

GMB

CONGRESS 2012

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SIS. MARY TURNER MBE
(President)
(In the Chair)

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Held in:

The Brighton Centre,
Brighton

on:

Sunday, 10th June 2012
(Congress)

Monday, 11th June 2012
(Morning: Congress/Afternoon: Section Conferences)

Tuesday, 12th June 2012
(Section Conferences)

Wednesday, 13th June 2012
(Congress)

and

Thursday, 14th June 2012
(Congress)

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PROCEEDINGS
DAY FOUR
(Wednesday, 13th June 2012)

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FOURTH DAY'S PROCEEDINGS

WEDNESDAY, 13TH JUNE 2012

MORNING SESSION

(Congress assembled at 9.30 a.m.)

THE PRESIDENT: Will Congress please come to order. Good morning, Congress. Could you please thank the Children from Somerhill Junior School in Hove for their lively entertainment this morning and for waking us up. *(Cheers and applause)*

Congress, I would like to welcome them on stage and they have all been given a GMB goody bag with a special edition T-shirt. As a thank you, we would like to give the school a cheque for £2,000 to help them. *(Presentation made amidst applause)*

A SOMERHILL JUNIOR SCHOOL TEACHER: Thank you so much for being such an appreciative audience and thank you for giving us the opportunity to play to you today.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

ANNOUNCEMENT:

THE PRESIDENT: If anyone has any photos that they would like to be included in the end-of-Congress slideshow, the funnier the better, then please see Charlotte in the Press Office upstairs.

Could I welcome delegates back from your Section Conferences where I am sure there have been some lively debates and interesting speakers.

We have five Social Policy motions carried over from Sunday's business and we will try and take those later today if time permits so please listen out for further announcements. We will also take Emergency Motion 2 this afternoon.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 5

THE PRESIDENT: I call on Helen Johnson to move Standing Orders Committee Report No. 5.

SIS. H. JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): Congress, I am moving Standing Orders Committee Report No. 5. The SOC has been informed that the following two motions have been withdrawn: Motion 76 – Temporary/Agency Workers, from Birmingham & West Midlands Region, and Motion 141, GMB Political Monitoring, from Southern Region.

Emergency Motions. The SOC has accepted one further emergency motion, Emergency Motion 4 – Job Losses in UK Manufacturing, standing in the name of Midland & East Coast Region. The SOC recommends that this emergency motion be heard in the morning session of Congress today.

The SOC has given permission for a video to be shown in relation to Remploy which will be shown later this morning, and for a video to be shown of Cammell Laird, whilst Motion 174 is considered on Thursday morning.

On the subject of times for speakers, in view of the outstanding number of motions still to be debated, please be aware that the SOC are considering speaking times. President and Congress, I move Standing Orders Report No. 5.

THE PRESIDENT: Does Congress accept Standing Orders Committee Report No. 5?

Standing Orders Committee Report No. 5 was ADOPTED

CEC POLITICAL SPECIAL REPORT (Continued)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, we will now continue our debate on the CEC Political Special Report and political motions which we suspended on Monday.

I will call for speakers from the two regions who did not get a chance to speak on the report, and then I will take any other speakers. Then we will move to the vote on the Report. Will speakers from the South Western Region and Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region comes to the front.

SIS. J. SMITH (South Western): Congress, I am speaking for the South Western Region on the CEC's Political Special Report.

The South Western Region wholeheartedly supports the CEC Political Special Report. It is an excellent document and asks many pertinent questions, questions we need to be asking and getting answers to to put before you. We had 13 years of New Labour which did not deliver as much as we in the trade union movement could have hoped for. We need the Labour Party to get back to its socialist roots and to capture the five million votes lost at the last general election. There is time to bring forth and nurture candidates who hold our values. We need to bring forth candidates who support the ordinary working people of this country and are not in politics for self-advancement. Let us ensure that our future politicians have some experience of real life. We have seen over the last few decades potential candidates who have come straight from university, gone into research posts but had no experience of what I call real work. Many have proved to be insular, closed in the political environment and with no experience of the real world. What we don't want are careerists who have no real rapport with or understanding of ordinary working people.

The South Western Region agrees that the 14 proposals need to be adopted, and adopted quickly, in order that we can go into the next election supporting the Labour Party with policies that this country needs. Let us bury New Labour once and for all and move on with a progressive party that can be seen by the electorate as one which has their interests at heart. That can be done. We want a government that is working for the betterment of the people it serves. Congress, South Western Region supports the CEC's Political Special Report. *(Applause)*

BRO. I. KEMP (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I am speaking in support of the CEC's Political Special Report. President and Congress, I am sorry, Paul, it's me you're listening to.

Colleagues, I hope that Ed Miliband's going to get a copy of this report just to see how he can return Labour from being the 'party of disillusion' back to being the party of hope and justice that I first joined when I was 16. After forgetting its core values and its core supporters, and after 13 years of dashed hopes, millions of voters, including some of our members, deserted Labour at the last election. After seeing the spivs and speculators prosper under New Labour, is it any wonder, although we welcome this report in the Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region, that some of our members still have reservations about our links to the Labour Party, especially our financial ones?

To give us a strong political voice and a party that shares our members' hopes and aspirations, we cannot rely on those careerist and drawing room politicians who hi-jacked the Labour Party, and we especially cannot rely on those spivs in *Progress*. After all, who was it whose money and hard work got Labour's gains in the council elections in May? It certainly wasn't the millionaires and luvvies who benefited from the last Labour Government and certainly not those in *Progress*, who would have loved to have seen Labour councillors lose their seats.

In order to rebuild our Labour Party, we have got to work with the rest of the labour movement to encourage our members to be active within the party, to give us a loud and strong voice on the issues affecting us. We must hold all of our Labour politicians to account. Using the measures highlighted in the report, we can rejuvenate the Labour Party from the grass roots up, but also we must change. We must change and adapt our structures to encourage political activism, to educate and inform and to support our members being engaged in the political process. I am proud to say that Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region already has some of these structures in place.

To those comrades who say that our future is outside the Labour Party, I give you this warning that, maybe, should have been in the Report. It took 45 years from it being founded for Labour to form its first government. We can't waste another 45 years looking for a party with pure socialism. As the great Nye Bevan said: "For socialism to succeed, it doesn't have to be 100%, and if it were such dogmatic purity would be barren." Instead of being out in the wilderness, Comrades, grasp this opportunity, reclaim our Labour Party, invigorate it with our ideas and values.

Congress, fight for our political future starts here and now. Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region stands ready to man the barricades to carry that fight forward. Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region supports the CEC's Political Special Report.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ian. Does anyone else wish to come in on the debate? If you do, please come forward.

BRO. M. COPPIN (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I am speaking in support. President and Congress, one year into my position as a GMB-elected Labour

councillor – not a GMB-sponsored councillor – I was elected with the biggest vote return in the whole district for a trade union councillor. (*Applause*)

In my district we have already more than tripled our trade union councillors. They are not all GMB but, nevertheless, active trade unionists. We are bringing to the forefront the very issues and aspirations of our members who overwhelmingly voted for us. To be frank, the most difficult job as a new active councillor and trade union councillor is to bring on board the old guard, the gravy-train mob who don't feel the need to change. We are labelled the "awkward squad" because we do challenge outsourcing, we support the living wage, we insist on scrutinising decisions of officers and the cabinet, and we insisted that the wages saved from last November's strike be spent by the local community groups and not go to pay more on consultants.

We are going to build new council houses, we are going to put in place proper strategies for jobs and protecting the vulnerable in our area and ensuring a decent place to live. We were not elected to negotiate with the employers. We were elected to hold the employers to book and put in place true labour and trade union policies. What I am getting at here is that we can take on the struggle, we can change things, but we just need to do what we do best: campaign and win positions, change attitudes and instil trade union policies. There is no rocket science to any of this. It's just a good old-fashion rumble.

There are many more GMB and other trade union activists achieving these results all around the country. The GMB Political Statement is, without doubt, the best piece of work that the trade union movement has produced in recent times. We cannot just wait for Labour to change. We need to change it. Our Labour Party was born out of the trade union struggle and it must now be reborn. No longer should we feel the need to make excuses for Labour. We must give them the direction they need. Thank you very much. Please support the CEC Statement. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: The General Secretary needs to answer a couple of points that were raised in the debate.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Congress, it's been a long debate and, in a sense, it was a very good debate and, actually, it was a very needed debate. It was also an honest debate. A lot of heartfelt points were raised. There is a lot of frustration but a lot of determination as well that we want to see the decent common values of trade unionism echo through the decision-making process at Westminster and elsewhere.

Mick Coppin has just spoken. I know Mick a little. He became a branch secretary in Mansfield, grew the branch, grew his workplace in membership, and understood the need to get more of our activists politically involved but active in the party. You see already the differences. There are many others in this hall, actually – Gary Doolan and others from the GMB in London – who got active by working in a local authority. When their jobs were outsourced, they actually stood for the council. Gary Doolan actually stood against the Lib-Dem Leader of the council and beat him. He knocked him out (*Applause*) because the values that Gary and our other members spoke about meant that people resonated. They understood how people felt and they were able to defeat the politicians. They helped to get Labour back in control in Islington. Only last week, it was Gary and other trade union councillors, and other good Labour

councillors on the Islington Council, who have come to the point of bringing back inhouse, under direct labour, with better and decent conditions, a whole range of services, including refuse and street cleaning, that the Liberal Democrats had privatised over past years. That's the reason why it is so important for good trade union people to be involved in the decision-making process of politics. That's the outcome. There are many more instances like that.

I want to make a couple of points. I am not trying to score them. Kim from London made the point about sponsoring MPs. Look, I don't know how many more times I'm going to have to say this. We don't sponsor MPs. We don't. We don't give money direct to MPs, but we do give money to campaigns and we give money for CLPs, and we affiliate to CLPs, but the big part of what we have got is that organisational support that we put on the ground to help MPs get elected. That's the big part, not the affiliation fee itself but that big issue about whether we should be giving our organisational support, which is also financial, to assist people to be elected who don't share our values. That comes to the heart of why we introduced, effectively, a grading system. This relates to the point that Matthew made. He named a couple of MPs in a very impassioned contribution.

This is where we just need to sharpen our act a bit better. Both of those MPs came through the system in your own region, so the starting point for blocking them out is not me but it is your own region. If you think that those MPs are not worthy of GMB support, then the first place is the region. But let me give you a bit of comfort, because I agree with you about the actions of one of them that I know about. I haven't commented on the other one yet. One of them recently did ask, in the time-honoured fashion, for some money from the union for a particular project, and we turned it down. We did not turn it down because the project wasn't a good one. We turned it down because we are sick and tired of giving money to people who then do absolutely nothing but turn their backs on the very people who give that money in the first place. (*Applause*) I am just sick and tired of it. We've had enough of it. So we are not buying it.

