorities have specific wagons and staff to collect paper, bottles, tins, and green waste. All these recycled goods are then passed on to companies who reuse them for new cars, fridges, and other goods which are recycled, but in the future when the local authorities meet the government's ever-increasing targets to recycle more and more and the percentage goes on and on, we will again be in the same position where we have a glut of recycled goods that no one wants and the cost outweighs the process. The cost of collecting the goods will outweigh the price they will be able to get for them. They will also have to take into account the cost of replacing the vehicles, the increase in staff wages, and the very important cost of fuel.

I believe that our members will end up paying for this cost. It will not be the Council Tax payer. The government as it is now has placed many councils into a rate-capping situation. Unless the government start to look at the problem and put plans into place to deal with it, it will be our members and our members' terms and conditions that will end up paying for this. Please support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

BRO. J. LACY (North West & Irish): President, Congress, I wish to second my colleague's motion regarding recycling. As many of you are probably aware, the UK is moving away from domestic refuse collection and concentrating more on recycling. Because recycling is a world, European, and government-led initiative, it has now become very, very big business, and also the number of people employed within it. But because of the current downturn in world trade our members, who work in the recycling industry, are possibly going to be exposed to redundancies affecting them and their families' lives. The government must help local authorities through this difficult time with financial support. Congress, please support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Anyone wish to come in on the debate? No? The CEC are supporting.

Motion 146 was carried.

**INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY – PUBLIC SERVICES
INVEST IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR
Composite No. 9**

C9. COVERING MOTIONS

- 104. INVEST IN LOCAL AUTHORITIES (London Region)
- 105. PUBLIC SECTOR FINANCE (London Region)

INVEST IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

We call upon congress to ask the GMB to call on the Government to increase the funding available to Local Government from Central Government Funds, and reduce the pressure on them to make continual savings, as local services are suffering an increasing detriment every year. This is likely to lead to an irreversible lowering of the quality of services if continued and has already put a great deal of stress on GMB members who are bearing the brunt of year on year savings.

The pressure on Local Government to make year on year savings at the level set by the present Government is not sustainable. Although efficiencies are possible, and even necessary in some cases, a continued reduction in funding at this level will result in the collapse of many public services. As the banks are being bailed out with £50+billion local councils are struggling to make ends meet. This is leading to many Local Authorities looking to the private sector to help increase their funding. This does not make sense, why is the Government helping out the financial sector and leaving the public sector to languish and seek help from those who may well be banging on the chancellor's door for a bailout as the economic turmoil deepens. But it now seems there is a bottomless pit available for the banks.

Local authorities are governed by democratically elected councilors, were as the banks have no one democratically appointed to voice the opinions of the taxpayers, of whom this money comes from. As the banks are now being almost nationalised it is madness that a continual reduction in grants to the public sector is driving them to seek private finance to support essential services.

We believe that the Prime Minister should help to support essential Public Services, who are making increasing cuts, over and above those from the Private Sector who may have either borrowed or lent beyond their means. As the initiative to bring us out of the current crisis is to increase spending, we believe this should be directed at the Public Sector as well as the Private Sector.

Congress we call upon you to lobby government to stop capping local authorities and start investing money into them we are told that there is no extra money available but we are expected to carry on providing services for less and less.

(Carried)

SIS. B. BENHAM (London): President, Congress, successive governments have for many years pursued a specific policy of reducing funding in real terms to local government from the central government funds. This, of course, has the effect of forcing councils to decide whether to reduce services or increase Council Tax, or indeed do both given that with the Council Tax capping limit it is not possible for authorities to raise enough from Council Tax to maintain an appropriate level of service and pay a living wage to their employees. Indeed, colleagues, this deliberate policy of underfunding is at odds with the government's stated aim of valuing public services.

The evidence is all too plain. There is not a council in the country which is not making scathing cuts to its workforce. Departmental structure proposals aimed at saving anything from a thousand pounds to hundreds of thousands are a daily occurrence. Privatisation is still rife leading to an underclass of employee being victimised and paid a pittance causing a further drain on coffers with the increase in benefits claimed. The government have made it clear that the way out of the current recession is to increase spending but you cannot spend what you do not have. The decision to prop up failing banks and guarantee their toxic debt was correct initially but having been saved these banks are now not playing the game and are positively restricting the flow of credit, so increased spending is not coming from that quarter. It could, however, from fully funding the requirements of local government and, colleagues, that funding would cost less than the billions committed to the banks. Free from restraint councils, even Tory councils, would spend money putting more money into local communities at personal, small business, and corporate level, and this would in turn generate more wealth in local economies. This is not rocket science, it is just good economics and will not affect Britain's credit ratings. If banks failed the country by their irresponsible lending, they are compounding that failure by refusing to circulate credit by responsible lending now they have the funds. Let's beat the recession by directing funds to where they have an immediate impact, colleagues, that is, the local government. Please support. *(Applause)*

BRO. D. RIGBY (London): President, Congress, brothers and sisters, my branch which is mainly public services employees asks this Congress to lobby the government to stop capping local authorities and invest money in them: public services, public money. I work for the public services where public money is spent and accounted for, not like the MPs. Do we see any extra help or any extra money? No, we do not. As a matter of fact we are told we have to make big savings each year. Our money is capped to public services but we still have to get the job in hand done. We are all aware that there are big problems out there but they are none of our doing. We know we need banks and we all need money, but do we have a say in how the banks are run? No, we do not. We are told that the banks now have public money invested in them. If the banks lose this public money, who is going to pay it back? If people do not like something in the public sector they can elect councillors to have their say and get it changed. Are we now all going to have a say in banks? I do not think so. We are all aware that when – and not if – the Conservatives get in next year our public services will be decimated more than they are now. We need more investment now. Congress, I second. *(Applause)*

ECONOMIC CLIMATE IMPACT ON PUBLIC SERVICES MOTION 106

106. ECONOMIC CLIMATE IMPACT ON PUBLIC SERVICES

With the increase in outsourcing of public services and the potential mass job losses many local council's appear to have overlooked the additional amount of people needing to use public services when faced with difficulties over their finances and housing status. The jobs being shed are across the council's without any apparent thought for future need.

For example someone losing their job may need information on benefits from the council's money welfare team and/or may face eviction therefore may need advice on homelessness and social housing. This may impact upon the whole family and the children may need support at school with access to free school meals and/or counselling. Depending upon the personalities involved it may lead to one partner seeking advice from a domestic abuse counsellor or even in extreme cases seeking refuge.

This is not hypothetical but confirmed through evidence and statistics in previous time of economic difficulties. The impact upon the individual and families can be devastating and the local council will be part of the process in enabling people to find a balance or responding immediately.

The concern we have is that by dismantling many of our local services we will not be prepared to respond as and when required. Our members in local government are being expected to take on more work because of less staff and unable to cope. Who may well find themselves being the subject of punitive sickness absence sanctions and ultimately out of work.

We have to have the investment in local government services now in order to support and provide the services needed during this very difficult period.

The Government need to be investing in 'real terms' in local government services and not just 'sound bite' for public. Giving money to private organisation that have grown fat on money which should have gone to direct public services to support our members in delivery good quality services. But reality is the money has been creamed off at the top.

We ask congress to support this motion.

BRISTOL PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH
South Western Region

(Carried)

BRO. L. WOODWARD (South Western): I am a proud Remploy worker. Congress, the current economic recession is having a significant negative impact across the fabric of our society. We have all read and listened to the news about the effect of the closures of companies and businesses throughout the UK and the effect that they have had on many employees. According to the Citizens Advice Bureau, the number of Britons seeking out debt management advice has increased dramatically over the past 12 months and while a number of recent reports have suggested that the worst could be over for the UK economy, the Citizens Advice Bureau has warned that for millions of people money worries are getting worse by the day with many having no choice but to turn to others for debt advice. According to the organisation it has seen a 179% increase in enquiries from consumers worried about debts or unemployment over the past year alone, and alongside is a 49% rise in people seeking out advice over mortgage or secured loan problems. Furthermore, it is now estimated that a typical debt advice client is around £16,970 in the red and it will take them 93 years to pay off at a comfortable rate. Many faced with such high levels of debt find themselves facing eviction or home repossession and they are in desperate need of impartial advice.

The Citizens Advice Bureau is one area of support but the local authority has a role to play. However, the new initiative of transformation and shared services is hitting councils and some appear to have taken their eye off the ball. Many local authorities are looking to shed jobs quite significantly in some areas and as many as 300 jobs could be lost. Some smaller authorities may be losing something like 30 or so jobs but the impact on the local community as a primary employer in the area can have a detrimental effect upon the whole community and the whole economy. Evidence is now coming in from local authorities where staffing cuts are being made in areas where there should be growth, areas like housing officers. Some councils are taking a leaf out of the Jobcentre Plus rationalisation programme and closing a large proportion of their area offices, making the public travel further and making it less accessible to reduce the number of customer points. There is an increase in the move to encourage members of the public to make contact through the centralised call centres when dealing with all local authority issues. One colleague tried to contact an area housing manager recently only to find she had been put through to the call centre and was told no one had heard of the manager. In the end she gave up and sent an email instead. Just imagine if you are facing eviction and you have to go through a sequence of questions read out from a script with someone on the other end who is not trained to deal with this level of enquiry. Yet the same council has shed around six jobs in their housing section out of a workforce of 20. Service demand has increased and staff sickness is very high. Punitive measures have been introduced to manage sickness.

The concern that the South Western Region has is that by dismantling many of our local services we will not be prepared to respond as and when required. Our members in local government are being expected to take on more and more work because of less staff, putting themselves at risk from stress and all the issues that that causes. Too often government have given money to private organisations to work in partnership with the public sector but the only result that has come out of that partnership has been the fact that consultants have grown fat on money which should have gone direct to public services. Please support this motion, comrades. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you; by the skin of your teeth there! A seconder?

The motion was formally seconded.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION MOTION 108

108. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

Congress agrees to support a campaign to reinvest savings identified from Local Government reorganisation.

During the bids submitted by Durham and Northumberland Councils' in Northern Region, both projected savings, when combined, amounting to £50 million arising from the creation of two single unitary councils.

We say that money, coupled with a portion of the 3 million pounds in extra efficiencies savings, should be re-invested in those Unitaries to enable a smooth transition, and to deliver the improvement in services they were designed to achieve.

DURHAM COUNTY LA BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

SIS. J. JEPSON (Northern): President, Congress, as a recently retired local government worker of 35 years in what is now the largest county council employer in the country, Durham County Council, I speak on this issue from experience. The organisation of local government in the North has brought about massive changes in the way our councils are run. In County Durham where I worked we went from eight district councils and one county council to one unitary council covering the county area. This has been a massive change in the way services are provided at local level, how services are managed, and political structures have changed. The reason the government put forward these changes was the massive efficiency saving that would be created. The projected savings that have been created by bringing in two single unitary authorities in the counties of Durham and Northumberland are estimated to be £50m. That is an awful lot of money. This motion is about what is to be done with that money.

Here is a massive opportunity to enable a smooth transition for staff and service users if this money is used wisely. In my own county there are challenges to bring together and harmonise terms and conditions across nine former local authorities. We must avoid at all costs the employer using the local common denominator to harmonise. We should always be arguing that all of our members get the best of the nine sets of terms and conditions. This amount of money should enable that to happen. It should make the transition smooth. Let's campaign to make sure it is not frittered away but used wisely for the benefit of trade union members. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

BRO. C. HENWOOD (Northern) in seconding the motion said: Congress, this motion is clear and simple. If efficiency savings are made through the organisation of local government, then they should be passed on to the employees and to improved services. So often in the past when local government has reorganised this has not been the case. We must campaign to reinvest savings identified from local government reorganisation. Services provided by local authorities have in recent years where cost-cutting measures have been in place been eroded. It is important when a pot of money is available that it is used wisely. This is the opportunity to improve services, reinstate some things that have been previously cut, and make services better for all the service users in the local authority areas.

Also, when discussions are taking place to harmonise terms and conditions we must ensure that our members do not suffer. We must negotiate the best possible terms and conditions at local level, not allow employers to use reorganising as an excuse to drive down terms and conditions. We can use the figures here created to argue for improvements as the £50m efficiency savings came directly from the bids Durham and

Northumberland County Councils submitted. Congress, please support this campaign. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

PFI
MOTION 109

109. PFI

Congress recognizes that the GMB has consistently campaigned against the Government's use of the Public Finance Initiative (PFI) to finance Public Works and Public Investment Programs.

Our opposition has been based upon our convictions that PFI is not effective or efficient; that it delivers poor quality and is by far the most expensive option.

Congress further recognizes that as the UK stands on the abyss of economic destruction, due to the reckless speculation of Banks and Investment Institutions, the time has come for the Government to abandon its misguided faith in "The City" to deliver a pizza, without a £billion bonus, let alone best value public investment.

Given that the urgent need to stimulate the UK economy and the evident fact that that will not be financed by private capital, Congress calls on the Government to come clear; to declare that the PFI era is no more and that the UK's economic recovery will only be delivered by public works and public investment.

NEWCASTLE CITY LA BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

SIS. V. DAVISON (Northern): President, Congress, GMB have constantly opposed PFI and PPP schemes or whatever other term the government have used to described the use of public private money controlling public buildings that have been built. At this stage, we have to acknowledge that the government have transformed the face of public buildings in this country. We have new state-of-the-art hospitals providing top quality services to the public. We have schools that are now fit for purpose, no longer are our children taught in buildings that should have been condemned with leaky roofs, no damp-proof courses, rooms not big enough, and in some cases classrooms were converted toilets. This situation had to change and change it has. Now our members who work in schools, hospitals, and other public buildings work in an environment which is at last fit for purpose so we applaud the government for that.

Where we have a problem is the way these buildings were built and the finance structure that was used to build them. We will live with the legacy of PFI and the like for many years to come. However, what we must now do is look to the future at how capital projects like this will be financed. We are calling on the government to say that the PFI era is no more and that the UK's economic recovery will only be delivered by public works and public investment. It is time for the government to call a halt to the PFI experiment and move forward in a way that protects the public purse. Congress, let's take back control of the public buildings. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

BRO. A. KIGHTLY (Northern): President, Congress, the PFI experiment has been a disgrace. Many of our public buildings are now run by private firms only for profit. Cost effectiveness of the PFI experiment has never been proven. It has never been efficient or effective. The economy of the country is in a bad way due to the reckless speculation of the banks and investment institutions. It always seems crazy to me that the private companies were seen as the best way of delivering public building services. Congress, the whole ethos of private companies is to maximise their profit margins - not ours, theirs. The ethos of public buildings and the service provider benefit should be for the people. These two things have always been incompatible. However, the government has disagreed with us and the other trade unions on and up to this point. It is important at this stage that we redouble our efforts to get the message across to the government that what has happened up to this point has happened and we have to live with it. However, enough is enough. The way forward is not PFI, it is to create jobs in the public sector, by creating jobs in the public works departments, the training of apprentices, and delivering buildings that are not in hock to the private companies for years to come. Congress, it is time for this to stop. Please support. *(Applause)*

PUBLIC SECTOR APPRENTICESHIPS MOTION 111

111. PUBLIC SECTOR APPRENTICESHIPS

We call on congress to support the government's initiative in creating apprenticeship places. The public sector accounts for some 20 per cent of the national workforce, but employs less than 10 per cent of all apprentices. Many more public sector organizations could be taking advantage of the benefits that apprenticeships bring, as a way of unlocking talent within their local communities and ensuring that they have a workforce equipped with the skills it needs for today and tomorrow.

There are economic and social reasons for the public sector to employ apprentices and we ask congress to lobby the government to ensure that our public sector employers take up this responsibility and secure future employment and skills for our young adults of the future.

INNOVIA BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

BRO. M. EBDEN (Northern): Good morning, President, Congress. For many years now the public sector, along with the private companies, has cut back on the number of apprenticeships being taken on over the years. This has led to a shortage of skills in all trades. It is a disgrace that this has been allowed to happen. We must support the government's initiative in creating apprenticeship places. There is a mismatch of the number of apprentices in the public sector that we must put right. Currently, the public sector accounts for 20% of the national workforce but employs less than 10% of all apprentices. This is a disgrace. The public sector with its size, guaranteed work structure, really has no excuse for taking on apprentices. It must act quickly, at least to equal its figures. If it accounts for 20% of the national workforce it should account at least for 20% of all apprentices. Apprentices bring enormous benefits to organisations that the

public sector has been losing out on. The development of companies' skills becomes an asset for generations to come which we need to encourage and develop. It is important that the public sector act now to help fill the skills gap that is looming. The government is to be applauded for its initiative in creating apprenticeship places by providing funding and support with training agencies and regional agencies. It is made easier for local authorities and hospitals in the public sector to take action and recruit apprentices. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

BRO. J. WINTER (Northern): President, Congress, not before time I come to the rostrum to talk about the increasing apprenticeships in the public sector. Not so long ago when I left school it was normal for many of our young people to have the choice to go into apprenticeships. You may not always get the choice you wanted but in most times you got an apprenticeship. Unfortunately, for many years this has not been the case. Not before time this government has stepped in to increase dramatically the number of apprenticeships that are available. However, the public sector has been slow in taking advantage of these places. It is disgraceful that only 10% of apprenticeships are in the public sector even though it makes up for 20% of the workforce. However, we must always be careful to make sure our young people are not exploited whilst training on their apprenticeships. They should be paid the rate for the job and not the £80 per week that modern apprentices earn; £80 a week and often working a 40-hour week is simply not acceptable. So, whilst we accept and welcome the government's introduction of apprenticeship places we must continue to press the government to increase the derisory sum of £80 per week for modern apprentices. Congress, as a country we have a responsibility to train and to skill our young people of the future. The sustainability of our economy depends on young people coming into the workforce with the right skills and training to fulfil the needs going forward. I therefore urge the public sector to play a full part in this requirement and take on more apprentices. Congress, please support this motion. (*Applause*)

PUBLIC SECTOR PENSIONS MOTION 121

121. PUBLIC SECTOR PENSIONS

Congress is appalled by comments made attacking public sector pensions from the bosses' organisation the CBI and the Tory Party.

We pledge to work with other public sector trade unions to defend our pensions and will call on members to support strike action if any government attempts to erode or cut public sector pension provision.

BARNESLEY GMB BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

BRO. H. RAJCH (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): There is actually a very good GMB local government pension scheme booklet which can be obtained outside on the stall which I recommend people to read through and find out more about the scheme. What I

will be saying is that the local government pension scheme that we have is okay, it is a good scheme, but it is not the gold-plated fantastic scheme which the press very often try to convince people is the case. I know that a member went to speak to an independent financial advisor recently and that adviser said, "Stay in the scheme you are in. You won't find a better equivalent scheme." That was a recommendation to stay in but it is clear that whoever wins the next election our pension scheme is going to come under attack; that is pretty obvious. The press and politicians have been creating a myth, really, that there is a pensions crisis in local government and that our scheme needs reforming. They always say reforming, don't they? I was at the South Yorkshire Local Government Pension Scheme Annual General Meeting and I asked the head financial person there whether there is a crisis at the moment, and he said, no. He said, "Don't worry about it. We've got billions. Things are sound at the moment. Okay, things might change but that may be a long way off. We don't know the patterns for the future but at the moment there certainly isn't a crisis."

It is the system, isn't it, that is in crisis as we have been hearing this morning and the pensions are certainly under attack in a number of workplaces. Also, with the state pension, unfortunately, the government has not restored the link between pensions and earnings. Interestingly, the private schemes are more expensive to administer, 50% of workers' contributions go to administration and marketing. In the state scheme it is around 1%. Private schemes depend on the performance of the funds investment in the stock market whereas the public local government scheme payments are guaranteed. We have also been hearing this morning how some employers have shut schemes to new entrants. In the GMB we have a position of saying no to two-tier workforce in public sector pensions, we are not for that and it is very important we fight to maintain that, I think. I know the GMB is committed to defending pensions. The press releases we issue show that and that is not in doubt. What I also say is that we have had a successful day's strike over pensions. In March 2006 we were able to get a successful one-day strike action which forced the employers to back off at that time. We do need to work with other unions in defending our pensions. If it was successful before, then it can be successful again. People are living longer generally, though, in just general terms and that is good, that is something positive we should celebrate, we should be pleased about. The employers, and many employees, seem to think that it is a problem once they retire, and the sooner they die the better. We are not for that. We see it in a very positive way and it is great that people are living longer. We need to campaign, we need to put that argument across to our workers, why they should fight to defend their pension scheme; they have done it before and I think they will do it again. We will be at the head of that campaign and we must fight to defend our pensions. (*Applause*)

BRO. G. WARWICK (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Good morning, President, Congress. I am very pleased to be seconding Motion 121. The sentiments in this motion are very real. I believe that pensions could be one of the main and serious issues leading up to the next election. A tax on pension schemes seems to become an everyday event and very few final salary schemes are still in existence. Unfortunately, this trend has developed into concentrated attacks on public sector pension schemes but it is not just the Tory Party that is campaigning for reductions in public sector pension schemes. If you

remember at the time of the last budget the Liberal Democrats were also preaching the same message. So, we have a concentrated attack from the two major parties below Labour.

Pensions is something we must protect and safeguard. After all, the reform of deferred pay where members have made payments for many years to provide for their retirement – it is totally unjust, totally unacceptable, for people to play politics with members’ future livelihoods. As my colleague has just said, one of our worst fears is there could well be now a two-tier attack. Now, there are many, many different pension schemes within local government. One of the weaknesses is that councils have to decide what the employer’s contribution is going to be and, unfortunately, this gives the leaders and chairs of those authorities the opportunity to go out and say, why should our council taxpayers pay more to featherbed a scheme. What they forget is that it is a funded scheme, always has been, and it always will be. To give credit to the Labour Party, when the local government pension scheme was reformed from April 2008 we managed to retain it as a final salary scheme against the trend of many, many others. Make no mistake, any change in government next year will guarantee an attack on public sector pensions and we must be prepared to oppose any such threats to our members’ future income. Thank you. Please support. (*Applause*)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND EQUAL PAY MOTION 127

127. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND EQUAL PAY

Congress remains committed to the full implementation of “Single Status”; the eradication of all inequality and discrimination and full compensation for past inequalities.

Congress further recognizes that the full costs of our campaign are substantial and that without additional Government investment threatens and undermines our members employment.

Congress calls upon the Government to demonstrate its commitment to equality by putting its money where its mouth is and to full fund the cost of implementing equal pay in Local Government.

SUNDERLAND CITY LA BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

BRO. G. MAYOR (Northern): Congress, single status in local authorities was a good idea in theory and should be a good idea in practice. Eradication of discrimination and inequality in terms and conditions is a good thing. However, when single status was brought in no one could have seen the financial burden it would create. The costs of single status being implemented are substantial and far greater than envisaged. The scale of these costs continues to undermine the employment of our members. For many local authorities the choice is to implement properly single status and make people redundant or not implement single status and save jobs. In the current climate limiting local

authorities' funding seems to be an inevitable consequence of single status. Congress, we are calling on the government to step in and help local authorities to be good employers and treat the employees fairly and equally. The government needs to give local authorities the extra funding they need to implement single status in full and also provide full compensation when it is required. This does not seem a lot to ask a government that is committed to equality in the workplace in terms of pay and other areas, a government that has recently introduced the Equalities Bill, to move this agenda forward and even more so a government that looks favourably on helping local government to fulfil its obligations. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Congress, is there anyone who would like to come in on the debate? Sorry, a seconder first.

SIS. S. McGEE-JOHNSON (Northern) in seconding the motion said: President, Congress, single status and equal pay are very good things for our members and they are very important to low-paid workers in local government. However, the implementation of equal pay has proven problematic and can cause hardship to our members. It is no surprise that when a similar thing was introduced into the health service called the Agenda for Change money came along from central government to help with implementation. That is why the imposition of Agenda for Change was not without problems but went far more smoothly than single status and was implemented far quicker. After all these years that local authorities have been trying to introduce single status it is clear that one of the major obstacles is funding. The government needs to demonstrate its own commitment to equality by putting its money where its mouth is and fully fund the cost of equal pay in local government. Only by doing this can we draw a line under equal pay and move on to the wider agenda the government have introduced into the Equalities Bill. Without getting into the foundation of equalities sought, such as equal pay, we cannot see how local government can move forward to tackle the more structural forms of inequality and discrimination, like promotion. Come on, government, be brave and put some money into equal pay. They found the money to bale out the bankers, so they can find the money to help our low-paid local government workers. Congress, please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sharon. Is there anyone who would like to come in on the debate? No. I will now call on our President, Mary Turner, to give the statement on Motion 111.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Malcolm. Congress, on behalf of the CEC I move in support of the following motions, 106, 108, 109, 121, and 127, and Composite 9. I am also asking you to support Motion 111 with the following statement. Motion 111 is about creating new apprenticeships in the public sector. The Labour Government wants to encourage more apprentice places. Congress, we should embrace Labour's commitment. Traditionally, apprenticeships have been associated with manufacturing and engineering. They have followed the sad decline of those trades. GMB has long campaigned for the restoration of apprenticeships throughout the economy. There is no reason why the public sector should not take the lead. The government has set out its proposals in a bill

currently going through parliament. It aims to deliver 21,000 new apprenticeships in the public sector next year. GMB welcomes Labour's support for apprenticeships. It is absolutely right that our young people are given a head-start in their working lives. That is what social responsibility is all about. It is what we believe in and that makes us different from the Tories. We have our role to play. GMB wants to ensure that these are real jobs with proper pay and conditions, not cheap replacements for existing jobs. GMB will support and promote good apprenticeships throughout the public sector. We will help deliver Labour's vision for the future. Please support these motions and note this statement on motion 111. Thank you, Congress. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mary. Colleagues, Composite 9, Motion 106, 108, 109, 121, and 127, are all being supported by the CEC.

Composite Motion 9 was carried.

Motion 106 was carried.

Motion 108 was carried.

Motion 109 was carried.

Motion 121 was carried.

Motion 127 was carried.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Motion 111 is being supported with a statement. Does the Northern Region accept that statement? *(Agreed)* Thank you.

Motion 111 was carried.

REGIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT: LONDON REGION (Pages 85-91)

LONDON REGION

1. MEMBERSHIP AND RECRUITMENT

FINANCIAL MEMBERSHIP	
Section Financial Membership (by each Section):	
COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION	33,132
MANUFACTURING SECTION	10,514
PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION	50,329
Grade 1 members	60,507
Grade 2 members	25,077
Retired, Reduced Rate & Others	8,391
Male Membership	44,145
Female Membership	49,830
Total number recruited 1.1.2008 – 31.12.2008	14,754
Increase/Decrease 1.1.2008 – 31.12.2008	2,276
Membership on Check-off	57,106
Membership on Direct Debit	30,371

During the period January 1st to December 31st 2008 the London Region built on the success of the previous year. With a further increase of 2276 financial members, reflecting the hard work and commitment of all the Officers, Staff, Branch Secretaries, Shop Stewards et al.

Unfortunately we suffered a slight membership decrease in the Commercial Services section which reflects the overall trend. However, we made up for this with an increase in both Manufacturing and Public Services sections. Female membership continued to grow, as did the numbers on check off and direct debit, the largest percentage increase being grade 2 members.

We continue to increase membership in schools based on our pro active campaigning, which we are also pursuing in Wilkinsons, ASDA and Southern Cross, as part of Regional and National targeting.

As with all other Regions we face a very difficult future but we are confident that with sensitive targeting and commitment we will weather the storm.

2. GENERAL ORGANISATION

Regional Senior Organisers	2
Membership Development Officers	3
Regional Organisers	17
Organising Officers	8
No. of Branches	120
New Branches	NIL
Branch Equality Officers	25
Branch Youth Officers	10

Whilst the London Region continues to focus on recruitment we are mindful of the need for consolidation, as well as the protection of the terms and conditions and employment rights of those of our members in companies facing the effects of the economic downturn.

3. BENEFITS

Dispute	411.56
Total Disablement	NIL
Working Accident	2187.50
Occupational Fatal Accident	NIL
Non-occupational Fatal Accident	NIL
Funeral	17,104.00

4. JOURNALS & PUBLICITY

GMB London Region continues to issue press releases when it is considered by the relevant Organiser that raising public awareness of a dispute will assist in a settlement. We also get press coverage for any employment issue that can be helped to progress with the use of positive public opinion.

We continue to highlight the work of GMB members in the public sector and the utilities.

We have highlighted the successes of GMB full time Organisers and the benefit of GMB membership such as the re-instatement of GMB London Region member Virgilio Teixeira who was unfairly dismissed from his £20,000 a year job as Head Chef at the Arora International Hotel Heathrow, the sacking of GMB London Region member Tony Goode from M&S for leaking to the press details of the cuts in M&S redundancy scheme. Tony Goode was summarily dismissed in early September 2008 for leaking details of the cuts in the redundant pay scheme. St Albans Council's role in the illegal use of mini cabs in the City. The expansion of Stansted and Heathrow Airports. GMB sponsored the London march in support of the 80th anniversary of the Polish state, which was attended by many London region members and members from other GMB regions, including our member who was sacked from the Grosvenor Hotel for trade union activities. The loss of members jobs as part of the recession and many other disputes in the Region. We have also publicised the work of the Sex Workers Branch in pushing through their agenda and opposition to the Police and Crime Bill. The 2009 Pay claim was launched in January even though the 2008 claim remains unsettled. Pay talks and freezes at BMI and BA and other workplaces and the dispute at Chemilines in Wembley.

The London Region website (www.gmbunion.org.uk) hosts all the press releases that have been issued this year on the NEWS page. They are also shown on the Press page on the national site www.gmb.org.uk

Campaigns

The Thermal Insulation Engineers Fight for Re-instatement of Pleural Plaques Compensation. The press office also assisted with the Laggors further rallies of Parliament to support the reinstatement of compensation for Pleural Plaques.

The campaign against Wembley employer Chemilines has gone to the National Press Office.

Private Hire Drivers Health and Safety - Private hire drivers lone working problems have led to nine deaths since March 2007. The campaign was launched at the start of February 2008 and there was a lobby of Parliament on Workers Memorial Day (28th April 2008). The campaign aims are to get funding for CCTV and shield in cabs. Sheffield has led the way by introducing these and cutting attacks on driver by 72%.

Candid

As part of the GMB Congress Special Report 2006 and Progress Update 2007 – A Framework for the Future of the GMB: Moving Forward, the first edition of a new look CANDID, the March 2008 edition, was part of the first every national magazine that will be mailed to every GMB member. Four editions of the new look CANDID which comprises an outer 16 pages of GMB London Region news and views and an inner 16 pages will be GMB national news and views have been delivered to GMB all London Region members.

5. LEGAL SERVICES

Applications for Legal Assistance	Legal Assistance Granted
785	785

Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Court	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
855	438	2	401 £4,353,067.14	14 £316,919.90	£4,669,987.04
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2008			1,344		

(b) Employment Tribunals (notified to Legal Department)

Claims supported by Union	296
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Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Tribunal	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
79	27	4	42	6	
			£354,461.61	£27,611.77	£382,073.38
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2008		217			

(c) Other Employment Law Cases

Supported by Union	Unsuccessful	Damages/ Compensation	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008
489	-	£649,869.91	679

(d) Social Security Cases

Supported by Union	Successful	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008
2	-	7

The London Region continues to monitor advice and performance of the Region's solicitors to ensure that they provide a first rate service to members.

6. EQUALITY & INCLUSION

The London Region has not as yet set up the new Equalities Forum format regionally and therefore the individual Race and Equalities and Young Members reports follow.

Around five percent of the total membership of GMB London Region, are designated as young members. That means that they are aged twenty-seven or less. The vast majority of them work in public services, the utilities, water, gas and electricity supply and so tend to be covered by decent Terms and Conditions agreements. We also have many young activists who work for other trade unions and the Labour Party and other campaigning political pressure groups. They form the basis of the Young Member activist base.

A search of the GMB membership data based revealed that we only have 10 Branch Youth Officers listed and email addresses for only two of those.

A delegation of GMB London Region Young Members attended the GMB Young Members National Conference in November 2008. Unfortunately the delegation was entirely male and did not reach the necessary gender balance. This should in no way undermine or devalue the work and commitment of the individual members of the delegation who have done all the work in the Region. Between them they have set up a dedicated website at www.GMBYOUNGLONDON.unionweb.co.uk and member survey (results not yet available).

The conference heard about the workings of and the high level of success of the GMB@Work agenda from Martin Smith, GMB National Organiser. We were successful in getting Sam Tarry on the GMB delegation for TUC Youth Conference in 2009. They joined the delegates for six other GMB regions in workshops on how to fight the BNP and how to get involved in the ASDA Store campaign and recruit and help organise workers in their local stores. Sam Tarry took responsibility for organizing the after conference bash at a local pub which was very successful.

It is not all campaigning work for GMB young members. They enjoy themselves too. Twelve of them volunteered to go to Glastonbury 2008 as servers for the trade union owned Workers Beer Company to raise money for trade union activities and campaigns. Here is a report from one of them. Glastonbury-goers not anchored to the Pyramid Stage or the Dance Arena, who can brave the walk along the top of the festival site, past The Park and Greenfields areas, and who aren't adverse to partying until dawn before dragging themselves and their friends back to their tents to snatch a couple of hours sleep in time for the bands start up again, will often find themselves in a little corner of vibrant activity, music and theatrics – a mini-festival within a festival. It used to be Lost Vagueness; all posh-frocks and bow ties, table-dancing and roulette. In 2008 it was Shangri La.

GMB sent volunteers from its London and North London groups to Glastonbury this year to help staff the bars in Shangri La, serving drinks to the colourful range of punters frequenting the area till the early hours. As well as the usual Glasto festival camping provisions – tent, Wellington boots, snorkel – the servers were instructed to take along their weirdest and wildest fancy dress items so as to blend in with their surroundings. Arriving on site laden with Hawaiian shirts, neon tights, pirate hats, face paints, glitter and all manner of random get-up, the fourteen GMB members were split between three of the Shangri La bars: Bassline Circus - a futuristic, high energy bar with live acrobats and DJs; Shackney - a two-storey favela-style rum shack with an outdoor dance floor and a VIP lounge upstairs; and Club Da Da - a circus freak show-themed music and cabaret venue. The shifts were 11pm until 5am, on the Friday and Saturday nights (and mornings), with Sunday free to spend the time catching up on some well-earned rest and soaking up the sun (no snorkels necessary), sights and sounds of the festival. GMB young member volunteers working in Shangri La area of Glastonbury earned over £850 for the London Region Members' Hardship Fund - which members can appeal to if they need financial help at any time.

RACE & EQUALITIES REPORT

Local Community:

We are involved with the local community, i.e. Muslim community – CJM (Central Jamia Mosque). There have big gatherings every Friday. As a member of this organisation I always involve myself in their surgeries which offer information and help to people in this community, for example issues relating to immigration, which can be directed to an independent Solicitor, giving people instant help and advice. This community is also heavily involved in any national or international issues, i.e. sending donations to the recent war appeal in Gaza plus other international disaster funds. We have similarly now decided to get involved with the Singh, Hindu and Polish communities giving assistance and advice, this way we can show these communities how the GMB is helpful to the local community and local politics.

Opposition Wins Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara Elections:

The Lion Group has beaten the outgoing Falcon group by 90 votes.

More than 7,000 people turned out to vote for the Gurdwara committee, which will oversee management of the Havelock Road temple and its facilities for the next two years. The queue was ½ mile long at busy times. There have been accusations of misuse and unfair practice by outgoing President Himmat Singh Sohi, which he has denied. This struggle has continued for many years causing disunity amongst the Sikh

community in Southall. Raj Gill, GMB activist and employee, is keen to work with community leaders to introduce the GMB/TUC learning agenda to assist on employment advice. We are hopeful of positive responses in order to assist workers in and around west London area.

EEC Elections:

The European Elections will be held in the UK on Thursday 4th June 2009. The count will be held across Europe on the evening of the 7th June. London will have 8 seats in 2009. We will be urging maximum turnout of voters to ensure BNP Candidates are not Elected. Support Hope not Hate UAF and local TC campaigns to defeat racism. Main focal area of BNP activities in West London is Hounslow Middlesex and East London is Barking & Dagenham.

Race & Equalities Committee:

The Race & Equalities Committee held a meeting with the National Equalities and Inclusion Officer, Kamaljeet Jandu, providing guidelines. We have also recently written to all Branch Secretaries, requesting details of the Race & Equalities Official in their branch to update our records. We will be arranging a meeting soon with the Regional Secretary and Branch R & E representatives to make a plan for this coming year.

Two local companies, one company based at Heathrow Airport the other based at West Middlesex Hospital, consist of mainly Punjabi and Polish speaking female workers. In both areas we have tried to improve the quality of working conditions and the environment, i.e. equal treatment, pay, health and safety standards. The workers have been working in a very vulnerable environment with long shift working hours. However the companies are improving terms and conditions, and we have been assisting with the language barrier. We have also recently recruited a new Polish Shop Steward at one of these companies, which again will aid the language difficulty.

Race & Equalities Case File:

Recently we have become involved in a race/violent assault case through the Hounslow Race & Equalities Council. We have recently attended the investigatory meeting with the lady involved and the company, Johnson Controls. This is a very serious matter and the case is still ongoing. We are offering our full support to the member whilst the company investigates and conducts a full enquiry into the incident.

Migrant Workers:

We have several companies at Heathrow Airport employing migrant workers in security positions. Some of these workers experience difficulties renewing their passes as their passports and documents are held up in the system with the Home Office. There is no fast track system to identify these workers who have valid passports and the right to work in this country. As a result of the long delays some are losing their jobs and being put in financial difficulties. The union is trying to support these workers who are unfairly dismissed in these circumstances.

New Project:

We start a new project for recruitment in the West London area and have several food companies to target. With this in mind we may need assistance from the Race Committee to input in the organisation of these work places.

We now have a new site office which opened on the 1st February 2009, at the Brent Indian Association at Wembley. This is where we will run surgeries for the local community, in particular targeting Park Royal and the Wembley area in recruiting and organising the community. The office will be open every Monday and Friday for surgeries and on Saturdays for English and Computer classes.

Activist workshop: Is been proposed in Park Royal venue by some GMB Branch's to organise local industry.

Branch's Social:

The Hotels and Catering, and security Branches held a very successful Latin American Brazilian event at Guanabara Club in November 2008. The GMB Hounslow and G4S also supported the function. The event raised £420 for The Cuba Solidarity Campaign.