I am pleased. Billy, from Northern Region, said he had to read it twice because he couldn't believe it was that good. In a sense, it probably just reflects what we know in our heart of hearts. We have to do it ourselves. It's the whole issue about how we change policy in the party. We are not waiting to be ushered into some room, after everyone else has decided what's good for us. We are not doing that any more. We are going to put on centre stage the key issues. We will put them in the political arena, we will put them in the public arena and we will campaign because we have been pretty successful at doing that. But we are not asking anybody to do it for us. We intend to do it for ourselves. That means encouraging more and more people and the union giving more and more people the active support and encouragement to get elected and to do the things that carry the socialist value within the very heart and spirit of trade unionism.

Frankly, can you imagine a House of Commons that had half of its number as decent, good trade unionists? This would be an incredibly different country, and I happen to think that it would be a much, much better country.

Mary, I move the report with great pride.

Can I just make a plea. I am sure that Terry from Yorkshire will hold me to it. Let's get on and do it. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Matthew, you were very passionate but you were very lucky because if you had gone on much longer, I would have had to give you the kiss of life. You did do well. You just opted out of that in time. Well done.

Congress, can I put the CEC Political Special Report to Congress. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against?

The CEC Political Special Report was ADOPTED.

LABOUR PARTY FUNDING MOTION 139

139. LABOUR PARTY FUNDING

This Conference congratulates those GMB members in the Public Sector who, along with other Public Sector workers, took strike action last November in defence of their pensions.

Congress is appalled by the lack of support by the Labour Party Leadership for legitimate, lawful industrial action.

It would appear that the present Labour Leadership has learnt nothing from mistakes made by Labour under the Blair and Brown Governments, which alienated traditional supporters and paved the way for a vicious Tory/Lib Dem Coalition hell bent on destroying jobs, services and living standards. Failing to support workers taking legitimate and lawful action will not win back that support.

Congress agrees that with the exception of affiliation fees, any other funding for the Labour Party will cease immediately until such time as the Leadership and the Party support GMB policies.

L33 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Lost)

BRO. I. LOWES (North West & Irish): Congress, I move Motion 139 – Labour Party Funding.

President and Congress, after its defeat in the last General Election the Labour Party had an opportunity to take a long hard look at itself and analyse the reasons why it lost, the reasons why so many traditional Labour supporters failed to vote Labour. There is no doubt that when in power Labour did not do enough to address the issues that affect ordinary people. New Labour's love affair with capitalism led to the gap between rich and poor widening, this despite 13 years of a Labour Government.

It is true to say that New Labour listened more to the CBI than it did to the TUC. The CEC's Political Special Report correctly identifies many of the things that New Labour got badly wrong, but is it any surprise when you look at the leadership of New Labour: career politicians who think that the Labour Party exists to provide them with

cushy jobs. They could just as easily be Tories or Liberals as there is not much difference between them.

The Shadow Business Secretary says he wants to see 'responsible capitalism'. Does he not understand the nature of capitalism? Did they not teach him anything at university? Capitalism exists to make profits and doesn't care about the consequences for ordinary people. The only thing that is responsible about capitalism is that it is responsible for causing poverty and misery to millions of working people.

Since the General Election, the Coalition has carried out a series of attacks on jobs, pensions and living standards. When trade union members have resisted these attacks, there has not been one voice raised in support from the Labour Party leadership. Some have even condemned strike action.

At Monday's Public Services Conference, Ed Balls was asked why the Labour leadership failed to declare support for workers who strike to defend jobs and pensions? He responded by saying: "We are a responsible Opposition, and whilst we will not condemn strikes we will not support them, either."

There is no doubt that the current leadership has lost its way. They don't know who it is they are supposed to represent. The Labour Party was formed to give a voice in Parliament to working people, to represent the interests of the many, not the few. When workers strike to defend jobs and pensions we demand that our representatives in Parliament give unqualified support. Labour can no longer take for granted support from its traditional base. Support has to be earned and earned with policies which will address the needs of ordinary people. We have to campaign for a socialist agenda and not a social democratic agenda. (*Applause*)

This union gives sufficient funds to the Labour Party, yet do we get value for that money? The answer, sadly, is no. The days of the blank cheque must end. The Labour Party must be told, "No more money until you start acting in the interests of GMB members, carry out GMB policies and represent the interests of ordinary people." Thank you. (*Applause*)

BRO. J. KEIGHT (North West & Irish): Congress, I second Motion 139. I am a first-time speaker. (*Applause*)

Congress, I have read the CEC Political Special Report and agree with the sentiments contained within it. However, it highlights exactly why this motion is before us today. If we take a step back, we had three terms of a Labour Government over 13 years, and, yes, the Labour Party introduced some good policies, which are highlighted in the CEC Report.

However, there is no mention of what the Labour Party promised and what they failed to introduce, the legislation they did not repeal, the re-nationalisation of the railways and the utility companies of this country, the repeal of the anti-trade union laws and there is no mention of the introduction of *Best Value*, privatisation of the public services through the backdoor, the introduction of the private sector into the National Health Service and the introduction of PFI, which has cost the taxpayer billions and billions. Also, when have Labour supported striking workers in dispute? They are

constantly sitting on the fence when asked for their opinion. All this despite objections from the trade union movement and rank and file Labour supporters.

We ask ourselves why? The answer, in my view, is plain and simple. There are no consequences to the leadership of the Labour Party if they don't listen to us. The Labour Party needs to understand that if they want our money, they need to support the trade union movement. We should not allow the Labour Party to take our money for nothing. I ask Congress to support this motion. Thank you.

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

BRO. B. CLEARY (North West & Irish): Congress, I have come to the rostrum to support Motion 139. The other day we heard Ian and Tom speak but they missed out on one word, and that word, under Tony Blair's government, was a dirty word, and that was "socialism". This Congress and I want another socialist Labour Party, not a Lib-Dem or a Conservative Party. So the other day a phrase was mentioned a couple of times, and that was "the two Eds". If Labour don't listen to us, we have a word for it in Liverpool, and that's "Dick Eds". Thank you. (*Laughter and applause*)

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

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Colleagues, Motion 139 has a lot of merit in it and a lot of sympathy and support from me, Mary, the Executive and a lot of people in this hall. When the two Eds failed and other senior figures failed to come out and support public sector workers right across the board who were having their pensions attacked, and when people did not feel about to speak out in support of people who were engaged in lawful activity – I repeat, "lawful activity" – then we took a decision that, with the exception of affiliation fees, then the box would be shut tight. (*Applause*) So the first part of your motion we have already done. We knew that, apart from going to a full-scale public war – if you remember back, some of us did make it absolutely plain just how far we thought they had gone from the principles of supporting working people – the biggest and most effective impact we could have initially was to say, "I'm sorry, but our members are not just going to continue to pay on a basis of failing to support", but we also realised that there were some elections to fight and some good people in those elections who we wanted elected who could help us change the balance in the Labour Party and change the process.

The problem about this resolution is really simple. While its power, intent and anger is for all to see, it would mean, effectively, that we would not be able to support people like Tom Watson. We supported Tom Watson when very few other people in the party or outside were supporting him. We supported Tom Watson when he had the power of *News International* going through his bins and chasing his kids round schools. We supported Tom Watson. The problem about 'catch-all' resolutions like this one is that we wouldn't be able to do that. We would not be able to support Mick Coppin, we wouldn't be able to support Gary Doolan and we wouldn't be able to support those people who we are relying on to build up the massive support inside the political party to do the very thing that you want done, because we all agree with what you want done. In order to do that, we've got to support the people – it was contained in another resolution – we could target better, if we were smarter, those people who were more attuned to the values of the GMB, of trade unions and socialism, than

some of the clowns who, frankly, walk under the mask of Labour Party membership at the moment. That's the reason why the CEC is asking you to oppose the motion, or to withdraw it, if you will, and not because we haven't done what the first part of the resolution does. We slammed the door shut very quickly. The word went around all the regions, "It's cut off."

We gave ourselves, if you like, the sensible policy of saying that where we were going to campaign for a Labour candidate against the BNP, we were going to have to put resources and finances in. When we were going to get the Mayor of London – Boris – kicked on his arse, then we had to put time, money and organisation into that. The problem about this motion is that we couldn't do any of that. We would just be sitting on the sidelines until when? Until Lord Sainsbury flings a few more millions at the Labour Party? No. That's the reason. It's not that we do not share your views, but it is because the reality is that you can't tie the hands of people who are trying to change and create the very scenario that you want us to do. That is the reason why we say, with great difficulty, either please withdraw it or we must ask Congress to oppose Motion 139 because we just would not be able to support the very people who we want to change the balance in the Labour Party and to reach the Labour Party that you so desperately want. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Ian, do you wish to have the right to reply?

BRO. I. LOWES (North West & Irish): The region is not prepared to withdraw Motion 139. It is not because we disagree with the CEC's Political Special Report, as there is much in it to commend it. Neither was this motion put forward by the usual suspects. It came about because of the genuine anger by rank and file members who asked the question: "Why are we giving money to these people?" When people were on strike in November and the disgraceful conduct from the leadership of the Labour Party who failed to support our members, our members were asking the question, "What are we doing giving money to these people because they are giving us no support whatsoever?" (*Applause*)

At the Public Services conference on Monday, Ed Balls even tried to accuse GMB members of voting Tory. That was never the case. People did not switch sides. What happened was that traditional Labour supporters were so disillusioned that they never turned out to vote.

Paul Kenny said that if this motion was carried it would prevent us, as a union, from getting involved in supporting campaigns. It would not. It would not stop us campaigning alongside people to fight the BNP and racism. What it would mean is that we wouldn't actually be giving financial support to those people. I hope that the CEC is successful in trying to convince the Labour Party to change direction, but being the cynic that I am, I doubt very much whether you will be able to convince these people. If it does not go through this year, we will be back next year with it. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ian. I now put Motion 139 to the vote. The region is not withdrawing the motion. The CEC is asking you now to oppose. I now put it to the vote. All those in favour, please show? All those against?

Motion 139 was LOST.

**ADDRESS BY SIS. MONICA SMITH, NATIONAL SECRETARY, GMB
RETIRED MEMBERS ASSOCIATION**

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, it gives me great pleasure to ask Monica Smith to address Congress. Monica is the National Secretary of the GMB Retired Members Association. Monica does a great deal of work for this union and we are all very, very proud of her. Monica, will you address Congress, please. (*Applause*)

SIS. M. SMITH (National Secretary, GMB RMA): President and Congress, I always consider it to be my pleasure and privilege to be asked to come to the rostrum to give you a brief update of the RMA business of the National Committee and also the regional committees. It is good to report that more and more interest is now being shown at regional level and numbers are increasing.

The National Committee continues to lobby and fight for better conditions and recognition of GMB policies, knowing that we have the full support of our General Secretary, Paul Kenny, and our National President, Mary Turner. The mention of their names open doors that would otherwise remain closed.

Jerry Nelson, our National Co-ordinator, keeps us well up-to-date with GMB Union policies. Since Jerry took over the position of co-ordinator, the RMA, with his advice, has gone from strength to strength. Our RMA National Chairman, Derek Baker, keeps the Committee in line. As you all know, once an activist, always activist. Our RMA National Treasurer, Brian Adams, always keeps his eye on the pennies. Our finances are not too bad, not great, but like everyone else we have to keep a tight budget with Brian urging everyone to use their bus passes or rail cards when travelling to meetings, etc.

Since our last Congress, the RMA has voted to go for a biennial conference in order to continue to save money. The National Committee went back to the regions and the proposal was endorsed with a provision that the National Committee can recall the RMA Conference at any time.

The other good news is that the RMA has purchased a new banner, and quite decorative it is, too. In one corner there is a zimmer frame, the opposite corner has a bus pass. A pension book and wheelchair also feature on the banner. Well, that's my little joke for the week. It's not like that at all.

Congress, we hope to take the banner to Blackpool next week to the Pensioners' Parliament, and not only our retired members but also our union members will be proud of it.

Colleagues, it is a known fact that UK pensioners are the poor relations of Europe. We are not asking for any handouts, for what the Tories are giving us with one hand, they are taking twice as much back with the other. We are not scroungers. We are asking for what you all know that we are entitled to, which is what we have fought for in the past. Dignity in old age is the birthright of all of us. I can assure Congress

that the RMA of today will, with the help of the GMB, keep on fighting for our principles for the GMB RMA of tomorrow. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I think that this Congress should give Monica and her team at the RMA a great round of applause because, believe you me, the work that they do is outstanding on our behalf. That applies to all of us, not just pensioners, but also for the young. Monica. (*Applause*) Monica has experienced a sadness this year, but she is back here and she is doing well. Monica, I spoke to your daughter a little while ago, and she is going to build you a little shed in the bottom of the garden. She thought she would sell your place or put you a cardboard box on the balcony. Thank you. (*Applause*)

**EMPLOYMENT POLICY
PENSIONS & RETIREMENT
LIVING PENSIONS
MOTION 60**

60. LIVING PENSIONS

This Conference is asked to help steer all pension schemes away from *a race to the bottom* by ensuring that there is a Living Pension established with a minimum level across both the Public and Private sectors.

The current proposals for the NEST scheme, which will soon be the prevalent scheme across the Commercial Sector, will only be a token gesture to pension provision. The company contributions need to be at a level that will result in pension's that will make living affordable.

The GMB needs to ensure that members' pensions allow them a liveable retirement and that all provisions are both safe and funded at levels that have a practical effect.

G36 SECURITY BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. A. GROAT (Southern): Congress, I move Motion 60 – Living Pensions. I stand after our illustrious colleague who represents the Retired section, and I look back on the struggles that the GMB has gone through, what it did in November on the Day of Action and I stand here, again, asking about living pensions. The point is that the Government changes the whole ballgame in October of this coming year when it introduces the NEST scheme, which will be the predominating scheme across the commercial and, probably, the public sector as well.

As to the scheme's viability, that will be judged in the long term, but in the short term we need to look at the basics of this thing. One of the basics is how much the employers are going to contribute to these new, fantastic, and going-to-save-us-all from pension crisis scheme? Let us look. Will it be a 10% bonus like everybody else? Will it be 9%, 8% or 7%? No. Realistically, will it be 6%, 5%, 4%, 3% or equal to the rate of inflation? No. It will be 2%, and even they think that is too much. 2%! In God's name, when do we take the begging bowl back to the Government. 2%! They must be laughing in their socks.

So I call on the union to campaign at all levels to upgrade that 2% to a more realistic level. I ask, when you do your wage negotiations, that you include pensions and the amount of contributions that your employer puts into it, to increase it so that it is realistic.

I would also ask you to become involved with the administration of your pension schemes, to make sure that you have got somebody on the trustees board and the decision-making process, so that they can't slip anything past you, so you know what is happening and – this is the third thing – we as a union must campaign as strongly as we possibly can to make sure that this generation and the generations to come after us have a living pension. Thank you. (*Applause*)

SIS. A. RAOUX (Southern): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and first-time speaker. (*Applause*) President and Congress, this is too much of an important issue to ignore. Pensions have taken a beating through the Tory years. Congress, please support. (*Applause*)

MPs' PENSIONS MOTION 61

61. MPs' PENSIONS

This Conference notes the “do as I say, not as I do” attitude of MPs in relation to Public Sector Pensions and believes the hypocrisy of Coalition MPs knows no bounds when they tell lower and middle income workers to pay more for their pensions, when MPs' pensions are gold plated paid for by the taxpayer.

As part of GMB campaigning on Pensions this Conference calls on policy-makers to put their own house in order before they tell workers what to do.

NORTHERN ELECTRIC IND BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

BRO. J.A. WINTER (Northern): Congress, I move Motion 61. The debate on MPs' pensions has polarised in the last few years. After the MPs' expenses scandals, people like the former Labour MP, John 'Lord' Hutton, has written a report for a Coalition government and is telling our people to work longer for less. This, Congress, you will agree is something that we never thought we would see. This, by the way, is the same Lord Hutton who was a lecturer – yes, in the public sector – before he became an MP, and his views are shared – let's be honest – by MPs from all sides of the political spectrum.

Congress, how dare these policymakers tell our people how to live their lives and what retirement they should have, yet live by entirely different rules themselves. It was Osborne who said, “We are all in it together”, but, as we know, this is a load of crap. Will Labour overturn this? Personally, I don't think so. This do-as-I say and not-as-I-do culture is a disgrace. If anyone has a gold-plated retirement pension, it is the very MPs who make laws for us to live by. This is the problem, Congress, that we have in the UK today. The great and the good have been shown up for what they are. Whether it be press, police, bankers, public sector directors, religion or politics, some have been found to have their noses in the troughs for the last 20 years. This culture of

corporate and individual greed has to stop. Lower and middle-income workers are fed up with being told what to do by the lawmakers, many of whom are just not up to their jobs. They can start with putting their own house in order before they tell us what to do. They can start by ending the hypocrisy of having such pensions and start reducing their own terms and conditions. They can start by giving a moral lead by ensuring that our members don't have to suffer due to their double standards.

(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tony. Secunder?

SIS. V. DAVISON (Northern): Congress, I second Motion 61 on MPs' Pensions. In supporting the mover of this motion, I have to say that the message I am getting from our members is utter disgust at the way MPs are operating on their pensions and then telling everyone else what to do. The average MP's Parliamentary pensions will be at least four times that of the public sector worker. By the way, that is using the absolute worse case figures for MPs.

Low and middle-income workers across sectors are having to deal with the worst economic conditions in their lives. It is tough in every constituency in the land. The least that can be done is for lawmakers and those on excellent terms and conditions to show that they know how everyone else has to struggle to survive. What we want is not just our terms and conditions to be maintained, but we want everyone to have the opportunity to get better terms and conditions. We see nothing wrong in earning more, working less and having great pensions in a long retirement. In fact, we welcome it. We reject the language of some Parliamentarians who would be more at home in 1812 than 2012. I urge your support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

PENSION AWARENESS MOTION 63

63. PENSION AWARENESS

This Conference is asked to help members become aware of their pension choices and provide training so that they and their representatives can make informed decisions.

G36 SECURITY BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. A. GROAT (Southern): Congress, I move Motion 63 – Pension Awareness. We have got a NEST pension, we now have a pot of money so what do we do with it? Basically, we are asking the GMB if it can put a system in position to train our representatives and regional centres, and maybe even a national centre, to advise our prospective pension persons where to spend the money, where they will get the best return on investments, where they won't get ripped off with administrative charges and to avoid major pension scandals like we had during the 1990s, when stuff was mis-sold to our guys. To take independent pension advice is a very expensive process, as I can tell you personally. I have just had to undertake it because my own pension has been closed and I have had to look elsewhere.

I ask, Congress, that we put a system in position from which our membership can obtain free and unbiased advice as to the best package for their circumstances. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder?

SIS. J. OKOTURO (Southern): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I am seconding Motion 63 – Pension Awareness.

President and Congress, we held a good and informative Public Service conference which dealt, in part, with the proposed new public sector LGPS – Local Government Pension Scheme Arrangement – which is to be put to members of the LGPS. At a time when the Con-Dem Government is making proposals to introduce to changes to pension schemes in the public sector, in particular, we believe that the time is right for this union to provide pension awareness and, possibly, training to members and their reps in order to assist members to make informed decisions regarding their pension choices.

With all the attacks on the pensions every day, we must educate and inform our members on pensions. Knowledge is paramount; pensions are precious. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Joyce.

ASSISTED EARLY ACCESS TO RETIREMENT MOTION 64

64. ASSISTED EARLY ACCESS TO RETIREMENT

This Conference calls upon the GMB and its associated affiliates to develop the idea of some form of state assisted early access to retirement scheme and then campaign to get such introduced into the state benefits system.

Conference recognises that the current economic world recession is inevitably going to mean longer term higher unemployment therefore such a scheme could be developed as a cost neutral idea to allow people to have some form of interim benefit to encourage earlier retirement and thereby creating job opportunities for the unemployed youth in our society.

Conference should like to see the introduction of a new state benefit that is aimed at the 55 to 65 years age group that would allow such person to take the opportunity of finishing work early without accessing private pensions. Such payment should be time restricted and recognise that such person has limited savings being their primary income but would be entitled to limited benefit to enhance such savings up until access to private/state pension funds can be obtained without early penalisation.

RHONDDA CYNON TAFF BRANCH
South Western Region

(Carried)

SIS. H. DAVIES (South Western): Congress, I move Motion 64 – Assisted Early Access to Retirement.

This motion is an idea in its earliest form, calling for GMB activists to develop and then sell it to the Government with an ultimate aim of getting some form of assisted early access to retirement. It is based on the idea of getting our political leaders to recognise that longer-term higher unemployment is a consequence of the current world recession and that unemployment will remain high into the foreseeable future. We need to get this or a future government to look differently at how to manage such unemployment enabling early release from the workplace and, thereby, creating much-needed real opportunities for the youth in our country. This in no way implies that older workers are of any less value to their employers, but they are more likely to have savings which could go some way to supporting themselves until retirement. Whether an individual wishes to apply for such early retirement would be an entirely personal decision.

We should like to see developed and introduced a new state benefit aimed at those over 55 who may be considering, and have made some provision for, an early retirement. Such a benefit could assist in paying National Insurance contributions, which have to be maintained up until the State retirement age, and also include a sum intended to supplement personal savings until the time that pension funds can be accessed.

If a person has saved and is considering early retirement then some State financial help could make this a more feasible option, releasing genuine job opportunities to more young people currently unemployed. The encouragement of early retirement should be seen as beneficial to employee, employer and country. Initially, we need to get all political leaders to see this.