7. TRAINING

(a) GMB Courses Basic Training					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Introduction to GMB (3 days)	11	110	36	146	438
GMB/TUC Induction (5 days)	8	58	30	88	440
GMB@WORK	16	166	73	239	478

(c) Health & Safety Courses (please specify subjects)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Health & Safety (5 days)	8	62	22	64	420
Safety Inspections (2 days)	3	23	7	30	60

(d) Other Courses (please specify subjects / weekdays/ weekends)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
ULR Follow On (3 days)	1	9	3	12	36
Put it in Writing (3 days)	5	27	13	40	120
Negotiation Skills (3 days)	3	25	4	29	87
Say Your Piece (3 days)	2	17	6	23	69
Stress, Bullying, Harassment (3 days)	6	43	13	56	168
Communication Skills (1 day)	5	26	11	37	37
Disc and Grievance (3 days)	4	34	13	47	141

Northern College	2	1	1	2	14
Other regions (not known)	9	4	5	9	N/A
Diversity Works (1 day)	2	22	8	30	30

8. HEALTH & SAFETY

The RHSO continues to work closely with all Regional Officers, where issues of health, safety and welfare can be a benefit by preparing bespoke written and/or verbal advice before, during and after to their servicing and recruitment activities, being proactively involved in workplace visits, advising on workplace health and safety inspections, incorporating safety representatives' support and advocacy.

In conjunction with the Regional Education Officer, the Region continually looks to see if we can further improve the existing skill set and knowledge base of GMB representatives which encourages a greater presence at the workplace and thereby aid membership growth and retention.

Allied to in-house regional health, safety and welfare courses a number of representatives have undertaken and successfully passed their NEBOSH General Certificate and IOSH NVQ level 3 occupational Health and Safety training qualifications by obtaining funding through the John Cope Trust

Workers Memorial Day was honoured with a multi trade union and hazard campaigners rally at the Tate Modern and then marching to Rose Court (currently HSE Head office); the rally then marched and concluded at City Hall office of the Mayor of London.

The following regional health, safety and welfare guidance have been sent to safety representatives and branches during 2008 to aid membership recruitment and retention:

- Guidance on '*ACOUSTIC SHOCK*';
- Guidance on '*Lone Working in safety*';
- Guidance on '*Work-related road safety*';
- Guidance on the TUC Safety Reps Survey 2008 Executive Summary;
- Guidance for Safety Reps guide on '*older working*';
- Guidance on Asbestos including a workplace inspection checklist;
- Guidance on COSHH including a workplace inspection checklist;
- Guidance for safety representatives on members working with diabetes;
- Guidance on the changes to the Safety Representatives & Safety Committee Regulations (1977) amendments;
- Guidance on Health and Safety Myths; and
- European Parliament discussion on the Working Time opt out update

The Region continues to show a commitment to Health and Safety as an organising and recruiting tool by investing in a dedicated Regional H&S officer; as this enables both action and information to be accessible to officers, safety reps and members in a quick and efficient manner.

(Adopted)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Malcolm. Colleagues, could I now call Paul Hayes. First of all, I congratulate Paul on his appointment as Regional Secretary for the London Region. I also want to thank John Cope for looking after the region so well. John, thank you. *(Applause)* Paul, could I now ask you to move.

The report was formally moved.

THE PRESIDENT: Page 85 – any questions? (*“Yes.”/ Laughter*) Page 86? (*“Yes.”/ Laughter*) Page 87? (*“Yes.”/ Laughter*) Page 88? (*“Yes.”/ Laughter*) Page 89? (*“Yes.”/ Laughter*) Page 90? (*“Yes.”/ Laughter*) Page 91? (*“Yes.”/ Laughter*) Yes. Any genuine questions? It is all right, Paul. We'll give you the kiss of life later! We usually tar and feather new regional secretaries but we thought this was a better way of doing it; more caring. Congress accepts report 85-91? *(Agreed)* Thank you.

Regional Secretary's Report: London Region (pages 85-91) was adopted.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I now call Helen Johnson to move Standing Orders Committee No. 4. Never had so many standing orders so early in the week!

STANDING ORDERS REPORT NO. 4.

(Adopted)

SIS. H. JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): President, Congress, Emergency Motions. The SOC has accepted one further Emergency Motion for Congress, Emergency Motion 4, Unjustified Expenses, standing in the name of London Region. The SOC is recommending that this be heard this afternoon in the political debate. President, Congress, I move SOC Report No. 4. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Helen. Any questions on the report? Agree to accept the report? *(Agreed)*

Standing Orders Report No. 4 was adopted.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, we will now play a short DVD, GMB@Work, the movie, which stars our own members and workplace organisers and their experience of GMB at work.

(DVD played to Congress)

Thank you, Congress. No GMB members were harmed during the making of that film. *(Laughter)* I have just registered the rights, Barbara, so you and George are out. Well done, everybody, and to the team.

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to CEC rule amendment. I remind Congress that the rule amendment was handed out yesterday, Rule Amendment 17e National Officials. Malcolm Sage to move and it will be formally seconded.

**CEC RULE AMENDMENT
NATIONAL OFFICIALS
Rule Amendment 17e**

CECRA17. Rule 17e

Insert: New clause 17e (2)

2 To help the General Secretary and Treasurer with developing and implementing strategies for workplace organising, the Central Executive Council will appoint a national organising officer, and such other officers in support of that role as the Central Executive

Council considers necessary from time to time. The national organising officer will convene a national organising team including representative officers from each region. The purpose of this team will be to ensure the co-ordination and implementation of effective organising strategies across the Union in line with GMB@Work.

(Renumber following clauses)

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

(Carried)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, the GMB@Work strategy has been the very core of the Union's success in recent years. It is the reason why we can stand head and shoulders above other unions. It is the reason we are growing and it is the reason the GMB future looks bright. Our rule book should reflect the key structures and aims of the Union. This amendment incorporates GMB@Work and the national organisation team approach. Congress, I ask you for your support in enforcing this vital pillar of the GMB. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Malcolm. Formally moved?

The Rule Amendment was formally moved.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Does congress accept Rule 17e? *(Agreed)*

CEC Rule Amendment 17 was carried.

NATIONAL ORGANISING DEPARTMENT REPORT (pages 7-11)

NATIONAL ORGANISING DEPARTMENT

A period of deep reform and change is underway in the way we build our union in the workplace.

Congress 2006 and 2007 adopted the following policies and principles to turn around our decline and rebuild the union:

Key Messages

1. **The main cause of our current decline is internal not external.** The answer to membership decline lies in our hands but we need to change how we work.
2. **Our job is not to manage the decline of the GMB – but to take whatever steps are necessary to halt it and reverse it.**
3. **We must be clear about what works and what does not work in recruitment.** We can identify and eradicate failed recruitment and organising practice from our past

4. **To turn membership decline around we need to focus on workplace organisation.** Increasing the activity of our membership and giving them a role in building the GMB where they work, mobilising our reps to recruit and organise.
5. **Increase union resources spent on recruitment and workplace organisation towards 20% of the total** – effectively directed within Regions.
6. **Fewer Targets more effectively organised and monitored.** Choosing targets by assessing the access we have to workers, the issues they face and potential to gain momentum, involving new members in growing the union.
7. **A bigger role in servicing and organising in the workplace for our Reps will be required.** New and coherent training and education will be required to equip them with the skills they need.
8. **Focus on consolidating membership in existing sites rather than green field.** Adopt a systematic approach to consolidation work and ensure all officers and Reps are briefed on what works.
9. **Expect every aspect of the GMB operation to make a contribution to membership growth**
10. **Focus on sustained membership growth rather than competitive sales culture.** Integrate recruitment and organising work with industrial issues and workplace organisation. We must end destructive competition on recruitment performance between officers and offices.
11. **We should go out of our way to include Reps, members, and potential members in our organising and servicing work.** We must guard against unconsciously displacing Reps or encouraging dependency on full time officials.

Regions

Performance and Accountability

1. Change performance measurement from league tables to a rolling average figure over the preceding year to replace competition between regions.
2. Each region to contribute to increasing the national rolling average by 2000 per month by increasing its rolling average recruitment figure substantially.
3. The adoption of Regional targets with collective performance measurements

Organising Teams

4. To divert resources into organising in each region under the control of a dedicated Senior Organiser.
5. To organise these resources into an Organising Team including an appropriate mix of skills and experience.
6. To require Servicing organisers to allocate regular time (ie one week per quarter) to the Organising Team on a rolling basis, to work on Project Board priorities at the direction of the Senior Organiser.
7. Organising Teams to include RHSO's to assist in identifying consolidation targets.
8. To consciously break with the "Recruitment Team" sales culture by full integration of the Organising Team into every aspect of regional activity, using servicing work as an opportunity to build membership.

9. To change the entry point for new officers, renaming the Recruitment Officer grade as Organiser.

Organising Project Boards

10. A single Organising Project Board in every region to ensure disciplined targeting of resources, with a clear, open and transparent method of selecting projects, regularly reviewed.
11. Organising Project Boards to include collective quarterly numerical targets and be on open display
12. Organising Project Boards to include no more than 6 main projects and the numbers expected to deliver in the quarter – and no more than 5 developmental targets.
13. Most targets to be consolidation – but in workplaces with membership density below 60% . Above 60% we should expect existing workplace organisation to improve density further – with external support and training.
14. Consolidation targets to be identified using organisers own workplace maps, and centrally produced information on membership levels, existence of check off and numbers of postholders.
15. Targets to be prioritised using the Aim Organising Test (Access, Issues, Momentum)

Administrative

16. To ensure each local office co-ordinates calls from potential members with allocated organisers to follow up leads within 24 hours.
17. To have an agreed and understood policy on services available to new members joining with pre-dated problems.
18. To adopt a systematic policy of contacting apparent leavers which involves the relevant servicing officer and establishes the scale of the problem of apparent leavers
19. To ensure the shift in resources to organising is understood by front line staff and put across to members.

Training

20. Follow on training in workplace organisation to be targeted at reps in consolidation targets. Training to be standardised, based around the 5 key principles and delivery to include organisers involved in the workplace.
21. Regional Training programmes to be reviewed and standardised, shifting the focus from dependency on officers to workplace organisation.
22. Regional training programmes to be open for entry at every level to allow retraining of Reps in targeted workplaces

National

Performance and Accountability

23. To produce monthly reports of average performance and the trend in each region.

24. To standardise evaluation system for projects into output measures (members recruited, increase in membership density, Reps coverage) and activity measures (contact time with potential members, workplace activity).

Organising Teams

25. To form a National Organising Team from the Senior Organisers appointed to make recommendations to the CEC organisation group on policy, review, monitor and manage recruitment work, share good practice and prioritise National organising projects.
26. That this team meet 10 times per year.

Organising Project Board

27. To develop a National Project Board on the same basis as in the regions but containing no more than 3 main projects at any one time.
28. To grade national projects into three streams: Stream One where we ask regions to divert some resources towards a common goal and place the project on their project board, Stream 2 where we ask regions to assist in developing a target, and Stream 3 where we launch projects designed exclusively to be run and lead by activists.
29. To produce data to assist in the identification of consolidation targets in regions
30. To produce data to assist in the prioritising of National Projects
31. To construct a clear streamlined decision making process to assess and prioritise National Projects: proposals come to MS or JM, are referred to the monthly NOT meeting for consideration and a recommendation made to JM for action.

Training

32. To produce a new Stewards Handbook to assist local reps learn the skills they need to improve workplace organisation – to re-define the role of workplace reps.
33. To use the Reps mailing to re-inforce the workplace organisation message to existing Reps.
34. To standardise training for new reps, follow on training for reps in consolidation targets and training for officers in consolidation techniques.
35. Briefing for all officers in consolidation techniques to be delivered in region, by the SO with support from the NOT and standardised nationally.

Administrative

36. To make the arrangements to allow workers to join us online
37. To establish a centralised lead Book in national office to allocate leads to the senior organiser in each region
38. To shorten the time between a TUC lead arriving and a local officer making contact

We are in our fourth year of implementing the GMB@Work strategy for growth within the union and each of the 38 points has been fully implemented or will be shortly

We remain focussed on helping our members build the power to improve their pay and conditions where it counts – in the workplace. In the process we have rejected quick fixes and short cuts, fluffy toys and gimmicks, gate jobs and employer partnership.

We no longer see recruitment as just giving out leaflets and hoping for the best Building the union is no longer what someone else does, or the last thing on our list. Recruitment and retention is now everyone's job and everyone's first priority.

Membership continues to grow despite the recession and recruitment remains high. 87,000 new members joined us last year, 20,000 more than in 2004 during the height of the "boom" . Two years into the recession and we are growing at the rate of 2% a year. Our members are suffering the threat of redundancy in many areas but thousands of workers are turning to us for the first time for the same reason. Because of this we have made great advances in building the union's strength in the Security, Retail, Care and Education sectors; not just in numbers but in Stewards elected and trained.

In these sectors we are better placed than at the start of any other downturn to weather the storm of redundancies and attacks on our members pay and conditions that is underway.

Over the next year we must continue to consolidate and develop GMB@Work further, taking more control of our Stewards training to make it relevant to the reality our members face at work; encouraging all branches to focus on building the unions membership as the best way for existing members to protect themselves and leading the campaign in the workplace for justice, respect and a fair share of the wealth our members work creates or sustains

Regional Officers through their NOT member will continue to focus on growth making sure very officer is focussed on spotting the opportunities to build the union and is supported in exploiting them

We need to stay focussed, keep our discipline be ready to stand by workers in any sector who want to get organised. Where our union is this time next year is our responsibility and no-one elses.

So we must stop blaming just the economy, the government, or the greedy bankers for the problems we face, and take control of our own future. Its what we do or don't do in each workplace that will count during this recession.

We must avoid the pessimistic and defeatist rhetoric that did us so much harm in the recessions of the 80's and 90's as a union, and made us seem weaker than we were to working people in the face of the Thatcher and Major attacks.

(Adopted)

THE PRESIDENT: I now call Martin Smith, National Organising Department, to move his report.

The report was formally moved.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Pages 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11. Congress accepts? *(Agreed)*
Thank you.

The National Organising Department Report (pages 7-11) was adopted.

GENERAL SECRETARY’S REPORT (pages 5-7, 11-21, 29-51)

A FRAMEWORK FOR THE FUTURE OF THE GMB: UPDATE

This report audits the progress that has been made towards implementation of the 23 recommendations set out in the CEC Special Report *A Framework for the Future of the GMB*, and carried by Congress 2005. Where it has been previously reported to Congress that the recommendation has been implemented, the recommendation itself is no longer shown.

1.	<i>Implemented</i>
2.	<i>Implemented</i>
3.	<p>The CEC will establish a special working group on young people, whose terms of reference will be to examine how to raise trade union awareness amongst young people, how to attract more young people into membership of the GMB and how to increase the participation of young people in the Union.</p> <p><i>The membership of the GMB National Equality Forum (NEF) was announced to Congress 2008 and in line with the Deputy General Secretary’s Report to Congress, two members of the Forum were lay representatives specialising in young member issues.</i></p> <p><i>A GMB conference for Young Members coordinated by a steering group of activists and officials was held at Camden Town Hall in November 2008. This was chaired by Kamaljeet Jandu, National Equalities Officer, addressed by the General Secretary, Martin Smith the Senior Officer from the National Organising Department and Dawn Butler MP. Young GMB members from all over the UK attended and took part in workshops at the conference to learn how to build GMB in their own workplace and campaign for issues of importance to them. They took part in workshops on ‘Organising Skills’, ‘Fighting the BNP, racism and fascism’ and on how to help organise – delegates were asked to adopt their local Asda store for signing up young members to the GMB. It was raised at the Conference the language used within the Union movement may act as a barrier to young people’s participation and there was a general lack of knowledge and information around GMB structures and processes. This issue was taken up by the NEF to develop a young members’ section of the GMB website.</i></p> <p><i>We continued to send a full delegation of GMB Young Members to the TUC Young members Conference in Eastbourne</i></p> <p><i>In addition to this work, the two young member representatives have also advocated work on issues of domestic violence and refugees.</i></p>

4.	<p>The CEC Training Committee will progress the development of education and training for workplace activists on the basis of the proposal outlined.</p> <p><i>GMB@ WORK two day training course for new shop stewards is in its second year of implementation with over 100 Regional Officials now involved in delivering training to new stewards as Organiser Tutors. The review of the training will involve the Organiser Tutors and the Regional Officials and is ongoing. The success of the training will be measured by its impact in the workplace in terms of improved membership and organisation.</i></p> <p><i>With regard to consolidation training for existing shop stewards within targeted workplaces, through regional initiatives this continues to progress. In discussion with the National Organising Team, Organiser Tutors and Regional Officials course materials are currently being finalised which once concluded can be used by regions to supplement current materials.</i></p> <p><i>To complete the process of re-connecting stewards training with the industrial realities of the workplace, we are in the process of reviewing regional training, with the object of ensuring that our training programmes are more industrially focused and standardised. Existing training materials from each of the Regions is being collated to form the basis of a review which will include all involved in the development and delivery of training, including Organiser Tutors and Regional Officials</i></p> <p><i>In respect to Union Learning Fund projects, a central monitoring system is now in place. This will allow the union to draw conclusions on the industrial impact for our members in the workplace of ULF funded work and also assist us to objectively assess its contribution to membership growth through recruitment and retention.</i></p>
5.	<i>Implemented</i>
6.	<i>Implemented</i>
7.	<i>Implemented</i>
8.	<p>The CEC recommends that the GMB should adopt and implement this increased workplace focus as <i>policy</i>, and will refer this matter in the first instance to the Recruitment & Organisation Committee for the Committee to identify how to progress this.</p> <p><i>Building our unions' strength in each workplace through improved local organisation, recruitment and retention has been a central theme in the GMB@Work organising strategy since late 2005. In particular, GMB@work training for Stewards and Officers has highlighted the need to put GMB representatives (now re-named GMB Workplace Organisers) back in control of the GMB agenda where they work. Specifically this has meant training all new and some existing GMB Workplace Organisers in techniques of Workplace Mapping and in the production of Workplace Newsletters. These techniques aim to ensure that in every workplace GMB reps know more than the employer does about who is coming and going, who is a member and who is not and that GMB Workplace Organisers control the GMB message to members and non members alike. At the same time briefing for GMB officials has shifted the emphasis of their work towards building and sustaining workplace organisation and GMB Workplace Organisers in place of offering one to one services outside. This has been supported by the production of a comprehensive Toolkit for all Workplace Organisers to assist them to be less dependent on their GMB Official for basic advice and guidance on</i></p>

	<i>representation.</i>
9.	<i>Implemented</i>
10.	<i>Implemented</i>
11.	<p>There will be a full examination of all nationally serviced branches by the Recruitment & Organisation Committee. This examination will be conducted with full consultation with the members of the nationally serviced branches and the Regions.</p> <p><i>Following discussion by the Organisation Committee and the Senior Management Team this review is currently on hold.</i></p>
12.	<p>The CEC will examine the issue of "tidying up" some regional boundaries where any alterations to these could enhance and improve the service to GMB members.</p> <p><i>Further work required.</i></p>
13.	<i>Implemented</i>
14.	<i>Implemented</i>
15.	<i>Implemented</i>
16.	<i>Implemented</i>
17.	<i>Implemented</i>
18.	<p>The CEC recommends that the Finance Committee and Senior Managers review all the financial restructuring issues identified by the Task Group with the aim of identifying appropriate reforms that can be implemented immediately and, in the case of reforms requiring changes to Union Rules, recommending detailed Rule Amendments for the CEC to propose to the next GMB Congress. Senior Managers have already taken preliminary steps so that the financial restructuring review can proceed quickly should Congress 2005 accept this recommendation.</p> <p><i>Financial processes are being kept under review.</i></p>
19.	<p>The CEC will look at all areas of expenditure to identify those that are unproductive and to make recommendations that these practices are stopped, to free up resources for direct servicing of members and ensuring the growth of the Union.</p> <p><i>To date cost savings made through national procurement give savings of over £300,000 per annum. Work is ongoing to identify further areas for cost savings.</i></p>
20.	<i>Implemented</i>
21.	<i>Implemented</i>
22.	<i>Implemented</i>
23.	<p>Regions should examine how to increase the number of members paying by direct debit, and whether incentives to convert to direct debit should be offered in the Region.</p>

<i>Implemented. Paperless direct debit has allowed us to introduce web-site recruitment and joining by telephone. Web-site recruitment in particular has been a major contributor to GMB's success. Direct debit payers now constitute 24% of members, and Regional initiatives ensure that the figure continues to rise.</i>

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

Press - The pace of industrial news in which GMB has an interest has increased markedly over this period. Each morning all GMB staff and officers receive an electronic copy of press clippings in which there is a reference to GMB for that day. This helps all parts of the union to be aware of what is happening to members across the union. Since the report to the 2008 GMB Congress has issued press releases on the following issues:

Pay - The Department has issued releases on the 2008 pay round in local councils, NHS, prison, FE and Environment Agency. There have been regular releases on strike ballots in pay and conditions disputes across a wide range of sectors including BMA, Balpa, airports and transport. Also covered were pay disputes and their resolution in Scottish Water, Scottish local authorities. There has also been coverage of pay freezes at the likes of British Airways. The stop start progress towards setting up a new national negotiating body for school support staff has also been the subject of releases. There has also been a release on pay and finance of high education. There were some releases on pay freezes: for example Stanley Casinos. There were also a number of releases regarding the de-recognition of GMB by Roadchef. The pay dispute at Appledore Shipyard in Devon was also covered.

Job losses - There have been a spate of job losses and closures all of which have generated press coverage. These include Fenlands Foods, Preston Brewery, JJB Sports, Indesit (formerly Hotpoint), Paramount Foods in Wrexham and Salford and Pringles in Scotland. The oncoming recession was forecast by GMB and a member of the Professional Drivers Branch was widely interviewed on the cut backs in the pipeline. The press releases have covered job losses at household names such as JCB, Findus, M&S, Woolworth, Indesit, Burberry, Wincanton, BMI. Corus, National Grid, Dupont, Thames Water, GKN, Ford, Legal Aid Service, Nottingham City Council, AA, Bakkavor, Tetley, Glaxo Smith Kline, Brett Martin, Kangol, Budelpack and Wilkinson. Of particular focus was GMB's support for Tony Goode the M&S whistle-blower who leaked to the media the company plan to cut redundancy pay for which he was summarily dismissed. His tribunal is scheduled for May 2009.

Economy and industrial news - Reacting to naturally occurring news stories with particular regard to the political agenda allows GMB to promote its policy and position on many issues. Recent reaction has been on the crisis in the financial sector and the government's response to it, as well as the monthly unemployment figures. Developments in the energy industry including nuclear gives rise to a steady stream of press releases; in particular issues relating to Ofgem generate coverage. One major story is the development of the third runway at London Heathrow which will run and run. GMB supports this development. During his visit to India we put out a number of press releases from Paul Kenny on the question of Coca Cola water use in its bottling plants in India. GMB also commented on the successful campaign to secure a future for the shipbuilding industry with the placing of the order for RN Aircraft carriers.

Political - GMB's profile in the political arena has increased. In the run up to the Labour Party conference 2008 there was speculation about a change of party leader in which GMB was constantly mentioned. There was a series of releases and briefings from the General Secretary in the successful campaign to secure employment rights for Agency and Temporary workers. There was coverage on GMB comment on the Working Time Directive (WTD) vote by Labour MEPs in the European parliament. There was coverage on

GMB's cull of sponsored MPs and coverage on the run in to Warwick 2. GMB demand that oil speculation be curbed has also generated coverage.

Legislation - Other areas covered in the past period have been two releases for the Sex Workers Branch on the policing and crime Bill which set out the views of our members in the lap dancing clubs for new licensing arrangements and the views of the sex workers to criminalising aspects of the sex industry. We have also covered progress on ending the UK opt-out of the Working Time Directive from the European Parliament. Developments in relation to the campaign to restore Pleural Plaques compensation have also generated a number of releases. GMB has also put out releases defending pension schemes in the face of Tory attack and defending those on benefits in the face of government determination to force them to take up non-existent jobs.

Posted Workers Directive - GMB Organisers helped to shift the way the news about the Lindsey Oil Refinery dispute was reported. It was first reported as a story of unofficial strikes about migrant workers and 'British Jobs for British Workers'. After GMB Organisers intervention, it moved to being reported as a story which revealed and discussed problems arising from the botched implementation of the EU Posted Worker Directive into UK law and the EU Commission's failure to address the Viking and Laval European Court judgements. Once the construction engineering workers at the Lindsey Oil Refinery reached a settlement. GMB moved the story on to the GMB construction engineering disputes at the Isle of Grain and Staythorpe construction sites affected by the same botched laws. This is a developing story and the department is working very closely with GMB staff in Brussels. Without their help the department would not have been able to shift the focus of the story.

Equal Pay - The department has helped GMB Regions by issuing press release regarding equal pay disputes in Birmingham, Leeds, Blackburn and in Scottish councils.

Surveys - The department has put out a series of press releases on topics like the percentage of women and ethnic minorities in the top five percent of council workers earnings. We have put out releases on the level of recycling across the country and how clean are the streets. In June last year there were releases on the spending by councils on temporary and agency staff. Other surveys covered the number of beds in care homes, the numbers in care homes supported by the public sector, house prices compared to average earnings, numbers of vacant dwellings that could be acquired by councils for social housing, average earnings by county,. The department issued its annual report on the amount of unpaid council tax.

Other Stories – These have included GMB's win for hundreds of ex-JJB Sports store workers redundancies to receive the full ninety days consultation notice, ex-Leyland Daf workers £8.4 million compensation win, River Thames lock-keepers homes saved, guarding the Olympic site, We welcomed the return of the Cammell Laird name to Merseyside.

All GMB press releases are available at www.gmb.org.uk/press where members can register to receive releases directly to their email address.

GMB Campaigns

The Department helped the London Region work to secure a recognition deal at **Pratts Bananas** in Luton. The Department also helped Southern Region with a recruitment campaign for technicians in **Virgin Media**. This is still on going.

Remploy: since the report to 2008 GMB Congress a delegation from the York factory attended the Labour Party Spring conference 2008 in Birmingham and secured a meeting the Prime Minister. He promised to look again at the case for closing York. However, nothing came of this meeting and thirty factories closed at

the end of March 2008 with a loss of over 2,000 disabled workers jobs. The campaign has moved to a new phase of securing the re-opening of the York factory and securing public procurement work for the fifty three factories that remain open and there is litigation over the 2,000 job loses.

Co-op: the April CEC gave the go ahead for a public campaign to secure re-recognition in Co-op FuneralCare. A campaign under the theme of "The Co-op; Lions led by donkeys" was launched outside a Co-op members meeting in Croydon in early May and this was followed by protests outside Co-op meeting in Bristol, Wrexham, Newcastle and Manchester. At the Manchester demonstration the Co-op manager, David Hendry, who de-recognised GMB came out to get his photograph taken with the live donkey. This has been turned into a poster with the slogan "which one is the donkey?". There was a motion on this issue at the 2008 TUC congress.

AA/Saga: A motion from the GMB Retired Members conference calling for pensioners to question the AA/Saga on their attitude to trade unions has been tabled at numerous meetings of retired members' organisations. The ex-boss of AA Tim Parker has been appointed Deputy Mayor of London and his record at the AA has been brought back onto the agenda. Events are planned for the Kent chicken farm later in the summer. GMB made a formal complaint to the Department of Transport that AA was ignoring the tachograph ruling on patrol staff recovering motorists' vehicles and the GMB Complaint was up held. The AA had to change its method of operation as a result. GMB also won a tribunal case for Jayne Wyatt who was an AA hotel inspector who was sacked for standing by GMB when the private equity bosses took over. There are 300 job loses in the pipeline and the AA are seeking these cuts without paying redundancy money.

Cash In Transit (CIT): GMB has secured an agreement with G4S that pays out automatically to members injured in assaults on CIT vans. The campaign continues to try and raise the profile of this issue and to get action from police, banks and supermarkets. This is a serious problem and it is clear that only re-engineering of the facilities at banks and supermarkets to keep the cash away from criminals is the final answer.

Licensed Mini Cabs: For London Region the department has continued to raise the profile of the issue of violence against licensed private hire drivers by their customers and the need for fiscal measure to enable drivers to equip their cabs with CCTV camera and shields.

Since the 2008 GMB Congress the department has been asked to help with four new campaigns:

Chemilines: Chemilines is a London based pharmaceuticals distribution company with a mainly female workforce that has laid workers off, made redundancies and intends to cut pay. The aim of the campaign is to get proper joint working procedures between GMB and the company and a decent pay rise for the workers. The company has been affected by the drop in sterling exchange rate in what is a parallel drugs market. Its treatment of its workforce is unacceptable under any trading conditions. We are at the research stage in designing a press campaign for this workplace.

Thames Water: A meeting took place on Thursday 5th February 2009 between GMB Shop Stewards and officials from all three GMB Regions to consider reports from members facing problem in the company. Members employed at the call centre in Swindon have been told that unless they agree to family unfriendly changes in working hours and shift times, and other measurers, that their jobs will be outsourced to India. GMB members are very angry with this threat. The meeting agreed that a report should be given to the CEC, together with a request for authority to proceed to a strike ballot of members employed by Thames Water. Thames Water is claiming that the economic downturn as the reason for continuing to cut jobs after many years of job losses and higher prices to consumers.

M&S: The department continues to highlight the poor treatment of M&S staff. Since GMB member Tony Goode was summarily dismissed by M&S in early September for leaking details of cuts in redundancy pay to the press GMB has received various reports from M&S employees who have been mistreated by the company. M&S are currently sacking 1,200 and GMB is seeking 90 days consultation period and a programme of voluntary redundancy before embarking on compulsion. We have promised to take tribunal cases where M&S cuts corners.

Licensed Public Houses with a Tie: The department has been asked to help with a new campaign to break the cartel which results in pubs owned by pub chains being charged up to £1 extra wholesale per pint of beer which it sells to its customers. The landlords who run these pubs are self-employed and they are being invited to join GMB, like the self-employed professional drivers, to secure their economic interest. The pub companies that own the pubs are up to their necks in debt and the additional charges are being used to pay interest payments. As we write this campaign is being developed.

National Organisation Department Training/Regional Targets Material

The Department has produced dedicated news letters and mailings for NOT and ROT targets.

The department also helped produce a DVD for distribution to Branches to show the success and impact of the GMB@Work training programme. Regions provided film of GMB Workplace Organisers who have completed the training and implemented what they learned into their workplaces. They told their success stories in their own words. GMB National President Mary Turner narrated.

Regional/National Magazines

The nine versions of GMB regional magazines are intended to deliver to GMB members information about the work of the union in workplaces around the country. The central, national pages are intended to convey GMB message on many work issues and factors relating to the GMB's work for members. For example, the March 09 editions inform members about their Labour Party candidates in the June 4th Euro elections. The importance of the elections of these MEPs was clearly demonstrated by the recent vote on the WTD.

2009 is the second year of the GMB regional magazines and all have been produced on schedule and on budget. The economic downturn has had a detrimental effect on our partners advertising budgets but up to now the advertising sales team have managed to maintain the income level for the Union.

The inclusion of various GMB letters, leaflets and financial information to members saves money on production and postage of separate mailings and enhances the quality of the contact with members.

GMB Congress 2009

The department has been asked by the Congress Working Party to look into reducing the cost of all elements of the staging of Congress including the cost of lighting and audio visual. In order to cut costs an entirely new approach was taken. It is planned to reuse the 2009 stage design at Southport in 2010. The use of fabric to replace the usual costly 'battleship' stage that has been used for many years has saved thousands of pounds. The success of the webcasting of the Congress 2008 has led to that being done again at Congress this year.

GMB National Website

At the time of writing the updated GMB national website was in the 'test environment' and being checked to see that the specification has been met by the supplier. The main change that members will notice will be that they will have access to a 'Member Only' area and to their own membership record by entering their membership number.

GMB Publications

Asda Charter:

Asda Teesport flyer	Asda Prize draw mailing
Asda Charter:	Asda Flyers
Asda Posters	Asda Back drop
Asda Ballot mailing	Asda Colleagues Circle - Newsletter
Asda Cold at work – Newsletter	Asda A5 Campaigning Leaflet
Asda GMB@ASDA Colleague Circle	

NHS

North Bristol Trust Posters	North Bristol Trust newsletter
DHL news letter	River Workers leaflet
MPO membership forms	Equalities flyer Labour Party Conference
Equality Strategy Leaflet	India Ship breaking Leaflet
M&S campaign boards	Engineering A5 Leaflet & Posters
Ofgem Lobby materials: 2x Banners 100cm x 150cm Placards	

Reprints

- London Region - Stewards Credentials
- Southern Region - Schools Folders, Dividers & Way our Schools Work
- Security Folders & Membership forms
- Local Government Pensions Guide
- H&S for Support Staff
- H&S for Security Workers

Newsletters

- Four Seasons Newsletter
- GMB@SCHOOL Newsletter - Regional Variations
- 2 Wilkinson Newsletters
- Lock & Weir Keepers Newsletter
- Local Government Pay 2009
- Local Government Pay A5 leaflet
- Local Government Pay A4 & A3 Posters
- Southern Cross: Newsletter, Retention Mailing, Construction Workers leaflet,
- Southern Cross news letter
- Southern Region - Schools Folders, Dividers & Way, Our Schools Work
- Notice Board Toolkits all components
- H&S Feeling the heat
- GMB@SCHOOL x 2 regions

Merchandise

The loss of the Welsh Steadlers factory has led to GMB moving its pen contract to a German supplier. The Department continued to search for suppliers of other items that meet GMB policy criteria.

The department has returned the storage and despatch of GMB Merchandise from Clause 4 to National Office saving an annual cost of around £4,000.

Merchandise Provided to NOT and GMB Sections

G4S Attack Fund Badges
GMB@WORK T-shirts
NHS Trust Pens

On-Line Surveys

The Department has increasingly used the new on-line survey facility to consult members on various issues. For example general member profile and opinion, on-line leavers, health and safety and environment questions, equal pay in Scottish councils and equal pay and bullying in Asda.

Sponsorship Realisation

GMB was one of the main sponsors of Glastonbury Left Field which was launched at a press conference in the Polish Embassy with the Polish Vice Consul and Michael Eavis. The Polish Vice Consul subsequently addressed GMB Congress. With the help of the Polish Embassy GMB put on three Polish bands in Glastonbury and they were introduced on to the stage by Paul Kenny. This raises further the GMB's profile among migrant workers in the UK and in Poland. GMB plan to work closely with the Polish Embassy on the year long UK wide Polish cultural festival which begins in June 2009. GMB also hope that the promise by the Vice Consul at Congress to refer cases of exploitation of Polish workers to GMB will come to fruition.

GMB sponsored the London march and rally to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of the Polish state.

EXECUTIVE POLICY

The Executive Policy section of the General Secretary's Department fulfils two roles:

1. Supporting the General Secretary in matters related to the Governance of the Union. The Executive Policy Section services a number of internal bodies and provides support for the General Secretary, Deputy General Secretary, CEC and National Officials at Congress and CEC meetings, TUC and Labour Party Conferences.
2. Developing union policy, raising the GMB profile and strengthening GMB influence by providing specialist advice, preparing proposals, drafting consultations and liaising with contacts in Government and other relevant industrial political bodies in the UK and the European Union.

Governance of the Union

During the past year Dolores O'Donoghue and Ida Clemo, Executive Policy Officers have continued to work closely with colleagues at National Office and the Brussels office and regional level. They are members of the Congress Working Party and are heavily involved in the planning stages for Congress which commence in July each year.

The Section co-ordinates policy work for GMB Congress and prepares the preliminary and final agendas; advises the CEC on policy stances; co-ordinates compositing of motions; finalises the programme and President's running order; co-ordinates and drafts the President's address and provides support and advice to the President's platform at Congress. At the time of writing this Report they are in the early stages of the preparations for Congress 2009, and dealing with the 226 motions (and 31 Rule Amendments) submitted by regions.

In 2008, the planning presented the new challenge of implementing the Task Group recommendations agreed at Congress 2007 to incorporate the Section Conferences into a more dynamic and streamlined

Congress Programme. This was achieved by working closely with members of the General Secretary's Department, particularly Steve Short, Executive Officer and providing advice and briefings for national officials and section staff. The section developed a number of new information systems to improve the smooth running of Congress; in particular a calculation system for the Programme created by Ida which greatly assisted the timing of debates.

In order to assist Regional delegations, Dolores and Ida with input from Steve Short produced a new Guide: "Congress Explained" setting out information and advice on the processes and procedures of Congress in a user-friendly format. The document, primarily aimed at new delegates, also gives hints and tips on writing motions and making speeches, and will be circulated to Regions in advance of the Regional delegation meetings in April

Following on from the recommendations made in Framework for the Future at Congress 2007, whereby it was agreed that existing policy motions will not be debated at Congress, Ida Clemo has created a policy database where regions will be able to check all the carried motions and decisions of Congress from 2005 onwards.

At Congress 2008 the section dealt with 120 motions of which 91 were carried and 10 referred, 4 Emergency Motions were carried (one with qualification). In addition there were 40 existing policy motions which were not debated. Executive Policy supported 45 CEC speakers with speech drafts and policy advice, and programmed the attendance of Guest speakers.

Following Congress, the section produced the CEC Action on Decisions document for the September 2008 CEC meeting which recommended action to implement the will of Congress. The section is responsible for referring all decisions of Congress to the relevant officials and senior staff, and ensuring that they are reported on in this General Secretary's report in line with motion 52 passed at Congress 2005:

Congress, we request that at sector conferences and Congress, delegates and regions are given an update on previous motions adopted and what action has been taken in agreement with the resolution adopted. We feel this will enable regions and branches to track how specific motions are progressing through the process – giving us more accountability.

The CEC Action on Decisions document setting out who is responsible for the actions on all motions carried and referred by Congress 2008 is now available on the GMB National Website www.gmb.org.uk/congress. The following table sets out the actions taken on referred motions.