The UK unemployment rate for 16-24 year olds has risen sharply in the current recession to 20% in 2010. It is now more than three times the rate than that of older workers. As a result, two-fifths of all those who are unemployed are now aged under 25. Business leaders and recruiters have warned that failure to acquire work experience and skills at the start will not only damage young people's prospects, but also leave significant deficiencies in the workforce for decades, even if we were to see an economic upturn.

The International Labour Organisation said that more than six million young people worldwide have given up looking for work and are becoming increasingly detached from society. There are real concerns about the connections between unemployment and suicide rates and major depressive illnesses.

The motion is calling for further development and financial cost-benefit analysis of the idea, and then to lobby our political leaders to get such a benefit payment introduced. We recognise that this would be controversial, to say the least, when there is so little money in the economy, but this may not be as costly as first thought, given the savings to be made by having less youth unemployment. However, we also believe that society should be giving greater priority to creating genuine opportunities for the longer term unemployed, particularly our young people. If by assisting someone who wants to retire early with a limited benefit helps to create such opportunities, then there would be two groups of people who would gain: those wanting an early retirement and those desperately demotivated youth who cannot see any work opportunity or stake for themselves in society. Please support this motion

and help us get our country's leaders to look at different ways of creating youth opportunities and helping older people to retire earlier. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder? Formally? (*The Motion was formally seconded*) Does anyone wish to come in on the debate?

SIS. J. SMITH (London): Mary, before I start, can Congress wish Dolores a very happy wedding anniversary that she is sharing with us today. We learnt this at breakfast this morning. Happy anniversary, Dolores. (*Applause*)

Congress, not only am I a member of the London Region but I am also a member of the London Region RMA, to which I am the secretary and also the National Committee. I am at this rostrum asking you to support all four motions. They are excellent motions, especially in the call for a decent living pension. Also we have to look at where the retirement age is increasing. We are going backwards. When the retirement age was 70, why was it brought down? It was because our male colleagues, and especially our male colleagues, did not live long enough because of the effects on them of the industries they had been working in. So they did not live to see their retirement.

We are not second-class citizens or downtrodden. We say to this Government that we need a decent retirement pension and a retirement age that we all so deserve. Please support these four motions. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jan. Sheila?

SIS. S. BEARCROFT MBE (CEC, Manufacturing): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC and asking you to support Motion 64 with a qualification. Motion 64 promotes the introduction of flexibility to the state pension system to allow for early retirement and access to state benefits. This already happens in occupational pension schemes and we would support increased flexibility to what is a very rigid state pension system. There are a number of ways to achieve this, but in exploring these we need to be mindful that there are also issues around areas such as tax, other pensions and welfare benefits that would need to be carefully considered. The CEC, therefore, wishes to qualify this motion to allow the GMB to pursue reforms that would promote flexibility but would not cause unintended problems in these other areas.

The GMB has a clear policy to support a simple state pension system that provides enough for all to live with dignity in retirement. GMB will support reforms that will benefit our members and resist those that will see members spending their later years in poverty or are forced to work until they drop. The CEC asks you to support Motion 64 with the qualification I have outlined. Thank you, Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sheila. Does South Western Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you very much. I now put Motions 60, 61, 63, and 64 to the vote. They are being supported by the CEC. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against.

Motion 60 was CARRIED.

Motion 61 was CARRIED.
Motion 63 was CARRIED.
Motion 64 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, we hope to take the motions that we did not take on Sunday, so where the CEC is supporting motions, I will be calling for anyone who wishes to oppose so that we can try and save some time to try and get those other motions heard. Is that agreed? (*Agreed*)

WINTER FUEL ALLOWANCE AND FUEL POVERTY COMPOSITE MOTION 20

C20. Covering Motions:

220. STOP FUEL POVERTY (*Midland & East Coast Region*)

221. WINTER FUEL ALLOWANCES (*London Region*)

WINTER FUEL ALLOWANCE AND FUEL POVERTY

Conference calls on this Tory led coalition to fully restore the winter fuel allowance to its previous level and resolves to campaign vigorously to maintain this allowance.

Congress, the cut in such allowances is yet another attack on some of the most vulnerable members of our society and pensioners should not have to suffer from fuel poverty due to the reduction in the payment of the winter fuel allowance.

(*Carried*)

BRO. J. GOLDING (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I move Composite 20 – Winter Fuel Allowance.

President and Congress, last year the winter fuel benefits were an annual universal benefit paying £250 to the over-60s and £400 for the over-80s. However, last year, buried deep in his Budget, George Osborne cut these allowances to payments of £200 and £300 respectively. These Draconian cuts come at a time when gas prices have rise by 40% over the last five years, and the six biggest energy companies have announced profits of £156 million. In contrast, three million elderly people live in fuel poverty where they spend more than 10% of their income on heating. For many, they face a stark choice of either heating or eating. As hypothermia rates go up alongside soaring fuel rates, it really is becoming a matter of life and death. The test of any civilised society is how they treat the most vulnerable members of that society. Cuts in the Winter Fuel Payment are an attack on the most vulnerable members of our society, whilst at the same time this Government pushes through tax cuts for the most wealthy. Congress, this is, quite frankly, obscene, but it is a stark illustration of the callous indifference and real priorities of the Tory Coalition Government. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Seconder?

BRO. I. HARRIS (London): Congress, I second Composite Motion 20 – Winter Fuel Allowance and Fuel Poverty. We have to make resistance to the Winter Fuel Allowance cuts and fuel poverty in general as part of the general fight against

austerity. This Government are determined to make the poorest and most vulnerable people in our society pay for the consequences of the deliberate economic mis-management and greed of the bankers and speculators that led to the current crisis. This union should be all of its powers up to, and including, industrial action to defeat the austerity programme. We have to try and build a real industrial and political alternative to austerity and build a society that is fair and just for all. We need to make the rich pay for their own crisis and let all the people in this country, young and old, live in peace, comfort and dignity. Thank you. *(Applause)*

FUEL POVERTY
MOTION 224

224. FUEL POVERTY

This Conference calls on the Government and all Energy Retailers to provide clear information to all of its energy users, particularly those poorest families, of their entitlement of a discount up to £120 on their bills, from the Warm Homes Discount. Making clear the deadlines that have to be met in order to make a claim.

Therefore we call on all Energy Retailers to advertise this discount well before the deadline in 2013 in order that those in need can submit claims.

We also call on these Energy Retailers to make sure enough money is lodged in this scheme as it has been calculated that approximately 5.7 million households in England and Wales are in fuel poverty and at present 10% of disposable income is spent on fuel. It is deplorable that in this day and age that a certain section of our society are suffering from fuel poverty and have to take the daily decision of whether to keep warm and cut back on groceries.

PONTYPRIDD GENERAL BRANCH
South Western Region

(Carried)

BRO. K. JONES (South Western): Congress, I move Motion 224. Fuel poverty is becoming a serious issue facing many households in our country. Particularly affected are those on low incomes and the elderly. According to a survey produced by AGE UK back in January half of our pensioners are turning their heating down in an attempt to save money. As emerged last year, a quarter of all households in England & Wales fall into the category of fuel poverty follow the autumn's steep increase in energy bills and stagnating incomes. This dramatic increase up from nearly one in five households early this year is embarrassing for this Government, which has a statutory obligation to eliminate fuel poverty by 2016. This now looks to fail and, therefore, they will not meet their legal obligation.

People who are cutting back on the amount of fuel that they use are jeopardising their health which, in turn, increases costs for the Health Service. There is much that can be done for those in need of help but, unfortunately, these messages do not always get out to the very people who need the help.

The Warm Homes Discount scheme was set up to help older people with energy costs. Customers who are able to claim pension credit are automatically considered for a discount. If you meet the criteria to get the discount, you will be contacted about the discount in autumn 2012. If you qualify, you will receive £130 towards your

electricity bill for winter 2012/13. Other people get the Warm Homes Discount from their energy supplier if they come under the term “the broadest group”, and the customers of that group could include those on low incomes and with a disability, long-term illness or those with young children, but the actual criteria used will vary from electricity company and supplier. This is a discount of £130 which will be issued via the electricity bill or customers who have been identified to come within the broader group scheme in 2012/13.

We call on the energy retailers to make sure that enough money is in the scheme because, as has already been said, more households are falling into the fuel poverty trap. These suppliers need to advertise that these discounts are available now well before the deadline of 2013. Yes, we can find all of this information on the internet but unless people know that these schemes and discounts are available they will not be looking. The energy suppliers need to do their bit to help the fuel poverty for the poor in this country. This is unacceptable for such a wealthy country in the western world to families, single people and disabilities. For the elderly, they have to take the difficult decision on whether to eat, keep warm or a little of both. This is not acceptable.

We as a union should be campaigning for social justice for this section of our society. We call on our CEC to look at this issue and lobby for a better deal for our people. Thank you. (*Applause*)

SIS. S. PICKSTOCK (South Western): President and Congress, I second Motion 224. As my colleague said before, fuel poverty is becoming a serious issue in this country. In May the Department for Energy & Climate Change reported that the gas and electricity price rises would push 400,000 more households into fuel poverty. The Government, and in particular the Minister of Energy & Climate Change, Gregg Baker, said that they were committed to tackling this issue and said that people would still get help with their heating and insulation through Warm Front, and two million households would get money off their energy bills through the Warm Homes Discount scheme.

The Government defines fuel poverty as a need to spend no more than 10% of our total income to achieve adequate levels of warmth amid their other needs. “Adequate warmth” is defined as 21 degrees in main living areas. However, 10% of household income, such as benefits and pensions, can be a large chunk out of a very small pot. A number of energy suppliers have already hinted that prices will rise this coming winter. We all know that this will put more pressure on households which are already having difficulty in paying their bills. We now that many of our families, older people and disabled people living on low incomes will be facing tough, daily decisions on what essentials they can cut back on to make ends meet.

This Government should get behind Labour’s plans to put all over—75s on the cheaper tariff and overhaul the energy market so that it delivers fair prices for all. We, as a union, now need to put our weight behind a campaign to highlight this issue. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to speak against? (*No response*) In that case, I call Evelyn Martin to reply on behalf of the CEC.

SIS. E. MARTIN MBE (CEC, Public Services): President, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC. We are supporting Composite Motion 20 with a qualification.

This Government claims to be penniless. That is not true. What they are is heartless and cruel. They have plenty of money to give away to their rich friends in tax cuts but they have cut the pensioners' Winter Fuel Allowance to save money. What a shameful act by a government that looks after the rich but leaves the old to die in the cold. The Tory and their Liberal Democrat poodles don't care at all about people who struggle to heat their house in winter. If Cameron and Clegg get cold, they just throw a few of their servants on the fire. *(Laughter)* The composite, quite rightly, calls for the restoration of help for the elderly and vulnerable with their fuel bills. The CEC fully supports that but with one minor qualification about the wording. Fuel poverty is now rising to a record level. Millions of people need help to meet their energy bills. Restoring the Winter Fuel Allowance to its previous level would be a step in the right direction, but we must demand more. In future winter fuel payments should be index linked to price increases and increase each and every year. That is the only way to stop more and more people falling into the fuel poverty trap. With this qualification, please support Composite 20. This Government doesn't care about the most vulnerable people in society, but the GMB must carry on fighting for them all. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Does the Midland & East Coast Region accept the qualification? *(Agreed)* Thank you very much.

I now put Composite 20 and Motion 224 to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against?

*Composite Motion 20 was CARRIED.
Motion 224 was CARRIED.*

COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION REPORT

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I call on Gary Smith to report back from the Commercial Services Section Conference. Gary.

BRO. G. SMITH (National Secretary, Commercial Services): Congress, it is an absolutely privilege, as ever, to be reporting back to you as a National Secretary, and I do intend to make my contribution brief.

At previous Congresses, Mary, I said that the section was in great shape for the battles ahead. I am delighted to be standing here with a backdrop of 6% growth in this section. Part of that success story has been the Olympics, and it is right that I mention it. We should all take enormous pride from the fact that when the Olympics open there will be thousands of GMB members who will be keeping the general public safe. Only yesterday more than 400 new members were recruited at the Olympic sites, and everyone of our activists and officers involved deserves great credit for that. *(Applause)* As I said, that is only part of the story, because of our growing involvement in Asda stores, Asda Distribution, G4S, British Gas and many of the other companies in this section. I want to thank all the lay activists and all the officers

who have done such an excellent job in promoting and growing the union in Commercial Services.

In turning to the conference, I thought it was an excellent conference, President. It was carried out in a great mood. There was a terrific spirit. Fifty-five lay delegates spoke on a wide range of motions and it was fantastic. Only on one motion – C25 – did the conference opt not to support the National Committee's and National Secretary's advice. Instead, they voted with the activists and, dare I say it, the awkward from the Wiltshire & Swindon branch. The colleagues from the ~Wiltshire & Swindon branch did an excellent job in promoting a motion, and well done to you. I give an absolutely commitment to Congress that the national officials and the National Committee will act on all the motions that were passed.

The one thing that really stood out in my mind in the debates around the motions, President, was the issue of zero-hours contracts. There was an enormous passion from our delegates when they spoke about zero-hours contracts. Zero-hours contracts are about exploitation and abuse. I give you this absolute assurance. The priority for our section will be challenging zero-hours contracts, both industrially and politically in the months and years ahead. (*Applause*)

The main item for us at our section conference was the agreement which has recently been signed in Asda Distribution. Thank you, President, for giving me the authority to do things slightly differently in terms of giving feedback and report from the section this year. Unfortunately, Mick Rix, the National Officer, is not here today. Mick suffered a bereavement just prior to Congress and him and his family have been hit very hard with that. He did manage to attend the conference yesterday where we signed our new agreement with Asda Distribution. With your permission, President, I will pass on our best wishes to Mick and his family.

THE PRESIDENT: Absolutely.

BRO. SMITH: To give the feedback on the section at conference on Asda Distribution, it is only fitting that one of the Distribution shop stewards – somebody who has been at the forefront of the battle for a generation – that he comes up and tells you about that story. Congress, I want to introduce a brilliant lay activist, the Chair of the Asda Distribution NJC, a comrade and good pal of mine, to talk to you about Asda Distribution, Adie Baker.

BRO. A. BAKER (South Western): Congress, I am proud and honoured to address my union's Congress as the Chair of the Asda Distribution NJC. (*Applause*) On behalf of all our members in Asda Distribution, I am grateful for this opportunity to say a few words about the historic agreement reached within Asda. I am proud of this agreement. I am proud to be chair of the negotiating team that delivered the deal. Of course, I am proud to be part of a union that stood up for workers' rights in Wal-Mart. Today is a day to celebrate this agreement. We are right to be positive about what we achieved and look forward to the future relationship with Wal-Mart.

Let me remind you that this is no sweetheart deal. This is an agreement forged in struggle. It was not always working together. As to sandwiches and signing ceremonies with Asda, it has never been like that, I can assure you. This is the

culmination of a generation-long struggle against a hugely anti-union company. They marginalised us, they attacked us and they tried to break us down but, Congress, they never beat us. *(Applause)* We are the union that would never die in Asda. None of us should forget that it was our General Secretary, Paul Kenny, who made the call that we would not take another step backwards. However, hard it got, we would build and fight in Asda. I would like to thank all the shop stewards and members within Asda Distribution because your loyalty, dedication and support made this deal possible.

I would say this to the activists in store. We had it tough in Distribution but I know what you have endured in stores. We gave you a commitment that any agreement in Distribution would be a platform to win in stores, too. So I want to say to our store activists. This is not just a Distribution agreement. *This* is your agreement, too. *(Applause)* Let us remember that this agreement is not the end. This is just another step forward in a long, hard fight in Asda Distribution and stores.

Finally, Congress, when they tell you that we cannot win a ballot, when they say that your employer is too powerful, when the defeatists say “We cannot recruit, we cannot organise and the going is too tough”, remember what we have achieved in Asda Walmart. This is not an agreement. It is a testimony to perseverance and it is a beacon of hope to working people everywhere. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Adie, let me say congratulations and I thank all of you, the stewards, the reps and everyone involved in this fantastic deal. I also congratulate you on your appointment as an officer in the South Western Region. *(Applause)*

Thank you, Gary, for your report.

SOCIAL POLICY

WELFARE RIGHTS & SERVICES

GOVERNMENT CUTS WHICH AFFECT EVERY CHILD BORN

MOTION 214

214. GOVERNMENT CUTS WHICH AFFECT EVERY CHILD BORN

The coalition Government is making cuts which affect every child born in Britain today. Not only have they abolished the health in pregnancy grant, the child trust fund accounts have gone for babies too. This isn't all. They have also made changes to the Sure Start maternity grant and tax credits which will cause hardship amongst low income families.

This has got to stop. We call on this Conference to campaign and petition the Government to get these vital grants reinstated and restore the cuts to the tax credits so that all these families need not suffer.

SCARBOROUGH & NORTH YORKS COMMUNITY BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Carried)

BRO. M. COPPIN (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I move Motion 214 – Government Cuts Which Affect Every Child Born.

President and Congress, you can read the motion for yourself, but let me read to you from a national newspaper article back in February which explains the points much

more eloquently than I could, and which could not be accused of rhetoric or exaggerated claims as the article is evidenced by the Government's own advisor. It states: "Cuts to children's services risk greater social inequality, says Coalition adviser, Michael Marmot. Regressive taxation is affecting child poverty and that Britain is failing our young children on a grand scale."

The key Government advisor on wellbeing and fairness has warned that cuts to children's services at the same time as increasing taxes on the poor are of deep concern and could exacerbate already high levels of inequality. Professor Sir Michael Marmot, whose work on health inequalities in 2010 has been incorporated into the Government's public health reforms, said: "Cutting services has a selecting impact the lower down you go in the social hierarchy.. We see increases in child poverty are moving from direct to indirect forms of taxation, which are regressive. I am really concerned about these things and their impact [on equalities]."

Marmot said that on the six measures that affect health – relating to employment, education, income and health, child development and environment: "I am not sanguine that we are doing enough on any of them."

Two hundred and fifty thousand children are failing to meet the standard set by schools. Such tests include being able to dress, concentrate and the ability to speak and recognise words. Marmot said this was evidence that Britain was failing its young children on a grand scale owing to inequality, with many not achieving basic levels of social and emotional development. Marmot also said that the evaluation of Sure Start programmes was "ambiguous", but added: "If Sure Start performed in a very mixed way – better in some areas than others – the response should be not to throw it out but to learn from the best and build on that. I have concern that we must not cut good services for early childhood."

He warned that although life expectancy was rising, it remained linked to social standing and the poor die sooner. He warned that the Government's plan to hand councils £2.2 billion once they take over public health next April could penalise local authorities in poor areas. He said he hopes that the Government does not end up punishing people because of deprivation. That is pretty much enough from the article.

Yet again the evidence is very clear. The overriding ideological policy of this shower of Tory toffs is that the rich will live splendidly from the suffering of the poor. The children are the future, but why would they want our children to have any future other than servitude and obedience to the masters, which is even clearer from the Beecroft report recommending the removal of licensing for child employment as it's a further bureaucratic burden on employers. As with all the other nasty attacks on the most vulnerable in our society, there are no depths to which this lot will not go, smoke-screened by deficit reduction and the streamlining of social provision. We must protect our vulnerable and fight this now. Please support. (*Applause*)

BRO. R. MORGAN (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I second Motion 214, briefly. President and Congress, our parents and children are under a vicious attack from this Government's actions in cutting or end grants aimed at supporting the poorest in society, with the pregnancies and early years grants cut. One of the main casualties will be the Sure Start Centres, which were set up in the poorest areas of our country.

They are designed to offer numerous services under one roof, including playgroups and parenting lessons. In the poorest areas of Derby City, these centres have proved to be a great success by developing our children and introducing them to the valuable social skills prior to starting school. They have proved to be very popular and successful in integrating children from families with English as a second language. They also teach pupils how to interact with others and to form a link between all social services. Far from saving money, it merely moves the problems from one budget to another. Schools will have to set up their own support services for these young children as their behaviour is not good enough or socially adept enough to join the mainstream teaching. All this comes with a background of dramatic budget cuts in schools already. It is, again, the poorest who will be forced to carry a disproportionate burden while the fat cats and the super rich gain from generous tax cuts. Thank you.

CARERS ALLOWANCE MOTION 215

215. CARERS ALLOWANCE

This Conference notes with concern that carers allowance currently stands at £55.55 per week and that for the required 35 hours care that the carer must provide, this works out at £1.59 per hour.

Carers allowance can't be claimed by anyone in full time education or by anyone earning £100 a week after tax.

We call upon Congress to instruct our GMB sponsored MP's to raise this issue in parliament with the intention of raising carers allowance to the level of the basic minimum wage and to look at the issues faced by young carers.

M15 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

SIS. L. WINSON (North West & Irish): Congress, I move Motion 215 on Carers Allowance. President and Congress, in April of this year the Carers Allowance was actually increased to £58.45. This is for a minimum 35-hour commitment to care for another human being. It works at a £1.67 an hour and must cover all your costs, which means petrol to take people to hospital, phone calls, checking on the person you are caring for, for the personal care that you supply to that person, for the lifting, for the bathing, for the feeding, for the responsibility of the nutrition of that person and for the care and wellbeing of that person.

The person being cared for may also be liable to receive an Attendance Allowance of around £70 a week. This gives a combined payment of around £128 a week, which is slightly better if you combine the two. You then get about £3.67 an hour. What's the minimum wage, Congress -- £6.48?