MOTIONS REFERRED TO THE CEC BY THE 2008 CONGRESS

UNION ORGANISATION: Representation & Accountability	
17. GMB ELECTIONS	The motion called for a candidate's statement to be produced in all GMB elections. The Finance Committee doubted the practicality of this and asked that a paper be prepared outlining the difficulties. At a subsequent meeting a paper was circulated demonstrating that it was impractical for candidate statements to be produced for every GMB election. This was endorsed by the Committee.
UNION ORGANISATION: Education & Training	

<p>45. STEWARDS TRAINING IN RELEVANT LANGUAGES</p>	<p>Between November 2006 and December 2007, under the supervision of the NOT, Regions met to devise an overall organising strategy for migrant workers. This was adopted by the SMT and CEC in early 2008. A key discussion was around the value of establishing branches and sub branches for newly arrived migrant workers and other supplementary language services and structures within the union. It was agreed that the union should always seek to strike the right balance between allowing migrant workers to organise themselves within their own language, cultural and community groups on the one hand and providing assistance, organisation and encouragement to them to integrate fully into the GMB and the workplace on the other. It was agreed that Regional Organisers were best placed to work with migrant workers to strike this balance and call in language support, specialised training, English classes, publications from regional support teams as appropriate. Specifically it was agreed that the need for specialised language support on GMB training courses would be identified at an early stage by Regional Organisers as they completed Initial Support Training for new Workplace Organisers in the first few weeks following their election. training programmes are currently under review, in the context of all GMB training provision. The demand for courses to be delivered in specific languages other than English will be monitored by the NOT and NEF as part of this process. The NOT and NEF will particularly seek to establish whether regional provision of such courses could be assisted by National Office.</p>
<p>46. RESIDENTIAL EDUCATION</p>	<p>Agreement has been reached for the GMB to have dedicated use of the NUM College in Scalby for specified periods at an extremely cost-effective rate.</p>
<p>UNION ORGANISATION: Equality & Inclusion</p>	
<p>49. CULTURAL AWARENESS</p>	<p>This motion asked for a programme of cultural and religious awareness for officers and lay activists so that they may be able to engage appropriately and defend members from indirect discrimination and disciplinary action. We do have equality training from GMB Reps and officers, however the proposed programme would focus on issues around cultural differences. This motion has been referred to the SMT for Officer and lay activist training and the National Organising Department for possible input into shop stewards training programme.</p>
<p>51. WIDENING THE SCOPE OF EQUALITY CLAIMS</p>	<p>This motion is about the use of comparators in equal pay claim that are based on gender, race / ethnicity, disability or sexuality respectively. Some discrimination is between individuals within the same group. For example using a women comparator with a woman which the motion defines as 'personal discrimination'. This motion would require a fundamental change to existing legislation and would involve extending more legislation into the collective bargaining process at a time when unions are seeking to re-establish collective bargaining into equal pay. The present Equalities Bill attempts to streamline the existing strands of discrimination law into one, and GMB has been active in supporting this approach</p>

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY : The Environment	
121. CAMPAIGNING AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE	The motion called for the Union to affiliate to the Campaign against Climate Change. At the December 2008 meeting of the Finance Committee it was reported that the Campaign disagreed with a number of GMB positions, for example on nuclear energy and civil aviation. The Committee agreed that this meant that GMB should not affiliate.
SOCIAL POLICY: Criminal Justice	
147. CAMMELL LAIRD 1984	This motion forms part of the GMB campaign for justice for Cammell Laird Members. The legal advice remains the same – proceedings would not succeed at present. However, the General Secretary and the National Office Legal Department have approached the Institute of Employment Rights to examine whether there may be the possibility of pursuing through the courts any claims in the future. In the meantime The Cammell Laird Group has worked hard on the play telling the story of ordinary GMB members in struggle, and this was given its first public airing last year.
SOCIAL POLICY: General	
166. LICENSING HOURS	As part of the review of the Licensing Act more power has been given to local councils and communities when looking at pub and club licensing hours. There have also been a number of policy developments made in this area: The 2008 Queens speech outlined the Policing and Crime Bill which promises a crackdown on binge drinking, a compulsory code of conduct for pubs and clubs and measures for responsible selling and marketing of alcohol by retailers. Similar measures will be taken in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Future Government consultations will be issued as part of the legislative process on the Bill and we will ensure that we take forward the issues raised in this motion in our response
176. TELESALLES	The Telesales motion was referred due to concerns over the call for the ban and the then possible effect on GMB members working in the industry. In discussions around the Union it has become clear that our membership, where it exists, in call centres is in companies that deal with calls inward or responding to solicited calls. This motion calls on the banning of unsolicited calls, and it would appear we do not represent members working in such organisations. In addition a review has recently been carried out and Oftel has produced a code of practice for the industry. Furthermore technology has progressed and call barring now allows individuals to bar calls from unwanted or unidentifiable sources. This motion can now be acted upon and the political department will follow up with by raising this issue with Government.
SOCIAL POLICY: Welfare Rights & Services	

198. WARM FRONT	<p>Since this motion was referred at Congress 08, the National Audit Office (NAO) has conducted a thorough investigation into the effectiveness of the Warm Front Scheme. This identified flaws in the way that the scheme is designed which prevent many of the households that the scheme is intended to help from accessing grants. Prior to the NAO investigation, the Commercial Services Section National Secretary had already raised the shortcomings of the scheme directly in discussions with the Energy Minister. Following the NAO report, the National Secretary again met with the Minister and officials from the Department of Energy and Climate Change to support the call (expressed in a Parliamentary motion) for the Department to initiate an urgent review of the scheme, and to suggest specific ways of improving the scheme that would benefit both consumers and GMB members working in the gas industry.</p>
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POLICY AND SUPPORT WORK

Policy Work

Ida has responsibility for policy work on the National Minimum Wage. This has involved co-ordinating the GMB response to two Low Pay Commission Consultations; a general one and one on a Review of the NMW apprentices exemption; giving oral evidence to the Low Pay Commission and attendance at meetings with TUC, BERR & HMRC, Civil Servants and Policy Officers on NMW issues: Tips, Enforcement, Apprentices and Guidance.

Dolores has been involved in developing a close working relationship with the Child Poverty Action Group, the leading charity campaigning for the abolition of child poverty in the UK and for a better deal for low-income families and children. Part of this work involves the GMB/CPAG Special Report to Congress 2009 on in-work poverty and policy issues on welfare reform proposals.

Dolores co-ordinated the GMB response to the Government Green Paper on Welfare Reform which at the time of writing has been brought before Parliament as the Welfare Reform Bill. GMB is strongly opposed to these proposals; we do not believe it is right to increase conditionality and to seek to force many claimants into what may be a fruitless search for employment at a time of economic crisis, causing anxiety and fear amongst lone parents, disabled people and those facing the prospect of unemployment. This Bill further undermines contributory benefits and proposes the abolition of income support, our main safety net benefit.

Special Projects

The section assists the General Secretary by undertaking special projects and duties as directed. In 2008 this has primarily involved producing presentations, briefings, statistics, profiles or research intelligence for the General Secretary to use in internal or external meetings. During February, Ida was involved in preparations for the General Secretary for the Full Time Officers meeting in Edgbaston.

Information Systems and Other Resources for Bargaining & Representation

During 2008, selected GMB Officers were provided with laptops as part of an ongoing initiative by the Senior Management Team to provide them with immediate access to bargaining and information tools. Ida Clemo continues to monitor and train Regional and National staff in the use of research information systems ensuring that these products are used effectively for bargaining support, recruitment initiatives and company research. Approximately 50 Regional and National Officers have been trained so far.

Ida designed a Guide to Information Systems Leaflet which has been distributed to all Regions to inform them of the resources they have access to for organising and bargaining support. In addition to this, a questionnaire on XpertHR was sent to all Regions to enable them to assess the usage and the feedback was used by Ida when negotiating a new contract with XpertHR. Ida has also rolled out training on the GMB Membership system to staff at National Office.

In addition, a new Recognition Agreements database has been created giving National Office and Regions access to the full text of a number of Regional and National recognition agreements. This will be accessible by Regions once the new GMB National website is up and running.

TUC General Council and Executive Meetings

The Section co-ordinates briefing materials for the General Secretary's attendance at TUC Executive and General Council meetings.

Senior Management Team

Dolores continues to provide the Secretariat to the Senior Management Team and has prepared the agenda, papers and minutes for the current schedule of SMT meetings and liaises with the General Secretary and Executive Officer to ensure that matters agreed by the SMT are progressed through to the CEC.

CEC Organisation Sub-Committee

Similarly, Dolores provides the Secretariat to the Organisation Sub-Committee and ensures that relevant Congress decisions are progressed through the Committee, which now meets 3 times a year.

Labour Party Conference 2008

Ida provided advice and assistance to the 44 strong GMB delegation at Labour Party Conference in Manchester. Our delegates asked questions on the Economy, Remploi and Public Sector Pay. GMB Contemporary Issues motion covered Energy Regulation and we submitted an Emergency motion on the Working Time Opt out. There were also four GMB fringe events.

TUC Congress 2008

Dolores and Ida ensure that GMB Congress decisions and GMB policy are taken through to TUC Congress. They are also responsible for supporting the GMB delegation and raising the GMB profile at TUC. They planned and organised (with assistance from colleagues in the General Secretary's office) the GMB stand and office at TUC Congress.

This year's TUC was particularly successful; the team created a series of new documents to assist and inform the delegation, and liaised with TUC to ensure that GMB was at the forefront of debate.

The team co-ordinated and provided speech drafts for the delegation and liaised with the TUC to ensure that GMB speakers were called. From the GMB delegation of 59, GMB had 31 speakers (19 Male, 12 Female), moved 3 motions, seconded 8 motions, raised 2 questions on the GC report and put questions to the Alistair Darling, Chancellor of the Exchequer and Harriet Harman Deputy Leader of the Labour Party. Delegation members also spoke in support of 15 motions (see table below).

GMB motions on Pensions and the Co-operative movement were carried, as was the GMB Emergency Motion on Energy Policy.

TUC Congress Motion	GMB Position	GMB Speaker
EM1 - Welfare Green Paper (PCS motion)	GMB seconded	Phil Davies
EM2 - The Failing Energy Market (GMB)	GMB Moving	Gary Smith
Comp 13 (on Motion 48) Pension Policy (GMB motion)	GMB Moved	Sheila Bearcroft
71. Trade Union Recognition by the Co-operative Group (GMB motion)	GMB Moved	Paul Kenny
26. Tax Justice	GMB Seconded	Neil Derrick
43. Transportation of Musical Instruments on Planes	GMB Seconded	Ed Blissett
64. Regular Foot Health Screening in Schools	GMB Seconded	Mary Turner
72. Protection of Employees in the Betting Industry	GMB Seconded	Jude Brimble
79. Apprentices	GMB Seconded	Edna Rolph
87. Participation of the Trades Union Councils' Conference at Annual Congress	GMB Seconded	Malcolm Sage
Comp 21 Health and Safety at Work	GMB Seconded	Audrey Harry
18. Improving Maternity Pay	Support	Margaret Gregg
20. Reclaim the Night	Support	June Minnery
23. Asylum Seekers and Employment	Support	Evelyn Martin
24. Access to Work	Support	Phil Davies
25. The Economy	Support	Ann Leader
35. Floodings	Support	George Fraser
39. Defence Expenditure	Support	Keith Hazelwood
45. National Identity Scheme	Reservation	Mick Rix
67. Royal Mail	Support	Gerry Ferguson
77. Cuba	Support	Andy Worth
Comp 5 Young Members	Support	Rory MacQueen
Comp 6 (on Motion 16) The Equality Bill	Support	Kamaljeet Jandu
Comp 14 (on Motion 49) Public Services	Support	Brian Strutton
Comp 22 Workers Memorial Day	Support	Michael Husbands
Comp 23 Nurses' Safety	Support	Sharon Holder
GC Report Para 3.9 Disability	Thank the TUC	Eileen Theaker
GC Report Para 4.6 Taxation	Question	Bernie Taylor

GC Report Para 4.13 Working Time	Question	John Toomey
Question to Alistair Darling	Question	Tommy Hall
Question to Harriet Harman	Question	Lorraine Parker

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY REPORT

Introduction

Motion 208 'Support for Trade Unions Internationally' encompassed the spirit of GMB's commitment to international solidarity. Trade unions are the cornerstone of civil society and the old adage Unity is Strength was never more relevant internationally than it is today. GMB has built and developed strong links with trade unionists all over the works in the interests of solidarity and support as well as in the cause of mutual industrial interest. We work with a wide variety of organisations both at home and abroad in pursuit of social, economic and political justice.

Shipbreaking

GMB, working with the Mumbai Port Trust, Dock and General Employees Union (MPTDGEU), finalized the organising project for submission to the Department for International Development's (DFID) Civil Society Challenge Fund (CSCF). The project addresses the problems faced by workers in the ship breaking downstream industries in Mumbai and Gujarat areas in India. Under this project, workers will receive better wages, job security and conditions through a democratic trade union collectively bargaining on their behalf. Workplaces will be made safer through improved occupational health and safety training, legal support, and provision of personal protective equipment. Additional elements of the project include legal advocacy, a health clinic in Mumbai, health camps in Gujarat and a non formal after school project for the children of migrant workers. A full copy of the report is available on request from the International Department.

This project was a culmination of intensive research and consultation with a variety of people and organisations. GMB met with DFID, TUC, the International Metalworkers Federation, the FNV Mondial, the fundraising arm of the Dutch trade union movement, Thompsons Solicitors and other lawyers who specialize in Industrial Law from India and in Bangladesh to share information on aspects of the Factories Act and international legislation that will effect the project.

As a companion piece to this project GMB launched - Making a Difference – a fundraising initiative aimed at raising funds through GMB branches to enable the MPTDGEU in their campaigning work, the project has raised almost £4,000 to date. This money will be spent on sponsoring a recruitment officer, providing materials for an anti asbestos campaign and resources for the informal school.

Additionally we have been involved in a variety of events linked to the project. In December, following a fact finding visit to workplaces in India, the General Secretary Paul Kenny officially opened a photo exhibition graphically illustrating the exposure of Indian workers and their families to the killer mineral asbestos. The exhibition, features photographs of workers handling and using asbestos with no protective equipment or control measures in place. We have also met with other trade unionists from the region working in the informal sector such as Self Employed Women's Association of India, Bangladesh Federation TUC and representatives from the Bangladesh Occupational Health and Safety Foundation.

Latin America

GMB played a leading role in organising the Latin America 2008 Conference, held in December to mark 50 years of Cuban Revolution and 10 years of the Bolivarian revolution in Venezuela. This year over 500 participants attended this popular annual event at Congress House to learn more about the radical social and political changes taking place in Latin America. Speakers included the Venezuelan and Cuban

Ambassadors and activists from Nicaragua, Bolivia, Paraguay, and Mexico who joined with parliamentarians and trade unionists from the UK for what has become one of the most informative and vibrant events in the political calendar.

Cuba

2008 marked 50 years of the Cuban Revolution. GMB joined with the Cuba Solidarity Campaign in celebrating the outstanding achievements Cuba has made in health, education and social welfare programs not only for its own people, but the unstinting solidarity it has shown to those less fortunate throughout the world. And all of these achievements made despite the continued assault on its sovereignty by successive administrations of the United States of America. GMB are represented on the Executive Committee of CSC and through this we have campaigned vigorously for the release of the Miami Five. Gerardo Hernandez Nordelo, Ramon Labanino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando Gonzales and Rene Gonzales who have all been imprisoned in the US for ten years for fighting terrorism. Mary Turner, President of the Union and Sheila Bearcroft in her first visit as TUC President led the GMB contingent at the annual US Embassy Vigil in October where more than 500 people had gathered alongside two of the wives of the five. GMB also participated in the Law Society Conference which sought to raise the profile of the case to a new and influential audience. In 2008 GMB participated in a series of Parliamentary initiatives which contributed to the work which resulted in the lifting of EU sanctions that had been in place since 2003, 20 Trade Union General Secretaries signed an open letter to the UK Government and a total of 227 individual MPs signed one of more than 3 separate Early Day Motions.

Venezuela

GMB has played a leading role in the Venezuela Information Centre (VIC) since its formation in 2005. VIC is a broad based non sectarian organisation which brings together trade unionist, parliamentarians and other members of civil society to campaign for the defense of Venezuelan national sovereignty and the right of Venezuelan people to determine their own future free from external intervention. VIC works closely with the Venezuelan Embassy and the Labour Friends of Venezuela, the parliamentary group of MPs whose Chair is Colin Burgon, GMB sponsored MP. This year we have organised and participated in a variety of public meetings throughout the country, have been involved in working with Scottish Parliament and colleagues from STUC.

Colombia

GMB continues to work with Justice for Colombia on Campaigns designed to alleviate the suffering of our trade union brothers and sisters in Colombia. In 2008 we worked on the Military Aid Campaign and the GS wrote to the Foreign Secretary requesting that he investigate the series of killings by Colombian soldiers who have received military training from the UK. We also called on the UK Government to halt all military assistance until the Colombian military end their collusion with paramilitary death squads which murder trade unionists and other civilians.

We also participated in the campaign to challenge European Union trade preferences for Colombia. Astonishingly, the EU currently provides Colombia – the most dangerous country on earth for trade unionists – with special trade benefits meant only for countries that respect fundamental worker rights and human rights. Colombia clearly does not fit the bill, and JFC and allies in the trade union movement are calling for the EU to open an investigation into the regular abuses perpetrated in Colombia.

Bananalink

Costa Rican Flood Appeal

A number of GMB regions and branches have generously donated more than £1000 in response to an urgent appeal following devastating flooding followed by an earthquake in the Caribbean coastal region. COSIBA-CR, (the Coordination of Banana Workers in Costa Rica), whose members organise banana and

pineapple workers in the affected areas, are extremely grateful for the monies pledged by British union partners to support victims of the flooding. Gilbert Bermudez of COSIBA-CR has reported that these funds are being used to respond to the most urgent needs of those affected by the flooding and now the earthquake, in particular providing emergency food, shelter and clothing to those who have lost their homes and livelihoods.

Guatemala Campaign

The GMB hosted the UK visit of two members of an ITUC delegation of Guatemala trade union activists in November. Activities included a MP briefing in the House of Commons, meetings with the TUC and Amicus and a public event in the evening hosted by Amnesty International and co-sponsored by ICTUR, ITF and IUF. The visit was part of efforts to raise awareness of

the human rights violations in Guatemala that disproportionately target trade union activists to the extent that it is hard on the heels of Colombia for the label of most dangerous country for trade unionists. The GMB signed a letter, along with the other unions involved in the visit, expressing concern to the British Ambassador in Guatemala about the safety of the returning delegates. The GMB European office has subsequently been lending support to identify MEPs interested in participating in a delegation visit to Guatemala later this year to be coordinated by the ITUC, their European and Guatemalan union affiliates.

GSP Plus

In November GMB sponsored MEPs co-signed a letter to Commissioner Ashton asking that a formal GSP Plus complaint be made against Costa Rica for breach of conditions of trade status in relation to Labour Standards and Human and trade union rights and freedom. In 2006 a complaint was submitted by the Central Social Juanito Mora Porras (CSJMP) of Costa Rica relating to serious violations of core ILO conventions in their country. GMB lobbied Peter Mandelson in his role as European Commissioner about this matter in 2007 and following a subsequently devastatingly critical report by an ILO mission to Costa Rica about anti-union activity, are asking for an investigation into Costa Rica benefiting from this trade preference scheme whilst core labour conventions are not being respected in the country.

It is worth noting that progress is being made to protect and promote labour rights in the Latin American banana industry, notably with the recent adoption of a new constitution in Ecuador which amongst other things ended labour sub-contracting in all sectors of the economy and heralded other important reforms to labour law. However the latest ITUC Annual Survey on Violations of Trade Union Rights highlighted that *'banana plantations are frequently the location for anti-union repression on the American continent'*.

Palestine

In the early part of the year GMB joined with the TUC and other affiliated unions to call upon the Government of Israel to lift the blockade of Gaza. GMB took part in various actions and demos to campaign against this collective punishment and participated in both the National Demo on 10 May and marked the UN International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people by attending the Lobby of Parliament. Additionally the International Solidarity Officer sits on the Trade Union Advisory Committee on Palestine and is a member of the Executive of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign an organisation we are affiliated to at a national level.

TUC and Other Organisations

GMB works with the TUC and affiliated trade unions on a variety of issues. As part of the day of action against global poverty called by the ITUC we participated in the world trade union movement World Day for Decent Work highlighting the work that we are undertaking in India. We took the excellent photographic exhibition created for Congress to the event which was held at Congress House. Through the year we were involved in a variety of issues where we wrote letters, signed petitions, attended demonstrations on issues

pertaining to the treatment of trade Unionists in Zimbabwe, Philippines, Iraq and Iran. We were actively involved with the TUC, ITUC, ITF and, Amnesty International in the Free Osanloo and workers in Iran. Our concerns, outlined in motions to Congress, are presented to relevant organisations including frequent exchanges with the Foreign Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development.

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

Introduction

The year started with Dan Shears joining the department. From his previous experience in the Health and Safety Executive he brought with him a wealth of knowledge, never more apparent than when he gave evidence to the DWP Select Committee at the House of Commons in February into the resources of the HSE. Dan was able to use personal experience, from the number of former colleagues leaving the organization, to highlight the great loss of knowledge and experience following the proposed budget cuts and the relocation of HSE headquarters to Bootle from London. While the cuts were not fully implemented there has been a major restructuring which in the opinion of GMB has diminished the ability of the organization to function as it should in a 21st century industrial society.

Dan has fitted in well to the departments' ethos and has proven useful in dealing with members concerns, particularly in the Commercial and Manufacturing Sections. However the doubling of the department resources has led to greater demands being asked of it from National Officers and safety representatives on national committees.

Motions from Congress 2008 which required action are dealt with in the body of the text.

Asbestos

The year was effectively topped and tailed by the ongoing Pleural Plaques campaign. In January, following the decision by the House of Lords to deny compensation to pleural plaques victims, GMB led a very successful lobby in parliament attended by 300 workers from a number of asbestos related industries, and over 40 MPs. Every speaker, including GMB General Secretary Paul Kenny, spoke out against the injustice of the decision and resolved to keep the campaign going. Perhaps the government imagined that this was so much hot air and that the campaign would somehow fizzle out-if so they underestimated GMB's campaigning agenda. The pressure, through lobbying, meetings, a motion to the Wales TUC, a Special Report at Congress 2008 and individual members raising the issue with their own MPs resulted in the government issuing a twelve week consultation in the summer. All the trade unions responding, and we suspect the majority of total respondents, were adamant that the House of Lords decision should be overturned. However the government had still not published the results of the consultation exercise by year end. As a reminder that the issue was still at the top of GMB's' agenda another rally at the end of October, with just as impressive a turn out, reiterated the commitment towards reversing this injustice.

The department also ensured that the consultation on this issue from the Northern Ireland Office received a similar response. This was also able to take account of the decision by the Scottish Parliament, which had decided to overturn the original House of Lords decision and introduce legislation to reinstate the compensation.

To be fair to the Government the amended Children's Act had introduced fast track, no fault, compensation for mesothelioma victims which at least ensured that many sufferers received their rightful compensation before they died. And HSE enlisted the trade unions in both the pilot, and the national project, in an attempt to reach trades people who might be exposed to asbestos, through the use of the media and targeted

information blitzes. Across the UK there are many private and public buildings where asbestos is present but unmarked and thus liable to be disturbed and lead to workers exposure.

The department also took part in the inaugural meeting at the House of Commons where interested parties ranging from victim support groups, thoracic surgeons, Macmillan nurses and GMB met to discuss the setting up of a properly funded research project into asbestos related diseases. Obviously it is early days on this but part of the difficulty on the pleural plaques debate was the disagreement on the extent of medical damage suffered by victims and this might be one avenue which could help avoid such injustice in the future. (Composite Motion 1)

Public Services

The Local Authority Forum, the body where the HSE, the Employers and the Trade Unions meet to discuss health, safety and welfare developments has not met in 2008 as the HSE felt it had gone as far as it could and took the opportunity of the chairs retirement to evaluate the future . Following a strong lobby from both the employers and the unions there are discussions underway on a move to reconstitute the forum. The guidance on health & safety to supplement the Green Book, of terms and conditions has largely been agreed though not yet published. Even though local authorities are by their nature supposedly exemplars of health and safety best practice the development of the twelve key principles for this sector can only help GMB reps to ensure high standards are met. Guidance on these principles was drawn up at the beginning of the year.

GMB continues to be represented on the Waste Industry Safety & Health Forum (WISH), co-ordinated by HSE where guidance and information on this dangerous industry is formulated. The department also spoke at a Veolia Waste meeting to managers and trade union reps on the need for workforce involvement and meaningful consultation.

Commercial Services

It has been a highly active year in provision of support to the Commercial Services section. The department has provided advice and expertise in dealing with employers across the utilities, security and retail sectors.

In British Gas, the department has been heavily involved with negotiations on Project Novo', a trial of new management practices with implications for health and safety. We have convened several meetings with senior Safety Representatives, and have met with management to discuss concerns, as the proposed changes to the business integrity and quality assurance elements of the business, which might have reduced protection to our members. We have instead agreed to pilot some proposed new measures, with GMB taking the leading role in designing the pilot.

The Senior Safety Representatives within the business have played a critical role in shaping the debate, by challenging the business when needed but also by feeding constructive comments into the process. The department wishes to thank Chris Bennett, Karen Dickinson, Pete Jones, Kevin Lover, Ted Pearce, Mark Thomas and in particular Aubrey Thompson for their contributions over the course of the year.

Within National Grid, the department has now taken a permanent seat on the National Safety Health Environment and Security (SHES) Forum, where we have begun to develop a positive relationship with management to secure our goals of full worker involvement. The department addressed the annual National Grid Safety Representative Conference, and we will be taken work forward on consultation in 2009 under the aegis of the "Trusted to Work Responsibly" programme that the company has instituted.

In addition, we have met with management to negotiate the terms of new policies on drug and alcohol abuse, and wider well-being. The management approach in both cases has been at odds with GMB policy

and members interests, and discussions are ongoing to attempt to resolve matters to mutual satisfaction. The department wishes to thank Phil Byrne and Carl Meader for their efforts over the past year.

In the wider Gas industry, we are taking a leading role in an OFGEM-lead review of emergency call-out arrangements when gas leaks are reported. This is an initiative that GMB has long campaigned for, as we seek to improve and ensure worker protection whilst trying to minimise as best we can the number of vulnerable customers whose gas supply is cut off unnecessarily in situations that are not really emergencies.

We have succeeded in arguing the group away from the adoption across the industry of expensive and unproven technology, to more reasonable measures to increase awareness of the dangers of carbon monoxide (CO). We are also forging links with key players in the industry – we are developing relations with Capita following their successful bid to replace CORGI as gas installer registration body. The department wishes to thanks Bill Higgs and Bob Matthews for their participation on the Working Group over the course of the year.

We have also met with the HSE to register our concerns regarding a number of recent developments in the gas industry, not least the removal of CORGI and the awarding of a 10 year contract to Capita to run the competent Gas Installers registration scheme.

We have been pursuing a number of issues with Group 4 Securicor (G4S).

On the Security side, we are helping to shape the company structure for health and safety consultation. We have worked with both National Officers and Safety Representatives to reform the national Health and Safety Committee, and are working with G4S management to review and jointly rewrite their national health and safety constitution. G4S held their first Manned Guarding National Health and Safety Committee in January 2009. The department attended to provide advice and support, and is now in talks to develop formal constitutions, sub-committees and policies with the Committee Chair and the Company Health and Safety Adviser. The department wishes to extend its thanks to Angus Groat for his efforts in helping to secure a positive result in our negotiations.

We are also working with G4S on the Cash and Valuables in Transit (CVIT) side of the business. We are engaged with the company on their investigations into recent incidents of violence to staff, and a worrying increase in reported work-related asthma from diesel fumes. We are working together to jointly develop better practice on incident investigation (Motion 65), manual handling and control of diesel as a result, and this work will be ongoing for most of 2009. The department wishes to extend its thanks to David Lyons, Brian Terry and Lynda Seaman for their efforts in dealing with management over the past year.

Aside from these companies, the department has provided support to a number of other sectors. We provided refresher training for Senior Safety Reps in DHL; and presented on the legal rights of safety reps at conferences for activists in Asda and EDF.

Manufacturing Section

With National Officers in the Manufacturing Section, we are helping to develop a health and safety training project with Bouygues. Bouygues are a French-based construction company who are expanding operations in Britain, and signed a recognition agreement with GMB in January 2008. We have developed an outline programme for Safety Representative training, and submitted a bid for £60,000 funding from Construction Skills (formerly the Construction Industry Training Board) with a view to securing funding to implement the training in 2009. The department was also part of a GMB delegation to Bouygues HQ in Versailles in October to outline the draft project to French trades unions. It is hoped that the project will help to set a path for future joint initiatives, including apprentice training.

The department has also helped to negotiate a drug and alcohol policy with Hanson Heidelberg. Again, the management approach has significantly diverged from GMB policy, and the department has been working with the National Officer to rectify matters and publicise the nature of the disagreement. This has been an issue of increasing importance within the department, and we aim to publish a briefing on drug and alcohol policies to Safety Representatives in 2009.

Environment

At last years Congress it was obvious that members were taking environmental concerns much more seriously. GMB has taken a stand on a number of areas where both the environment and our industrial policy can sometimes appear somewhat contradictory, but as last years special report recognized our prime interest is in protecting decent jobs, with a sustainable future. For this reason there was a recommendation not to back Motion 121(referred to the Finance committee) as it put us in a difficult position.

It is obvious that environmental issues are moving up the personal and political agenda, and have been exacerbated by the financial crises. The government has pledged to create 100,000 new sustainable jobs but there are many economists and green activists who think that there is a prime opportunity to look at the environmental agenda as a real way of developing a "just transition" and shape the new industrial landscape. GMB is involved in the Trade Union Sustainable Development Action Committee (TUSDAC) which meets with other trade unions and ,now, two government departments, DEFRA (Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) & the newly created DECC (Department of Energy and Climate Change) (Motion 123).

In addition the Political department negotiated to include environmental reps in the Warwick (2) agreement, and the GMB supported the Prospect amendment to the proposed Employment Bill, which unfortunately fell, in including them the concept of these reps at the workplace. ACAS published a consultation document on time off for trade union duties where reference was made to these reps but only in a voluntary capacity. GMB will respond with our policy but does not expect much change in these deregulatory times. There is also a chance that following a seminar in the NHS on sustainable development that they may accept the idea (Motion 122).

The CEC Green working Party has continued to meet and has established a sub group to look at developing guidance for officers, reps and members. There will be a "green" page in the National magazine to help disseminate this information. This area is relatively fast moving and GMB will be keeping abreast of all major advances to ensure the members are engaged.

Policy Development

Aside from the responses to asbestos consultations, the department has played a full role in the wider development of policy over the past year. We assisted with the GMB response to the Labour Party "Partnership in Power" exercise, and subsequently contributed to the development of GMB policy lines during the Warwick 2 process, including negotiating with Secretary of State for Work and Pensions James Purnell on the introduction of Directors Duties and Corporate Manslaughter (Motion 56).

We will be feeding into a campaign developed by the Professional Drivers Branch aimed at stopping violence to taxi and minicab drivers (Motion 65), and work continues with the gambling industry on the provision of seating for casino staff, where operators are stubbornly refusing to let croupiers and supervisors sit on aesthetic grounds.

We have taken the opportunity to promote GMB policy on health and safety at a number of events, including the Hazards Conference at Keele University; at conferences organized by the Chemicals Industry Association, British Safety Council and Trades Union Congress; and at the European Work Health Network

Conference in Bologna, where the GMB delegation played a crucial role in drafting the first resolution ever to be unanimously passed by the Network.

Publications

The major publication from the department this year was the new Safety Reps Handbook, which has been a number of years in the revising. This work was principally undertaken by Dan, with valuable input from the regions. As might be expected it forms part of the GMB@Work materials, though it is also capable of being used as a stand alone document. Feedback has been very favourable so far.

The department has taken the lead in developing new guidance on Toxic Shock Syndrome (Motion 54), and will be publishing the results in 2009 following consultation with internal and external stakeholders.

In addition there has been a regular production of monthly electronic newsletters covering a wide range of topics. This year they have been-

1. Climate Change - The Impact on the Workplace
2. Pleural Plaques - The Campaign for Justice
3. The Corporate Manslaughter and Homicide Act
4. REACH – Changes to Chemical Usage in the Workplace
5. The Decriminalisation of Death and Injuries at Work
6. Safety Reps – The Opportunity for Greater Involvement
7. The Health & Safety (Offences) Bill 2008
8. Pleural Plaques Compensation – The Fight for Justice Goes On
9. Changes to Employers Liability (Compulsory) Insurance Act
10. HSE Asbestos Campaign – “The Hidden Killer”
11. Mesothelioma Employers Liability – “Trigger Issue” Litigation
12. New HSE Strategy – Be Part of the Solution

These newsletters are now placed on the website for Reps to access. Any ideas for topics are always welcome.

Summary

The work that the department undertakes on behalf of GMB members and officers is shaped by the industrial, political and environmental worlds. In a recession there will be some employers who might decide to cut corners and endanger our members. There may be some employers who will replace their workforce with cheaper, less experienced and more vulnerable workers. There should be opportunities to look at how the industrial world can be changed by promoting green jobs. As always, GMB will continue to campaign and lobby on behalf of our members to effect political change, as always relying on GMB safety reps in all sectors to carry out their role in difficult circumstances. Even in the hard times there are many ways of demonstrating to both existing, and future, GMB members the benefits of defending good health, safety and welfare inside and outside the workplace.

LEGAL DEPARTMENT

Personnel

The Department comprises Barry Smith, Legal Officer, and Maria Ludkin Legal and Corporate Affairs Officer. Sarah King, Legal Research and Policy Officer, is currently on secondment to the GMB European Office in Brussels.

Activity – Introduction To A Broader Role For The Department

The Department has been heavily involved in organising and strategising the multiple actions regarding equal pay litigation, which is dealt with in more detail below. GMB continues to set the legal agenda which other Unions have followed. We are extensively involved in cases which are laying new ground in employment rights law.

As a result the Legal Department has also become much more involved in political campaigns as so much of our work now has a significant political dimension. This activity has expanded into new areas such as GMB's campaigns in private equity, agency workers, Marks and Spencer's treatment of employees, all of which are detailed below.

The role of the department has expanded to facilitate the co-ordination of legal, political, media and organising campaigns which serve to keep GMB at the forefront of campaigns on issues important to members, and which has assisted in our increased membership growth and political strength as a Union.

Action on Congress 2008 Motions

Motion 82 – Repeal the Anti Trade Union Laws

GMB remains committed to the repeal of anti-trade union laws. Although the Trade Union Freedom Bill was not heard in 2007, key parts of the Bill were put forward as amendments to the Employment Bill in November 2008. These included the protection of workers involved in lawful industrial action, employer's duties to provide information to unions, and the use of replacement labour during disputes. The amendments were defeated but 45 Labour MPs and 10 non-Labour MPs supported them.

Motion 85 – “Transforming Tribunals” Legislation, Motion 86 – Employment Tribunal, Motion 87 – Changes within the Employment Tribunal Services

These three Motions expressed concern at proposals arising from the Ministry of Justice Public Consultation “Transforming Tribunals”, including the use of more judges to hear Employment Tribunal cases sitting alone. We have called upon the Government not to weaken the involvement of lay members in the employment tribunals and for a fairer system to be put in place.

Motion 86 also referred to the statutory rules relating to tribunals (the statutory disciplinary, dismissal, and grievance rules) and the negative impact they have had on members pursuing their rights. These rules are to be repealed in April 2009, and replaced by a revised ACAS Code of Practice on Discipline and Grievance. We responded to the public consultations on repeal and on the revised Code of Practice. We will monitor the new procedures closely.

Motion 148 – Political

We have called on the Government, and the Ministry of Justice, to put in place a “people's judiciary”, and to review the process of selecting the judiciary and magistrates so as to reflect a wider cross-section of society. This should include a positive quota of working people with a trade union background.

Support for Recruitment and Organisation

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

A significant proportion of the Department's work continues to relate to equal pay issues in the public sector, and in particular in local authorities and the NHS. We have continued to support National Officers in developing our equal pay strategy, and we work closely with GMB solicitors.

GMB remains at the centre of equal pay. We support the pursuit of equal pay claims and at the time of writing this report GMB is supporting 30,000 equal pay claims in the public sector.

GMB remains committed to pursuing litigation in tribunals and in the higher courts where necessary in order to achieve equal pay. We have been supporting significant ground-breaking litigation in the higher courts on almost every aspect of equal pay law in the last year including litigation relating to the following: time limits, statutory grievances, TUPE transfers, comparators, the source of pay, the employers' so-called "genuine material factor defence", market forces, and so on. This strategy will continue in 2009.

In the case of *Allen v GMB*, the other side won their appeal to the Court of Appeal. The House of Lords refused to grant us permission to appeal. The case will now be referred back to the original Employment Tribunal to determine remedies.

We continue to work closely with National Officers generally on equal pay issues. We have contributed to the Special Report to Congress 2009 on Equal Pay.

Policy Development

We continued to work to co-ordinate the legal, political, and industrial aspects of the campaign to save Remploy factories from closure. We supported National Officers in negotiations with management, and with legal and political briefings of MPs and Government Ministers. We supported National Officers in respect of litigation relevant to the closures.

We have continued to be heavily involved in developing a legal and political strategy to support the GMB campaign to draw attention to the negative aspects of the unregulated private equity industry. We contribute widely to publications and conferences arguing the case for greater regulation, as well as considerable interaction with relevant politicians to bring about changes in the regulatory framework.

We have continued to support the campaign for Trade Union Freedom. We were disappointed that there was not sufficient time for the Trade Union Freedom Bill to be debated but we remain committed to supporting the removal of the legal shackles placed on trade unions. We remain committed to the repeal of Section 127 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994.

We welcome the EU Directive on Agency Workers which requires member states to give agency workers comparable rights with permanent staff. The Directive requires member states to implement its provisions by 5 December 2011. We have called on the UK Government to introduce the rights for UK workers. We believe that these rights should apply from Day One and not, as is proposed, 12 weeks after the employment has started.

We responded to the public consultation on the revised ACAS Code of Practice on Discipline and Grievances. The new Code will come into effect in April 2009 when the statutory disciplinary and grievance procedures are repealed. We are co-ordinating the GMB response to the revised ACAS Code of Practice on Time Off for Trade Union Duties and Activities.

Publications and Information Provision

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

We are updating the GMB "Most Asked Questions" which is presently in its 13th edition. This consists of a series of one page answers to questions covering a wide range of employment issues, including Health and Safety, Contracts, Pay, Maternity, Paternity, Flexible Working Rights etc. The aim is to provide a document which Regions can easily send or hand to members with common enquiries. This is posted on the GMB intranet and an amended version (which excludes Region-specific benefits) is posted on the GMB website.

Support for Recognition

GMB continues to meet with considerable success across a wide range of companies, both in terms of new sites and sites where GMB members have remained loyal through years of employer hostility. GMB continues to make good use of the legislation, both as a framework for voluntary agreements, and as a procedure for achieving recognition in the face of employer hostility.

We continue to provide support, advice, and assistance to Officers in considering and preparing applications to the Central Arbitration Committee. We provide standing guidance to Officers on the procedures. We provide a regular report on the progress of applications to the GMB Central Executive Council. Barry Smith is available to act as "devil's advocate" on applications.

Support for Industrial Action

We continue to provide day to day support to Regional and National Officers on industrial action issues and industrial action ballots. This represents a significant part of our work.

We continue to up date our guidance on ballots to reflect changes in legislation and case law. Barry Smith is available to run briefings for Officers.

We remain committed to Trade Union freedom, and the removal of the legal restrictions placed on trade unions to take industrial action, including the repeal of Section 127 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994.

Statutory Disciplinary, Dismissal, and Grievance Procedures

The statutory disciplinary and grievance procedures will be repealed in April 2009. This will mean that the fairness of a dismissal will no longer depend on compliance with the statutory disciplinary and dismissal procedures. The requirement that an employee sends a grievance letter and waits 28 days before bringing a tribunal claim will be removed. Instead tribunals will assess dismissals and grievance issues by reference to the revised ACAS Code of Practice on discipline and grievance. A failure by either side to comply with the Code may lead to an increase or a reduction in compensation of up to 25%.