Caring can have a devastating impact on carers' finances. One in five carers is forced to give up work, losing on average £11,000 in income whilst facing big additional costs that come with the caring. Carers are being short changed by an out-dated benefit system that doesn't recognise their contribution to society. The main benefit for carers – the Carers Allowance – is the lowest of its kind. Unfair rules are a

disincentive for carers who are able to work. Some miss out on carers' benefits altogether.

If you are over 65 and caring for an elderly parent, which is more common these days, you cannot get Carers Allowance. If you are under 18 you can't get Carers Allowance. If you are in full-time education you can't get Carers Allowance. If you earn more than £100 a week, you can't claim Carers Allowance. Many families find themselves outside the social care system, get no help whatsoever and face a constant battle for the most meagre of services. Carers are paying the price with their health, income and careers.

What about young carers? These kids seem to be invisible in the eyes of the British Government. Just keep shovelling them under the carpet and we don't have to look at the issues. The average age of a young carer is 12. The 2001 Census showed that there were 175,000 young carers in the UK, 13,000 of them caring for more than fifty hours a week. More than half of young carers live in one-parent families. A third of them care for someone with mental health issues. It should be an embarrassment to us all that in this day and age these children rely on charities, such as Bernardo's and Save the Children for help and advice. Of course, they don't get Carers Allowance.

This Government needs to recognise the job of work that carers do. Every year 2.3 million people become carers. On average it can take three years before carers find out about available benefits and help. Carers UK is now running a campaign to improve public understanding. Charities are, again, being used instead of information being readily available from the Government. Imagine what would happen, Congress, if 2.3 million carers stopped caring. Imagine the cost of that to the state.

When I was driving down on Saturday it came on the news that Cameron is going to ensure that carers get a holiday from their caring roles. I do hope he doesn't mean an actual "holiday" because most carers I know can't afford a day trip to Blackpool.

The whole issue of care is a disgrace. Our GMB-sponsored MPs must raise the issues when they are in the House at every opportunity. Carers should not be forced into poverty. Carers and the cared-for should not be used to balance budgets. Please support this motion.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Lorraine. I would just like to say that Lorraine was a first time speaker although she never said it. Could you give her a round of applause, please? (*Applause*) Secunder.

BRO. N. SMITH (North West & Irish Region): Congress, the whole care issue is out of control. There are six million carers in the United Kingdom and they provide more than £15bn in care each year. The probability of becoming an older carer is a one in seven chance for men and a one in six chance for women. This means that many of you will at some stage become a carer. The impact of caring on income, pension, the accumulation, education and development of social networks and friendships, can mean that caring at a younger age results in disadvantage in later life. Carers, both young and old, should not be expected to sacrifice mental and physical health or opportunities for education and personal development in order to carry out their caring role. Proposals for the transformation of future funding of social care should

not place increased demands on carers. Benefits need to be simplified and reforms to remove disincentives to working and education and ensure those carers of pensionable age receive financial recognition for a 35-hour working week. Basic carers allowance should be increased to at least a level of the basic state pension and the earning exemption rule needs to be changed to make sure that they do not provide a disincentive to employment and a new cost of caring allowance should be investigated. Becoming a carer or becoming a person who needs care is, unfortunately, becoming a fact of life. I can virtually guarantee that most of you out here today will become one or the other. Let's start to sort this out now. Congress, I second this motion. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Motion 216, London.

DISABILITY LIVING ALLOWANCE MOTION 216

216. DISABILITY LIVING ALLOWANCE

Congress agrees that the replacement of Disability Living Allowance with Universal Credit is a cynical attack on the most vulnerable in our society. Despite the Con-Dem spin, hundreds of thousands will lose out. Children, the elderly and families. Autistic children, paraplegics and those who would work if they were only able to see their chance at a dignified life taken away.

If there are fraudulent claims, they should be dealt with, and the GMB would support that, but evidence clearly shows that fraudulent claims are in the minority.

This motion calls for an all out campaign by the CEC and this union to restore dignity and resource to all disabled people, whatever their age. The Government and the right wing press should realise that the TV programme "Shameless" is just that a light entertainment TV programme.

HOME COUNTIES GENERAL BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. F. FRANKLIN (London Region): First time delegate, first time speaker. *(Applause)* President, Congress, in an ideal world there would be no disability living allowance because there would be no disability but we do not live in an ideal world. Just look at the government we have. So we are morally bound to protect those less able bodied than other. Any civilised society would ensure that the most disadvantaged among us will be given the means to maintain dignity, independence, and a sense of belonging. The current disability allowance caters for that but, colleagues, that is all to change.

In April 2013 the Government wants to replace the DLA with the Personal Independent Payment, a scheme which will require face-to-face assessment, increased waiting time, and differentiate on the basis of lack of mobility at the expense of other disabilities, such as blindness and deafness. The guidelines so far published are that if you cannot walk but you can see, you will get PIP but if you cannot see but you can walk you will not get PIP. Congress, my source for that information is no less than *The Daily Mail*, a real supporter of the welfare state. The Government spin is that more people with real disabilities will be better off. The fact is more people will be

left to suffer with their ailments and be abandoned by this millionaire government who care more for the City than for their moral obligations.

Colleagues, even Boris Johnson advised the Government to revise their plans for DLA saying this reform would cause stress and hardship to many. There have been thousands and thousands of freedom of information requests about proposed changes and every one attacking the changes. Of course, colleagues, there will always be those who abuse the system; many have not been caught but some have and they have rightly been exposed in the national press: the claimant caught running several market stalls whilst claiming DLA; a claimant caught playing goalkeeper whilst on the DLA; or the claimant playing golf on the DLA. These have all been exposed in the national press, and rightly so. The GMB can have no truck with crooks because they threaten the livelihood of genuine claimants.

Conversely, there was a report in the national press of Stephen Deering who lost a leg in a motorbike accident. He was receiving DLA but following an assessment this was removed because he could walk continuously for 150 yards on his artificial leg. His workplace is two miles away from his home and he has to be driven there by his wife. Congress, just who are the crooks? That bastion of extreme rightwing politics is quick to lambast scroungers, parasites and the workshy and is also quick to print sensational figures about the cost of DLA and the supposed amount fraudulently claimed. I stress here that the GMB cannot condone benefit fraud.

Official figures show that £12.6bn is spent annually on DLA. Official figures further show that £630m is fraudulently or erroneously claimed. That is 0.5% or 5%, depending on whether you use the British or American billion. *The Sun* claims, without any evidence, that the true fraudulent figure is nearer £1bn, still less than 1% of the British billion. Congress, the fact of the matter is that if this Government put half the resource it spends on seeking fraudulent social security claims into seeking and bringing to book tax evasion this country would be solvent overnight.
(*Applause*)

Congress, for the dignity of all those disabled people in this country, please support this motion. I move. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Frances. Secunder.

BRO. M. LANCASTER (London Region): Once again this Coalition government is attacking the most vulnerable within our society. Again, it is the disabled and their carers. By replacing Disability Living Allowance with a means tested personal independent payment assessed by a private contractor, ATOS, a company that has already faced a number of accusations of profiteering out of its controversial test of disabilities. Under this Coalition proposal it is estimated that 500,000 people will lose their entitlement to benefit over the next four years. These cuts will heavily impact the disabled and those who care for someone with a disability. Along with the cuts to housing benefit tens of thousands of families with disabled children will be plunged into poverty denying these children of their right to a future equal to others. It will tighten the chains that disabled people have fought long and hard to escape, sending them back to a time of Victorian ideology.

It does not stop there. Even our heroes who have bravely served our country are not safe from the Coalition cuts. If losing a limb in conflict is not enough, they will also face losing their benefit under ATOS assessment, calling on the British Legion to go cap in hand to the Government and asking for special treatment for our service men and women. You would not read that in *The Sun*. There are stories of a minority that have been caught cheating the system, stories that portray people with disabilities as leeches on society, a thought that could be no further from the truth.

In this Olympic year we will see hardworking disabled athletes competing for their country in Team GB in the Paralympics and what a disgrace that it has been allowed to be sponsored by ATOS, a company that's purpose goes against everything the Paralympics stand for. (*Applause*) Athletes like Lady Tanni Grey-Thompson, eleven times gold medallist, Paralympics basketball player Ade Adepitan, four times world champion gold medallist Alan Crafa, and Paralympics sprinter Ben Rushgrove, have all been publicly critical of the Coalition government proposal. I would not call these athletes lazy or scroungers.

Congress, as this motion says, if there are fraudulent claims they should be dealt with but let's put this into perspective. The Department of Work & Pensions own report says fewer than one out of every 200 claimants lie about their disabilities. Congress, I second. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Micky. Motion 217.

BENEFITS MOTION 217

217. BENEFITS

This Conference calls on the GMB union to campaign against the Coalition Government paying the French private I.T company ATOS £100 million of public money to use "Tick Box" methods, with complete disregard to the Hippocratic Oath, to deny sick and disabled people benefits, declaring them fit for work and condemning them to poverty.

SUNDERLAND 1 ENG BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

BRO. J.A. WINTER (Northern Region): Congress, this Coalition government and its views on the big society are not only a cover for the worst public spending cuts for nearly a century but they are in themselves a big con. To bring in a foreign company is bad enough, to bring in a French private company to do public sector work is even worse. It would not happen in France, of course, as they protect their sectors over there; not this ConDem coalition, they have given £100m of public money, yours and mine, Congress, to ATOS. This company will not pay tax on its profits that it gets from the UK taxpayer. It does not have a stake here. It only wants to take money off the British taxpayer, money that this Coalition government has given them. It is an absolutely disgrace. Congress, it is easy pickings for ATOS. They do not make anything. They do not do anything. They do not create wealth. What this bunch of IT consultant parasites are doing is making money off the sick and disabled. It is a modern day version of the deserving and undeserving poor.

Congress, when is this going to stop? The sick and disabled are paying for their benefits so that this French IT company can rip off the taxpayer. What should happen is for this contract to be ripped up and Labour should signal that it will do so. We should redouble our efforts in our national campaigns to attack this Coalition government at every turn. Privatising welfare and benefits is the road to disaster. Let's make the Coalition at national and local level pay for giving public money to parasites. Please support. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tony. Secunder.

SIS. C. LINFORD (Northern Region): First time speaker, first time delegate. (*Applause*) Congress, this Coalition government is privatising the NHS. They are hell bent on closing Remploy. Now they are privatising the welfare system. Only this Coalition government could regard it as good use of public money to give a French IT company £100m to cut the sickness benefit bill. The system we have had is tried and tested. We have had an occupational health service, which, when working with the NHS, provides a more than adequate service. We even have judges sitting in judgment in appeals, and even that provides independence from the political dogma. To blatantly privatise a system and hand over medical expertise to a bunch of IT consultants in France simply beggars belief. The taxpayer is getting ripped off, the sick and disabled people are getting ripped off, and this bunch of techies are creaming off. The sooner this system is scrapped, Congress, the better and the sooner we have a government that will guarantee to turn the tap off from these people and tell them where to go the better. Please support. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Motion 218, Housing & Benefits.

HOUSING & BENEFITS MOTION 218

218. HOUSING & BENEFITS

This Congress notes with disgust the Government's proposed cap on benefits and in particular the cap on Housing Benefit, which will have the effect of making many families, particularly in London and the South East homeless. As even Boris Johnson has said, this amounts to social cleansing.

This Congress instructs the CEC to mount a vigorous campaign to oppose the cap on Housing Benefit and to campaign for the re-introduction of rent regulation. If rents were properly regulated then the need for a Housing Benefit cap would not be needed.

ISLINGTON APEX BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. V. WEST (London Region): Even Boris Johnson describes the Government policy on housing benefit as social cleansing. You would have thought that Iain Duncan Smith would realise that he was on the wrong track but, no, he and the Government continue with the introduction of the capping of housing benefit, together with all the other cuts to the welfare system that we have heard of already this morning. This cut in housing benefit, or cap on housing benefit, will have one of two consequences: either families will be forced to leave London and the South East, and other areas of high housing costs, or they will be forced into poverty and

homelessness, more people sleeping under London Bridge, more people living in substandard housing.

I and the London Region accept that many private sector landlords play and abuse the system making profits, private profit, from public sector money, but the solution is not to attack the victims of rogue landlords, the solution is to reintroduce rent control and rent regulation in the private sector housing market. *(Applause)* But the real solution — the real solution — that this Government needs to take on board is to build affordable council housing. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Vaughan. Secunder. Hi, George.

BRO. G. SHARKEY (London Region): Congress, Cameron told us before the election that the Tories had changed, no longer the nasty party, but once in power they have reverted to type, reverted to policies that not even Margaret Thatcher would have dared to introduce. The cap on housing benefit is one such policy, a policy that hits society's vulnerable; a policy that will sink families into poverty and homelessness in London and the South East. This policy will result in families being forced to move to other parts of the country or to substandard housing. Congress, we must mount a campaign with others to oppose these proposals. We must stand shoulder to shoulder with some of the most vulnerable in society. Congress, I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, George. Motion 219. Congress, while the delegate is coming, I will then be asking for the movers of 205, Birmingham, 206, Northern Region, and 207, Midland Region.

NEW BENEFIT RULES AND LOW PAID WORKERS MOTION 219

219. NEW BENEFIT RULES AND LOW PAID WORKERS

This Conference calls for the CEC to support a motion to help low paid workers who are parents but the children do not live with them on a full-time basis. Up to the 31st December 2011 if they applied for housing benefit they would be entitled to £92.00 a week. After 31st December the maximum award would be £57.50p. They would find it extremely difficult to find a property or even a single room on this rate.

S02 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

SIS. S. LISNEY (North West & Irish Region): First time speaker, first time delegate. *(Applause)* Housing benefit changes prior to January 2012 mean that anyone under the age of 35 would only get a maximum of a single room rent. Prior to this it was under 25. The over 35 rule now means the likelihood is that these low-paid workers will have a family, some of them have come from a broken home, maybe even have a couple of children, but with the maximum rent, in our area in particular, at £57.50, this means that trying to get a property and a rent of £57.50 is totally unmanageable for a young family, especially for a single person. This means that they would only live in a property of just one room. It is just not reasonable to bring children into this property no matter how old the children are to share a room with either mum or dad, and they would never be able to stay overnight, which is totally impractical. The

Government needs to look at this and needs to look at the fact that they are breaking the family bond. The Conservative/Democrats constantly talk about the importance of family and yet by their actions they show us that they are hell bent on taking money from the normal working people in any way they find. This action indicates something very different. We demand that the Government look at this again as allowing this to continue will contribute to breaking up family bonds. Congress, I move this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sue. It wasn't so bad, was it? Secunder.

SIS. J. KELLY (North West & Irish Region): Yet again low-paid workers are going to be hard hit with the rule change in the housing benefit. This benefit of £57.50 would not even cover the cost of the rent for a single room and that probably would be shared facilities. Surely, the lone parent who does not have the child or the children living with them should have a suitable place to bring the child to visit. Low-paid workers who struggle to make ends meet on a daily basis do not have the money to take children out on outings and often cannot even find the bus fares or public transport to get them to see their children; not that this Government really understands anyway, or even care. I do not think they do care. Parents need to have an adequate safe environment to take their children to. Congress, I urge you to support this motion. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Colleagues, there is no CEC speaker. Anyone wish to speak against? I now put 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, and 219 to the vote. We are supporting all. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 214 was CARRIED.

Motion 215 was CARRIED.

Motion 216 was CARRIED.

Motion 217 was CARRIED.

Motion 218 was CARRIED.

Motion 219 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: I now ask the mover of Motion 205 to move; Birmingham, thank you.

**SOCIAL POLICY: HOUSING
PRIVATE HOUSING LANDLORDS
MOTION 205**

205. PRIVATE HOUSING LANDLORDS

This Conference request that central government implement a legislative framework to ensure private housing landlords commit to minimum standards of quality of provision, charges and services to their tenants, relating in particular to care and maintenance of buildings, environs and utilities.

W50 WELLINGTON BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

BRO. A. ENGLAND (Birmingham & West Midlands Region): It is my pleasure to move Motion 205. This motion arises out of my work as a GMB sponsored local Labour councillor dealing with housing issues. Telford, where I live, is a former new town development and corporation houses along with the council housing were previously passed over to a housing trust to provide social housing within the borough. The housing trust has now been selling off its substandard housing stock, mostly ex-development corporation housing which had then been bought up mainly by private landlords who are investors and speculators. Some of you may have recently seen the hard-hitting advert from Shelter where the landlord holds the family in misery and fear. I ask which century are we in, the 18th or the 19th. I thought these landlords slid under their stones decades ago. It seems they have reappeared.

Not all private landlords are bad. There are bad people in all walks of life: newspaper owners, some journalists, the occasional Baroness, most bankers, and the odd mayor. However, money-grabbing robber landlords feed off those on benefits who are often less able to stand up for themselves. I will give you a little case study.

A local resident in rented property paid for by the state, so that is guaranteed income to the landlord, 18 months ago, new baby, middle of winter, the heating breaks down. The code of conduct says it must be repaired within 24 hours. They were without heating for two weeks. Recently, with the same couple, their back door will not open. They have to use the window to access the back garden so they phoned the landlord. He is in Spain. Three weeks later, and I checked before I came to Congress, the door is still broken.

The code of conduct says urgent repairs, “that materially affect the comfort or convenience of the resident — five days to effect a repair.” That is contained in the Landlord Accreditation Scheme. However, it is voluntary, not compulsory. The Midland Landlord Accreditation Scheme reinforces the code of conduct and refers to the Housing Act 2004. It identifies a fit and proper person to be a landlord. All that is very admirable but membership is not compulsory, as it would be if there was a statutory licensing scheme for all landlords.

I have a contact in the local authority and he points me to the proposals being formulated by the Welsh Government and the BBC News website is quoted here. The Welsh proposal is reported as: “Private landlords will effectively need a licence to let homes under reforms being drawn up by the Welsh Government. Landlords will have to sign a mandatory register before they can take on tenants. The Welsh initiative is aimed at tackling homelessness and improving conditions in private rented housing and to provide more homes.” Those proposals include a fit and proper person test. Legislation will apply to all landlords and their agents regardless of how many properties they have. There are also often hidden costs and charges levied by landlords and their agents, legislation will cover that as well.

Social housing is also about quality of life issues. They affect people’s health and wellbeing and their ability to find and keep a job. For children it is the foundation for the rest of their lives, or it should be. Recent benefit changes take no account of family, community, or quality of life for social housing and private tenants on benefits. In short, housing is fundamental to delivering many of our goals as a

progressive society. This motion calls upon the Government to implement legislative changes but I am not that naïve. Yes, we want the Government to increase tenants' rights and enshrine them in law. I also ask that our political wing, the Labour Party, take up this cause as well and prepare its legislation in advance of resuming office. We are, I hope, preparing future legislation reforms. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Arnold. Well done. Secunder.

BRO. B. JACKSON (Birmingham & West Midlands Region): President, Congress, in seconding this motion it reminds me a little bit of when I was a very young lad and my mum and dad actually rented a house from a private landlord. The back kitchen was always full of damp because the window had rotted. I can fully remember my mother keep hounding the private landlord to actually put a new window in. A few years later the whole lot was all brought down; it was in a slum clearance area. The window never did get actually repaired.

Then my wife's son quite recently because of a family matter had to go into a private flat. There was no heating. The gas fire was hanging off the wall and in his desperation he bought one of these new-fangled electric heaters that are very bright but actually do not throw out much heat. He left it on because he had to go to work and a passerby saw that it was glowing in the downstairs flat and actually called the Fire Brigade because he thought the house was on fire. The Fire Brigade had to break in and found the heater but also found that there was little or no heating that was there with the existing gas appliances and said that he had never ever seen a flat left in such a dangerous state. I have great pleasure in seconding this motion and I encourage all the people in this Congress actually to support it. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Brian. Motion 206.

COUNCIL HOUSING REVENUES AND CAPITAL MOTION 206

206. COUNCIL HOUSING REVENUES AND CAPITAL

This Conference calls on the Coalition government to give Local Authorities the power back to keep council housing revenues from rents and the receipt from sales of council houses.

Since the inception of Right to Buy in the 1980s councils have had to return receipts to Whitehall and Central Government allocation.

This Conference notes that this has restricted council autonomy, places a blight on Regional Policy and local regeneration, and gives control to Central Government.

As part of a package of measures aimed at Regional growth and the development of effective Regional Policy, this Conference calls for council housing revenue and capital to, once more, come under the power and duty of Local Authorities.

Conference calls on the Labour Party to adopt this position and for progress to be reported back to the 2013 Congress.

DURHAM COUNTY LA BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

SIS. Y. MORRIS (Northern Region): Congress, over the last 30 years in housing, as well as other areas of public policy, emphasis by lawmakers has been on the public bad, private good. Right to buy legislation did not allow for councils to keep housing receipts. All councils sent their housing money to Whitehall and it went into the central pot of money. Whitehall then spent it in areas they saw fit. Congress, this was part of the process of ensuring that there was no regional policy in the country. Also, Whitehall ruled out further housing options of council housing. No wonder young people find it hard to get affordable housing.

Congress, the lack of regional policy based on regeneration is a disgrace. Allowing local authorities to keep receipts is a crucial way of giving councils the power to match funds, to work in partnership, to boost employment, and to rebuild local communities. Congress, council investment in housing and regeneration is vital to help boost our communities. The private sector alone cannot deliver because the banks are not lending. Every generation or two sees landmark legislation on housing. The move in the last 30 years in the UK to entrench home ownership as the main form of housing tenure has been challenged by several recessions. The last few years have seen a dwindling supply of council housing and the widening of the gap between rich and poor.