The Government has indicated that transitional arrangements will be put in place in terms of both the new rules and tribunal procedures. At the time of writing this report details are awaited. We will keep Officers and Regions apprised of developments and monitor the position closely.

Other Employment Law

We continue to provide day to day support to Officers on individual employment law matters, though as previously collective issues and policy matters remain our priority.

We have provided support to Officers in respect of collective redundancy consultation, which is an area of concern for the Union particularly in the light of the present economic circumstances.

Maria Ludkin has been involved in the Union's campaign in Marks and Spencers, reviewing and selecting key cases to forward to the employment tribunal and co-ordinating a campaign to ensure Marks and Spencer follows existing legislation in their treatment of workers.

Trade Union Legal Services

We remain committed to playing our part in defending trade union legal services from attack. We are lobbying to prevent any adverse impact on services arising out of Government initiatives in legal services, including the Jackson Review on Costs. We remain concerned about the activities of "no win no fee" lawyers and support the Government inquiry into their behaviour. We will keep Officers informed about developments.

Standing Orders Committee

Barry Smith was Secretary to the Congress 2008 Standing Orders Committee (SOC). He is Secretary to the Congress 2009 SOC.

PENSIONS DEPARTMENT

Actions Taken on Motions Carried in Congress 2008

Motion 68 – State Pension

We continue to pressurise government to increase the basic state pension and introduce an indexation mechanism that equates to the better of inflation and average earnings. GMB is working with the National Pensioners Convention and others to achieve this goal. GMB led the pension debate at TUC Congress 2008 and successfully secured unanimous support for our motion calling for the reforms highlighted by this GMB motion. GMB also sought reforms at the Labour Party's National Policy Forum that replicated the objectives of this motion.

Motion 78 – Compulsion

As with Motion 68, GMB sought relevant reforms through the National Policy Forum and TUC Congress. We have also worked with DWP and The Pensions Regulator to maximise the effectiveness of the compliance regime when auto-enrolment is introduced in 2012 and secured a ban on employers offering inducements to members to opt out.

Motion 76 – Workers' Pension Security

As with Motion 68 and 78, GMB sought relevant reforms through the National Policy Forum and TUC Congress. In addition we have worked with DWP and improved the benefits provided by the Financial Assistance Scheme and Pension Protection Fund. GMB led the campaign to secure ill health provision in these schemes which is now in place. We also actively participated in the government's deregulation review and have led the trade union movement's resistance to the review's proposals to reduce members' pension security.

Motion 70 – National Insurance Buy Back

As with Motions 68, 76 and 78, GMB sought relevant reforms through the National Policy Forum and TUC Congress. We also joined with the EOC and others to promote and support amendments to the Pension Bill to facilitate greater NI buy back with some success.

Motion 75 – Pension Loss Compensation

As with Motion 68, 70, 76 and 78, GMB sought relevant reforms through the National Policy Forum and TUC Congress. In addition we have worked with DWP and improved the benefits provided by the Financial Assistance Scheme and Pension Protection Fund. GMB led the campaign to secure ill health provision in these schemes which is now in place. We have also been working with the department to extend the coverage of the Financial Assistance Scheme to other schemes where compromise agreements were signed. Progress on this is expected in 2009.

Motion 71 – Tax Rates

The parameters of taxation and tax rates changed soon after the motion was written. However, GMB has continued to support a more equitable tax and tax relief system and maintains strong opposition to the continuation of means testing for pension benefits. As outlined for Motion 68, GMB continues to make every effort to improve state pension provision in the UK.

Motion 77 – Consultation & Member Involvement

As with Motion 68, 70, 71, 75, 76 and 78, GMB sought relevant reforms through the National Policy Forum and TUC Congress. We have also had discussions with DWP on improving the consultation legislation. As an outstanding pledge from the first Warwick Agreement, GMB has continued to pressure the government on the issue of increased member involvement in the governance of their occupational pension schemes. Progress on this in the private sector is expected in 2009. In public sector schemes GMB is in discussion with sponsoring government departments about improving the transparency and engagement of these schemes with their members.

Motion 72 – Women’s Pension Reform

Reforms advocated by GMB would improve pension provision for women workers and carers. GMB has also produced significant amounts of guidance for members that is intended to increase awareness of pension issues. The Pension Department has also embarked on a programme of work in conjunction with the National Equalities Officer to progress this motion further.

Motion 73 – Fixed Retirement Ages

GMB has continued to oppose the default retirement age adopted by the UK government. The case taken to the ECJ by Heyday was unsuccessful in invalidating this part of the age discrimination regulations so GMB has continued to lobby employers on a case by case basis to remove compulsory retirements where they still exist. A major achievement was the successful removal of the default retirement age throughout the Civil Service in October. We restated our arguments against the default retirement age in our response to the Welfare Reform Bill and will continue to instigate and support moves to remove this regulation.

Industrial Issues

GMB's Pension Department continues to support industrial negotiations throughout the union on pension issues that arise in the workplace. As in previous years, the trend has generally been one of worsening provision and declining occupational pension provision. However, in many cases we have been able to reduce the cuts proposed by employers and ensure greater security for members' retirements.

Commercial Services

The Pensions Department has participated in or assisted negotiations in the following companies in 2008: ASDA, BMA, Centrica, DHL, G4S, Jersey Mail, Magnox, National Grid, NUJ, Wincanton. Also in 2008, OFGEM published a range of detrimental proposals to the energy distribution sector's pension arrangements. The department responded to OFGEM's public consultation and presented GMB's concerns at the OFGEM seminar held as part of the consultation process. We have produced briefing material for

members and MPs and have worked with the CS section on the campaign to ensure OFGEM's proposals are not taken forward.

Manufacturing

The Pensions Department has participated in or assisted negotiations in the following companies in 2008: Akzo Nobel, Castle Cement, Harrison & Harrison, Isleburn, Pilkington Glass, Remploy, Shorts, Stag Furniture, United Biscuits, Weinerberger.

Public Services

The Pensions Department has participated in or assisted negotiations with the following employers in 2008: Civil Service, Environment Agency, HE sector, Legal Services Commission, Local Government Pension Scheme (England & Wales), NHS, The Rent Service.

As in previous years the department has been heavily involved in negotiations on reforms of the main public sector pensions. The new Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) in England & Wales was introduced in April covering more than two million members. The department produced a new GMB Guide to the scheme and was involved in resolving implementation issues with a number of the employers involved in the scheme.

In addition, since the introduction of the new scheme the department has been heavily involved in discussions with CLG and employers on ill health provisions, outsourcing and two tier code issues, governance and management of the scheme's funds, scheme sustainability and redundancy provisions. In August we issued Freedom of Information requests to 93 administering authorities of the LGPS in England & Wales to gain data on their use of the new ill health procedures. We received 77 replies covering over 1.5m active LGPS members.

In the NHS, GMB has continued to participate in the Technical Advisory Group which advises the Governance Group, responsible for overseeing the running of the NHS Pension Scheme. The Technical Advisory Group's initial focus in 2008 was on the implementation of the New NHS Pension Scheme for new joiners from 1 April 2008 and the revised NHS Pension Scheme for existing members. The latter part of the year saw attentions turned to the implementation of the Choice exercise whereby existing members will be given the opportunity to join the new NHS Pension Scheme. Discussions have focussed on delivery of the Choice exercise and what terms should be offered so that choosing to join the new scheme is an attractive option to members but will not produce excess costs to the pension scheme. It is anticipated that the Choice exercise will commence in summer 2009.

The department has been involved throughout the year with the Civil Service scheme, working with the other unions in the Council of Civil Service Unions on a number of reform issues that have arisen relating primarily to age discrimination.

The Higher Education sector saw a review of pension arrangements across the sector being carried out by external consultants. GMB's position remains that we will fight any attacks on the defined benefit nature of these schemes and strive to achieve parity in pension provision across the sector and improved representation for GMB members in their pensions schemes.

The department has also been involved with the pension implications of reorganisations and redundancies in The Rent Service and Legal Services Commission.

Regional

The Pensions Department has also participated in or assisted negotiations at regional level in the following companies in 2008: Aesculap, Aga, Alitalia, Amcor Flexibles, Aquascutum, BAe, Bayer Cropscience, Becker, Bennett Safetyware, Bison Bede, Cargill, Chapmans Agriculture, Ford, Gala Casinos, Chivas Bros, CIBA, Cleveland Potash, HiFlex, Hoval, IKO, Inbev, Indesit, Liebherr, Local Government Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland), Local Government Pension Scheme (Scotland), Luxfer, Mineworkers, Norbert Detressangle, Northgate, Oxsiris, P&O, Protega, Salt Union, Silvergate Plastics, Trillion, Urenco, Veolia, Viasystems.

Policy

- In addition to the work outlined above progressing specific GMB Congress motions, the department has been heavily involved with the DWP and The Pension Regulator on a number of issues:
- GMB has led the discussions with government and other stakeholders developing employer compliance safeguards in the context of the new Personal Accounts framework that is to be introduced in 2012.
- We have also been working with The Pension Regulator on improving the communication and governance practices of defined contribution schemes.
- GMB has resisted, so far successfully, the watering down of regulations that protect members' benefits as a result of the Deregulation Review published at the end of 2007. Discussions continue on issues of risk sharing, Section 75, surplus and statutory override.
- One outstanding commitment from Warwick I is progress towards having 50% member nominated trustees on pension trustee boards. We continue to press government for reform in this area and expect a statutory consultation on the issue to be launched early in 2009.
- The second outstanding issue is collective bargaining on pensions. Despite maintaining pressure on BERR to move on this issue, progress remains limited. BERR have conducted some research on the subject but are currently reluctant to abide by the spirit of the Warwick agreement in this area.
- As the Pensions Bill 2008 progressed through the Parliamentary process we have regularly briefed GMB MPs and Lords on our reform priorities. GMB successfully had terminal ill health provision incorporated into the Pension Protection Fund's provisions in July. Further GMB supported amendments on National Insurance buy-back and employer compliance have also been incorporated in the Bill that currently awaits Royal Assent.
- We submitted a raft of amendments to the National Policy Forum (Warwick II) and participated in a number of meetings with the Labour Party seeking to progress these points.

The department works directly with government on these and other relevant issues. In 2008 we had regular meetings with the Secretaries of State and Pensions Ministers at the DWP and also with senior civil servants in The Pensions Regulator, Pension Protection Fund, Financial Assistance Scheme, Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG), Department of Health and Cabinet Office totally 59 meetings. In addition, the department formally responded to more than 20 government consultations in 2008 (copies of all these responses are published on the GMB website).

Casework

The Pensions Department continues to advise on, and manage, a very large number of cases and queries originating from all nine Regions. In 2008 we received over 300 new cases of which approximately 60%

related to individual member queries or problems and 40% related to industrial matters. Replies to more than 90% of these cases are sent within one week of receipt.

In all cases, the Department acts in support of full time officers and will advise or take on casework as appropriate. As such, individual and industrial cases should be submitted from a regional officer in the first instance. The Department will keep regional officers advised on case progress at all times. Some members do contact the Department directly and in such instances we deal with these members fairly, but do advise them that their first point of contact should be their regional officer.

We deal with pension cases on all pension schemes operating in the UK: occupational, state, personal and stakeholder schemes. The cases worked on within the Pensions Department can be exceptionally complex and frequently involve Internal Disputes Resolution Procedures, the Pensions Regulator, Pensions Ombudsman, Financial Ombudsman, and/or the Financial Services Authority.

Some of the more complex cases, particularly those concerning individual pension rights can take a significant length of time to resolve, particularly when ill health pensions are being disputed and medical evidence is required. The Department recognises the anxiety that uncertainty and grievances relating to pensions can cause and aims to deal with all individual queries in an efficient and sensitive manner. In particular we have noticed a marked increase in the length of time it is taking the Pensions Ombudsman's office to investigate and make determinations on pension disputes. However the Ombudsman's office remains the main arbitration point for pension disputes and we have had to exercise and encourage patience when faced with lengthy delays.

In the more complex cases, the Department will recommend that regions or industrial sections will benefit from legal advice and we have good working relationships with solicitors who specialise in pension matters.

Communications

GMB has continued to raise the profile of industrial and policy pensions issues in the press and among members. In addition to a number of press releases the pension department also produced numerous member bulletins on a range of subjects as well as four/five Pension Q&As. We also launched a GMB Guide to the new Local Government Pension Scheme in 2008 and so far more than 16,000 copies have been distributed. The pensions handbook, "Pensions – GMB Putting You in the Picture" has continued to be distributed to members through their Regions and in addition to the hard copy, 2,000 disc versions have been distributed to the Regions that requested them.

The Pensions Department's webpage on the GMB National website continues to be used extensively to communicate our work. All general member communications, including our pensions guides, are posted here as well as many industrial and policy bulletins. There were over 50 news items added to the webpage in 2008. We have also added a checklist for members approaching retirement which gives useful information about benefits and age discrimination. A page of useful links to pension legislation and details of external pensions information has also been set up. The Department continues to run the Public Sector Pensions Campaign webpage.

In 2008, GMB began working with our colleagues in other trade unions on a joint venture known as Capital Stewardship. This project is focussed on increasing the profile of responsible investment issues and how pension funds, through their investments, can be used to shape the practices of publicly owned companies. A Capital Stewards website has been set up to provide high-level information to interested members and also to provide a forum for discussion of investment and general pensions issues.

Communications with members of our Member Nominated Trustee network continued in 2008. In the early part of the year a survey of network members was conducted which showed that there was significant support for moving this network towards being an electronic community with information provided via e-mail and the Capital Stewards website being a focal point for information and discussion. Those who did not elect to change to receiving electronic communications continue to receive regular mailshots from Pensions Department.

In 2008 a network of Regional Pension Officers was set up to facilitate communication and consultation between Regions and the Pensions Department at National Office. The first meeting was held in November with all regions represented.

Co-operation with External Organisations

GMB Pensions Department continues to work with other organisations where appropriate to promote GMB's agenda. This year we represented GMB at a number of public and industry events held by: Institute of Directors, Pensions Policy Institute, National Pensioners' Convention, UNISON, NAPF, The Pensions Regulator, Committee on Workers Capital, TUC, Swiss Re and OFGEM.

The joint GMB-T&G Local Government Pension Conference was held in Eastbourne in November providing a valuable opportunity for 100 delegates to discuss and learn about the provisions of the new Local Government Pension Scheme. Speakers at the conference included representatives from the Local Government Employers' Organisation and the Department for Communities and Local Government.

We also hold seats on a number of committees on behalf of GMB (or TUC), these include: The Pensions Regulator Advisory Panel, LGPS Policy Review Group, LGPS III Health Monitoring Group, TUC Capital Stewardship Steering Committee, NHS Technical Advisory Group, NHS Governance Group, CCSU Pension Reforms Group, Deregulation Review Body and FAS Stakeholders' Committee.

Training

The Pensions Department has continued to provide and expand the pensions training programme. Eight GMB Regions have now received the officer training course, which is a one day course that is normally run out of Regional Office. London Region Officers received the course in October 2008. The national Advanced Pension Course was hosted by GMB Birmingham & West Midlands Region in August 2009. This was a 5 day course and was invaluable for the trustees and those requiring advanced pensions knowledge. The Department has continued to develop the member training programme. Every Region was given the opportunity to have a course delivered in the Region in 2008. This is predominantly a two day introductory pension course and four courses were run in 2008. One scheme specific course is run every year and the national reps from Centrica had a two day pensions course hosted by GMB Midland & East Coast Region in January 2008.

POLITICAL DEPARTMENT

The Political Department has had a very productive year and has benefited greatly from having three political officers in addition to support staff. GMB's profile in the Parliamentary Labour Party and the wider trade union movement has substantially increased and is continuing to grow.

1. Actions Taken on Motions Carried in Congress 2008

Emergency Motion 1, Motions 4, 52, 56, 65, 103, 120, 131, 160, 163, 192, 194, 202, 213, 214 and 215, Composites 4 and 11. With regards to these motions, the Political Department submitted responses to the Labour Party's consultation process – Partnership in Power and took policies forward through the Labour Party's National Policy Forum at Warwick. A number were fully accepted, some were accepted following negotiated amendments and some were not accepted.

Motion 61, 62, & Composite 1. GMB have now organised two lobbies of Parliament in 2008 with 30 MPs attending and many other parliamentary activities have taken place. GMB's campaign has focused on overturning the Law Lords decision to stop paying compensation to those with Pleural Plaques.

Motion 127, 128 & 129. GMB has raised this issue at the Labour Party's NEC. A report on funding is underway and we await the results which are due shortly.

Motion 130. GMB has consistently lobbied the Government to implement stronger employment legislation through the TUC, Labour Party and through Parliament.

Motion 132. The Political Department in consultation with GMB Regions continually monitor GMB MPs to ensure they support the GMB's policies and agenda.

Motion 135. A press release was issued raising GMB concerns over MPs office allowances and there is currently a debate in Parliament on how to open up and make MPs expenses more transparent.

Motion 140. Up to date equipment for personnel serving in the armed forces is an issue which has been both debated and put forward by questions to the minister responsible in Parliament.

Motion 150. By 2010 there will be 3,500 sure start children's centres. There were no sure start centres in 1997. Since 1997 spending pre pupil has almost doubled in real terms from less than £2,900 to over £5,400.

Motion 154. The Political Department wrote to the Secretary of State to lobby for First Aid to be taught in schools. A review on the issue is currently ongoing and results are expected in April 2009.

Motion 157. The UCU reached an agreement with Keele University over the dispute.

Motion 161. A carers' campaign is due to be launched in early 2009. It aims to mobilize MPs through a parliamentary meeting hosted by the National Officer to pursue GMB's care agenda, which is focused on supporting and valuing carers.

Motion 162. Letters have been sent to the health ministers in the four nations regarding the current level of funding and any proposals to increase the funding available for both children and adult hospices.

Motion 164. GMB has raised this issue with government on numerous occasions. GMB have made representations to government in particular with reference to cancer sufferers for the abolition of prescription charges.

Motion 167. In January 2009 Gordon Brown voiced his support for presumed consent and is considering changing the law. The GMB will feed into this debate and raise the awareness of the importance of implementing presumed consent.

Motion 171 & Composite 12. GMB continues to have discussions with Government.

Motion 172. GMB works closely with the FBU in supporting this campaign along with other trade unions and also through the TUC. GMB has campaigned on this issue through TUC.

Motion 173. As per request of this motion GMB supported the RMT motion at TUC Congress and in fact seconded it. The motion was passed and GMB spoke in favour of it.

Motion 174 & 175. GMB has held various regulators to account. Ofgem has been held to account at Labour Party Conference over energy prices and by a campaign to prevent them from attacking energy sector pension schemes.

Motion 179. GMB continue to be involved in the Defend Council Housing campaign. Three Labour Party conferences have backed the fourth option and the council housing group of MPs have submitted EDM which the GMB have supported.

Motion 185. GMB has fought and won the argument for a third runway at Heathrow airport. The campaign focused on Heathrow being part of an integrated transport system in the UK.

Motion 186. Brake has been contacted by letter to ascertain the latest research in various topics highlighted. Depending on the results this will potentially form the basis of any campaign.

Motion 187. This issue will be highlighted to the GMB Councillor network for their consideration.

Motion 191. The issues have been raised through the Health Partnership Forums by the National Officer.

Motion 216. GMB are currently working closely with our sex workers branch in formulating responses and policy development in relation to the Policing and Crimes Bill, currently passing through Parliament.

Motion 217. Legal advice has now been taken and it is not possible to pursue this motion.

Composite 6. This issue has been raised with Labour MPs and with delegates to the NEC.

Composite 7. GMB has written to the secretary of state requesting that the government compulsory include trade union history and activities in the national education curriculum.

Composite 8. The Warwick agreement stated that there would be rights to request time off for training and that a Labour Government will introduce a right to request time for training covering over 20 million workers.

Composite 9. This is an issue GMB continues to take forward in discussions with politicians.

Composite 10. GMB opposes the Government's current proposals on welfare and benefits. A full response to the consultation was submitted.

2. Labour Party

Our two delegates – Mary Turner and Debbie Coulter - to the NEC have continued to play a crucial and central role in holding the Labour Party and Prime Minister to account. Issues raised during the past year include Remploy, funding caps for internal elections and temporary/agency workers.

The Political Department presented substantial contributions to the Labour Party's consultation process – Partnership in Power. The Department coordinated, reviewed, edited and wrote the response in-conjunction with most National Sections and Departments. A response was submitted to all six policy documents.

2008 marked the second Warwick Conference which was meant to provide the key manifesto policies for the next general election. As the next General Election is not expected to 2010 further discussions will take place to determine further policies to strengthen the campaign for a fourth term of office for the Labour Party. The July 2008 Conference therefore was not an end to the trade union's negotiations to improve the rights of workers in the UK. However, key policies agreed included:

- Free school meal trials in key areas of the UK,
- National minimum wage will be extended to 21 year olds,
- Sector forums will be established for areas of the economy employing low paid workers, e.g. for the hospitality and betting sectors.
- An increase in public procurement for Remploy to protect the remaining factories.

3. Labour Party Conference

GMB played a substantial and key role at Labour Party Conference 2008. The union submitted a contemporary issue on the current energy crisis and the failure of Ofgem to regulate the energy market. This proved very popular and many Constituency Labour Party's supported GMB's stance.

We rejected the Party's report on Remploy – the Contemporary Resolution submitted in 2007 – because it did not address our concerns regarding the future of the Remploy factories.

The Political Department also ran three fringe meetings on: equal pay, energy crisis and Remploy.

4. Campaigning/Lobbying

Pleural Plaques

The Department, alongside the Health and Safety Department, has campaigned tirelessly to ensure GMB members, who have contracted Pleural Plaques and whose payments were taken away by the recent decision by the Law Lords, are compensated and the decision reversed.

In October 2008 the Political Department organised a lobby of Parliament. The lobby was attended by over 250 people and more than 30 MPs. The Department has also organised various meetings with MPs who have submitted Early Day Motions on Pleural Plaques, and has been involved in the tabling of a Private Members Bill submitted to Parliament by Andrew Dismore MP – a GMB MP.

Temporary Agency Workers

The Political Department campaigned on a Bill focusing on temporary agency workers' rights tabled by Andrew Miller. The Bill passed its second reading but was then withdrawn in favour of a tripartite agreement between the Government, TUC and CBI.

This agreement ensured equal treatment between agency workers and those working directly for an employer. This is a significant win for the trade union movement and GMB was at the heart of mobilizing MPs to support the campaign which ultimately resulted in the Government backing down and agreeing to temporary agency workers' rights in the UK.

Professional Drivers Branch

The Political Department has continued to give support to the Professional Drivers Branch. In 2008 a Parliamentary event was organised where nine MPs attended to highlight the issue of driver safety. Meetings with civil servants were also co-ordinated to discuss the same issue. The Department is currently organising a meeting with Ministers to discuss a change in the licensing of private hire drivers.

CLP Affiliations

During 2008 GMB at a national level affiliated to every Constituency Labour Party (CLP) in the UK. This is in addition to the affiliations that individual Regions and Branches have already established with various CLPs up and down the country.

Lists of target constituencies have now been drawn up in preparation for the next General Election. GMB branches within these target seats have been affiliated to the constituency, although in many cases branches were already affiliated to CLPs. Branch secretaries were also asked to nominate a delegate where appropriate.

All members within the constituencies will now be written to and the material has been prepared. The overall aim is to regenerate the Labour Party and to build the campaign to win the next General Election, along with bringing GMB's policies to the heart of the Labour Party through the CLPs.

Anti-BNP

GMB policy has been at the forefront of the anti fascist and anti racist campaigns nationally and indeed locally. The work GMB has done recently in training GMB activists and officers in Regions, where the BNP are active, means that we are in a good position to mount a positive campaign against the racist and fascist threat of the BNP wherever it emerges.

Although the election of a BNP candidate in the London Assembly elections was undoubtedly a setback, GMB can be proud of the campaign we ran. The Department made sure that the BNP threat was campaigned against through leafleting, telephone and street canvassing, and other campaigning strategies.

Through meetings held with GMB Regions, the Department has emphasized the need to be vigilante against the BNP. It is crucial to ensure our members understand the threat to which they pose.

The Political Department is continuing to campaign against the BNP to ensure they do not win their first ever seat in the European Parliament in the 2009 elections. We will be working in conjunction with Searchlight and other trade unions to counter the BNP threat. Should the BNP win in this election it could emerge as the fourth political party in Britain – something that must be prevented. The Department has asked Regions to campaign against the BNP by:

- Organising day schools solely on the BNP threat;
- Training days for reps and officers - if required;
- Working closely with GMB regional MPs and MEPs;
- Linking up with universities, colleges and schools;
- Publishing pieces in regional journals to inform members of the BNP threat and most importantly go out and use their vote; and
- Organising GMB activists through email and the internet.

Gangmaster Licensing Authority - GLA

The GLA was set up to protect workers from exploitation in the agriculture, horticulture and shellfish sectors, along with the food processing and packaging sector. The GLA operates a licensing scheme for persons acting as gangmasters working in these sectors.

GMB sits alongside other trade unions, the TUC and employer representatives on both the board of the GLA and the GLA workers representation group.

In the last year the GLA has licensed 1134 gangmasters, although 52 have been refused a license, 77 have had their license revoked and 31 appeals have been won and 2 lost.

GMB would like to see some of the other Government enforcement agencies with as much teeth and trade union involvement as the GLA.

Regional Political Events

Various political events have been organised by the Political Department. Both Birmingham and Southern Regions attended Parliament where various presentations and discussions were made by politicians and special advisers.

In addition members of the Political Department have travelled to various Regions to give speeches and presentations to highlight the GMB's political agenda and to encourage GMB members to become active in the Labour Party's campaigns.

5. GMB MPs

We have continued to work with those Members of Parliament who are GMB members. Many individual meetings and briefings have taken place on a wide cross section of issues. The support we have had has been very positive in delivering for our members and sections. GMB continues at a Regional and National level to monitor the support we receive from our MPs. This as per previous congress motions this will be used in assessing support going forward.

6. Parliamentary Panel

There have been six rounds of interviews for the GMB Parliamentary Panel. 38 people have been successful and have been put forward to the Labour Party Parliamentary Panel. Many GMB candidates have been successful in both Parliamentary and European selections. They include selections for:

- Swansea West
- Nuneaton and Bedworth
- Bristol North West
- Brentwood and Ongar
- Kensington and Chelsea
- Guildford
- Kettering
- Sunderland Central
- Rochdale
- Wolverhampton
- Europe – London Regional List
- Europe – North West Regional List
- Europe – East Midlands Regional List

7. Government

Over the last year, regular meetings have been arranged with Government Ministers and Departments. These have ranged from meetings with Ministers and the General Secretary to National Officers, Regional Officers, Branch Officers and members. The list below highlights meetings with Cabinet level Ministers:

Gordon Brown	Prime Minister
Ed Balls	Secretary of State for Children, Schools & Families
Yvette Cooper	Chief Secretary to the Treasury
Jack Straw	Secretary of State for Justice
Jim Murphy	Secretary of State - Scotland
Hazel Blears	Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government
Alan Johnson	Secretary of State for Health
Lord Mandelson	Secretary of State for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform
James Purnell	Secretary of State – Work & Pensions
Nick Brown	Chief Whip
Liam Byrne	Chancellor of Duchy of Lancaster
Ed Milliband	Secretary of State – Energy and Climate Change
David Miliband	Secretary of State – Foreign Office
Geoff Hoon	Secretary of State – Transport
Harriet Harman	Minister for Women & Equalities
John Denham	Secretary of State – Innovation and Skills

Many other meetings have taken place with civil servants and junior ministers. These are often more fruitful in delivering results for GMB members.

8. European Elections

The European elections are due to take place on 4th June 2009. The Political Department is supporting 5 GMB MEPs along with 5 candidates in the elections.

Eight leaflets have been designed for the following candidates:

North East	Stephen Hughes MEP
Scotland	David Martin MEP
North West	Brian Simpson MEP & Steve Carter
East Midland	Glenis Willmott MEP & Roy Kennedy
London	Anne Fairweather & Raj Jethwa
Wales	Lisa Stevens
Yorkshire & the Humber	Richard Corbett MEP
West Midlands	Michael Cashman MEP & Neena Gill MEP

240,000 leaflets have been produced nationally for distribution in the regions. In addition, a generic leaflet has been designed for Regions who wish to print further leaflets to increase voter turnout at the elections.

Furthermore, the GMB strategy will also include publicising the campaign through the GMB website and through the internal magazines. The Department will also increase voter contact through telephone canvassing, automated calling, and direct mails to post holders and through GMB members living in target constituencies.

9. Regional Political Officers

There have been a number of meetings throughout the year with the Regional Political Officers to exchange information and co-ordinate political work. This has continued to allow the sharing of best practice and highlight Regional experiences and approaches.

The Regional Political Officers are:

Paul Maloney	Southern
Justin Bowden	London
Pamela Drake	South Western
Martin Hird	Birmingham & West Midlands
Les Dobbs	Midland & East Coast
Steve Jennings	Yorkshire & North Derbyshire
Cheryl Pidgeon	North West & Irish
Julie Elliott	Northern
Richard Leonard	Scotland

10. Early Day Motions

The following Early Day Motions were circulated to MPs with requests for support:

EDM 669	STATUTORY REDUNDANCY PAY
EDM 489	OFGEM
EDM 157	SOUTHERN CROSS ELDERLY RESIDENT HOMES IN HILLINGDON
EDM 2168	ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF AVIATION
EDM 815	ASBESTOSIS PLEURAL PLAQUES
EDM 693	BLACK, MINORITY ETHNIC AND REFUGEE WOMEN AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
EDM 1099	GAZA
EDM 658	CENTENARY OF THE STATE PENSION
EDM 809	FUTURE OF REMPLOY
EDM 1171	BRITISH GAS PENSIONS
EDM 1374	DRIVER SAFETY
EDM 1382	ELECTIONS IN PARAGUAY
EDM1405	EUROPEAN UNION SANCTIONS AGAINST CUBA
EDM 1438	TRADE UNION CASE FOR WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENTAL REPRESENTATIVES
EDM 1534	PENSION (S.1., 2008, No. 1083)
EDM 1609	TREATMENT OF ZIMBABWE CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS
EDM 1758	HUGO CHÁVEZ, FARC AND THE PROSPECTS FOR PEACE IN COLOMBIA

EDM 443	KAREN REISSMANN AND MANCHESTER MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE TRUST
EDM 1604	TRADES UNION FREEDOM BILL CAMPAIGN
EDM 1910	ENERGY INTENSIVE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY
EDM 1931	FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN YEMEN
EDM 2046	PRIVATE EQUITY
EDM 2313	GMB CAMPAIGN ON PLEURAL PLAQUES
EDM 2349	MR DAVID PUGH AND THE ECLIPSE PROCLAIM PERSONAL INJURY AWARDS 2008
EDM 247	STATE RETIREMENT PENSION
EDM 408	GAZA
EDM 500	CREDIT INSURANCE AND THE FURNITURE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY
EDM 677	LABOUR STANDARDS, EMPLOYMENT AND THE EU

APPOINTMENT AND ELECTION OF OFFICIALS

1 JANUARY 2008 – 31 DECEMBER 2008

**APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
& INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OFFICER** - Ed Blissett

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT OFFICER
South Western Region - Mark Stevens

APPOINTMENT OF SENIOR ORGANISERS
Midland & East Coast Region - Les Dobbs
Northern Region - Terry Scarr

ELECTION OF ORGANISERS
Southern Region - Tony Dowling
- Andy Prendergast

APPOINTMENT OF ORGANISING OFFICERS
London Region - Vince Maple
- Darren Parmenter
Midland & East Coast Region - Tim Clements
- Pat Hardy
- Rachelle Wilkins
Northern Region - Gail Johnson

- Ian McKenzie
- Suzanne Reid

South Western Region

- Ruth Bennett
- Jill Richards

GOLD BADGE AND YOUTH AWARDS 2008

Men's Gold Badge

The GMB Men's Gold Badge recipient in 2008 was Alistair McLean (London Region).

Women's Gold Badge

The GMB Women's Gold Badge recipient in 2008 was Audrey Harry MBE (Midland & East Coast Region). Audrey was nominated for the TUC Women's Award 2008.

Award for Youth

No nominations were received in 2008

The Central Executive Council, at its 21 October 2008 meeting, agreed that Gold Badge and Youth Awards will no longer be presented and instead from Congress 2009 each Region will select their own award winner for an achievement of the Regions' choosing. Each Regional recipient will receive a standard award which will be presented during Congress. The CEC will select from these nine Regional award winners who should go forward for the TUC Congress awards.

(Adopted)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. It now gives me great pleasure to call our General Secretary, Paul Kenny, to move the General Secretary's Report, pages 5-7, 11-21, 29-51. PK?

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you, President. Before I do, can I just on behalf of the Executive and everybody on the platform wish you a very Happy Birthday. It is Mary's birthday today. *(Applause)* I also take the liberty of formally giving you these flowers, Mary, now. *(Presentation amid applause)*

Congress, President, Paul Kenny moving the General Secretary's Report. It is 12 months, actually, since we met in Plymouth but who could have predicted the events which were about to unfurl in our economy. I will tell you who could, you did. The GMB predicted the banking collapse that was going to happen due to unsustainable debt levels and we told the House of Commons Select Committee in July 2007. We were not "Johnny Come Latelies" for this argument. Who warned the public about the excessive bonuses that the bank bosses were ripping out of their systems? Well, we have been warning about the greed based on nothing more than gambling with our money, for three-and-a-half years we have been warning about the immoral bonuses system. Did you see last week Barclays think that the crash never happened? Barclays at it again handing out

tens of millions to small upper elite. I say this to the politicians, when, when, is this abuse going to be stopped or taxed out of existence? To those masters of the universe who complain on their multimillion pound salaries about paying a little bit more, paying their fair share of tax, that have threatened to leave the country that has been lining their pockets for so long, my message is clear: slam the bloody door on your way out. *(Applause)* And who could have foreseen the exploitation of EU nationals and others by misuse and manoeuvring of the Posted Workers Directive such as caused conflict you have seen on your national TV at the Lindsey Oil Refinery and the South Hook Terminal in Wales? Who? Us. We said the Viking Lafell and Rupert judgments in the European Court will create social dumping, exploitation, and social discord.

MPs expenses, who foresaw it? Actually, we were complaining about the system and we have the press releases to prove it. On MPs expenses let me be clear, flipping houses, having second homes that are further away from Westminster than your constituency is just unacceptable. *(Applause)* Forgetting about your mortgage, spending thousands on furnishing your second home in a style you would not pay for yourself in your own home is an abuse. When we are talking about MPs expenses we can beat ourselves up a bit but let's not let the others get off the hook: Cameron with his multimillion pound bank balance claiming tens of thousands of pounds out of the pockets of the poor. His henchmen, right-hand henchmen, claiming hundreds of thousands of pounds out of the pockets of the poor and some of those bootlickers that hang on to the tails of Cameron, the coat and tails he likes to wear from his old student days no doubt, those Tory MPs who are rushing with their expense money round to Cameron's mother-in-law's shop in order to spend thousands of pounds there, obviously not seeking to ingratiate themselves with their leader in any way. The Liberal Democrats, those of you who have to come up against them politically at times know that they are always all things to all people and they have great difficulty making up their mind about anything. But when Ming Campbell has to pay thousands of pounds for someone to tell him what wallpaper to put up and what cushions to put on his settees, well, that really does take the biscuit, I tell you.

On expenses, Gordon, a simple message from the GMB and from ordinary people up and down the country: be tough. If you are not tough, I can assure you that the voters will be at the next election. *(Applause)* To those MPs with issues, do the decent thing. This Movement gave you much and now is the time for fresh working-class candidates that people can relate to. So help begin the process of rebuilding trust, not bankers but bakers and butchers, and bricklayers, and bus and tram drivers, and God preserve us from any more solicitors in the House of Commons. *(Applause)* We do not want solicitors; we want security workers and steelworkers, and supermarket workers, and school support staff, and no more consultants. How about a few carers? *(Applause)* Now is the time to select and elect 40 to 50 - great potential now exists - fresh, real people, real trade unionists, people who actually know how much a pint of milk costs and what it is like to get on a bus, MPs driven by commitment rather than being worried about being driven by a chauffeur. We want our MPs to be MPs full-time, not as an add-on: one person, one job. Tories screaming that having more outside interests helps them understand the world, we will get you a job in hotel and catering or in a supermarket, or in a cleaning

trade, and we will show you what the real world is all about. *(Applause)* You know, when you sweep it all away the real reason there are so many jobs on the side, so to speak, is just greed. It is gravy-licking. It is in the interests of their bank accounts. So, the GMB are clear, in future one person, one job, and if you do not like it, jack it. *(Applause)*

Finally, the final word on MPs salaries and then I want to move on to other things that are important to us, last night a delegate said to me, "Maybe we should stop talking about the expenses issue because of damage to the Party." Well, I am sorry, but you are wrong. Good, solid, committed Labour MPs have been tarred with the greed brush alongside those who have put themselves before the Party, their constituents, and the values upon which they first sought public office. In this life you are part of the solution or you are part of the problem. The idea that somehow those who speak out for restoring public confidence in our political system are rocking the boat, if you forgive the phrase, is just plain wrong. Never feel guilty about reflecting the concerns of our members. Never feel embarrassed about calling to account those who have transgressed, or supporting those who have been true and decent and whatever the rules may say have kept their feet on the ground, and upon whom, and there are many of them in the Labour Party, we should rebuild with confidence our political voice. *(Applause)*

In the real world in the last 12 months we have suffered the worst global crisis to hit us in modern times. Our members have not been immune from this economic winter. JCB, a world class workforce, world class brand and product: there were agonising choices for members at JCB between short-time working to spread the pain, or redundancies. Our convenor at JCB, Gordon Richardson, is here with us this week as a delegate and we will hear more from him tomorrow.

All across the Union members have been affected, jobs have gone; the scourge of unemployment which has been so successfully attacked during the previous 10 years has reared its ugly head again. Yet in the depth of this recession the GMB bucked all known trends. The regions grew, the Union has grown. GMB@Work reminded us what we always knew, if you address the issues, the Union will grow and prosper. The difference, as I see it, between the last 12 months and the recession years of the early 1980s and the 1990s is that we did not shrug our shoulders and say there's nothing we can do. More working people from construction to care homes turned to us in the GMB for help and support, and most of all they turned to us for a voice, a voice which reflected their worries. Marks & Spencer staff joined by the store load. M&S used to be proud of their treatment of their staff but they sacked a manager who had the temerity to speak out and let people know about their intention to cut the terms and conditions of Marks & Spencer staff as a precursor to redundancies. Those staff from Marks & Spencer who joined GMB learned the hard way that employer-owned and controlled staff associations, and we have all come up against them, have no teeth when the real issues of protection are on the table.

One of the campaigns that we are launching from Congress this week is about pubco's, and this will be of interest to one or two delegates. Have you ever wondered why some

pubs can sell beer cheaper than others, sometimes in the same street? It is about the pubco's. Years ago the breweries owned virtually all the pubs. The government of the time said that was a monopoly and they were forced to relinquish a large chunk, which was then kindly bought up by effectively a property company, pubco's, and created a whole new set of problems. The two biggest, Enterprise and Punch, are debt-laden and their tenants and licensees are forced to buy their beers through them, and even crisps sometimes, at inflated prices way above the market price which free houses and independent pub chains can do. The profits are not going into the landlords' pockets, many of whom just earn minimum wage levels, they go to pubco companies and their offshore tax havens, banking, and company arrangements. The House of Commons Select Committee, chaired by a Conservative I might say, recently found evidence of bullying of tenants and they have recommended an urgent referral to the Monopolies Commission.

In the meantime, GMB is linking up and launching a campaign with the Fair Pint campaign to protect and defend GMB members and abolish the tie and replace it with a proper economic business relationship. Here is the tough bit, delegates, I may have to call on some of you to help us do research and recruitment in pubs across the country. *(Laughter/Applause)* It is a difficult task! If I could prise some of you away from the museums and libraries that you were all in last night, it is a task to be undertaken with a recruitment form and a thirst.

We have continued our battles in the year, President, with the AA, Remploy, the Co-Op Funeral Care, and we will this year, and we will next year. The GMB never slinks away. The GMB never works on sound bites, we work on support and substance. President, 2008 saw our Union grow for the fourth year in a row, an incredible achievement. We did it not by sucking up to employers but by standing up for members. We face membership losses during this year which will be far more tragic for those losing their jobs than for our balance sheets.

Covered in the report to Congress is the work of our legal, pensions, research, and of our national organising team. I want just to pick out one member of that team who has been working the Asda national campaign. I am sorry if it looks like we are concentrating a bit on Asda but those delegates at Asda know that for many years I think we went the wrong way in our confrontation with them and in recent years we have made it clear we are coming for collective bargaining and we will keep going until we get it. I would like to pick out the work of Keith Williams, a member of the national organising team who has been absolutely unflinching in constantly coming up with new ideas and pushing the barriers and, trust me, if not everybody at Asda House knows my name, everybody at Asda House knows his name, and that is more important. *(Applause)*

Our political, equality, press, and campaign departments have all been outstanding. Also I have a special word for our health and safety department. We made an addition to that, Dan Shears, who joined us last year, and he has been a very, very powerful and valuable addition to the team. He has strengthened our commitment. He has strengthened our

health and safety. Dan, I appreciate all the work that you have done. Well done. We are very grateful to have you in the Union. *(Applause)*

A final word, President, about our officers and staff. They have made changes. They have made quite a lot of changes. They have embraced Congress policy and have worked very hard to deliver what you have asked of them, but much is still to do. We are not yet firing on more than 50% of our potential but our success in our growth, in our campaigning, and our fighting for members, is a team game. If the Union is about anything, if it is about anything, if it means anything, it is about changing our society, about social justice for a better life for our communities, our families, and our children. Thanks to you the GMB is active, well, and kicking with renewed vigour. You know, I am unashamed, and like you, President, I love this Union, and every time you think (or if you do not think) your boots are just leaving the ground for a second, trust me, the GMB members know exactly how to bring you down to earth.

Last night I saw a delegate I had not seen for many years, I must admit. I spoke to her, shook her hand, and she said she was delighted to see me. Then she said to me, “You know one thing, you don’t seem to be getting any older, Mr. Edmonds,” *(Laughter)* at which point I nicked her dinner. What I am saying to you is, some people know where to score points with me, I’ll tell you, but – there is a but – there is a real harsh reality coming down the road at us, a general election where there will be some stark choices, and a Tory government already lining up to attack and slash public service workers’ jobs and their pensions, and the services that they provide. That same Tory government, make no mistake about it, will also have in their sights the Union Learning Fund which has helped so many people in the world of work and back into education, and they will also be targeting benefit systems like the Working Family Tax Credits, which is actually needed, needed, by five million working families in this country. Don’t forget the state of our hospitals and our railways and our schools, and the break in the earnings link for pensions which the Tories created. Don’t forget, in anger and frustration at the way things have gone or the things that we have not been able to achieve in the last few years, don’t forget in anger how the Tories fractured our society. Don’t ever forget how the Tories attacked workers’ rights, and please don’t ever turn away in frustration because when we do that that is when we let in the extremists. If we turn our back on the fight ahead - the biggest fight that this Union is going to battle in, in the last 10 years, is going to come in that election - if we turn our back on that fight a whole new generation will pay the price that many of us had to live through during the 1980s and the 1990s. Those children we saw yesterday deserve better than that. So, let’s put aside our differences. Let’s not battle over them. We’ll have the arguments but let’s put aside our differences, Congress, and unite behind our common values. Mary, I move that report. *(Applause/Standing ovation)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul, very much. Could I ask Congress, are there any questions on page 5-7, 11-21, 29-51? Agree to accept the report? *(Agreed)*

The General Secretary’s Report (pages 5-7, 11-21, 29-51) was adopted.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. I say thanks to you and the staff for those lovely flowers and the card, really much appreciated. I will put it in my second home! Congress stands adjourned until 2 o'clock. Thank you, and can you take the membership forms to the pub on your way!

Congress adjourned for lunch.

AFTERNOON SESSION

Congress reassembled at 2.00 p.m.

THE PRESIDENT: I call Congress to order.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I will give you some pre-warning of the order of business. I want to welcome the dynamic duo of Dougie Henderson MP and Frank Doran MP. Is Dougie Henderson MP here? (*No response*) What about Frank Doran MP? Is he here? (*No response*) We will move on and come back to this item when they arrive.

I will take, first of all, the Commercial Services Section Report. Then I will move to Industrial & Economic Policy – Commercial Services, and to Composite 5, to be moved by North West & Irish Region, and then to Motion 79. We will then deal with Emergency Motion 2, which I warned you about, on National Grid Greed, to be moved by Northern Region. Then we will give the CEC stance on all of those items, which is to support. Then I will call Motions 80 and 81.

COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION REPORT (Pages 51 – 59)

COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION

Commercial Services Section National Committee

Kevin Flanagan	-	North West & Irish Region (Section President)
Brian Adams	-	Birmingham & West Midlands Region
David Clements	-	Southern Region
Kevin Crummey	-	Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region
Elaine Daley	-	Birmingham & West Midlands Region
Roy Dunnett	-	London Region
Gwyn Evans	-	South Western Region
Jean Foster	-	Southern Region
Peter Kane	-	Northern Region
Kath Manning	-	Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region
Catherine Murphy	-	GMB Scotland
Benjamin Rankin	-	GMB Scotland
Malcolm Sage	-	Midland & East Coast Region
Lena Sharp	-	London Region

Commercial Services Section National Officials

Gary Smith	-	National Secretary
Jude Brimble	-	National Officer
Mick Rix	-	National Officer

Introduction

Since last year's Congress we have continued to take great strides in developing the Commercial Services Section.

The Commercial Services Section Conference, held in Plymouth in June 2008, was very successful and the feedback from delegates was positive. The Section Committee have taken on board delegates' views and will use these as guidance for organising future Section Conferences. In attendance were 83 Delegates, 16 National Committee Members, 11 Regional Officers and a large number of visitors to the Conference. There were wide ranging debates about industrial issues across the Section and speakers included Alan Johnson - Head of the British Gas Services People Academy, who talked about the British Gas Apprentice Programme; Adrian Bull from Westinghouse talking about opportunities for the UK Supply Chain around Nuclear New Build and Joanna Lucyszyn - GMB Southern Region, a Polish GMB activist who spoke about the challenges confronting migrant workers. There were also presentations to the Conference on Blogging and Company Surveillance at Work by Tom Jones - Thompsons Solicitors and Kerri Harding - Section Administrator. Other speakers to the conference included Kamaljeet Jandu - GMB National Equality & Inclusion Officer; Dan Shears - Research & Policy Officer, Health and Safety Department; and Keith Williams - National Organising Department.

Conference also enjoyed the thought-provoking music and dramatic presentation by the Banner Theatre Group.

The Officers and Staff in the Commercial Services Section have been working to a plan agreed by the Section National Committee. The focus remains on growing the Section, building Shop Steward Organisation and campaigning on issues important to our members.

Security Industry

The security industry still remains a high priority for GMB. There is massive potential for membership growth. In the Guarding side of Security a lot of progress has been made in developing Shop Steward structures and industrial relations machinery. This is particularly true in G4S Security.

G4S Security Services

G4S Security Services is enormously complex and diverse, the largest sector of G4S, currently employing some 18,000 security officers across eight divisions, made up of thousands of contracts. The workforce are spread across 5,800 sites. There are real challenges in terms of organising and representing such a disparate group of workers. In the Section we have consistently focused on the representative structures for members. We have learnt from past errors where we have grown the membership but failed to adequately develop the Shop Stewards structures. At the time of writing 13 collective bargaining committees have been established within this division of G4S, with a further four under discussion, which will ensure that GMB members have full collective bargaining rights in every sector of Security Services. The long fought for National Health and Safety Committee is also now actively up and running. The network of shop stewards continues to grow, and we are now represented in every division of Security Services within G4S. The NOT team are also supporting the organising agenda with a GMB@Work course planned for March, aimed at 30 senior reps. This is critical work if we are to secure sustainable growth and develop an organising culture on the ground. The development of the negotiating machinery and the dedication of shop stewards means that progress is now finally being made in delivering improvements on pay and conditions (in line with Commercial Services Section National Conference Motions CS12 and CS16).

In the Aviation Division a new national sick pay scheme has been secured. Work is set to start in March on negotiating the introduction of a sick pay scheme for the wider Security Services Division.

Pay negotiations have taken place covering various Strategic Accounts, Regional Accounts, Monitoring and Response. In some cases this is the first time that "real" negotiations have taken place. Pay deals in the main have been based on two year deals, and have ranged from 2% to 3% for 2009 and 2% to 2.75% for 2010. All pay negotiations have also focused on underpinning to address low pay.

At the time of writing, facilities had been secured for shop stewards to conduct work place ballots at over 600 sites, giving direct access to recruit new members over a three week period. Shop stewards will also be undertaking a detailed mapping exercise. A lot of work is also being done to ensure our membership information is as accurate as possible.

Within the industry we continue to see consolidation. In 2008 G4S acquired GSL, where we also have recognition. This is important as GSL now make up 80% of the G4S Division, dealing with Criminal Justice and Immigration. GMB is now the lead union in a division we have traditionally not been recognised in.

G4S Aviation

G4S Aviation Services have been hit hard as a result of the contraction of the aviation industry and economic downturn. As a consequence we have seen a several significant contracts being lost and the workforce involved in resultant TUPE transfers. A number of airports have also been hit by redundancies as clients reduce their security requirements. November 2008 saw significant financial losses in this division of G4S and as a result the business has now been transferred into Security Services. We are currently working hard to safeguard recent advances in terms and conditions within the new structure. Job security remains a high priority.

GSL / G4S

Pay negotiations within GSL private prisons resulted in a three year deal consisting of 5% in 2009, 4% in 2010 and 3% in 2011. In GSL court Services 4.3% was achieved on a one year deal. At the time of writing, negotiations for GSL Inter-Prison Transport were about to begin. G4S Care and Justice Division are clearly seeking to expand their footprint in the criminal justice sector as well as immigration detention.

In line with Congress policy, we have also been campaigning on the issue of Section 127 of the Criminal Justice Act. An amendment to the Labour Party policy document on Crime and Justice was submitted prior to the 2008 National Policy Forum (Warwick 2). Our submission called for the repeal of Section 127. As a result of our position there has now been a series of meetings with the Justice Secretary and Special Advisors. This dialogue is ongoing.

We have also had meetings with the POA in relation to a complaint to the International Labour Organisation on Section 127. The complaint argues that the legislation effectively denies our members the right to take industrial action without there being adequate compensatory mechanism in place to protect workers interests.

Aside from the work on Section 127, we have now given an increased focus on strengthening our organisation across the Criminal Justice Sector. The Government has well developed plans to build three large Prisons. Discussions have taken place with the Industry and Government to ensure that there is proper independent Trade Union recognition within any new privately run prisons (in line with Commercial Services Section National Conference Motion CS13). We have made very forcible representations about employers constructing sweetheart arrangements with Unions which are actually "company supported". The Union is also in early discussions with the Home Office, seeking to establish a national tripartite body to cover private prisons which if achieved will place GMB at the heart of this growing sector.

Securitas

In Securitas we have had difficult negotiations over the Company seeking to recoup the cost of license fees from Security Officers. The Union has vigorously resisted the Company trying to get their employees to pay for licences. If we had let them get away with it this would have set a dangerous precedent for whole industry. At the time of writing we are optimistic there will be a successful outcome to these negotiations. Agreement in principal has been achieved to get the national and local negotiating machinery in place by early summer. This will enable us to focus on the industrial and organising agenda in a company where there is still a potential for 3,500 members.

Licensing and SIA

The issue of security industry licensing has continued to present a challenge. On 6th November 2008, the Chief Executive of the Security Industry Authority (SIA) stood down. An interim Chief Executive is currently in place. A major security company (Securiplan) was found guilty on 7th November of employing unlicensed guards, including criminals, and has lost £36 million pounds worth of contracts as a result.

The shortcomings of the SIA and the significant problems with the licensing system were referred to in the Securiplan court case. GMB has met with representatives of the SIA and will renew our efforts in the light of this further evidence of the organisation's failures. It is clear that political pressure will continue to be placed on the Government to address the problems associated with the SIA, and GMB will ensure that our members voice is heard (in line with Commercial Services Section National Conference Motions CSEM1, CS13, CS14 and CS15).

Skills For Security

We have been heavily involved in Skills for Security and the development of qualifications for security workers. This work has focused on increasing the skills of our membership in the security sector. Very importantly, it seems that in the future there may be an increased link between training and licensing. GMB have strongly argued to ensure that whilst training opportunities exist, they must not become a barrier to achieving licenses, so putting jobs at risk.

Cash and Valuables in Transit

GMB continues to lead this high profile campaign about attacks on members in the CVIT Sector (in line with Commercial Services Section National Conference Motions CS9 and CS10). The overall level of attacks remains too high but, as a direct result of our campaign and the political pressure brought to bear on police forces, in some of the high attack areas we have seen a improvement in the levels of attacks. Our fear is that attacks will rise again in a period of economic down turn. Since the last Congress we have had activists go to Brussels to do a presentation to a European Commission event on Violence at Work. We continue to participate in the Home Office round tables meetings, which are chaired by the Minister, as part of the strategy to deal with attacks.

GMB has been making representations on parking restrictions for CVIT vehicles. As a result of our work the Home Office Minister and the Transport Minister have written to every local authority reminding them of their obligations relating to parking for CVIT Vehicles. We have backed the ministerial advice up with letters for council chief executives and leaders (in line with Commercial Services Section National Conference Motions CS9 and CS10).

A further successful CVIT Conference was held on 27th and 28th January 2009. This was attended by 70 delegates, senior police officers, industrial speakers and the new Under Secretary of State from the Home Office, Allan Campbell, MP.

Very significantly, since the last Congress, the first compensation/welfare scheme for members injured in CVIT attacks was launched in G4S. This is a joint GMB /G4S initiative. The original plans for funding the scheme were devised by Senior Shop Stewards within G4S. By the time we meet at Congress we should

have over £1m in the jointly managed fund. Injured members have already benefited from payments. We hope that we will be able to roll this model out across the industry.

i. G4S Cash Services

We have secured a new recognition agreement in Cash Centres; the agreement covers around 900 employees. All Cash Centre staff will benefit for the first time from being part of the negotiations which cover road crews. These negotiations are about to commence. At the time of preparing this report we are in the midst of negotiations for Admin and Clerical Staff in G4S Cash Services.

ii. Loomis

Loomis remains the second largest CVIT Company in the UK. The business environment for Loomis remains very challenging. As a result, there have been job losses and the Company has contracted. We had a very problematic TUPE transfer of Brinks employees following the Loomis acquisition of Brinks. We successfully pursued the arguments on behalf of our members and in the circumstances a positive outcome was achieved.

Complex negotiations have also now been concluded harmonising terms and conditions. This involved getting former Brinks workers onto the higher rates in Loomis.

Loomis employees are still covered by a multi-year pay deal. Given the consolidation in the banks and the effect that the economic downturn is having on the retail sector, this is likely to be a very difficult year for our Loomis members.

iii. Security Plus

Security Plus remains a small family business, employing some six hundred people, whilst growing its business in Scotland and South West. The current economic impact on the retail industry has taken its toll as this is the main focus of their cash in transit work. At the time of writing the Company has implemented a pay freeze across the entire business as a way of avoiding potential job losses. The situation will be reviewed in April. Difficult discussions are currently ongoing to secure access to the workforce to ensure we grow the membership base.

Aviation

In line with commitments to the Section National Committee we organised an Aviation Sector Conference for Stewards and Officers. This attracted the Aviation Minister and the Minister responsible for ID Cards. This brought together Shop Stewards from across the industry to discuss strategic issues.

The Aviation Industry continues to face challenges over environmental issues, consolidation in the industry and also in relation to the economic downturn. Trading conditions in ground handling remain extremely difficult and we are still engaged in a race to the bottom with contractors aggressively competing on price. With increasing regularity, contracts are being lost by companies with Union recognition agreements to those that are hostile to trade union organisation. This ultimately impacts on pay and conditions for our members. A number of the companies in the Sector have already gone bust and many of our members have been affected by redundancies. At the time of preparing this report we anticipate a number of further announcements about job losses in the industry.

Our campaigns to secure a future for the aviation industry and therefore our members' jobs always need to be sense-checked against our responsibilities on the environment. The Union has supported Future Heathrow in the campaign to ensure that there is a modernisation programme and a third runway at Heathrow airport. However, we have also helped to successfully move the debate over the third runway on,

by arguing that it needs to be part of an integrated transport plan including improvements to the rail network servicing the airport and indeed the wider country. GMB supported Government-planned restrictions on noise and clean air protection.

GMB led a high-profile campaign on Aviation Fuel Duty. We organised a successful fringe meeting at the TUC Conference in 2008. This meeting was attended by Ministers for transport and the environment. We have vigorously lobbied GMB MPs and Government over Aviation Fuel Duty. Our work was incredibly successful. Our concern on Aviation Fuel Duty was that it could cripple unionised UK-based long haul carriers whilst actually favouring short haul anti-union operations such as Ryanair. We were also concerned that the initial plans would simply have led to tax avoidance with freight being landed in countries such as France and then being transported to the UK by road. One of our primary considerations in the debate on the Air Passenger Duty was the fact that this could have had a detrimental impact on the construction of the new Airbus aircraft which is the most fuel efficient and noise-friendly available. The Government has, in essence, now effectively adopted the GMB's policy on Aviation Fuel Duty. There is no doubt that our campaign and lobbying has served to protect our members' jobs in aviation. All our work and political campaigning around aviation has hugely heightened the profile of GMB across the sector.

The Union has successfully negotiated a new recognition agreement with Servisair. This new agreement builds on our previous relationship and covers two thousand Servisair employees. We are currently mapping out the Servisair locations to assist our recruitment and organisation work. One of our priorities is to strengthen the Shop Stewards' structure.

In Aviance the Union has been involved in developing new agreements over policies and procedures. The Shop Steward network and membership continues to grow not least because of the high profile campaigning activity around Heathrow.

Within BMI we are involved in difficult negotiations as the Company is reneging on commitments to honour the last year of the three year pay deal. With reductions in the BMI routes there are also redundancies taking place. At the time of writing British Airways has also announced major redundancies as part of a cost-cutting exercise. Our Senior Shop Stewards and officers are involved in tough negotiations to try and minimise the impact of the British Airways restructuring programme.

Freight and Logistics

In line with commitments to the Section National Committee we organised a well attended Logistics, Distribution and Road Transport Shop Stewards Forum. This brought together shop stewards from across the industry to discuss strategic issues. The logistics sector is being hard hit by the recession. Our agreements on security of employment with DHL and Wincanton should provide some protection for our members in these companies during the recession.

DHL

A major mapping exercise of the business is underway. GMB@Work training was undertaken for Senior Shop Stewards. This has not yet fed through into the membership levels. However, with the appointment of many new shop stewards at site level who will also undertake the GMB@Work Training we are confident that progress on membership levels will be made.

Roadchef

The Union has launched a major campaign around Roadchef following the Company's signal that they intended to derecognise us.

Our Campaign has received national publicity. Our organising activity is focusing on sites where we have established shop stewards and a membership base. We have a number of national grievances registered against the Company. Southern Region have legal action in train regarding a TUPE transfer of one of the sites, which was sold to another company.

Private Hire, Chauffeurs and Hackney Carriage Campaign

The National Organising Committee of the Professional Drivers Branches has met on a number of occasions through 2008 and 2009. This is an activist led initiative. At least six Regions are involved in activity and recruitment reports have been received in St Albans, Stevenage, Chichester, Winchester, Burnley, Leeds, Southend-on-Sea, Bracknell, Brighton and Crawley

The General Secretary led an event at the House of Commons on the issue of Driver Safety, amongst the MPs attending was the Minister, Rosie Winterton MP. The Union has been involved in a successful strike in St Albans which included Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers. GMB is pursuing action against St Albans City Council via the Local Government Ombudsman. The activists are leading the campaign for CCTV in Private Hire in London. A sick pay scheme has been introduced for professional drivers in the London area. There will be an opportunity to roll this out in due course. The National Officer has made representations to the Transport Minister in relation to the excessive charges now being made on Hackney and Private Hire vehicles on access to ranks at airports and train stations etc. (in line with Commercial Services Section National Conference Motion CS17).

ASDA

i. ASDA Distribution

Since last Congress we have continued to grow the membership in Distribution and to strengthen the shop steward structure. A new recognition agreement was secured at the Teesport site and great credit goes to the activists and officers in the Region for the work that they carried out. At the time of writing we have two more recognition ballots planned. The National Organising Department are supporting us in developing the membership in ASDA Distribution (in line with Commercial Services Section National Conference Motions CS1 and CS2).

In the summer of 2008 Shop Stewards in ASDA Distribution undertook GMB@Work Training. The GMB@Work course had immediate and demonstrable benefits with increases in membership. The activists have recently agreed a new structure for the National Shop Stewards Forum and National Joint Council. Securing these new agreements with the Company represents a significant step forward and it should greatly strengthen our negotiating position at a national level in ASDA Distribution. This should also improve our ability to ensure that individual members are treated with dignity and respect at work (in line with Commercial Services Section National Conference Motion CS5). One particular area where we have challenged the Company is in relation to sickness absence procedures related to Weekly Accident Reviews, or what is known on sites as WAR Committees (in line with Commercial Services Section National Conference Motion CS4). Pay and conditions continue to be negotiated at a local level. The next challenge for us as a trade union is to achieve national collective bargaining across all Distribution sites.

There remains huge pressure on our members in ASDA Distribution over productivity. The retail industry is very competitive and there are always aggressive plans to cut costs. We are currently in discussions with the Company about introducing a scheme which would reward employees where there are improvements in productivity.

The new NJC structure, improved working across the National Shop Stewards and the GMB@Work training leave us better placed than we were in the past to challenge the Company's agenda where it has had a negative effect on our members.

ii. ASDA Stores

The membership in ASDA Stores continues to grow. This continuing trend is thanks to the ongoing hard work of our activists and officers. ASDA stores has been a particular challenging environment for us as a union over the past few years. In 2008 we combined the ASDA Stores Conference with GMB@Work training. Again this led to a marked improvement in recruitment activity. Our organisational work is well supported by the National Organising Department.

At the time of writing the North West Region is awaiting the outcome of litigation against ASDA over the imposition of Top Rate. The Employment Tribunal case taken by the North West Region has exposed some cynical behaviour on the part of the ASDA Stores Management both in relation to the Trade Union and their imposition of Top Rate. We are at present pursuing arguments with the Company on behalf of Stores members in relation to Equal Value. At the time of compiling this report we believe that there is an argument to compare the relative value of the jobs undertaken in Stores by our members and those undertaken in Distribution.

We have launched a major campaign of trade union rights in stores. The principles of the Campaign are outlined in our Charter for ASDA Stores Workers.

The Union is committed to securing collective bargaining rights and ending discrimination against women workers in ASDA Stores (in line with Commercial Services Section National Conference Motions CS1 and CS2). Health and Safety continues to be a main campaign theme in Distribution and particularly in Stores. For the first time in many years we managed to secure some consultation on the new Colleague Handbook. As part of this consultation we have made strong representations on issues such as health and safety and dignity at work (in line with Commercial Services Section National Conference Motion CS3, CS4 and CS5).

Energy

Energy continues to dominate the headlines. Our members, their families and the industries in which our membership work have been hit hard by soaring energy costs. GMB has continued to press the case that the liberalisation of energy markets has been an absolute failure. Gas has been a key area of focus for our campaigns. We have highlighted market failure in gas, including the impact that speculation in the City has had on driving up prices.

Wider opinion is catching up with our position on energy. It is undeniable that the market approach has left us unprepared for the inevitable decline in North Sea gas reserves. It is now an established fact that the UK has inadequate gas storage and hence we are left in the absurd position whereby the country exports gas to continental Europe in the summer and has to import gas in the winter.

The Union held a very successful fringe meeting at Labour Party Conference on the issue of speculation and energy prices. We have continued to press the case for a balanced energy policy including renewables, nuclear and clean coal (in line with Commercial Services Section National Conference Motions CS6 and CS7). The development of bio or "green gas" is one area over which we have lobbied Government.

Since the last Congress there has been significant changes in UK based energy companies. EDF have purchased British Energy. This clears the way for nuclear new build. In addition to supporting our members in both companies the Commercial Services and Manufacturing Sections have been pressing companies

and Government to ensure there are clear commitments to the UK supply chain and jobs when investment in our energy infrastructure takes place.

Given developments in nuclear and the powerful position of French companies in the industry we have been building our relations with the French unions, in particular CGT. We have held several meetings with the CGT. These have been lay activist led meetings and focused on areas of mutual concern such as safety and use of contractor labour.

The contract to run the Sellafield site was won by Nuclear Management Partners Limited. There is likely to be significant changes on site. We continue to lobby hard to ensure that Sellafield, which dominates the local economy, has a viable future. The Union has championed plans to put Sellafield at the centre of the planned nuclear renaissance.

Another area of work in which we have been involved is the future of URENCO, a company which enriches Uranium based on Merseyside. The Government part owns URENCO. Again we want to ensure the business has a secure future which protects our members interests.

OFGEM

In 2007 we successfully campaigned against OFGEM interfering in our members pensions in the Gas Distribution industry. In 2008 as part of the Electricity Distribution Price Review OFGEM again returned to the theme of pension provision for our members in the regulated gas and electricity sectors. It was clear that OFGEMs proposals presented a major threat to our members pensions.

GMB has led the campaign to roll back the OFGEM offensive on pensions. Emergency motions were moved by GMB at Labour Party and TUC conferences on the issue of OFGEM interfering in our members pensions and their failure to deal with rocketing energy prices. GMB members of Parliament have been continuously briefed on our concerns and Ministers have been met on the issue. In October 08 GMB was the only union asked by OFGEM to present our concerns to a seminar on the issue of pensions involving all the stakeholders across the regulated energy sectors.

Early in 2009 over 100 GMB activists and stewards from across gas and the electricity industry took part in a lobby of Parliament over the issue of pensions and OFGEM. Speakers included Gary Smith; Lord Larry Whitty; Frank Doran MP; Celia Barlow MP; Colin Burgon MP; Jim McGovern MP; Angela Smith MP and Ellis Broderick, Pension Trustee from Wales and West Utilities.

Our shop stewards deserve great credit for the support they have given to the campaign to defend pensions in the energy sector.

As a result of our efforts, at the time of writing this report it is clear that going through the consultation Ofgem are moving their position and seeking to avoid further conflict with the Union.

The Union has been raising concerns about the performance and failings of OFGEM for a number of years. It is clear that again political opinion is now catching up with GMB. There has been a spate of Early Day Motions tabled in the House of Commons which were very critical of OFGEM, including two which were initiated by GMB. Ministers in the new Department of Energy and Climate Change have apparently been taking a much firmer line with the Regulator by seeking greater focus on energy costs to end users, as demanded by GMB.

National Grid

i. National Grid Industrials

The final year of the GO21 delivered an increase of 4.4% with flow through to uplifts and protected pensionable pay. Negotiations on pay talks are about to start. The GO21 agreement continue to present serious challenges particularly around policing terms in the agreement. The Union is concerned that the Company has cut back too far on resources at a time when work loads have not declined in the way anticipated. At the time of writing this report there is a serious threat to meter work. Ofgem is interfering in metering contracts and some energy companies are carrying out meter work with in-house provision. If National Grid was to lose the metering working in the regulated sector it would have implications for about 500 jobs. The Union is pushing hard on this issue. National Grid Shop Stewards along with others in the gas distribution industry, have been engaged in ongoing discussions with the HSE about safety generally and Carbon Monoxide in particular (in line with Commercial Services Section National Conference Motion CS11).

ii. National Grid Staff

Last year our staff membership settled on a 4.7% increase and negotiations for 2009 are under way. GMB has led a campaign to secure the future of the Newcastle National Grid Site, where over 180 jobs are at risk through Company plans to outsource and offshore the work carried out in Newcastle. The GMB campaign has given us a real opportunity to secure a viable future for the Newcastle operation.

British Gas

i. British Gas Industrials

British Gas Industrial members accepted a 2 year deal for 2008/2009. The first year was an increase of 4.6% to pensionable pay with flow through. The second year guarantees a minimum of 4%. In addition there were significant improvements to allowances and most importantly the move to £30 an hour for overtime worked in the winter months. As of 1st April 2009, we achieved a key goal of breaking the £30K basic for engineers (£35 in Inner London). The deal was accepted by a 91% majority on a 93% turnout. This huge turnout in the ballot was great credit to our shop stewards.

ii. British Gas Staff

Pay formula for 2009/2010 has delivered an increase of 4% for Level 7 and Level 8 staff. We are concerned that the Company are seeking to take some of the Level 7 population out of collective bargaining. Unfortunately another Trade Union has already agreed to this in a different part of the British Gas business. However, we will vigorously campaign to ensure that all Level 7 and Level 8 staff are covered by collective bargaining. We have led numerous campaigns amongst British Gas Staff over the past year, in particular over pensions as the Company effectively imposed changes to Staff Pensions, at the time of writing we are the only union making a complaint to the Regulator about the way that British Gas conducted themselves.

iii. Apprentices

British Gas had announced plans to take on one thousand apprentices. Due to the economic circumstances this has been delayed. GMB is keen to work with the Company to talk to Government about opportunities to safeguard the apprentice programme going forward.

(Adopted)

BRO. G. SMITH (National Secretary, Commercial Services Section): I formally move my Report.

THE PRESIDENT: I will go through the pages of the Report. Page 51? 52? 53? 54? 55? 56? 57? 58? 59? *(No response)* Does Congress agree to accept the Report? *(Agreed)*

The Commercial Services Section Report was adopted.

THE ROLE OF ENERGY REGULATORS COMPOSITE MOTION 5

C5. COVERING MOTIONS

- 77. REGULATORS IN THE SERVICE INDUSTRIES AND ENERGY SECTOR (North West & Irish Region)
- 78. UTILITIES COMPANIES (North West & Irish Region)

THE ROLE OF ENERGY REGULATORS

Congress calls on the Government to review the role of the regulators in the service industries and energy sector: their influence in the negotiations and agreements within the industries and are they working in the public interest?

This Congress calls for legislation to be put in place, preventing the energy regulators such as OFGAS from interfering in the terms and conditions of employees of the utilities companies.

(Carried)

BRO. C. ASHCROFT (North West & Irish): Congress, I move Composite 5. We are calling on the Government to review the role of the regulators in the service industries and energy sector. Firstly, for example, OFGEM, the regulator, sticking its nose in where it is not wanted on the premise that it is looking after the consumers' best interests. I think not. They are more concerned with operating profit and shareholder dividends. In stating that they are concerned with safety but reducing the amount each network receives to carry out essential work is, surely, compromising the consumers' and their employees' safety.

OFGEM's continued support and approval of operating structures within networks is simply a licence to cut corners which impacts upon the workforce and seriously jeopardizes public safety with the potential of job cuts for gas engineers. The Government should be more concerned that we receive the essential services we deserve in a safe and organized manner. This will safeguard the public and also our jobs.

How much do these organizations actually cost? They take approximately 20% of each supplier's bill to enable them to regulate us. Truly, this money would be better used on

the total infrastructure and giving the service the public deserve at a realistic price. Why doesn't this regulator regulate the suppliers' exorbitant price increases, making them vast profits while leaving us with the real fear of fuel poverty? The answer is very simple: profit for the companies and a massive tax gain for the Government who seem to have forgotten about the families who struggle with the mounting pressure to achieve a fair standard of living now and for the future. We must not forget the low paid, the unemployed and the pensioners.

Sadly, the Regulator was brought in to assist and stop a monopoly by making affordable energy. Needless to say, all they have achieved is the opposite. We have seen increasing fuel bills and bigger profits for companies. Secondly, Congress, the Regulator is, once again, trying to influence our negotiations and agreements in relation to our pensions provisions. Pensions are, clearly, a critical issue for our members, and any attack upon them by the Regulator will need to be dealt with robustly and we, as a Union, will not tolerate such interference from an outside busy-body agency which is only interested in profits and dividends.

The Government has a moral as well as a managerial duty to ensure that the money allocated or collected by the Regulator provides value for their consumers. Please support our motion for the Government to review the regulators. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder.

BRO. J. POWER (North West & Irish): I second Composite 5. Conference, the Regulators, such as OFGAS AND OFGEM, are useful and serve a purpose when acting in a manner that they were intended to act, which is ensuring fair pricing for customers, regulating excessive profits and ensuring that a good service is delivered. It is not their remit to interfere in the terms and conditions of the employees of the companies that they regulate. For too long this Government has pandered to big business and some of the regulating bodies increasingly seem to favour the employer rather than ensure fairness. This has to stop. The remit of the regulator is clear and legislation should be put in place to ensure that companies such as OFGAS do not exceed their remit. Workers' terms and conditions should be the sole remit of the employer, the workers and their unions, and they should remain free from outside interference.

OFGEM PROPOSALS TO REGULATE THE PENSION RIGHTS IN THE UTILITY INDUSTRIES MOTION 79

79. OFGEM PROPOSALS TO REGULATE THE PENSION RIGHTS IN THE UTILITY INDUSTRIES

This Congress deplores the current proposal of Ofgem regulatory body to undermine the Pension rights of our membership employed in the Utility Industries in the mistaken belief that it will lower the costs for the consumer.

If necessary the membership to be balloted, to take the strongest action to protect our members pension rights.

CAMBORNE C21 BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. C. LAWRENCE (Southern): I move Motion 79. The GMB had a number of victories in 2008, of which the Union and its members can be rightly proud. The fight against OFGEM, the energy regulator's proposals to undermine that the defined benefit pension schemes remain in the electricity and gas sectors, was a major success for the GMB. While doing almost nothing to address the very real failings of the energy sector to meet consumer needs, OFGEM had, essentially, proposed to take over the board of trustees for a number of company schemes in the sector. Apparently, they were ignorant of the perfectly capable Pensions Regulator and scheme trustees who currently run these schemes. The result would have been a riskier approach to the management of the scheme's funds posing a greater risk to the scheme's members and the Pension Protection Fund of insolvency.

GMB's involvement in consultation, media and political coverage and a lobby of Parliament combined to force OFGEM to climb down at least for the moment. We have to be on our guard. Thank you, colleagues. I hope you support my motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder?

(Motion 79 was formally moved)

EMERGENCY MOTION 2

NATIONAL GRID GREED

Congress notes with dismay the announcement made at a meeting with GMB shop stewards on Friday 5th June 2009 of impending redundancies at National Grid's Newcastle site. Congress further notes that National Grid's plans to close this site would destroy 181 local jobs in its shared services function in Newcastle, and that the company have consistently failed to rule out offshoring work currently carried out in Newcastle to low wage economies such as India.

Congress believes this site closure is nothing but an act of irresponsible corporate greed, made possible by OFGEM's failed and discredited regulatory regime. Congress notes that National Grid recently announced massive global profits of £2,915 million in the year ending 31st March 2009, a 12% increase on the previous year. Notwithstanding these huge profits, staff and unions at Newcastle have been working with the company to identify further cost savings of £3 million. Yet despite this, the company plans to sack these workers and offshore their jobs.

Congress condemn's National Grid's actions in the strongest possible terms. It pledges full support to the workers in the fight to save their jobs, and calls upon the company to abandon this unnecessary and unjustified closure.

Congress calls for the CEC to instigate a national campaign of opposition to National Grid, by mounting local opposition to any planning applications submitted by the company throughout the UK.

Congress also recognizes that National Grid is set to benefit financially from the huge investment required in the UK's energy infrastructure, and therefore calls upon Government Ministers to intervene and support GMB members who are the victims of the company's corporate greed by:

- * Exerting the maximum possible pressure on National Grid to exercise some loyalty and commitment towards the Newcastle workforce that has helped it to become a successful and highly profitable business.
- * Changing the rules by which OFGEM operates to ensure that in considering future funding rounds, socio-economic considerations are taken into account, such as the need to ensure companies retained skilled UK jobs.

(Carried)

BRO. D. LEYLAND (Northern): I move this emergency motion on the National Grid Greed. Congress, we have had to bring this emergency motion to you today not because of any major crisis in the company but because of corporate greed. A few days ago the National Grid announced the closure of its Newcastle site with the loss of 181 jobs. Up to the end of March this year, the National Grid made a global profit of £2,915 million. These are huge profits for an organization, up by 12% on the previous year. But this was not enough for National Grid. At the time of the closure announcement, staff and unions were working with the company to find another £3 million of cost savings. Newcastle is already suffering job losses in all sectors of the economy. We can do without any more. We are calling on the company to rescind their decision and not close the Newcastle site. We fear that the jobs which are proposed to be lost will go to low wage economies, such as India. This is in danger of sounding like a record. We have been here before, Congress, with call centre jobs, clothing and textile jobs and shipbuilding jobs. Let us not let this happen again.

We need to put pressure on the Government, and particularly the Energy Minister, to bring common sense to prevail on the National Grid.

The Government is currently investigating investing huge amounts of money to update and upgrade our energy infrastructure. The National Grid is set to benefit from this. Congress, I am sure that if the unions, the workforce and the Government all work to stop this happening, we can succeed. We need the National Grid to reverse its decision to

keep open the Newcastle site. We also need the rules that OFGEM operates by to be changed to protect the skilled UK jobs.

Congress, thank you for letting us bring this emergency motion. Please support the workers at Newcastle National Grid. Please support this emergency motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Do we have a seconder?

(The emergency motion was formally seconded)

I call Motion 80, Campaign to Reform OFGEM. Then I will be calling Motions 81, 82, 83, 84, 86 and 87.

CAMPAIGN TO REFORM OFGEM MOTION 80

80. CAMPAIGN TO REFORM OFGEM

Congress recognises that OFGEM is a flawed regulator and would ideally like to see it replaced with a properly accountable enforcement authority. Until this happens there is a need to change the manner in which it operates. Energy utility companies should not be able to retrospectively increase customer's bills without giving a minimum notice period of one month, in advance of changes to its charges. No other service provider is allowed to increase the cost of its service without informing customers and Congress calls for the CEC to campaign for this change.

CAMBRIDGE 2 BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. K. ROBERTS (London): I move Motion 80. This motion is a very simple motion. We need to campaign for the reform of OFGEM. We know it is flawed and we should replace it with a proper accountable enforcement authority. Why is an energy/utility company allowed to increase bills without informing people first. No other service provider would be allowed to do this. We need to campaign for this situation to change. We wouldn't stand for it if we went into a restaurant and halfway through a meal they came over and said "Your bill's being doubled". I don't think we would be paying it. I think we would be complaining and we should be complaining because these people should not be allowed to change the price halfway through without informing people. It causes hardship and it should not be allowed.

Congress calls for the CEC to campaign to change this situation. Please support this motion. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder?

BRO. R. SLADE (London): I second Motion 80. Governments have been giving utility companies a licence to print money for far too long. It is clear and transparent that

OFGEM is a body that has limited or little or no powers to force these major companies to reduce the bills paid by its customers when production costs fall. Yet the industry increases bills very rapidly for the consumer as soon as prices rise a little bit. The cost of energy should not be allowed to fluctuate to such an extent that some have to make the choice to either eat or heat. Every Christmas this happens when we have a spot of bad weather. Usually, it is those who are weak and vulnerable who are on the highest tariffs with no alternative but to pay on demand or go without. How can it be right that the cost of energy can rise to the customer after it has been used? I have never been asked by anyone to pay more for something I have already bought after I have bought it. This happens because OFGEM is a weak and ineffective regulating body. We require a stronger regulator to protect the consumer from being repeated milked for more and squeezed for more.

It was reported today on television that £460 million extra was paid by those on pre-payment meters, which is 17% more on comparable bills by another format. I support this motion. *(Applause)*

ENERGY COMPANIES PROFITS MOTION 81

81. ENERGY COMPANIES PROFITS

Congress calls upon the Government to curb the huge and grotesque profits made by energy companies and cap future price rises.

MANSFIELD CENTRAL BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Carried)

SIS. S. FARMER (Midland & East Coast): I move Motion 81, Energy Companies Profits. President and Congress, Congress demands an official inquiry into the big energy companies' profiteering based on the fact that these organizations are hiking even higher costs on us all and continually making increasing gigantic profits. They are plunging low earners into a difficult choice of whether to eat or heat. It is sickening and obscene that whilst these companies are making these huge profits, there are expected to be more than 25,000 winter deaths as a result of customers not being able to keep warm. The Government has put in the Winter Fuel Allowance, but many single parents and others do not get this payment.

The Competition Commission should also investigate the £24 billion domestic power business. It does not take a nuclear physicist to work out what the 'Big 6' have been up to. One day they have been jacking up prices and then the next announcing huge profits with supposed investment. It is a conservative estimate that over 2.5 million people are currently suffering from fuel poverty, who are spending more than 10% of their income on heating their homes, and are being faced with the conundrum of whether to put fuel on the table or get respite from the chill. Campaigning on this issue is easy. There is no opposition from the public. The only complaints are the capitalist cartels and the

shareholders wallowing in their piles of money made at the expense of vulnerable people in our communities. The message is simple: give us a fair deal. I move.

SIS. D. MILLS (Midland & East Coast): President and Congress, I am seconding Motion 81. The Government has had to get involved recently with other large and badly run companies, namely, banks. Well, for the protection of the electorate they should now take the helm of this country's energy supply and implement a fair and sustainable future for the market and consumers alike. They must stop pussy-footing around with pathetic claims like principles and practicalities, or impose a retrospective tax and just take them on.

The huge and unexpected profits should be taken and used to ensure that this winter no one dies of cold to fund someone else's luxury and greed. If ever a vote winning opportunity was available, here it is. Please support. *(Applause)*

GOVERNMENT REGULATION OF UTILITY COMPANIES PROFITS MOTION 82

82. GOVERNMENT REGULATION OF UTILITY COMPANIES PROFITS

Congress we call upon you to lobby government to monitor and act on the vast profits made by all utility companies. Instead of the ridiculously high bills we now pay, which mainly go towards shareholders bonus' profits to share holders, should be limited enabling the price of fuel and water being reduced.

BRAINTREE AND BOCKING BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. RIGBY (London): I move Motion 82. Utility bills! My branch calls upon this Union to lobby the Government to make changes on how private utility companies can award themselves fat-cat bonuses from our utility bills: water, fuel, gas, electricity and phone companies. None of us can do without most of these companies, but the money that we pay in bills to these companies is a ridiculous amount, considering that most were once public utility companies. Regarding the council tax that we pay to our local authorities, the Government tell the authorities that they will be capped if they exceed a set amount. Then the same should apply to these companies, or local authorities have the same privileges. It is scandalous that we pay more than we earn to keep ourselves warm and to get to work to see in the papers and on TV how much the big bosses award themselves for increasing our bills. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder?

SIS. D. PETERSON (London): I second Motion 82. President and Congress, we are in the middle of a recession. Year on year our Union negotiates for a pay rise and the Government and employers do their best to keep our pay rise to a minimum. The Government makes a big noise about minimum rises in the State pension, which is a pittance. Year on year our utility bills rise and wipe out what little rise the lower paid

and pensioners receive. This has to stop. The Government must dictate to the utility companies that they cut the huge bonuses that the utility fat-cats and shareholders award themselves. The amount of profit they make is ludicrous. The price of essential utilities has to be capped and make utility bills affordable to all. Please support this motion.

UTILITY PROVIDERS OF ENERGY MOTION 83

83. UTILITY PROVIDERS OF ENERGY

Congress

Deplores the action of utility companies who reduce their prices disproportionately to their price increases and therefore instruct the CEC to lobby Government and energy regulators to bring prices down in line with the reduction of oil prices.

R35 – ROCESTER JCB GENERAL BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

BRO. G. RICHARDSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): I move Motion 83. President and Congress, the link with oil and energy prices. The question is of prices rising, of gas and electric, energy, has an instant knee-jerk reaction to the increase in the price of oil. While I do not for one minute think that the cartel doesn't manipulate prices, there may be some logic to that system. Whether you agree with the logic or not that it makes a difference to the world, that it makes it vulnerable, to generate such a vast profit, is another question. But does the logic mean that it is okay for the UK, because to produce electricity in the UK only uses 2% of oil to source the power? Unfortunately, it uses 33% of gas. Historically, the cost of oil, both in the UK and Europe, was linked to the cost of gas. This harks back to when State monopolies controlled extraction and transportation right through to checking out and finding new supplies.

In Europe the de-coupling of oil and gas prices did not happen as markets have not de-regulated as they have in the UK. The result of this is that the UK's gas prices have, once again, albeit indirectly, come into line with international oil prices. So, like gas, the effect of oil prices flows down the interconnectors into the UK market. Once the price of gas has increased, the price of electricity follows, because the cost of coal-generated electricity becomes more favourable, the demand for electricity from coal fired power stations increases and, therefore, the price goes up. Again, you can see the trend; always up, rarely down.

However, we still export some gas on the Continent in the summer and we still export some electricity, but they are still subject to the volatility of oil prices, so what affects these? That is so complex and multi-dimensional, from OPEC, demands from China, the threats or so-called threats of local terrorism, including Russian separatists fighting for their own homes, Nigerian militia to the war in the Gulf. But, belief me, if Shell is prepared to murder the likes of Ken Sarawayo in Nigeria and other activists, you can see what they are prepared to do for greed and profit.

The oil industry has not demonstrated that it can regiment or control itself, and if the industry was confronted with the possibility of becoming self-regulated and make it a public utility, then the prices would tumble. Unfortunately, the USA have the largest reserves in the world and still have no real plans to use them. So as prices rocket at the push of an oil button, they definitely don't come down accordingly.

So I call upon the regulators to switch off this price button when prices come down against the oil producers, and not allow our friends and members who are on meters to be overcharged by £460 million. Thank you.

BRO. P. COOMBES (Birmingham & West Midlands): Why is it that oil prices are at their current high levels? It is because of the short-term tight market conditions with the world's spare capacity at just below 3% of demand. The demand for oil has slowed down sharply since then, and production is expected to rise. We will not be running out of oil for a long time, so there is no real need for the prices to be so high, even though oil in the ground needs investment to become accessible and to produce.

As prices of oil do increase, the energy companies hike the wholesale prices of gas and electricity to the public all with the formal approval of the regulator. No attempt is made to absorb the cost of the price rise and affect the profits of the energy companies. OFGEM states that its priority is protecting consumers by promoting competition in the UK market. The blame is placed on European unregulated suppliers. Yet again OFGEM is not on hand to reduce the immediate drop when the prices of oil fall. Whatever the price increase, the business model of the energy companies will endure because when wholesale energy prices increase, the consumer takes the hit and their profit levels are maintained. When oil prices decrease the energy prices take whatever time to drop. So come on, OFGEM, and come on the Government and force a correlation. I second. *(Applause)*

UTILITIES COMPANIES' PRE-PAYMENT TARIFFS MOTION 84

84. UTILITIES COMPANIES' PRE-PAYMENT TARIFFS

Congress calls upon the utilities companies to immediately change their charging tariffs, to ensure that those customers on pre-payment meters pay the same, or less, than those on direct debit arrangements. Further, Congress calls for an application of tried and tested technology by the utilities companies, to ensure that no domestic consumer is entirely cut off from their power supply through an inability to pay. Congress calls on the Chancellor to use whatever legislative, fiscal or other powers he has, to ensure that the utility companies comply with this.

Congress notes that the poorest sections of our society are those forced to use pre-paid tariffs which are some 30% higher than direct debit tariffs.

Congress also notes the assistance that the Government has provided for the banks and other financial institutions. To effect the change as outlined, this government will go some way forward in the present dire economic climate, in assisting some of the sufferers of the banks' policies.

(Carried)

BRO. B. HULLEY (Southern): I move Motion 84. Worthy President and Congress, this motion concerns pre-payment meters for gas and electric. It is a method of paying for your gas and electric by means of a card or a key which you charge up at the local shop. It is the equivalent of the old shilling in the meter that we had in the old days. The pre-payment method is generally used by people on low incomes who do not want the shock of a quarterly bill. It is pre-paid, paid for in advance, not on credit. So how can the utility companies justify charging 30% above the standard tariff? This is a terrible injustice, hitting the poorest and most vulnerable the hardest. It is not a mistake, but it is a conscious, deliberate and despicable policy. The utility companies must change their charging tariffs immediately to ensure that customers on pre-pay meters pay the same or less than everybody else. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Secunder?

BRO. B. BURTON (Southern): I second Motion 84. President, boom and bust! We have heard a lot about boom and bust over the years. These energy companies have definitely taken the boom by putting up energy prices 40p a unit and bringing them down by 10p! The “bust” is for the vulnerable in our society. It is immoral and unjust for those who have less to pay more. We must take on these energy companies. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I understand it looks like they are going to be given leave to take the companies to the High Court on this issue. So watch this space.

ENERGY PRICES MOTION 86

86. ENERGY PRICES

We call upon congress to bring back into public ownership rail and utilities (Gas, Water, Electricity).

(Carried)

BRO. D. LEYLAND (Northern): I move Motion 86 on Energy Prices. Congress, a few years ago this motion might have sounded silly, but not now. Now we live in a world and a country where we have nationalized banks. Who would ever have thought of that? This motion is quite simple. It is calling upon Congress to bring back into public ownership rail and utilities.

Congress, we all know that the privatisation of the utility industries has been a disaster for all of those who use them. The only people who have benefited have been the

companies who provide us with gas, electricity and water. When Thatcher introduced privatisation of the utilities in the 1980s she hailed it as a great white hope which was going to make the UK a nation of shareholders who would share in the wealth created by the utility companies. It was also going to bring costs down to us, the consumers. Did it do either of those things? Of course it did not. Within a few short years 95% of the shares in the utility companies were back in the hands of a few big corporations and the big pension funds. They were not in the hands of you or me. They said there would be a reduction in prices. I haven't noticed them. Have you? It was a myth. It was also a myth that Thatcher put forward in order to raise a large amount of money to give tax cuts to the rich. We must not forget that that is what Tory Governments do in practice. Let us bring our utilities back into public ownership for the real benefit of the people and not for the fat-cat shareholders. Congress, please support this motion. *(Applause)*

BRO. G. MANUEL (Northern): I second Motion 86 on Energy Prices. Colleagues, the rail service in this country is expensive and inefficient. Since the railways were privatised a dozen or so years ago, rail travel has become even more expensive and punctuality has become even worse. The mainline service between the north-east and London is a good one, but it is not as good as it was. Before privatisation, you could catch several trains a day which took over two-and-a-half hour to travel from Newcastle to London. Today the quickest journey times are almost 2 hours and 50 minutes, and they are very few. The punctuality of trains has become a joke, with passengers always having to allow an extra hour on to a journey if you are going to a meeting in case of delays. The cost of rail travel has gone through the roof. You can often get a return flight to Europe cheaper than you can get a return standard class ticket from Newcastle to London. As for the costs of a first class ticket, you can fly to New York and back for that.

The point is that there is no need for our rail service to be like this. Let's bite the bullet and re-nationalise our rail service. Let's invest in improvements in the rail lines, get rid of the internal franchise market, which does not work, and plough any profits back into the service and not into pockets of shareholders. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

EXEMPTION FROM PARKING RESTRICTIONS FOR CVIT VEHICLES MOTION 87

87. EXEMPTION FROM PARKING RESTRICTIONS FOR CVIT VEHICLES

Congress is alarmed that notwithstanding the highest number of violent attacks on GMB members in the Cash and Valuables in Transit Industry, Local Authorities continue to be over zealous when it comes to parking enforcement. Local Authorities continue to issue high numbers of parking tickets, in the period July to December 2008, in excess of 62000 tickets were issued to the CVIT industry, notwithstanding guidance being given to them by Government Departments.

CVIT crews need to park as close to their delivery location as is safely possible and help reduce the number of CVIT attacks, protecting both our members and the general public. Exemption from parking restrictions would provide a safer environment. This needs to be achieved by legislation to secure the long term solution throughout the UK.

The current system is putting GMB members' lives at risk.

Congress calls upon the Government to introduce legislation that exempts CVIT vehicles from parking restrictions when cash transfer operations are being conducted.

SECURICOR APEX 5 S15 BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. A. GOODFELLOW (Southern): President and Congress, there are not many jobs where you leave for work knowing that there may be a possibility that while you are performing your duties during the course of your work you could be attacked, coshed and be threatened with injury to your life and limb. We are talking cash-in-transit. There was a time when banks and building societies were situated so that CVIT vehicles could stop directly outside and access into bank premises through a side entrance. Not any more. Now there are no parking restrictions, double yellow lines, red zones, shopping malls and places where a walk of hundreds of feet may be necessary while carrying valuables or cash. It may be a company policy that if an employee is threatened or attacked that they give up the fight and give the cash over to the assailant, which is difficult when the it is chained to our members' wrists. He or she then has the spectre of the assailant, especially if there are fire arms involved, being taken hostage. That risk is too great.

After enquiring and investigating, I can tell you the policy in regard to CVITs and parking in Southampton. I quote: "The only vehicles which can park/stop at will are marked police vehicles." All others are fair game. I have heard reports that a Lumas CVIT vehicle had three tickets on the same day in the same stretch of road. The irony is that most of the parking wardens in Southampton are GMB member and council employees, but to their credit they do show, being a GMB member, a great amount of discretion. But orders are orders and there are many over-zealous wardens. One in particular was recorded for ticketing a hearse. Fortunately, it was not occupied.

We all know that for local councils parking fines are the money tree of income, but for the rogue franchisees who control over-zealous wardens it means reaching targets, performance-related pay and manipulating the criteria for administering fines. Modern day parking has nothing to do with maintaining the clear flow of traffic.

Congress, these vehicles are operating in their working environment. They are not dropping the kids off and they are not picking up the shopping. They are not selling ice-cream. They perform an essential job of work. It would only take a stroke of a Government's pen to give cash-in-transit vehicles special dispensation and exempt them from parking restrictions so that their occupants, our members, could perform their daily duties in a safe and professional manner and, therefore, reduce the risk of threats and attacks to their person. Thank you.

(Motion 87 was formally seconded)

ZERO HOURS CONTRACT IN SECURITY MOTION 89

89. ZERO HOURS CONTRACT IN SECURITY

The expression "Zero Hours" (or Nil Hours) contract is not legally defined in some security industry. It is a day to day name for a contract under which the employer does not guarantee to provide work and pays only for work actually done.

This allows employers to abuse employees by keeping them waiting around for work, and not offering proper training or job security.

We, the London Security Branch, are calling for Congress to campaign towards clarifying, curtailing or banning the use of Zero Hours contract in the security industry.

GMB (LONDON) SECURITY BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. E. ELUM-SMITH (London): I move Motion 89. This Congress is concerned about some Security Industry Authority licensed security companies which are providing only "Zero Hours" contracts when providing security employment to its employees. In the security industry, a zero hours contract of employment is a type of employment contract where an employee is available to work but does not have specific hours to work. If you have a zero hours contract, this means that there is a formal arrangement that you are required to be available for a certain number of hours per week, when required or a combination of both. The contract of employment should provide for a minimum number of hours of work as well as the minimum pay as defined by the employment legislation. Congress, if zero hours is expressed as a term in an employee's written contract of employment, then the employer does not need to provide full-time or part-time employment as no breach of contract has occurred.

Zero hours contract have been outlawed in many areas. Congress is aware that this practice continues. Congress is also concerned that zero hours contracts could be used to undermine secure employment rights. We, therefore, call upon the GMB to ensure that the security companies licensed by the SIA follow the best policy and provide a minimum hours of employment to be specified in the employee's contract of employment. I move.

BRO. R. OWEN (London): I am seconding Motion 89, Zero Hours Contract in Security. Madam President and Congress, this seems to be an example of the very worst type of employment practice, reminiscent of the dark days when people were forced to queue for work outside the docks or outside the mills. It is exactly the same principle. Those who were lucky enough to be chosen for work were given it and the rest were sent home empty-handed. It is nothing short of an abuse that any worker should be obliged by contract to make themselves available for a set number of hours, or as required, which is even worse, yet have no right under that contract to expect even a minimum number of paid hours work. As is too often the case, and especially in the security industry,

employers are able to exploit employment law to perpetuate the worst kind of casualisation and render their employees totally insecure in their employment. Considering it is the security industry, that is quite an irony, isn't it, really?

I believe, therefore, that Congress and the CEC should do all it can to apply as much pressure as possible to banish this outrageous practice to the dustbin of history. I second. Thank you. *(Applause)*

PACE INTERVIEWS MOTION 90

90. PACE INTERVIEWS

This Congress calls on the CEC to examine the practice being introduced the Local Authorities to interview Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers using a Quasi legal procedure by investigating and interviewing drivers using the Police And Criminal Evidence (PACE) procedures. This involves cautioning and tape recording interviews with drivers at early stages of investigations and before a complaint is proven.

We believe this practice may be a contravention of the individuals Human Rights. We believe the use of PACE outside of the proper legal system, prior to any charge being made against a driver is in itself illegal. We urge the GMB to liaise with Local Authorities to investigate the use of these procedures and to seek advice where appropriate to ensure that the rights of individuals are not infringed.

Further, we call upon the GMB to review its services to members and to provide access to emergency legal support for professional drivers faced with PACE interview procedures or where the livelihood of the driver is threatened by Local Authority procedures.

MANCHESTER CENTRAL D41 BRANCH
North West and Irish Region

(Referred)

SIS. B. KELLY (North West & Irish): Congress, I move Motion 90 – PACE Interviews. This motion highlights the situation that Hackney and, in some cases, private hire drivers face if there is a complaint from a member of the public regarding the way in which they have conducted their duties as a driver. A number of local authorities have started to introduce the Police and Criminal evidence Act procedures, for short, known as PACE procedures, which involves giving a caution to the driver and tape recording the interview almost as if they were present at a police station.

In some instances, the PACE interviews are conducted by retired police officers who, of course, have no real powers in terms of the legal system to undertake such duties when they have retired. Unlike other situations where someone is in employment, these interviews can then be used later on in the process to provide evidence against the driver in front of a Licensing Committee. This can lead to the revoking of their licence and, as a result, the loss of their livelihoods. What makes it further complicated for the Union is that in a normal disciplinary situation GMB officers would be able to be present.

However, in the case of the PACE regulations, the only person who can actually participate in the procedure is a solicitor. Drivers are advised of their legal right to have a solicitor present and, in a few cases, local authorities have said that GMB officers can be present to “observe”.

In other words, the whole process is a quasi legal process which many drivers feel is unnecessary at this point of an investigation. Often the PACE interview will take place prior to any discussion with the driver and after the local authority has already carried preliminary investigations with the complainant. We believe it is unnecessary for the local authorities immediately to conduct a PACE interview. In some instances we question whether this is in itself an infringement of their human rights. One case recently, which was won by the Union, was where the member was told at the beginning of the interview that they did not have a complaint. Yet the evidence in the interview was used to support a request from the licensing officer to the Licensing Committee to consider the suitability of the driver to continue driving.

This raises questions as to how the Union can best support drivers in these situations. Unlike people who have a normal contract of employment, they will have rights of appeal and would be represented at each stage by someone from the GMB. However, because of the legal situation in these instances, GMB officers cannot participate in the interview process. They can only observe. This is a legally grey area for the Union because normally the GMB will support action through the legal system once all other procedures have been exhausted. For example, after the final appeal has been lost. In this case, PACE interviews are conducted from day one. We believe the Union should be providing support to those drivers through the Union legal system, who are asked if they wish to have a solicitor present. This is especially important when the evidence acquired in the interview can lead to the information going as far as the Licensing Committee and the magistrates court, should the driver appeal against the decision of the Licensing Committee.

There are questions about the way in which PACE procedures are being implemented. The allegations against the driver should be made clear prior to any PACE interview being conducted. We would ask the Union to examine the way in which the PACE procedures are being used by the local authorities to check whether they are legally valid. Furthermore, we are asking that the Union consider legal representation and a special helpline number for drivers if they face a situation where they are being asked to participate in PACE interviews.

The Professional Drivers branch, with whom we have discussed this matter previously, are considering a survey across the country to examine ways in which the PACE interviews are being used. They will be seconding the motion. Any information you can obtain from local authorities in your regions would be most helpful. I ask you to support this motion, ensuring that justice for our members is addressed in a fair way.

Congress, I move Motion 90 and ask for support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now go back to Motion 87. Terry, I will call you, but not to second. London Region withdrew Motion 88 in favour of Motion 87. Does London wish to take part in the debate. (*No response*) Does anyone else wish to come in on these debates?

BRO. T. FLANAGAN (London): I think the way Bridget moved Motion 90, and I am very grateful for it. This is a major issue. Let's not beat about the bush. People's lives are being destroyed and their livelihoods are being taken away by the vicious actions of licensing officers. There are many licensing officers out *there* of many ilks. The worst are always ex-police, who seem to think that they can rule the roost and victimise people ad lib. They have not imitated the London branch so far of murdering people on the street or water boarding them, but I don't doubt that that is on the agenda sooner or later.

However, what we need to look at is this problem. It is happening continuously. Our members need backup on it. I am not sure, and no one is sure, whether the process is legal or not, but they are doing it and we have to address the issue. The way I address the issue is to go to their superiors. My advice is always in these issues to ignore the bureaucrats and go to the politicians. Hit the press and hit the media. You can win the battle in that way.

I don't know if any or all of you have read the press releases *here*. There is one about Leeds. This is about officious licensing officers attacking an ethnic minority and attempting to take their livelihoods away. They are ex-police, I understand, but I could be corrected on that. It is outrageous. This is how these people operate and the motion is about another method of their operation of taking vindictive actions against people.

Let me tell you one thing which a licensing officer told our people: "If you form a union or join in a drivers' association, I want a list of the members and I want the minutes of the meeting." I wrote an article about him in a newspaper and he ended up writing to the General Secretary. But I'll have him. Support the motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: When? Thank you, Terry. Is there anyone else who wishes to come in on this whole debate. (*No response*) I call Peter Kane for the CEC to speak on Motions 79 and 90.

BRO. P. KANE (CEC, Commercial Services): President and Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC. The CEC is supporting Composite Motion 5, Motions 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 86, 87 and 89. We are supporting Motion 79 with a qualification and are asking Congress to defer Motion 90.

Congress, the CEC is supporting a whole raft of motions that call, quite rightly, for the Government and OFGEM to sort out the energy market. The country needs a clear and unambiguous energy policy for the benefit of everyone, not just a select few.

The market for gas and electricity is in a complete mess. Soaring fuel prices benefit only those who profit from the sky high bills that we have to pay. Again, motor fuel is over a

pound a litre. Meanwhile OFGEM does nothing to support the consumer. It just spends more and more time on behalf of the energy companies, whose only aim is to make more and more profit and less time interfering with pensions and hard fought terms and conditions of all members in the gas and electricity industries.

On Motion 87, we must not allow our members in the security industry to be put at unnecessary risk and we ask that you support the exemption from parking restrictions for CVIT vehicles.

On Motion 89 we have a policy of not exploiting workers. These zero hours contracts are exactly that – exploitation – and we support Motion 89.

However, the CEC supports Motion 79 but it comes with a qualification. It is for the workers in those industries to decide whether they wish to take industrial action. We calculate that our members would accept such a mandate being placed upon them.

The CEC is asking for referral of Motion 90. This is about local authorities using PACE and criminal evidence procedures when interviewing taxi drivers, whose human rights may be infringed by this process. Such infringement of human or legal rights is clearly unacceptable, and the GMB will not tolerate the livelihood of any driver being threatened in this way. However, the CEC needs time to investigate and determine the best way to tackle this issue. If carried at present, Motion 90 would require the Union to gather information, liaise with local authorities, seek legal advice and review their service to members and provide emergency legal support to professional drivers. Referral would allow the CEC to investigate thoroughly the background to the motion and decide the best way to provide effective support to the members affected.

Congress, in summary, please support Composite Motion 5 and Motions 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 86, 87 and 89. Please support Motion 79 with the qualification outlined and refer Motion 90 back to the CEC for further investigation. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Peter, I think, on reflection, we had better have the signers next year.

Colleagues, first of all, I ask Southern Region if they will support the qualification? *(Agreed)*

I turn to Motion 90. Does the region accept reference back? *(Accepted)* Does Congress agree? *(Agreed)*

With the exception of the reference back and with the region accepting the qualification, I put them in block form. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against?

Composite Motion 5 was carried.

Motion 79 was carried.

Motion 80 was carried.

Motion 81 was carried.
Motion 82 was carried.
Motion 83 was carried.
Motion 84 was carried.
Motion 86 was carried.
Motion 87 was carried.
Motion 89 was carried.
Motion 90 was referred.

ANNOUNCEMENT

THE PRESIDENT: I have an announcement to make. Zoe's Place bucket collection raised £900. *(Cheers and applause)* As the General Secretary did not put into the bucket, he has added £100 to it. So that makes it £1,000, Dougie. *(Applause)* I am recommending that we make it £2,000. We will double it. *(Cheers and applause)* Will someone pick Allan Wylie up from the floor? *(Laughter)* Does Congress agree that? *(Agreed)*

EMPLOYMENT POLICY – RIGHTS AT WORK

THE PRESIDENT: Now we move to Employment Policy – Rights at Work. This section includes Motions 56, 72 and 73.

EXPLOITATION OF EEC WORKERS BY SECURITY COMPANIES MOTION 56

56. EXPLOITATION OF EEC WORKERS BY SECURITY COMPANIES

The GMB Congress 2009 is deeply concerned that some Security companies are continuing to recruit overseas for Security Officers in order to reduce labour costs, thus undermining Terms and Conditions in the UK. The workers from EEC Countries are paid reduced pay rates and are a source of cheap labour and the subject of exploitation by agencies recruiting for some security providers.

We ask that the GMB to work other sister unions to stamp out any unfair practices and work towards achieving a global agreement with G4S.

GMB (LONDON) SECURITY BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. E. ELUM-SMITH (London): I am speaking to move Motion 56. President and Congress, the GMB Congress 2009 is deeply concerned that some SIA licensed security companies are continuing to recruit overseas for security officers in order to reduce their labour costs. But it is not only security officers who are losing out but good security companies lose out if their competitiveness is undercut by bad companies and the power of the marketplace can easily lead to a rapid downward spiral of wages and conditions at the workplace, plus safety. The reason for this situation is simple. No arm of the Government has been given overall responsibility for enforcing the employment rights

introduced or enhanced since 1997. In practice, ignorance or criminally exploitative employers, of whom there are evidently far too many, can deny workers their legal rights with impunity.

Last year the Security Industry Authority shut down a major security company after being found guilty of employing unlicensed guards, including criminals. The workers from EC countries are paid reduced pay rates and a source of cheap labour, and the exploitation by agencies recruiting some security providers.

We asked the GMB to work with other sister unions to stamp out any unfair practices and work towards achieving a global agreement. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

BRO. J. RICHMOND (London): I second Motion 56, Exploitation of EEC Workers by Security Companies. President and Congress, this motion should not be seen as a wholesale attack on the employment of workers from the EC or elsewhere. It is put before Congress to set in stone the right of all workers in all industries to have equality in terms and conditions. In every major town and city throughout the country there is a street or a street corner where would-be workers offer themselves for hire to bosses in white vans for less than the going rate. This practice is normally seen in the construction industry but it is spreading to other industries. The quality of health and safety regarding those workers is questionable, and the skills of tradesmen from all the countries concerned is also questionable, who seek only to do a fair day's work for a fair day's pay.

As the mover said, this practice is spreading to the security industry. A suitably accredited security guard from anywhere in the EC should be just as effective in his job as any accredited security guard who is a UK citizen. But it is the accreditation which is measured, not the nationality.

Many security companies recruiting cheap and non-accredited labour have contracts guarding hospitals and other public buildings. It is simply not good enough that patients, employees and the general public may be put at risk by cowboy security companies who think only of the pound in their pocket and not their employees and the people they serve. Please support. I second. *(Applause)*

CONTROLLING THE USE OF SUBVERSIVE SURVEILLANCE IN THE WORKPLACE

MOTION 72

72. CONTROLLING THE USE OF SUBVERSIVE SURVEILLANCE IN THE WORK PLACE

Congress recognises the ever developing technology and subsequent cheaper availability of CCTV monitoring equipment together with satellite tracking technology that is available to employers, and is consequently concerned that such readily available subversive surveillance equipment is becoming more and more prominent in the workplace.

Therefore, Congress calls upon the GMB as a workplace Trade Union to use its expertise in developing a generic workplace policy for the controlled use and guidance on the appropriate operation of such technology in the workplace, in the hope that local representatives of the GMB can make use of and persuade individual employers to adopt.

Congress also calls upon the GMB to produce a leaflet or booklet outlining a simplified version of the law around the use of such surveillance both satellite tracking and CCTV, and how it can be used or dismissed in regard to employment law.

Congress also calls for the GMB to be more proactive in fighting and speaking out against the use of such electronic surveillance equipment, with its aim of putting a stay on the ever increasing obsession that powers in authority have in making ever more use of such CCTV monitoring of everyday surveillance which is a particular scourge of the British citizen.

R45 RHONDDA CYNON TAFF BRANCH
South Western Region

(Carried)

BRO. C. JONES (South Western): I move Motion 72. This motion is calling for three separate actions concerning surveillance in the workplace. It was originally developed at branch level when one of our local authorities decided to invest in a new refuse fleet which had cameras and satellite tracking built in. The shop stewards wanted to investigate what rights existed for the use of such equipment. They soon discovered that this was not to be a straightforward subject to get answer to. The employer was claiming health and safety reasons for the use of such equipment and we could not find any workplace guidelines or any company policies for such implementation. This, then, left our researcher looking at the law on CCTV operations. Quite honestly, colleagues, it would take a good legal mind to digest and understand this vast amount of legislation and pick out the relevant points to use in an argument with the employer.

Firstly, we would like to see the GMB, with the help of its legal department, develop a basic workplace policy that shop stewards can use as a guide with the aim of getting our employers to adopt when they are firming up on the installation of such technologies within our workplace. It is our understanding that this equipment is becoming even cheaper for employers to purchase, which is for security or use for the legitimate monitoring of controlled areas or just out of health and safety concerns. In reality, the technology and computer power behind such equipment is phenomenal and it is very easy to use. Yet it misses nothing. It continually compiles information and can and sometimes will be used against our members who do not follow the company rules or policies.

From my own experience, the sad fact is that employers are purchasing and installing such equipment without due consideration of any legal constraint and very often are innocently are unaware that there are legal guidelines to be adhered to, which are for the protection of everyone's privacy. Basically, an attitude exists which states, "This is on our property, when you are working in our time so we can do what we like."

Secondly, we are looking towards the development of a GMB booklet that will help all our shop stewards when preparing for installation and discussion with management or, dare I say, disciplinary action.

Lastly, we ask for the GMB to establish a sustained campaign against the ever-growing intrusion of privacy in our workplaces. Such a campaign we see as a winning strategy to raise the GMB's profile and a champion for future recruitment opportunities. Please support this motion. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleagues.

(The Motion was formally seconded)

**PROTECTION OF CHILDREN ACT (POCA) AND PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE ADULTS (POVA) INVESTIGATIONS
MOTION 73**

73. PROTECTION OF CHILDREN ACT (POCA) AND PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE ADULTS (POVA) INVESTIGATIONS

This Congress calls for GMB to campaign for a process to be put in place a process to covering both POCA and POVA investigations in line with the ACAS code of practice covering disciplinary processes.

These investigations must be subject to a fair transparent process.

CAMBRIDGE 2 BRANCH
London Region

(Referred)

BRO. K. ROBERTS (London): I move Motion 73. Congress, the Protection of Children Act and the Protection of Vulnerable Adults Investigations are very good pieces of legislation, but it has left out one fundamental right for our members, which is the right to appeal. We need to campaign to make sure that this process in investigations are fair and transparent, and these need to be in line with the ACAS Code of Practice covering the disciplinary procedures. We would not let any other employees or our members, basically, be disciplined without them following the minimum of the ACAS Code of Practice, so why is it that under POVA and POCA, which could have such devastating effects on our members, they can be put on a register for a minimum of 10 years? We need to get this legislation changed. It cannot go on and it is unfair in denying everybody their fundamental right to appeal.

The GMB cannot stand by and let this happen. This is such an injustice that it cannot go on. Please support this motion. It is very important. It gives the fundamental rights which we all stand for in this room. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kevin. Secunder?

SIS. C. HOLLAND (London): I second Motion 73. As we speak, I am supporting a member who is moving on from his job as a caretaker. Under this legislation, though, although unfounded, because of the POVA and POCA terms, the investigation will go on his record, and he will have no right of appeal. Is it not the normal procedure in a court of law that you are innocent until proven guilty? I know we have to protect our vulnerable citizens, but this way cannot be fair. One of our LSAs was commended by the police for averting a riot in a playground, but because she got hold of the young person's collar, it is on her file for life. We have to protect our members. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? *(No response)* Then I call Kath Manning of the CEC.

SIS. K. MANNING (CEC, Commercial Services): President and Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC. The CEC is supporting Motion 56 and 72, and is asking Congress to refer Motion 73.

Congress, the EC is seeking referral of Motion 73 concerning the Protection of Children Act and the Protection of Vulnerable Adult Investigations. We do so because these are issues of utmost importance. They are important for our members and important for children and vulnerable adults, which the law must protect. Because protecting children and adults at risk is so vital, the CEC must be concerned that any advice or guidance for our members is 100% accurate and up-to-date. At present, a new system aimed at protecting children and vulnerable adults from harm is being established. This will be the responsibility of the recently established Independent Safeguarding Authority. The new Vetting Service runs side-by-side with the new Authority. It will have a single list of all those who are barred from working with children, and another related list of those who are barred from working with vulnerable adults. This will replace the existing Protection of Children Act list and the Protection of Vulnerable Adults list. At present a phased transition is taking place between the old and the new system.

The referral of Motion 73, whilst the new system comes fully on stream, will allow the CEC to fully examine how investigations and other processes will operate under the Independent Safeguarding Authority. Only then can appropriate and accurate guidance for members be provided.

Congress, please support Motions 56 and 72, and refer Motion 73 to the CEC to allow guidance to be produced when the new safeguard system is in full operation. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, the CEC is supporting Motions 56 and 72. All those in favour, please show?

Motion 56 was carried.

Motion 72 was carried.

THE PRESIDENT: I am asking London Region if they will accept reference back in relation to Motion 73? (*Agreed*) Does Congress accept reference back? (*Agreed*)

Motion 73 was referred.

WELCOME TO DOUG HENDERSON MP and FRANK DORAN MP

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, you will see that I have been joined by Doug Henderson MP, who is on my left, and Frank Doran MP, who is on my right, the Chair and Secretary of the GMB Group of MPs. Both are long-standing GMB members and, Congress, they are here to listen and to take your views back to the GMB MP Group. I know that two weeks ago Frank heard my views because he happened to be in the room at the NEC, so it is now your turn. Thank you. Welcome Doug and Frank. We have split them up. They can't converse.

POLITICAL – LABOUR PARTY

THE PRESIDENT: I call the movers of Composite 16: Our Union's Voice in the Labour Party, to be moved by the North West & Irish Region, with the Northern Region to second.

OUR UNION'S VOICE IN THE LABOUR PARTY COMPOSITE MOTION 16

C16. COVERING MOTIONS

- 149. UNION VOICE IN THE LABOUR PARTY (North West & Irish Region)
- 150. OUR UNIONS VOICE IN THE LABOUR PARTY (Northern Region)

OUR UNION'S VOICE IN THE LABOUR PARTY

Congress notes that in expectation of a snap General Election, the 2007 Labour Party Conference was persuaded to suspend its own right to vote for or against 'contemporary' motions on important policy issues. It was however agreed this suspension should NOT continue for more than two years without being subject to a review.

Congress now believes that the need to restore the right of our union and others to move and vote on motions at the Labour Party Conference has been clearly demonstrated on a number of issues, for example, Remploy, Manufacturing, Public Services and Pensions. The need for this facility has been further increased by the current international economic crisis and is even more urgent.

Congress therefore calls on our representatives to the Labour Party to press as a matter of urgency for our union and others to recover the right to submit motions to the party conference for full debate and voting.

Congress further calls for the criteria for accepting such motions onto the agenda to be broadened, lifting the restriction, so that they are not restricted to topics involving specifically 'contemporary' incidents occurring in the few weeks before the Labour Party Conference.

Congress also believes we should take every opportunity given for unions to bring forward all matters of concern to our members, and that we should seek commitments of support from the WHOLE of the Labour Movement.

(Carried)

SIS. M. GREGG (North West & Irish): I move Composite Motion 16. The composite motion is set out on page 97, seeing that our visitors have only just arrived. It is headed: "Our Union's Voice in the Labour Party".

No one can ever accuse trade union members of being fair weather friends to the Labour Party, but now, more than at any time in recent years, the Labour Party needs to start listening to those people who actually care about the party's future. That is why we are calling on the Labour Party to restore the right of trade unions to submit motions to this Annual Congress. It does not make sense for the party to ignore the collective voice of trade union members, the millions of people like you and me who work hard every day to make a living. Now, more than ever, the party needs to be aware of the challenges and experiences of working people, and the best way to do this is to allow unions to submit motions that focus on the issues that working people are facing every day. This gives an opportunity to reverse the decline in democracy in the Labour Party, to repair the damage of recent events and help to clean-up the party's image. Gordon should have no problem in adopting the recommendations of this composite motion.

Congress, we urge you to support this composite motion and with it our voice within our party. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Margaret. Northern Region.

BRO. R. SPEAKMAN (Northern): I second Composite Motion 16 on Our Union's Voice in the Labour Party.

Congress, this composite is quite straightforward. It is calling on the Labour Party to relax its position on contemporary motions at future Labour Party Conferences. As an affiliate to the Labour Party, we send a delegation to Conference every year. We speak and vote on debates but, currently, the right to bring contemporary motions has been suspended. This means that if an issue arises in the coming weeks that is of real importance to both Labour Party members and affiliate organizations, then we have no mechanism to get that issue discussed on the floor of the Labour Party Conference. Colleagues, this is not an acceptable situation. The suspension of contemporary motions came about as a result of the 2007 Labour Party Conference when it was thought that we were going to have a snap election, but that time has passed. We now need the Labour Party Conference to become the forum once again for discussion and debate on the issues that concern us. It is healthy to have issues that concern us out in the open and discussed. Issues which do not go away, if not debated freely and openly, usually fester and resentment builds up where once there was none. If things can be discussed in an open and friendly forum, then situations and problems can usually be dealt with. That is what

we want. That is what we should have a right to expect. Congress, please support this composite. *(Applause)*

POLICIES FOR A FOURTH TERM LABOUR VICTORY MOTION 151

151. POLICIES FOR A FOURTH TERM LABOUR VICTORY

Congress must raise its concerns if the Labour Party is to win a fourth term in office arguing against where the Conservatives want to take us.

The Labour Party Conference has regularly passed good motions on pensions, housing, manufacturing, supported by the GMB. These policies must be used now to win support for a fourth term Labour government and avoid the disaster of another Conservative government.

NORTH KENT ENGINEERING Z39 BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. B. BURTON (Southern): Congress, we must raise our concerns if the Labour Party is to survive, let alone win a fourth term. They have got to start listening to working people. Good motions have been passed at Labour Party Conferences on housing, railways, pensions and support for manufacturing. All are GMB policies. They must adopt them. Some people might say that we should not criticize the Labour Party, but the Labour Party is our party, formed by the trade union Movement. The first Labour MP was Kier Hardy, a trade unionist. In the words of an old style trade unionist, Ted Heal: “Your critics are your best friends”.

Let’s not forget, though, who the enemy is. Our enemy is Tory boy, Cameron, and his Thatcherite buddies. Do you remember what they gave us: “No such thing as society”; “Get on your bike” and deregulation? Look at what that has caused us? They Tories have a philosophy of “Take, take, take, stretching right up to the Houses of Parliament!” We have had Old Labour and we’ve had New Labour. Let’s have the people’s Labour Party. That’s what it was formed for. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Brian. Secunder?

BRO. B. HULLEY (Southern): I am seconding Motion 151. Worthy President and Congress, the Labour Party is our party. It was formed by trade unions to represent working people. New Labour, ‘blue Labour’, has failed. If there is any chance of a fourth term it will only come on the back of new policies. Colleagues, we have a duty to take our party back from the charlatans who have taken it from us. I second. *(Applause)*

LABOUR PARTY NATIONAL POLICY FORUM COMPOSITE MOTION 17

C17. COVERING MOTIONS

- 152. PROMOTING GMB POLICIES (North West & Irish Region)
- 153. TAKING GMB POLICIES FORWARD (Northern Region)

LABOUR PARTY NATIONAL POLICY FORUM

Congress notes that the Labour Party conference has regularly been persuaded to adopt constructive policies similar to or in line with those of our own for example, Pensions, Housing, Manufacturing and Public Services. But these Policies have not been subsequently pursued by key parts of the Labour Party hierarchy with sufficient urgency.

In particular, important union policies agreed by the Labour Party conference (which is constitutionally the Party's supreme policy making body) have regularly been undermined by the failure of the Labour Party's National Policy Forum to campaign for their implementation.

In order to rectify this situation and increase the accountability of Labour's National Policy Forum members involved, Congress now calls on GMB representatives to press for the National Policy Forum's constituency members to be elected (in the same way as those on the Party's National Executive Committee) by a ballot of the whole membership of the Labour Party.

(Carried)

SIS. R. DAVISON (Northern): I move Composite Motion 17 on the Labour Party National Policy Forum. Congress, this motion is quite clear. It is calling for the election of constituency members to the National Policy Forum by the Labour Party's membership as a whole. We have a situation at the moment where constituency National Policy Forum members are elected regionally. The National Policy Forum of the Labour Party is an extremely important body which we ignore at our peril. The decisions and reports made at the National Policy Forum go forward to be debated at Labour Party Conference. They then get voted on and become party policy. That is why the things which get on the agenda of the National Policy Forum are crucial, and it is the reps who decide what motions go forward and which ones don't. Obviously, many hundreds of motions go forward and, with limited time at forum meetings to discuss issues, it is unavoidable that a sifting process has to take place. That is why it is so important that like-minded people are elected to the National Policy Forum from the constituencies as it is only then that we will see the issues that matter to us on the agenda to be discussed.

Congress, the policies which go forward to the Party Conference and then go on to become part of a Labour Party manifesto matter to us. We must never forget that the Labour Party was created from the trade union Movement, and it is the only party we campaign for. It is our Labour Party and we must not forget that. It is, therefore, crucial that we flex our muscles in all parts of it and have our say. Our voice must be heard. Please support this composite motion. *(Applause)*

SIS. M. GREGG (North West & Irish): I second Composite Motion 17. The mover of the composite has outlined its purpose. GMB is a campaigning union. Many of our campaigns have made headlines throughout the UK, some never to be forgotten. Remember *Cedric the Pig!*

Delegates to Labour Party Conferences voted for many important policies, only to be frustrated by the National Policy Forum's lack of campaigning and urgency on these issues. We have heard a lot lately about transparency and accountability. This motion will give us that. It will also enhance the participation of lay members and improve their involvement at ground level as Glyneth said yesterday. It will create better communications and it will share policies that will benefit our members which come to fruition and re-invigorate the lay members. Are you still listening, Gordon? Please support. (*Applause*)

LABOUR REPRESENTATION COMMITTEE

MOTION 155

Congress notes that:

- Policies adopted by the Labour Representation Committee (LRC) on many subjects already reflect GMB policy, including energy, the state pension, the NHS, council housing, the railways, and trade union rights.
- Affiliations to the LRC already include the following trade unions: ASLEF, RMT, BFAWU, CWU, FBU, and the NUM.
- Other affiliates and members of the LRC include Constituency Labour Parties, branch Labour Parties, Labour MPs, and individual GMB branches.

Congress therefore resolves that the GMB will:

- affiliate to the LRC;
- cover LRC campaigns and events in its publications;
- circulate LRC campaigning material to Regions and branches;
- encourage Regions and branches to affiliate to the LRC;
- encourage Regions and branches to initiate local LRCs where they do not yet exist.

GMB HOLBORN BRANCH
London Region

(Lost)

BRO. M. SAYWELL (London): I move Motion 155, Labour Representation Committee, without the support of my region. President and Congress, let me remind Congress of New Labour's devastating policies and practices of war, privatisation, corruption, turning a blind-eye to bankers and City spivs and not investing in manufacturing. It just goes to show that you don't have to agree with every policy to affiliate to something. But as long as we are affiliated, we should align ourselves to those who are fighting to return the

party to core Labour values and increase all the good work that all the good Labour activists have achieved.

The Labour Representation Committee is made up of like-minded individuals, groups and organizations who are members or affiliated to the Labour Party. These include MPs, constituency Labour parties, trade unions like ASLEF, RMT, CWU, FBU and the NUM, and there are people in this room who are members of the Labour Representation Committee. Their stance on major issues includes support for the Bill of Trade Union Rights, which seeks, effectively, to repeal the anti trade union laws brought in by Thatcher, an end to privatisation of public services, a massive council house building programme and linking State pensions to earnings, but they are also leading the way on economic policies, coming up with practical alternatives and being reactionary to the issues that are facing us now. These are all policies that our Union today, the GMB, has been talking about and supporting at Congress. In effect, the LRC stands for everything that New Labour rejects.

We have heard our President say that we should listen to our old friends and not the Johnny-cum-lately careerist politicians, who are just as likely to jump ship if Labour were to lose the next election. Those in the LRC have always been our friends and we should align ourselves with them. As I said, several of our sister unions have affiliated, but if the GMB were to affiliate to the LRC this would be the biggest and most significant change and would send a strong message to New Labour and would send shock waves through the party and signal the beginning of the end of careerist politicians who are stuffing their mattresses as they are stuffing us. Let's rebuild our political voice and fight for social justice and get representation by real people. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I call the seconder.

BRO. S. MCKENZIE (London): I am seconding this motion without the support of the region.

Comrades, brothers and sisters, I think it is fairly clear that only by uniting with other socialists in the Party and by adopting socialist policies will we have any chance whatsoever of stopping the Tories at the next election. (*Applause*) The vote to affiliate to the Labour Representation Committee in London was a very close vote, and that was before the expenses scandal broke and we got hammered in the European and council elections. I think the vote might have been different if it had been taking place after.

We were hammered, as people have pointed out, not because the right wing extremists and the Tories and the racists got much more, but because our voters stayed at home. They stayed at home because they were not inspired to come out and they did not trust the people who were representing the Labour Party at the national level with all the shenanigans that were going on. We want policy change. We ain't going to get it on our own. We have got to put the pressure on for socialist change inside this party and we can only do it by uniting with other like-minded people in the party, people who belong to the Labour Representation Committee and have fought for socialist policies within the party

all their lives. Please support this resolution, support socialism and give us a chance at the next election. *(Applause)*

SPONSORSHIP OF POLITICAL CANDIDATES

MOTION 156

156. SPONSORSHIP OF POLITICAL CANDIDATES

Congress instructs the Central Executive Council, the General Secretary, Regional Committees and Regional Secretaries to adhere to the letter and spirit of Rule 2, Clause 8 when deliberating and deciding on sponsorship for sitting and prospective MP's, Local Government Councillors and MEP's.

NORWICH GENERAL BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. K. BARKER (London): I have come to Congress to move a motion about union funds going to support future MPs, MEPs, and local councillors. Rule 2, clause 8, says: "To help elected members to Parliament and public authorities who promote our policies and the interests of members through political members methods, providing the candidates are pledged to collective ownership, under democratic control, of the means of production, distribution and exchange."

I am not here to say the political funds should not be used to support MPs but to ask the Central Executive, General Secretary, Regional Committees and Regional Secretaries, to make sure that MPs, potential representatives of the GMB who could be holding political offices, are GMB members who are actively supporting GMB beliefs and not just promoting themselves to gain members' hard-earned money for their own personal ends. I would ask for the support of this Congress on this motion so that our ruling parties understand we feel strongly that the spirit of Rule 2, clause 8, is used to promote our policies and interests, especially with the dogfight that is to come in the future elections, locally and nationally, which may give us less of a political voice making the need for our GMB supported MPs, MEPs, and councillors to reflect and put forward our views in the political arenas they are elected in. If we as a union support and sponsor these people we need to know we are getting an MP, an MEP, or a local councillor who is of the same mind and beliefs as our membership, not like some of the people in the past who have received funds from the Union only to drag the Union's good name through the mud of the media. So, I call upon all Union officers in whatever position they hold to ensure that the members' money is used wisely in the spirit of Rule 2, clause 8, so we may get the political voice we need to make it better for our membership. Please support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

BRO. A. McLEAN (London): I am here to support the resolution proposed by my colleague. In these turbulent times and with the backlash of the MPs expenses scandal still fresh in our minds, it is easy for us to forget that not all MPs are able to self-fund their aspirations to move into politics. I believe that we as a trade union should not lose

sight of the important part we play. The sponsorship that we provide is vital. However, it is important that the funding the GMB provides to MPs is devoted to those who are able to promote and support our policies and the interests of our members. The GMB has in place methods which enable us to do this and I urge you to support the proposal that any sponsorship provided adheres to the requirements of Rule 2, paragraph 8. I second the motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

**GMB SPONSORED MPs
MOTION 157**

157. GMB SPONSORED MP'S

Congress notes the recent news of the scandal that 4 Labour Lords had worked as paid consultants for private companies. News which raises the question where does their loyalty lay? – with the Labour movement or their pocket?

The news reinforces our belief that the only way forward is to abolish the House of Lords, and replace it by an elected second chamber. Further, this scandal enforces our belief that all our sponsored Members of Parliament should hold only two loyalties, first to their constituents and secondly to the GMB. They should not work for any other organisation as paid consultants. If they do so then we should not sponsor them.

EDMONTON & ENFIELD BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. V. WEST (London): Congress, since the region put this motion into the order paper, it is no longer four lords a-leaping into their bank accounts but what looks like hundreds of MPs and members of the House of Lords stuffing their pockets, their bank accounts, and anything else they can get their mucky hands into. We have a whole new language, haven't we? We have "flipping". I thought that is what the clowns did round the corner in the Tower Ballroom. We have "switching". I thought that is what Ronaldo did last week when he moved to Real Madrid. We have "double dipping". Now, that is what I think sheep farmers do on a Saturday night when they are bored! (*Laughter*) But what we found out is that all these are means by which MPs and members of the House of Lords have found ways in which to milk the system at the taxpayers' expense. MPs and lords having second jobs appear to be the least of our worries in the current crisis of our politicians. In every way it is exactly the same thing, it is the same issue, and that issue is transparency and accountability. I do not want my legislators to be in hock to private sector companies who are paying them large consultancy fees, nor do I want my legislators claiming for duck houses, bath plugs, moat cleaning, and dubious cable TV channels. More importantly, and this is the real crux, this is the real thing that has made me angry, I do not want my legislators playing the system so they can avoid Capital Gains Tax on their second homes. (*Cheers/Applause*) One MP who disgracefully resigned from the Cabinet the night before the election claims she was rocking the boat. Well, as the Manchester Ship Canal goes through Salford I know exactly where she can go and rock the boat and I know exactly where she can find a floating duck house in which to do it. (*Laughter*) But we have a real opportunity now, Congress, to replace some of these MPs with people who will listen to us and to their constituencies, MPs who

do not milk the system, MPs who are prepared to be transparent and accountable. Let's seize the opportunity to get the snouts out of the trough and clean up the system, deselect those MPs who are guilty, and let us seize the opportunity finally to keep our promise to reform the House of Lords, a promise that has been long overdue. We are often told we get the legislators and the MPs we deserve. We deserve better. I move. *(Applause)*

BRO. B. DUFFIELD (London) in seconding the motion said: President, Congress, in a general election there is only one guaranteed result and that, colleagues, is that no member of the House of Lords will lose their seat. There never was anything noble about this multi crew and recent revelations reinforce that belief. It is no less an affront to democracy and decency that these people can use their unelected position and influence for personal gain as consultants and they do this in the knowledge that the affronted electorate cannot vote them out. But, Congress it appears that self-serving is now not only confined to the Lords. Recent reports suggest that MPs of all parties have their nose in so many troughs they make Cedric the Pig and Sir Fred Goodwin look like Robin Hood. Money for Jacuzzis and tennis courts and castle moats may not be illegal according to the rules but it is certainly morally wrong. Then there are the second homes. Why is it that one Luton MP commutes daily to parliament and the other Luton MP who lives in the same street in Luton requires a second home in London? That is neither necessary nor right. Claiming interest on non-existing mortgages is illegal and shows utter disregard for the thousands and thousands of constituents and decent citizens struggling in the recession to put a roof over their heads. Colleagues, the GMB is right to publicise the excesses of politicians elected or otherwise, but in most cases there is no direct action we can take. That is not the case, however, with GMB sponsored MPs. We sponsor them on the basis that they support our policies. If the sponsored MPs fail to support our policies we the GMB should make demands and stop their sponsorships. If they abuse the expenses claims as well as taking our sponsorship then the sponsorship should be withdrawn and the reason for withdrawing publicised to the widest possible audience. Congress, please support. *(Applause)*

UNJUSTIFIED EXPENSES EMERGENCY MOTION 4

UNJUSTIFIED EXPENSES

**THIS CONGRESS CONDEMNS THE SHAMEFUL BEHAVIOUR OF LABOUR
MPs WHO HAVE ABUSED THE TRUST OF THOSE WHO ELECTED THEM BY
MAKING MORALLY DISHONEST EXPENSE CLAIMS.**

**WE EXPECT NO BETTER FROM THE TORIES AND THEIR ILK AND IT IS
CLEAR THAT THE BEHAVIOUR OF THOSE FROM EXTREME RIGHT WING
AND FASCIST INSPIRED ORGANISATIONS HAVE AN EVEN WORSE
RECORD INVOLVING CRIMINAL DISHONESTY OF ELECTED
REPRESENTATIVES.**

ONLY BY EXPELLING FROM THE PARTY, THOSE LABOUR MPs FOUND GUILTY OF MAKING THESE SELFISH EXPENSE CLAIMS WILL OUR MOVEMENT REGAIN THE TRUST OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE.

WE THEREFORE INSTRUCT THE CEC TO:

- INSTRUCT OUR DELEGATES TO THE LABOUR PARTY NEC TO SUPPORT ANY CONSTRUCTIVE MOVEMENTS ON THAT BODY TO EXPEL SUCH ELEMENTS FROM THE PARTY.
- WITHDRAW ALL FUNDING FROM ANY GMB SPONSORED MPs WHO HAVE INDULGED IN SUCH PRACTICES.
- ORGANISE DE-SELECTION PROCESSES IN EACH AND EVERY CONSTITUENCY WHERE GMB SPONSORED MPs WERE GUILTY OF SUCH BEHAVIOUR.
- INITIATE PROCEEDINGS TO EXPEL ANY OF THESE MPs WHO ARE MEMBERS OF THE GMB ON THE GROUNDS OF BRINGING THE UNION INTO DISREPUTE.

**GMB PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS BRANCH
LONDON REGION**

(Referred)

BRO. T. FLANAGAN (London): Thanks, Paul, you just nicked my speech. Anyway, we'll see what we can do with it. Let's make it clear, this motion you have in front of you is not an attack on the Labour Party. For 30 years I have been a member of the Labour Party, since a guy knocked on the door and said, "Would you like to join the Labour Party?" I said, "Who are you?" He said, "I'm Ken Livingstone." So, we had a chat and three hours later and a bottle of Bacardi that sealed the deal. So, we know where I stand.

Let's have a look at where we are going with this MPs' racket currently. The Labour Party is getting most of it. They seem to be forgetting about the Tory vermin. What are they up to? Mr. Cameron is worth 40 million quid, milking it for all he can, all sorts of rackets going on. The man with a moat; Vaughan has covered that. Then let's turn round to the LibDems. Clegg, £2,000 on redecorating his house; it is a scandal. We've got to put a stop to it.

Let's go on to the point that Paul covered this morning in his speech. Let's stop selecting solicitors, let's go on selecting working class candidates. I note that Paul was clever and left out cab drivers and building workers. Well, perhaps that's me and Macca out of the frame. *(Laughter)* But the point needs to be made that this Party has disintegrated, taken over by the middle-class parasitical infiltrators, and we have to deal with them. It is our Party but for the last 12 years it has betrayed us. It needs to be whipped into line. I am not prepared to abandon my Party. I want to get back into control. *(Applause)* 25,000

pensioners per year die of hyperthermia and cold in this country and it has happened for the last five years. I think that needs addressing. In January I watched the television and it said eight pensioners an hour are dying of the cold. Under a Labour Party? No way. New Labour Blairites were happy with it. I am not. Let's get ourselves together. There is a parallel I can draw here. Islington, once the workers' republic, has been taken over by the LibDems so the leaders of the LibDems can stuff their pockets with all sorts of salaries.

We, the London Irish, Gary the hooligan Doolan, good Arsenal supporter, he gets on the case: end result, I'll tell you what he achieved, free school meals for all children under 11, free sports facilities for all under 18-year olds (that should help the Arsenal get some decent players), £100 off Council Tax for all over 65s, introduced a London living wage (including agency staff) for all council contracts, and cut Liberal councillors' extortionate allowances to pay for this. That is the Labour Party in action. That is the Labour Party I want to see. That is the Labour Party we have to support. To do that you need to carry this motion. Let's get rid and clean up this present stable. Have a look at the motion. If they are corrupt in the Union, have 'em out. Get 'em out of our constituencies. Get 'em out of the Labour Party. Let's get our Party back in our control. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Terry. Terry, Paul left out dinner ladies as well so I am in the same camp as you.

MR. T. FLANAGAN: When I am standing here I can't hear what you are saying!

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Tough! (*Laughter*)

THE PRESIDENT: Can you hear me now? Can you hear me now? (*Laughter*)

MR. T. FLANAGAN (*walking back to seat*): Yes, Mary.

THE PRESIDENT: He left out dinner ladies as well so I am in the same camp with you. God help me! Carry on. (*Laughter*)

BRO. S. MCKENZIE (London): Most of it has been said so I will be very brief. There are clearly Labour MPs who are totally clean and above board, the likes of Martin Salter from Reading, the likes of Kelvin Hopkins from Luton, and the likes of John McDonnell. There are loads of them. I would say the majority. There are those that have genuinely made errors. It is a very corrupt and complicated system. I am not talking about those people but, as has been said by everyone, there are those that have cynically milked the system and there is even a possibility that there are those that are guilty of making fraudulent claims and that is outside of the corrupt rules and regulations that existed anyway. Now, these people should be dealt with and this motion explains precisely how they should be dealt with. They should be had out of the Labour Party and if they are GMB members they should be had out of this Union as well for bringing this movement into disrepute.

One thing I would like to point out, though, is that you have to get this in perspective. We have to get this into perspective. The election results were disastrous but when you think about it lectures and moralising from Wisteria Dave and the duck house/moat brigade, otherwise known as the Tories, is hypocrisy beyond belief. I think that we should be going through a list of all the things that they have done and putting our briefing notes to all our people in all the branches and all the regions around this country so when this general election comes round and this issue comes up, we can show them up for precisely what they are and precisely what they do. We've got to get organised. We're up against it. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, does anyone wish to come in on the debate?

BRO. J. KANE (Northern): President, Congress, I think we have to put a bit of reality into this. It is not all that are guilty of fiddling expenses. I think we have a bit of a thing here where it is one suit fits all; that is not the case. There are good honest MPs sitting on the table alongside you. We have to go back to where this came from. It came from the Thatcher era. The MPs' pay was frozen. The way round it was expenses. It was not a Labour era, it was the Thatcher era. Where are the auditors in this? Where are the auditors looking at the expenses? Why haven't they picked it up? I agree with our policy of going back to the grassroots and getting grassroots candidates but let's not make the mistake of condemning everybody and tarring everybody with the same brush. Thank you. (*Applause*)

BRO. A. WORTH (Regional Secretary, Midland & East Coast Region): President, Congress, covering Motions 151, 155, 156, 157, Composites 16 and 17, and Emergency Motion 4, so not quite as many as Peter had in the earlier reply! The CEC is supporting 151, along with Composites 16 and 17. The CEC is supporting with a qualification Motions 156 and 157, and opposing 155, and asks Congress to refer Emergency Motion 4.

Turning first to 156 and 157, the CEC's qualification is regarding the wording of the motion. The sentiment of both motions we support. On 156 the CEC already has in place a system of monitoring MPs and rating them with regard to their performance in line with the GMB's aims and values. The GMB no longer sponsors MPs but where they meet our standards, which does not include flipping houses, fiddling expenses, and blaming staff in the back office, support is made available to the constituencies, not for the MPs.

With regards to Motion 157, the motion says that MPs should have two loyalties, to their constituents and to the GMB. The CEC says they should have three loyalties. They should be loyal to the Party as well. So, not only should those who fiddled their expenses be deselected but those who lined up to play the media game of "Let's get Gordon," should also be deselected for their disloyalty to the Party. (*Applause*) Obviously, Hazel Blears does not know where Salford canal is. We should replace them, as many speakers have said and the CEC agrees, with decent working people. We should not have a situation with a Labour government that when a system is corrupt it talks about replacing

it with an allowance of over £160 a day at the same time that it is offering half a percent to public service workers and it is offering 7p on the minimum wage. (*Applause*)

Turning to Motion 155, the CEC do not believe that the GMB should be tied to any factions in the Labour Party. The CEC believe that we should follow policies that benefit our members. The Labour Representation Committee has a number of policies contrary to the GMB policies. Therefore, the CEC would request that you vote against that particular motion. For example, the policy on nuclear power where we have thousands of workers, Trident, LRC policies are against our policies on that, and also against the expansion of Heathrow Airport which the GMB supports. We would rather not affiliate and that enables us to pick up some of the campaigns that we are able to support.

Finally, Emergency Motion 4, unjustified expenses, the CEC wholeheartedly support the sentiment behind the motion which expresses the anger and outrage that our members up and down the country have at the abuse and exploitation of the MPs' expenses system. The motion, however, is technically flawed in its detail. For instance, the GMB does not sponsor MPs. As I said before, it supports those who share our values and we have a system to deal with that, and will deal with that. The motion is also incorrect in its understanding of the process that needs to be followed to deselect MPs. It fails there. It also fails to deal with constituencies which we do not financially support and we have to deal with those as well, not just the limited number of GMB ones. If they are on the fiddle, whether we supported them or not, we should sort it out. The CEC want to deal with all of those, as I say.

We continually monitor our relationship with all our supported MPs and therefore we are recommending reference of that Emergency Motion 4 to allow the CEC, the regions, the political committees, the officers, and yourselves, to deal with our relationships with the MPs who need dealing with as one speaker rightly pointed out. Discussions have taken place, I understand, with the region and the mover of the Emergency Motion has indicated that they will accept this position. I hope they do and then we can get on with doing the job that it calls for.

Congress, the GMB organises industrially and politically to secure the aims of this Congress. Congress and delegates should not just pass resolutions and motions in this hall. To achieve the aspirations of the motions each and every one of you needs to go back into the constituencies and ensure the motion is actioned. Retake the Party. Don't give the Party away. We will not retake it by just whingeing and whining on the sideline. We need to get back out there and do it. (*Applause*) Congress, as you may tell, I am never one to walk away. We have actually built that Party. We are loyal to that Party. We are friends of the Party. We should sort out people who think because we criticise and give good advice that we are doing anything other than trying to be helpful to them. Without the GMB they would not have got into the positions that they are in, in some cases, so we should deal with that side as well. So, don't walk away.

Vote for 151, 156, 157 with the qualifications that are put on, vote for Composites 16 and 17, please vote against Motion 155, and refer Emergency Motion 4 to the CEC, and then,

delegates, as I have just said, get back in the constituencies and make sure the GMB's voice is heard on behalf of decent working people. Thank you, President. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Andy.

BRO. A. WORTH: Mary, I understand the fiddling MPs are launching a song, it is called, *Who's Sorry Now?* *(Laughter)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Andy. Colleagues, the CEC are supporting Composite 16, motion 151, and Composite 17.

Composite 16 was carried.
Motion 151 was carried.
Composite 17 was carried.

THE PRESIDENT: The mover of Motion 155, the CEC are asking you to oppose. Do you want the right to reply?

BRO. M. SAYWELL (London): Congress, I appreciate the points the CEC have made but I would argue that you do not have to agree with every policy to affiliate to an organisation. We have disagreements with some Labour Party policy yet we remain affiliated, quite rightly, and as I said a signal from the grassroots, from you as the delegates, if you support this motion it is a signal from the grassroots, Labour Party members, that you want a change in the direction of the Labour Party. I urge you to support it. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Matt. Colleagues, the CEC are asking you to oppose 155.

Motion 155 was lost.

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now move to Motions 156 and 157. Does the region accept the qualification on both? *(Agreed)* Thank you.

Motion 156 was carried.
Motion 157 was carried.

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to Emergency Motion 4. Terry, I understand you will accept reference, is that correct? *(Agreed)* Thank you. Congress agree reference? *(Agreed)*

Emergency Motion 4 was referred.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, Dougie and Frank, I hope that you have heard the views. I know you will take them back. I have to say this, I know Frank was at the NEC and he was as upset and distraught as everybody else that particular day. I know the views went

back to the MPs. Thank you. Colleagues, I think it would probably be right if we ask Frank and Dougie to say a few words. Congress agree? (*Agreed*) That will shut me up for five minutes. Dougie?

MR. DOUG HENDERSON, MP: Thanks, Mary. Could I just say I think you have been very kind to Frank and me this afternoon given what you have had to put up with from the Labour Party and from Members of Parliament in recent weeks. When I came up to the platform today I thought I was going to be put in the stocks but I have to say that I think you have dealt with the issues that are before you in a very responsible and a very reasonable way. You can be absolutely assured that Frank and I will take back your message and the things that you have said, and the tone of what you have said, to our colleagues in the Parliamentary Labour Party and also back to the other members of the GMB group.

I said at a meeting that was held on behalf of GMB members in parliament a few weeks ago, maybe a couple of months ago, that when you are in difficulty you have to look to the family and the real family of the Labour Party is the working-class movement and the trade union movement. I said that then. I have always believed that to be the case. I think today that is even more a necessity that Members of Parliament recognise that. The core of progress, democratic socialist progress in this country has to come from the working people and their families, and the trade union movement that represents, supports, and gives them the ballast that they need to make their views count in the rest of society.

On behalf of the Parliamentary Labour Party, can I thank you for your commitment, your ballast, making those strong principles and strong views count at a time when I know that we have let you down and, hopefully, things can be corrected. I think you have someone coming to see you tomorrow who will be saying things to you. I will leave any comment that may be made till then and I know that you will have the opportunity to raise questions. So, thanks very much for inviting us again today, thanks for telling us in a frank and responsible way what you and your members feel back in the branches, and I wish you well. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dougie. Frank?

MR. FRANK DORAN, MP: Thanks very much for that, Chair. Can I follow Doug, I think we are quite both stunned because Mary did not give us any warning we were making a speech so this is on the hoof. It has been useful for us to hear this discussion and debate today. We understand the anger. We get it in our constituencies. We know how concerned people are. I am grateful that the debate you have had today, and we still have one more to come I think, has been reasoned and focused. That is what is important. At the end of the day, we have all been shocked at the stories we have read in the press but we have to remember one thing, that these allowances and salaries were introduced so that working people could become Members of Parliament. Before we had salaries and before we had expenses it was bankers and lawyers who ran the country. That is a fact.

The situation that we have now is clearly not fit for purpose, it needs to be changed, and we are in the process of doing that. I know that you have the Prime Minister coming later in the week and he will tell you, I am sure, just exactly what is being done to deal with the system but the fundamentals are that the Labour Party and the trade unions are partners. You created the Labour Party and we respect and want the relationship that we have. We have a battle to fight, a job to do together, and I hope that we will do it. I am encouraged from what I have heard today, as I said. It is a long battle and uphill struggle that we have between now and the next election. We do not have a lot of time but we will only be able to win the next election if we fight together. Some of our colleagues have learned that the hard way in the last few days but I am encouraged from what I have heard today. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you both very much for those kind words.

THE PRESIDENT: Can I say thank you, Dougie and Frank. When Dougie came up he said about the stocks. I said, “No, we’ve got a rope instead,” *(Laughter)* in the good humour that we do it in. Everybody knows that we are very serious and we were very upset, but from this meeting, hopefully, positivity will come out of it. Take the message back. You are welcome to stay with us if you wish.

POLITICAL – DEMOCRACY & CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

MPs EXPENSES AND THE TAKING OF OTHER REMUNERATIVE POSTS MOTION 162

162. MP’s EXPENSES AND THE TAKING OF OTHER REMUNERATIVE POSTS.

Congress holds that elected representatives to parliament are paid generously and enjoy generous arrangements for the coverage of their expenses, and that their election should require them to be full-time representatives of the people. Congress therefore instructs the CEC and General Secretary to initiate a campaign for changes in law to prohibit such representatives from

- (i) Simultaneously holding other (non-parliamentary/governmental) remunerative posts.
- (ii) Benefiting from the retention or sale of properties acquired through, or with the aid of expense claims, after they have ceased to be elected representatives.

NORWICH GENERAL BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. K. BARKER (London): Madam President, Congress, since my branch put this motion forward time seems to have travelled very fast so I need not say a lot about expenses. The media has given me more than enough examples over the last three weeks

of MPs gaining from their expenses; after all, I only have four minutes up here. I would like instead to direct my speech to MPs holding remunerative posts, or should I say wallet-filling positions? MPs are paid very well for the job they do and they also, I understand, can claim some genuine expenses, but should anyone who is voted to represent the people have a remunerative position? No. We cannot trust them to be honest with a few expenses claims so how the hell can we trust them to be honest and not exploit their position as MPs to get extra money while holding executive positions in other organisations? We, the voter, who pay the taxes to pay their wages should expect MPs to be unconnected and free to make decisions without any worries or consequences. We need them to speak for us knowing they have no ties to anyone so they can say what the people who have voted them in need them to say on local and national issues. Can we really believe that their interests in companies and organisations will not be neutral? Of course, we can. No, we can't. No, I do not think we expect them to. Mind, there is always the excuse, "I feel I was doing nothing wrong and I declared it to all the parties that I needed to tell that I had another well-paid job." I suppose I could understand the need for these positions if they were on a minimum wage but they can vote themselves a nice pay rise whilst telling minimum earners to tighten their belts. Perhaps it is time to stop being good old Joe public and to say what we really think, that MPs have the responsibility to the people of this country and they should have no other financial interests other than the one that they are paid for, and that is to be an MP that the voters of this country have looked up to and been proud of. It seems to me that we need hard and fast rules on what is expected of MPs and their positions. The next thing that will be in the morning paper will be some MP who has used his position in a company; that will be the next scandal. I feel this Union needs to send a clear message to MPs of all parties about what we think of those MPs who have abused the trust of the voters. I ask you to support this motion and show how disappointed and disgusted we are in the whole fiasco. Please support. I move. (*Applause*)

BRO. R. OWEN (London): I am seconding Motion 162 on MPs' second incomes and expenses. It all sounds almost redundant now after what we have heard for the last hour. It is strange, really, because actually this motion was put forward in October so, well done, Norwich General Branch, you were well ahead of the game on that one, really. (*Applause*) We are going to stick with it. Madam President, Mary, you were spot on, on Sunday, when you said that a week was a long time in politics. Our two colleagues here have had the courage to come and face us today. It must have seemed like an eternity for the last couple of months and I pay tribute to you for coming. (*Applause*) The more Labour politicians that we see at places like this, the happier we are going to be because it means you are listening. Tomorrow we have a very special guest and hopefully he will be listening too. We can turn this around. We really can turn this around. I think it is very important to remember where all this information is coming from. It is coming from The Daily Telegraph, drip by drip, by drip, day by day, and they have inflicted maximum damage on Labour, but the Tories have escaped. They are actually standing in front of us and hypocritically telling us that Labour are on the take. Yes, there have been a lot of MPs on the take but I bet you there are more Tories on the take than there are Labour. Again, it has been used to try and destroy the Labour Party and we have to be so careful that we do not fall into that trap. There is a lot of difference between information and

propaganda, and what we are being fed is propaganda, very largely. Yes, obviously we need to sort the expenses mess out, it is a real mess, but the biggest problem is not only the undermining of confidence in the Westminster politicians. Look at the results from the European elections, they were disastrous, not because UKIP and BNP have that much more support in the country, they do not have, it is a tiny minority of people, but because Labour support collapsed you now have two BNP MEPs. What we need to do is banish those people back into the darkness. We need to take them on and we need to tackle them head-on. That means sorting ourselves out, and that means the Labour Party listening to us. I urge you to support this motion. Thank you very much indeed.

MANDATORY VOTING AT ELECTIONS MOTION 160

160. MANDATORY VOTING AT ELECTIONS

Congress acknowledges the importance of democracy of voting at elections and, therefore, is concerned at the small turnouts on such occasions.

Congress hereby calls upon the CEC to campaign for legislation to be passed to bring in mandatory voting for all citizens over the age of eighteen.

ANWICK & MID Lincs COMMUNITY BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Referred)

BRO. P. SOPER (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, on 4th June this year we had elections for the county councils and for MEPs. Going by the turnout figures two-thirds of everyone at this Congress did not vote. Yes, I went and voted to try and ensure that Glynis Wilmot MEP was re-elected, which she was. If we all had voted then we could have more Labour MPs, more MEPs, and probably no BNPs at all. If this carries on with the turnout reducing to a general election for the government, then we could have less than 50% turnout. Then we will have the minority electing a government for the majority. Sometime ago they increased hours for polling and still the turnout is reducing. If the polling stations were open all week the turnout still would not improve so can we call on the CEC to get legislation passed so mandatory voting for all citizens over 18 can come into force. I move. *(Applause)*

BRO. P. EYRE (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, voter turnout at the Euro elections was down to just 35%, the lowest since 1918 which Glynis mentioned yesterday. To reiterate on what my colleague just said, yes, we do call on the CEC for legalisation to be passed for mandatory voting for all citizens over the age of 18 and with a higher turnout of voters, hopefully, it will help Labour candidates. Please support. *(Applause)*

COMPULSORY PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIONS MOTION 161

161. COMPULSORY PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIONS

Congress asks that voting for Local, National and European elections should be compulsory. If a person wishes to abstain they should have to do so in person.

NORFOLK PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH
London Region

(Referred)

SIS. V. THOMAS (London): Madam President, Congress, this motion was raised some considerable time before the European and county elections of a few weeks ago. What an election that was. If we needed a wake-up call about the failure of many of the electorate to cast their vote, then the last Euro and county elections have been just that. We ignore that call at our peril. A lot of people have concluded the result overall was largely due to one thing, MPs expenses. The issue that determined the result was out of the hands of those standing as county councillors or MEPs. We all suspected Labour would pay on the day. Unfortunately, our concern was centred on those who would actually cast their vote rather than those who do not use their vote at all. A lot of dedicated people did spend a lot of their time raising public awareness with the *Hope not Hate* campaign. Some of the electorate voted for other parties, the Tories, LibDems, and in Norwich the Greens. There have always been extremist political groups and it is a testament to our tolerant society that they continue to exist but our tolerant nature is being abused when the manifestation of that tolerance is the lies of fascism in Europe.

This country is a decent tolerant country and so are most of the people in it but unless the silent majority cast their vote we will always be under the threat of fascists like the BNP. This threat is now a reality in Yorkshire and the North West. I was in Norwich at the count the day after the elections and I can tell you that there were no smiling Labour faces. Generations before us have toiled and in some cases given their lives to give us the rights we have today and with rights come responsibilities; everyone must exercise their civic duty, take an active part in elections and cast their vote. Congress, please support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Does anyone wish to come in? Come on, John. *(Cheers)*

BRO. J. TOOMEY (North West & Irish): I don't know what the CEC are going to say about Motion 160 and 161 but I certainly oppose anyone that tries to compulsorily or mandate me to vote for anyone. After the disgusting behaviour of them MPs there, not you two but 92 of you *(Applause)* why would you expect people to turn out and vote for you? They were both amazed and disgusted at the antics. You are like pigs in a trough. You don't deserve our recognition. What I say is abolish parliament, like (?) Conran said, and let's have a republic! *(Applause/Cheers)*

THE PRESIDENT: Never fails!

A DELEGATE: This is an ill thought out proposal, Madam President and Congress. I am from Wiltshire and Swindon Branch. If we had compulsory voting most of our members would have had to go out in Wiltshire and have a straight choice between LibDems, BNP, and Tories, because Labour did not stand in most of the seats in the county. That is true right across the South West in the rural areas. The answer is not to make people vote for candidates; in some cases all the candidates are no good. Remember, in *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* Robert Tressell addressed this, he said, "If you have compulsory voting are you going to send people out to force them to choose between capitalist candidates?" No. The answer is there need to be good candidates that inspire people to vote for them. The answer is not to force people to vote Labour but to have Labour candidates worth voting for. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Anyone else? No? John McDonnell.

BRO. J. McDONNELL (CEC, Manufacturing): President, Congress, the CEC are supporting 162 on MPs expenses and other extra posts they have but asking Congress to refer Motion 160 and 161. Now, Congress, I come from Salford, that is where I have lived for the last 50 years. We have three MPs there at this point in time, Hazel Blears, and I feel like being sick when I mention the woman's name ----

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't got a bucket! Stop it.

BRO. J. McDONNELL: -- and then we have Ian Stuart but because of the boundary changes he has had to stand down. I suggest he keeps his case packed because he may be coming back. Then we have Hazel Blears. What can one say about Hazel Blears? She has deserted the working class movement. She tried to bring the Prime Minister and the government down for her own political ends. That is how much she thinks of working class people. She betrayed the people of Salford and you know it really got them going when she mentioned the £13,000 that she stole. That is what she did; she stole it from you and me. Then she gets her handbag out in front of the world's media, opens it up, takes her cheque book out and signs for £13,000, just like that. I can tell her now that in Salford there are people earning £13,000 over a two-year period, wonderful people who have supported Labour all their life and now because of that woman are deserting Labour. They are crying because they cannot go out and vote for Labour. It is not fair.

I will tell you something else, and this is not fair. There was a poster up in a shop where I live, the sweet shop, and it says, *No more than two MPs allowed in the shop at one time.* (*Applause*) That is not all, it says, *take your hoods off as well.* (*Laughter*) But, you know, that is not fair because we have a wonderful MP in Salford who represents me. She is called Barbara Keeley. She is available, she goes out and meets the people, and it is those types of people who are suffering for the likes of Hazel Blears and all the other people that have been robbing the taxpayers' money. I will support her and the people of Salford will because she does a wonderful job, like hundreds of others of our MPs.

I was fortunate enough to have a letter printed in the Manchester News which really created people to think. I got loads and loads of letters and phone calls. In that letter about Hazel Blears I mention that because of the actions of her and all the other people of all the parties who have been taking the taxpayers' money the BNP may get a seat. Lo and behold, I stand here today where a National Front, a fascist, represents me, a fascist. I was born in 1933 and I can remember, and my sister who is 80 will tell you, about the Board of Guardians and all the other business, the Board of Guardian doctors, and where she took me when I was two years old to a place in Birkenhead where we got a meal. She will tell you what the meal was, coco and a bit of bread and cheese.

You know, that is what it is all about and that is why I want to come on about the Tories. They are what they are. We expect them to do that. They will rob you and smile at you. They are that type of person. As Steve Hopper said, the president of Durham Miners who I was sat with last night, the only good Tory is a dead one, and that is fact. (*Applause*) Going back to all those people, all through the country who through the actions of these people, these MPs, and not all of them, who voted for the BNP, well, what those people did was put a swastika on every cenotaph in this country. They have given power through the ballot box to a man who walks in the footsteps of Adolph Hitler. What a wonderful situation, and what people. They say they represent the working class. Hazel, I can assure you there are people who are supporting me. I do not think she has long to go. She is just about there now and we are stamping on her feet, and I think she will go in the end.

THE PRESIDENT: John, could you please attend to the business you are standing up there for? I have given you some leeway. (*Laughter*)

BRO. J. McDONNELL: I know. I just could not help it. As you get older that is how you get. (*Laughter*) But going to Motions 160 and 161 (*applause*) they are complicated, especially given the present political climate. In recent years fewer and fewer people chose to vote at elections. This is in part due to the disillusionment with politicians. It is crucially important to encourage people to engage with politics at the ballot box and beyond. It may be possible to achieve this by lowering the voting age or extending the voting period. The arguments for and against compulsory voting are complex. Compulsory voting does not show up that the government represents the vast majority of the population given that governments cannot afford to neglect any section of society. Compulsory voting works well in a number of countries around the world, including Belgium, Australia, Cyprus, and Singapore. Many believe that making voting compulsory is an invasion of an individual's civil rights. Moreover, some organised groups do not believe in taking part in political activities due to their religious beliefs, for instance, Jehovah's Witnesses. Many others do not wish to vote because they do not want to become involved in the political process. These are crucial considerations and should be carefully considered when setting the GMB policy. Therefore, the CEC is asking for these two motions, 160 and 161, to be referred to allow the CEC to refer to this matter and give it thorough and appropriate consideration.

President, if I may, and I know the movers of Motion 160 and 161 wish to re-engage the voters due to the poor turnout at the local and European elections and to beg your indulgence I think now that the feeding frenzy has exhausted itself and the dust is settling on the political devastation suffered by the Labour Party, it is time once again for the trade union movement to step in and rescue the ethics of a Labour Party and enshrine the belief, an opportunity for all. That is why the trade unions created a party many years ago. There is too much negativity and criticism that has been exercised not only by opponents of Labour but by many within the scope of the Party itself. The all too familiar scenarios ----

THE PRESIDENT: John, John, please wind up.

MR. J. McDONNELL: I will just finish now on three things, President. I think it is ----

THE PRESIDENT: I want to get breakfast in the morning!

MR. J. McDONNELL: You know, I think it is interesting. I think they were enjoying it, but, anyway.... *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. I've got a lot of members down there who think it is interesting too.

MR. J. McDONNELL: We ask the ----

THE PRESIDENT: John, come on. *(Cheers/whistles)*

MR. J. McDONNELL: Support 162 and ask the people of 160 and 161 for reference back. Thank you, President. *(Applause/Cheers)*

THE PRESIDENT: That's quite all right, John. I move to Motion 162, the CEC are supporting.

Motion 162 was carried.

THE PRESIDENT: Do the movers of 160 and 161 wish to reply to that debate?

BRO. P. SOPER: Why should he have all the fun? I think I am making a mistake here taking Toomey on. Come on, you are a boilermaker. Down with the revolution! Let's get out there and vote Labour. I refer. *(Applause/Laughter)*

THE PRESIDENT: You are trying to make my life hell. Okay, Midland & East Coast accept reference? *(Agreed)*

Motion 160 was referred.

THE PRESIDENT: London Region, do you accept reference or do you want the right to reply? Accept reference? Does the region accept reference? (*Agreed*) Thank you.

Motion 161 was referred.

EMPLOYMENT POLICY – RIGHTS AT WORK

EQUAL PAY MOTION 74

74. EQUAL PAY

Congress agrees to instruct the CEC and General Secretary to use our political and industrial influence to create an environment that allows the GMB to negotiate as well as litigate on behalf of our members to deliver equal pay.

Our campaign, consistent with our policy to introduce equal pay has stalled in some areas due to anti union tribunal decisions and unscrupulous employers who see the delivery of equal pay as an opportunity to reduce the pay of men rather than increase the pay of women.

Our campaign should be aided by, if necessary, legislation that allows for the delivery of equal pay under the framework of collective negotiation.

NEWCASTLE LA BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

BRO. M. BAKER (Northern): President, Congress, as a local government worker I see every day the effects the equal pay situation has on our members. It is not just the financial effects but the effects on morale and the ability of our union and others to work within the framework of collective negotiation. The scandal that is equal pay has gone on too long. It is time action was taken to sort out this problem once and for all. It is time our Union used its political and industrial influence in order to create an environment that allows the GMB to negotiate as well as litigate on behalf of our members to deal with equal pay. There have been some terrible anti-trade union decisions in this area, decisions that in some cases may need changes in legislation to put right. There have also been problems created by a certain band of solicitors who operate out of the North East who have become very rich on the backs of low-paid local government workers, people who are not interested in equal pay for our members but are interested in lining their own pockets at our members' expense. The situation has gone on too long. It is time that our Union takes action. It is time that if a change in legislation is needed, then we lobby our friends in government to make this happen. Let's face it, if there is a change of government and the Tories are in power, I do not think many changes will be coming our way. Let's use our influence and get the equal pay situation sorted. Let's move the blocks that are stalling the process. Let's bring justice and fairness to our low-paid local government workers. Let's deal with that equal pay. Congress, I move.

(Applause)

SIS. C. LINES (Northern) in seconding the motion said: Congress, I have been attending this Congress for a number of years now representing my members in local government in the public services section. It is an absolute disgrace after all these years that the equal pay issue is still not sorted. It is not the GMB's fault it is not sorted, in fact the opposite. The GMB has led the way in this area and has won much praise in many quarters because of it. It is the fault of anti-trade union tribunal rulings, unfair and dishonest employers, and quick-win solicitors. We should not be surprised to learn that bad employers have been trying to use the equal pay legislation to drive down the pay of men in local government rather than increasing the pay of women; that was the intention. It is time we as a trade union, and the CEC, and the General Secretary, flexed our policy and industrial muscle. We need to campaign to get the equal pay under the framework of collective negotiations. It needs changes in the legislation to bring that about and we are campaigning for all that as well. Congress, let's not have to bring this issue back again next year, let's sort it out. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? No? We have no CEC speaker.

Motion 74 was carried.

CEC SPECIAL REPORT: EQUAL PAY

Introduction

At GMB Congress in 2005, GMB launched the most aggressive equal pay campaign ever seen. GMB now has 30,000 individual equal pay claims lodged with tribunals. We have negotiated equal pay for literally hundreds and thousands of women and recovered over 1 billion pounds in compensation for them. This report highlights the GMB campaign for equal pay.

Why Equal Pay is Important - The Gender Pay Gap

Full-time women workers earn on average around 19% less than men. It is an even bigger difference in part-time work, around 40%. These average differences between the sexes, known as the gender pay gap, are largely caused by society attaching lower values to certain roles mainly carried out by women (eg caring, catering, cleaning) and by more men being in managerial and senior professional positions. Part of the gender pay gap is

caused by discrimination in pay - that is unlawful and is what equal pay law seeks to address.

GMB – The Union for Equal Pay

The GMB Campaign for equal pay launched at Congress 2005 builds on a long tradition and hard work of GMB activists in organizing around the issue of equal pay. The GMB strategy is to register claims, to negotiate, and to back that up with litigation when necessary. The success of the Campaign has put GMB back at the forefront of the struggle for equal pay. The GMB campaign puts equal pay at the top of the bargaining agenda in the workplace.

More and more women want to join GMB, and in the last four years over 177,000 women have joined GMB. Women now make up almost half of all GMB members today, many of them part time and low paid. GMB continues the commitment to help working women fight for equal pay. Since 2005, GMB has visited and campaigned in thousands of workplaces including schools, local government, care homes, and in private sector companies. More than 76,000 part-time working women have joined GMB for the first time, including 45,000 in local government. Working women joining GMB to fight for equal pay has made a major contribution to the 9% growth in our total union membership that we have seen since 2005.

Julie Hayward – Cooking Up a Storm

The Campaign builds on historic trade union struggles for equal pay. GMB won the first ever equal pay for work of equal value case when Julie Hayward achieved her famous

victory against Cammel Laird. Julie was a cook working in the shipyards who proved that her work was as demanding as the work of a male painter.

It was a long legal process but her victory demonstrates the very real benefits for women and the role of trade unions in achieving those victories. Julie's case sits alongside other historic struggles supported by trade unions including the Ford Sewing Machinists, the Hull Fish Packers, the Yorkshire Dinner Ladies, the NHS Speech and Language Therapists, and the Belfast Cleaners to name a few. The TUC has produced a DVD portraying these struggles with interviews with some of the women concerned, including Julie Hayward.

The GMB Campaign – Delivering equal pay in the workplace

The GMB equal pay campaign is about delivering equality in the workplace. This means negotiating collective pay arrangements that are as free from bias and discrimination as we are able to achieve - and litigating to make up any shortfalls where appropriate. There is no other means of achieving equal pay in collective settings. Courts can hear complaints of unequal pay and can set compensation but they cannot design whole pay systems for large scale employers.

The GMB campaign in the Public Sector

In the NHS and in local government there has been huge progress on equal pay since the late 90's. Thanks to trade union pressure, Single Status in local government and Agenda for Change in the NHS have led to more equal pay structures being introduced across over 2 million workers. The GMB campaign builds on Single Status and Agenda for Change to bring real improvements in the pay of low paid workers.

With the introduction of the 1997 National Joint Council Single Status Agreement councils committed to end the historic pay discrimination in local government by reviewing and renegotiating their pay and grading structures to make them equal pay proofed. But lack of progress due to underfunding meant that in 2004 a further national agreement was necessary to try to secure the implementation of all pay and grading reviews by April 2007. While this accelerated progress the problems of local government finance continued to be a hindrance. As a result 40% of councils have still to complete single status, or, more positively, single status has been completed for 1 million council workers. GMB will continue to press for full implementation.

In the NHS, Agenda for Change is the most significant overhaul of pay in the NHS since the creation of the health service in 1948. Introduced in 2004 with significant central government funding Agenda for Change has been implemented in most NHS Trusts. However, Trade Unions are challenging the NHS over equal pay compensation because Agenda for Change did not include any provision for backpay and there are around 14,000 outstanding claims from all unions at employment tribunals. Nonetheless, Agenda for Change is regarded as a successful example of implementing equal pay in practice. After hearing evidence from employers, the government, and unions, an employment tribunal has recently ruled that Agenda for Change does what it set out to do – deliver equal pay!

The GMB Campaign in the Private Sector

There are few examples of major equal pay schemes in the private sector and these employers often do not recognise or acknowledge equal pay as an issue in their businesses. It is also the case that most private sector employers organise their operations in such a way as to reduce the prospects for making equal pay comparisons by segregating their workforces with different pay structures. GMB has been seeking to break this mould by looking at the potential for equal value claims in a number of companies.

The GMB Campaign: Challenging the Employers

GMB believes that equality proofed pay structures can only be achieved through collective negotiation which needs to be backed up by litigation - and where negotiation fails that litigation is carried out. Practically this means GMB Officers establishing whether there are possible equal pay claims and encouraging members to register them while at the same time engaging with employers to renegotiate job and pay structures. By lodging equal pay claims our members' position is both protected and strengthened. These claims can proceed where negotiations stall or do not deliver.

Carrying out this strategy in the real world is far from simple. The first issue is that only rarely is there a clear and certain prospect for equal pay claims. In any large, complex employer there will be many pay anomalies but whether these are due to sex discrimination requires considerable expert analysis. That is why public sector employers are required to carry out equal pay assessments to test their pay structures for bias and discrimination - which GMB calls on all employers to do.

The second issue is that once pay inequality is recognised there comes the question of what to do about it. For an individual it may just be a matter of paying them more. If it is for a large group this is likely to be evidence of a systematic problem requiring an overhaul of the entire job and pay structure. There is also likely to be a considerable cost implication.

If any of those issues stand in the way of progress then we proceed with equal pay claims through tribunals. The proof of that is the 30,000 live equal pay cases that GMB is actively pursuing for women mainly in local government. These are all generated by our local Officers and activists with the approval of the individual members and taken up by GMB solicitors throughout England, Wales and Scotland. These cases can be long and difficult with many test issues including cases that have gone to the appeal courts and the House of Lords.

As an example, the GMB case of *Joss v Cumbria County Council* involves several thousand claimants and the case has already been running for 5 years. It has spawned a series of satellite cases as Cumbria has fought every issue and appealed every finding. Legal costs have been huge and as yet there is no sign of any money for the claimants.

At the same time there are other cases which are testing important principles of equal pay law, sponsored by GMB and other public sector trade unions. We are absolutely at the forefront of this cutting edge litigation, leading the fight for equal pay.

The GMB Campaign: Challenging the No-Win No-Fee Lawyers

At the same time as campaigning for equal pay, GMB has faced attacks from no-win no-fee lawyers. In 2003 English law changed to increase the amount of compensation equal pay claimants were entitled to for past pay inequality. It increased to a maximum of six years back pay (five in Scotland) from the previous two years. This amount of potential cash now made equal pay an attractive proposition for law firms to tout for the work on a non-win-no-fee basis; before that it was just left to unions.

A number of such no-win-no-fee lawyers operate in the equal pay field. One such no win no fee lawyer is Stefan Cross. A former trade union lawyer who did GMB work in the North East, Cross set up in 2002 with a sales force of ex-union officers to take equal pay cases for union members with him at a 30% fee rather than for free with their unions. He was prepared to act for them in claims against their unions. Cross' actions are an attack on trade unions and seek to blame unions for the employer's failure to pay equal pay.

Allen v GMB

The case of *Allen v GMB* was run by Stefan Cross on behalf of 51 women employed by Middlesbrough Council. It was regarding their equal pay negotiations in 2004. A tribunal in Newcastle found that GMB had indirectly discriminated against the women, a finding overturned by the Employment Appeal Tribunal and subsequently reinstated by the Court of Appeal in 2008. The House of Lords refused permission to appeal. The case has now been referred back to the original tribunal to determine remedies i.e. the compensation that the claimants will recover.

Other Cases

There are thousands of other *Allen*-type cases against unions pending from the same no-win no-fee lawyer mainly in the North East and Scotland, which GMB is challenging.

In 2009 GMB successfully challenged hundreds of cases brought against the union by Stefan Cross in Yorkshire across three local authorities, Leeds, Rotherham, and Sheffield.

When GMB pressed Cross to particularise the general alleged complaints against the union in these three authorities the claims were withdrawn.

In 2007 Cross threatened to sue GMB in the civil courts on behalf of 3000 members across the UK alleging that we were negligent in not notifying them about their equal pay rights. GMB challenged these cases and at the time of writing this report the threatened 3000 has been reduced to 8 (which are still contested).

Quinn v Cross

As part of the no-win-no-fee contract Stefan Cross tries to impose penalty clauses on his clients if they change their mind. One such case was a Ms Quinn in [Glasgow] who did not like the service she got from Stefan Cross so she went back to her union and refused to pay his penalty clauses. In December 2008 a Scottish court not only upheld her right to refuse to pay but in so doing declared Cross' contract unenforceable. This means that those Scottish clients of his who have paid him a share of their equal pay compensation may be able to recover it - and GMB has written to members in Scotland offering to do just that.

The GMB Campaign: The Future

There is no end in sight for the campaign for equal pay or the litigation that results from it. For GMB it means that our resolve to win equal pay must not weaken - whether that be through negotiation or running 30,000 equal pay claims or defending ourselves against no-win-no-fee lawyers.

This is our action plan for the future:

- We will build on our successful campaign which has already recovered over a billion pounds in compensation for GMB members.
- Campaign for equal pay through collective negotiation and litigation where necessary to protect members and keep GMB at the cutting edge of equal pay law
- Press for full implementation of Single Status in local authorities with equal pay and compensation
- Press for equal pay compensation in the NHS
- Press private sector employers to address equal pay
- Demand proper funding for equal pay. If society is serious about the equal pay gap then the cost of closing it has to be provided for. It is simply not feasible for equal pay to be achieved at nil cost as it is expected to be in local government.

- Demand that collectivism is brought back into the process of securing equal pay. The rights of individuals to equal pay and not to be discriminated against are being interpreted by Courts as anti-collective such that negotiating equal pay has become a lottery. If the Courts will not apply common sense then the law needs changing.
- Demand access to justice. Where members and their unions have to resort to litigation it should not be open to employers to thwart the process for years and years. Equal pay law is far too complex and technical and needs reforming. Tribunals can't cope and the only gainers are lawyers. There must be fast-track specialist courts for equal pay that also carry the seniority to determine binding outcomes. Collectivism needs to be part of the process. By the same token, abuses by no-win-no-fee lawyers should be stopped.
- Challenge the attacks brought against the union by no-win no-fee lawyers. We will support our members who seek to obtain justice against the no-win no-fee lawyers.

Conclusion

The success of the GMB equal pay campaign is down to the hard work of GMB officers and activists who organize around the issue. It is not an easy struggle and has difficult obstacles to overcome. However, our task as a progressive trade union

is to represent our member's collective interests and to secure justice and equality for our members.

(Adopted)

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, can I now move to the CEC Special Report and as before, Congress, I intend to take the debate on the CEC Special Report. It will be moved and seconded on behalf of the CEC. I will invite each region in turn to put up one speaker. I will then ask for any speakers opposed to the report. Finally, we will move to the vote. Okay? I call Brian Strutton on behalf of the CEC to move.

BRO. B. STRUTTON (National Secretary, Public Services): Brothers and Sisters, we know in the GMB that the struggle for equal pay is part of the struggle for basic justice, a pure and fundamental principle of fairness and decency for working people to be treated with respect and not exploited. It is a struggle against employers and against some of society's most misconceived values, values that right up to the 20th century meant that paid work for women was frowned upon in case it took away work for men. Men were seen as the breadwinners and women were seen as the mothers and housewives, and even today occupations that relate to those old-fashioned views of women's roles, caring, catering, cleaning jobs, are still segregated to women and underpaid in comparison to work of similar demand that is carried out largely by men.

Society generally has been slow to come to terms with gender segregation but none slower than employers of women. Where that manifests itself as discrimination at work is where we step in. It is a core objective of the GMB set out in the second rule of our rule book to achieve and maintain equal pay for women. It is a struggle rooted in the workplace, not as some would have it a theoretical debate between lawyers and academics. It is actually no more complicated than the same issue trade unions have always fought against, the inbuilt propensity for employers to exploit workers whenever and wherever they can. We should tell that to some of these lawyers and academics who have made handsome livings out of arguing over equal pay. They have made it so complicated that nobody really understands what the law about equal pay means, and that smokescreen of complexity allows employers to hide and dodge, and evade, their true obligations; and worse, it has even led to the ludicrous proposition that somehow it is not employers but trade unions who are to blame. How can that be? Do we pay people's wages? No, employers pay wages and if there is equal pay discrimination the finger of blame points fairly and squarely at the employer.

What we do is what we do best, we fight for working women and we keep on fighting. For the first half of the last century that fight was to stop the most blatant discrimination of all, men and women doing precisely the same jobs side by side but with a man's pay rate and a woman's pay rate, indeed equal pay for the same work was only introduced in

the public sector in the 1950s and 1960s and progress was even slower in the private sector. But thanks to the four sewing machinists in 1967, the Belfast hospital cleaners in 1985, the NHS speech therapists in 1986, the Yorkshire dinner ladies in 1990, and of course our own Julie Hayward, supported by the GMB to establish the principle of equal value, the right of women to have equal pay has been forced forward. All of those ground-breaking cases were union cases.

There were no firms of lawyers out there then volunteering to take up the cudgels but that changed because in 2002 the law began to change to allow women more back-pay compensation for equal pay tripling the amount available and, guess what, all of a sudden lawyers began sniffing around this potential goldmine for them, not out of some altruistic desire to help low-paid women, make no mistake about it, their motivation was to make money, not much different to those greedy solicitors who made a mint out of the miners' compensation scheme. Most notorious among them is Stefan Cross, the no-win no-fee lawyer who used to work for unions and who now uses former union officials to drum up business for him. He takes a cut of up to 30% from the women he represents. He does not tell them that their union would do it for free.

Cross and his cronies have also persuaded union members to sue their own union using discrimination law that was designed to be used against employers. In one case in one court, this is the case of Allen, Cross won a case against us because a tribunal found that we had indirectly discriminated against 26 women in pay and grading negotiations in Middlesbrough back in 2004, and there are many more cases to deal with. But Cross has just had to withdraw 175 similar cases in courts in Scotland. He has been stopped in his efforts to bring 500 claims against us in Yorkshire. He has lost his botched attempt to destroy *Agenda for Change* throughout the NHS. He has failed in his threat to run 3,000 negligence claims against the GMB that he said he was going to do in 2006. He probably thought we would cave in and negotiate settlement with him but we do not negotiate with terrorists. (*Applause*)

In Scotland, they are very sensible courts up there and have declared Cross's no-win no-fee approach to be unlawful and his contracts unenforceable. So, I am pleased to tell Congress that over 50 GMB members in Scotland are suing Cross for taking money from them to which he was not entitled. (*Applause*) That is not all; questions are being raised about his activities under English law. Over 100 GMB members have asked us to raise their complaints to the solicitors' practice authorities about his business ethics. Furthermore, the government has woken up to the situation and last month announced proposals to place restrictions on them and to regulate the no-win no-fee market. Good, but let's just hope it is not light-touch regulations.

Congress, there is something much more important that government can do, that is to re-think how equal pay is going to be paid for. European law encourages equality through removing the advantage. In equal pay terms that means employers can try to get away with it by dumbing down and plead poverty to justify it but, surely, equality if it means anything is about improvement and equal pay is fundamentally about paying low-paid women more. That means government has to go beyond the extra borrowing that it has

allowed for local government to help fund equal pay, welcome though that is, and must provide direct funding so that employers do not give some women pay rises by giving men and other women pay cuts. That has to stop.

Congress, our report to you sets out how we continue to take this great campaign forward. We will continue to be at the forefront of equal pay. We will continue to negotiate equal pay in the workplace. We will continue to litigate against employers who will not pay up. We will continue to fight back against the legal and establishment forces who seek to undermine collectivism and trade unionism. The GMB will continue to campaign for justice for women and all works as we have always done. I commend the equal pay report to you. Thank you. (*Applause*)

SIS. C. MURPHY (CEC, Commercial Services) in seconding the report said: You have heard from Brian about the GMB's tireless campaigning for equal pay. I want to tell you about some of the successes of that campaign in recent years. It was in 2004 that GMB took a fresh look at the lack of progress on equal pay, particularly in the local government sector. The public services section issued the new GMB policy which took a stronger and more aggressive stance making it clear that we wanted to negotiate equal pay but that we would back that up with litigation.

That still was not enough and so in 2005 GMB launched a major drive to encourage our women members to launch equal pay claims. We set a target of 30,000 equal pay claims and thanks to the enormous efforts made by our branches, stewards and officers, we have achieved that and surpassed that target. As a direct consequence there has been acceleration in the number of local authorities prepared to negotiate and this is important because despite everything equal pay can only be achieved through collective bargaining, not through the courts. We now have equal pay settlements for literally hundreds of thousands of women worth over a billion pounds, money that they have been owed, of course.

The GMB campaign for equal pay is not only right because it is about justice for workers but it is really delivering substantial payouts for our members, and naturally more and more women want to join the GMB because we are successfully fighting for them. We do not campaign just to make new members but there is absolutely nothing wrong with growing through the success because it adds to our bargaining strength for everyone. The equal pay campaign is a hard one but that is why our members need us. I commend this Special Report to you. (*Applause*)

SIS. M. CLARKE (Birmingham): In 1970 a Labour government introduced the Equal Pay Act, in 1975 they then introduced the Sex Discrimination Act, two good pieces of legislation yet roll forward to today, almost 40 years later, and we still have women workers being blatantly discriminated against with regard to pay in the workplace. We in the Birmingham & West Midlands Region currently have over 8,000 equal pay claims lodged. Single status, which was supposed to right the wrongs of pay inequality in the public sector in local authorities, was introduced in 1997, 12 years ago, and it is still not implemented in many authorities throughout the country. It is nearly 40 years since the

Equal Pay Act and 12 years since single status and still major pay inequality. Would any other group of workers in the economy be treated so unfairly for so long? I think not. Women have put up with this for far too long and I tell you now, enough is enough. We have had enough of not having enough. (*Applause*)

The GMB lead the way on many principal campaigns and have set records and standards by being the first trade union to win the first ever equal pay for equal value claims. Congress, we must continue to set the trend for other unions to follow. Our next big task, although we are far from completing the one we currently have, is to target private industry. Equal pay should be a priority in all wage negotiations in all workplaces. The Special Report sets out the progress to date and the challenges ahead, and there are many, not least the battle we have against the ambulance chasers that call themselves lawyers. We in the Birmingham & West Midlands Region are proud of the stance our union has taken against these reprobates. We should and we are fighting them all the way. The GMB is the leader in tackling pay inequality and Birmingham & West Midlands Region is pleased to support the CEC Special Report. Thank you. (*Applause*)

BRO. A. MOSS (North West & Irish): Congress, whilst I accept the report I just want to highlight some of the pitfalls that may befall you because according to this report there is about 40% of the members who have not been paid. The problem we have with it is that we in Liverpool are not worried about the lawyers, we are more worried about the council itself. Up to two weeks ago we thought we were moving along quite smoothly and then the City Council dropped bombshells on us and told us that they were not going to pay the TUPE staff and they were not going to pay any claims to males, the piggy-back claims as we call them, and they said they would probably see us in the European Court before they pay that.

The problem is that you have to be aware of what is going to happen. Like Mary, we worked with the dinner ladies. We have people who have two or three jobs, cleaning, dinner ladies, SAs, you name it and they have done it. The problem we have with that is that we have schools that are split. What you have to understand is we have the voluntary-aided schools. The schools there are not paying out for these equal pay claims. Inside there we have dinner ladies who are working for the council and we have support staff who work for the school so you have each side against each other. The problem we have with that is they are turning on the Union.

We went along there with our fulltime official, myself and another colleague, and stood and listened to what they said and the first words out of their mouth were, "It's the Union's fault." It's not our fault. It's never been our fault. We're fighting for them but, beware, they are coming at you and they are threatening the membership. Whilst we have gained membership from it, we could lose it as well. What I am saying to you is that we also have to be aware that people are signing away their rights and they do not know they are signing away their rights.

Last week we went to a signing ceremony where people were signing a COP3 which meant that they were giving up their rights if they had a claim within the council and a

claim outside the council if they were working for a firm that had been TUPE'd, and they signed away those rights. We were appealing with them not to do that but they were doing it because they were scared in case they did not get the money. So, I say to you, Congress, beware what you sign and what your members are signing because they are trying to rip you off, and it is not just the solicitors, it is the councils themselves. Thank you. (*Applause*)

SIS. J. SMITH (London): Congress, Madam President, speaking on the equal pay CEC Special Report, London Region fully supports this well-documented report which gives the history on the fight for equal pay for our female and ethnic colleagues. In the 1970s, this Union, our proud union, set up its own equal rights department with Pat Turner as its equal rights officer. I can tell you I as a shop steward and my works convenor were fortunate to attend our then Woodstock Training College and the course we attended was equal pay. It was reported in our candid journal the frustration that I and my convenor had expressed, the frustration within the workplace of us doing the same work and getting a lower rate of pay. As a result of the training we received we produced a case and took the company successfully to a tribunal.

This report raises how vital it is for our shop stewards and our officer force to fully engage in the fight for equal pay. As equal pay is an issue that needs extra effort in understanding our negotiations, stewards and officers may benefit from some additional briefings and training purely on equal pay. The CEC has done a great job preparing this excellent document giving very clear examples in the fight the GMB has faced in getting our members equal pay, including a scurrilous former trade union lawyer by the name of Stefan Cross. I ask you, what type of liar is this when his actions were to attack the trade union and blame them for the employers' failure to pay and recognise equal pay?

Congress, London Region, as I said, fully support the report. Finally to all employers: this is 2009 and when we do the same work contributing to your profits treat us as equal and not as second-rate citizens. Please accept and vote for this report.

BRO. J. NEEDHAM (Midlands & East Coast): There are two issues, low pay for women workers and the vultures circling for compensation settlements. These are the main issues but the last agenda item is that the government will not allow local authorities in the main to settle at full compensation levels. Let's get the government to find the funding for equal pay claims. It found the money for the banks. Local government pay offer 2009 is 0.5% applied equally to both men and women. This seems to be the way that local authorities want to apply equal pay. However, they know we have secured settlements of around £25,000 for our dinner ladies but when local authorities put their money in Iceland and it goes down the Swanny maybe that is why they cannot afford to give you equal pay; maybe we should turn round and say invest the money properly in the first place and you might be able to pay our workers what they deserve. We agree to support this motion. (*Applause*)

BRO. N. COLLINSON (Northern): Congress, Northern Region welcomes this report on equal pay. Things have moved on in the health service through *Agenda for Change* and

the single status and we have moved a long way to right the injustices of equal pay, but we are not there yet. We need to build on the successful campaign we have already run. The importance of maintaining the role of collective bargaining is imperative to the future of our members. It is the best way to reach agreement on equal pay. One of the most important things moving forward is to press the private sector to address the issues of equal pay. Overall, this is an excellent report which Northern Region welcomes. Thank you. (*Applause*)

BRO. S. GLEN (GMB Scotland): Yesterday we heard the CEC Report on Low Pay and a statement was made by a colleague, a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. That applies in a lot of ways to this particular report. Thousands and thousands of female workers are working and doing a job the same as men and getting paid a damned sight less. I talk from a personal point of view as my wife has worked for the council for years and it was about 30% less than what the guys were getting for the same job. The GMB is aggressively campaigning for equal pay and will continue to do that and, I may add, with some considerable success. Towards the end of the report the GMB's action plan for the future as far as I can see is sound. If you read it you will see that it is sound. I urge you to support and accept this report. Thank you.

SIS. E. THEAKER (Southern): Single status has addressed many issues in my own area, Croydon, with many staff receiving six years' compensation back-pay, some school caretakers received up to £20,000 plus, and the care assistants also got the same amount. This was marvellous but, alas, the cost was much more than anticipated and as a result further down the list of people that were being paid out, jobs that were deemed no longer active but have been worked over the past years would not be evaluated so staff will not receive payments for the full six years. These include home carers, one of the groups that were meant to benefit. The home care service in Croydon was outsourced a few years ago and many staff were redeployed so have continuous service and the record of working in that area is quite apparent, but they still will not be paid. Due to the diminishment of council funds this back-pay has ceased. They will be paid for the years up until the time the home care was outsourced. As a result we have many grievances running and we also have members that are going to need a solicitor, which is a disgrace. The council know that we probably would not succeed with a tribunal. Our members are now requesting civil actions for breach of contract. We should ensure that when we are making agreements like the one that was taken out in 1997 with the National Joint Council we should not allow any loopholes so that when an agreement is reached it is brought into force straightaway. Had they been paid in 1997 and not given extra time they would have been earning the money that they should have got then, and would not have got back-pay, fair enough, they would already have had it. The argument staff are using is that even if the job was outsourced in 2005 or 2006 they should still be covered under the 1997 agreement. Although this has left many staff, let's say, dissatisfied I think mostly the people have appreciated the work that has been done. The report from the CEC is excellent and I recommend it as well from the Southern Region. Thank you. (*Applause*)

BRO. P. KEMPTON (South Western): Colleagues, delivering equality at the workplace is the very cornerstone of GMB policy, a policy that reflects gender balance within GMB organised workplaces and which serves to project our Union as a champion of equality. Our approach to the challenge of delivering fair, transparent, and non-discriminatory pay and grading structures has been both positive and decisive, and an example to others whose stance has been uncertain and imprecise. We have combined a robust industrial strategy with a policy of encouraging the registration of legal claims. This twin track approach has ensured that the aims of members are subject to negotiation but fully protected when employers fail to respond to our members' claims. Our campaigning activities have been fantastically successful in attracting new members to the GMB who clearly see us as the vehicle for challenging bias and discrimination in pay structures. Congress, what a contrast there is between what we do and the activities of the parasitical no-win no-fee hawks who care little about equality and everything about financial gain and an opportunity to sue diligent union negotiators. Colleagues, our resolve to secure equality cannot and will not weaken. Our success so far highlights what can be achieved when a union shows determination and commitment towards reducing the gender pay gap. Our members both present and prospective deserve nothing less. Congress, the South Western Region is pleased to support the Special Report. Thank you. (*Applause*)

SIS. L. BROOK (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I read the CEC Special Report on Equal Pay with great interest. I have been involved in equal pay and pay and grading issues for around five years. However, as you know, this struggle has been going on for much longer than that, too long. Some seven years ago I spoke at National College about the gender pay gap. Unfortunately, in spite of the continuous hard work of the GMB and its activists the unacceptable gap remains. We are pleased that our members who were originally sucked in by the leeches who are no-win no-fee solicitors, and especially my area in Leeds by Stefan Cross, have realised that the solicitors provided free by the GMB to fight and win their claims will pay them 100% of the claims and not rip them off with get-out clauses and extortionate fees.

Unfortunately, these no-win no-fee solicitors are not the only unscrupulous people involved in this issue. We continue to fight employers who create pay models which not only do not increase our female members' pay but attack and bring down our male members' pay to foot the bill. When the *Agenda for Change* was implemented in NHS Trust there was significant central government funding; local government has not received any such funding. This has been used as an excuse by local employers as to why they cannot afford to create acceptable pay models. Equal pay cannot be achieved with no cost. We also continue to fight for other pay related to pay and grading which are covered under the NJT terms and conditions which are being withheld from not only our female members but also male colleagues. We must ensure that we protect the possible claims of those staff who are TUPE'd or leave employment for some other reason, and those that we are currently still fighting for from employing schools that are refusing to pay our members, by lodging tribunal cases within the timescale. We welcome the continuing support of the GMB in providing activists with training to enable them to continue to support our members in this fight and will continue to fight for and win equal pay claims for our members. We wholly support the action plan for the future

but would ask that you remember that equal pay and its implementation should raise women workers' pay not attack and reduce our male colleagues' pay. We call on your support for this report and ask that you continue to support and fight unscrupulous employers to achieve equal pay for all. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. That was a great debate by everyone. Anyone wish to speak against? No? Okay, can I now put it to the vote?

The CEC Special Report: Equal Pay was adopted.

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, can I remind you that we have an important guest tomorrow so please make sure you have your credentials and you may have to take your bags out with you at lunchtime; you possibly will. The other thing is people have been asking me about the President's Night. The President's Night is tomorrow night and everybody, including guests, is invited to that evening. Okay? It is at the Imperial. Congress is adjourned to 9.30 tomorrow morning. Thank you all.

Conference adjourned.