Congress, investment in the council housing coupled with the ability for councils to keep their housing receipts will make a difference to local regeneration. Central Whitehall control is not producing good housing policy. Labour has a good opportunity to break out from the cosy consensus that has built up in the last 30 years where underfunded council housing has been regarded as bad and all other forms of housing tenure as better. Labour can adopt a fundamental change in housing policy by ensuring that it will return receipts and enable councils to keep more of their housing receipts on the back of that principle should they be returned to power. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Well done. Secunder.

BRO. K. STUBBS (Northern Region): Congress, council housing stock is now a shadow of its former self and turning the clock back is virtually impossible due to very limited resources. Successive governments' housing policies have not kept pace with local demands whilst resources have been continually cut leading to the massive problems we face today on housing. Even worse than that, billions of pounds have been lost to local communities over the last 30 years because of these policies. The finance that should have been used for local regeneration has gone into a central Whitehall pot where there is guarantee at all that any of it will be spent on housing. Indeed, there are now grave and serious concerns that it is being used for privatised services and ripping off the taxpayer.

Congress, there simply has to be a radical overhaul of the UK housing policy with Labour leading the way, based upon local regeneration. Resources must be devolved from Whitehall with local communities keeping housing revenue and capital receipts. If we do not, we will just go down the same blind alley successive governments have taken; ignoring the issues involved is not helping anyone, either today or in future decades. All of our children will one day want their own home. We must not fail

them by taking the easy option not to do anything about the housing problems. Let's not forget our councils retain the right for housing strategies.

Labour must become radical again on housing and deliver what the people want and we as a trade union need to call them to account in this vital area of policy. We need them to focus on a change of mood on housing by ignoring the fast buck to be made by selling housing and instead treat houses as a home. The message to Labour is quite simple and needs to be sent out loud and clear: support the people and they will support you. I urge you all to get behind and support this motion. I second.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Motion 207, Midland.

CHANGES TO PLANNING REGULATIONS MOTION 207

207. CHANGES TO PLANNING REGULATIONS

This Conference considers that the proposed changes by the Government to planning laws in favour of "a presumption in favour of sustainable development" will lead to a completely unregulated urban sprawl and will not contribute in any way to economic recovery.

LEICESTERSHIRE 2000 BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Carried)

SIS. L. GUBB (Midland & East Coast Region): President, Congress, when the Coalition government published its intention to reform planning regulations that have been in existence since 1947 there was widespread condemnation and suspicion, and quite rightly so. As trade unionists alarm bells start to ring when we hear the words, "red tape", "simplify", and "deregulate", from a Tory government. It would seem that most of the country was similarly horrified. Whilst developers in particular did welcome changes proposed in the draft document, rubbing their greedy hands together, opposition was voiced from many quarters, in particular and surprisingly the most vocal being the National Trust, who are not noted for their opposition to the Tory Party. They started the emphasis in the consultation document on economic advantages from the changes over environmental considerations. People could see the possibility of the loss of allotments, for example, and even the desecration of national parks, whilst in my neck of the woods people fighting to preserve the green wedge to prevent the loss of identity of various communities and battling against various powerful landowners and developers could see all their efforts being lost.

We all want affordable housing, both for ourselves and for our children, and viable businesses to create jobs but not at the expense of environmental standards and the loss of valuable amenities. Would we, for example, like to see Stonehenge surrounded by a housing estate?

The initial concern was fuelled by the lack of understanding of the term, "a presumption in favour of sustainable development". Of course, we all know what it means, don't we? It is probably about as understandable as the "big society". In essence, it means that unless you can prove otherwise then the developments, such as houses, roads, supermarkets, etc., can go ahead whatever the opposition, a challenge

for the people of Britain. Thankfully, the final document was published and the MPPF have been substantially changed. The Government initially wanted to remove the priority given to building on brown field as opposed to green field sites. This has now reverted to brown field sites being given priority, a default that was proposed if a local authority did not have a local plan. This has now been removed. Local authorities have now been given a 12-month period to put local plans in place or adapt existing plans. On the debit side this will of course lead to a growth in NIMBYISM and a lack of regional coordination and under localism local communities will be left to take on the resources of multinationals.

The presumption in favour of sustainable development has been more fully defined with the balance being given of economic, social and environmental matters. However, while the nastier elements of the proposals have seen to be curtailed, vigilance will have to be exercised as to how the new guidance is implemented by the local authorities. The devil, they say, will be in the detail. Congress, I move.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Secunder.

BRO. R. MORGAN (Midland & East Coast Region): Few people were aware of the Government's proposals to alter the planning rules dramatically and even fewer have the inclination to address planning issues in their local area. The Government is struggling to defend its controversial and national framework policy, and quite rightly so. The framework slashes the current planning laws. This will result in a free hand for greedy developers. The ConDems say communities will have the final decision under the Government's new neighbourhood plans. Does anybody believe that because I certainly don't? They also state it will be a huge opportunity for communities to exercise genuine influence over what their home town should look like in the future. I think we all know that will not happen. Neighbourhood plans will simply become a charter for those with vested interest to get the most say, with the local communities only getting involved once decisions have been made. Eric Pickles and that apology for a Chancellor, George Osborne, say they are good for the UK economy. What they actually mean is it is good for the rich and powerful developers who will be able to fill their pockets with a dash for cash with the Tory toffs and their Liberal poodles. Congress, I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Richard. Congress, does anyone wish to speak against? No? Thank you. I call Lorraine Parker to speak on Motion 206.

SIS. L. PARKER (CEC, Public Services): President, Lorraine Parker speaking on behalf of the CEC covering Motion 206 asking Congress to support the motion but with a qualification. Congress, the reason why the CEC is asking for the qualification is that the motion calls for local authorities to keep council house revenues from rents and receipts from the sales of council houses instead of sending the revenue to central government. The Government announced plans in November 2011 for 25% from the receipts of sales to be held by local authorities. In addition, in February 2012 the Government announced plans that councils would take control of housing rent revenue in exchange for councils taking responsibility for some of the Treasury's historic housing debt. These issues are therefore currently under review.

Although in principle GMB would support local councils having control of housing stock and revenue, this is frankly a very complex issue that needs to be thoroughly researched, especially in light of the recent government announcements. In addition, there would need to be a clear indication on how revenue and capital would be spent before giving the motion our full support. Congress, the need for housing in Britain has never been greater with the successive governments not addressing the crisis, in particular, of affordable housing in Britain. Congress, the CEC asks you to support Motion 206 with the qualification that I have set out. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Lorraine. Does the region accept the qualification? Speak to Mary, Northern Region? (*Agreed*) Thank you. I call Phil Davies to come down while I am taking the vote, please. The CEC is supporting all, with the qualification, 205, 206 and 207. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 205 was CARRIED.

Motion 206 was CARRIED.

Motion 207 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, it gives me great pleasure to call on Phil Davies to report back from the Manufacturing Section Conference. Phil.

MANUFACTURING SECTION REPORT

BRO. P. DAVIES (National Secretary, Manufacturing): Congress, the Section Conference carried 20 motions that varied from declining manufacturing to the closure of our Remploy factories. There were 87 delegates, eight guest speakers, including three international speakers, and three General Secretaries. There were 16 section committee members present.

Congress, this will be my last congress as National Secretary of the Manufacturing Section so I would ask the timekeeper to give me a few extra minutes. I need to say a vote of thanks to a number of people. I would like to take the opportunity to thank the officers in the section, Keith Hazlewood and Alan Black, who worked ever so hard for our members in the manufacturing section and continue to do so. Keith will be retiring also in October and I am sure you would want to wish him well for the future. (*Applause*) I would like to thank all the other National Officers in the union who have helped me over a number of years, especially Jude Brimble, who has been a great supporter of our members in Remploy and are one of the best customers, along with Paul Kenny of course, to our workers cooperative up in York. I would like to thank all the staff, Barbara Casher, Dolores, everybody at the National Office at Euston and Wimbledon. I would like to thank our Kathleen Walker-Shaw for the work that she does for the union; what an asset, what a person, what a worker. (*Applause*)

I joined the union at the age of 15. At 15-and-a-half I was elected as check secretary in one of the branches, I was elected to the Furniture Workers Executive at 27, and have been a National Officer for 23 years. I have had eight General Secretaries and I have worked with a number of Presidents of different unions, I have worked with a number of General Secretaries of different unions but there is one person that I hold in

such high esteem, I have never seen another lay president like her, that is our own Mary Turner. (*Applause*) What a great tribute was paid to her by Sam Hagglund to me and Kathleen. He said that he had been round the world, he had seen all the congresses of different unions around the world, he had seen many, many lay presidents but he had never seen one like our Mary. He had never ever seen someone that can handle a conference but can also be humorous. What a great tribute that is from an international speaker.

Congress, I just want to share two stories that I shared with the Manufacturing Section Conference. Bear with me as some people have heard them before. One story is that one evening very late in winter I picked up Mary Turner at Brent Town Hall, 9 o'clock at night, she had been battling as usual with the council. She got in the car and we drove to Nottingham. It was an awful night, the traffic was terrible and it took us about three hours to get to Nottingham. All that time she spoke about the members, the union, what we could do to help Remploy, about her family, and I spoke about mine. You really get to know people sometimes in a very short time when you are with them. We got to Nottingham and we got lost, didn't we, Mary? People that know me know that I am not very good with the new technology and the SatNavs, and what have you. We drove round Nottingham five times. I have a confession to make. We did not really get lost. I was so intrigued with Mary I didn't want to let her out the car. (*Laughter*) On another occasion if you remember at the TUC we had dumped all the redundancy notices for Remploy on the feet of Peter Hain, and Brendan Barber looked like he had been struck with lightning, there was horror on his face. When I walked back to the seat the General Secretary sort of nodded to me. I have another confession, I got the bollocking for that but it was Mary Turner's idea, not mine. (*Laughter*)

Congress, it would not be a report if I did not mention our members in Remploy. Our members in Remploy are under the worst attack possible, the most vulnerable in our society are being attacked on a daily basis. Only today a notice has been issued in every Remploy factory to say if the people that have shown an interest, the organisations that have shown an interest, the entrepreneurs and the asset strippers who have shown an interest, if they want to make redundancies before they buy the factories Remploy will help select those people that can be made redundant and they will be selected on the basis of their disability, they will be selected if they are blind, if they are deaf, if they are physically disabled, the most vulnerable people with learning difficulties will be selected.

I am pleased to report that in Leeds, Pontefract, Chester, Oldham, and Birkenhead, today they have walked out into the canteen in protest. (*Applause*) Our members need your support. This is not just a fight to save disabled people's jobs; it is a fight to stop this Government attacking the most vulnerable in our society. It is the Movement's fight. It is every union's fight, not just the Remploy unions. I have to say this, our members are engaged in an industrial action ballot. If they come out, decide to occupy the factories, then we need to support them. Let me say to the power workers, the nuclear workers, the gas workers, and the water workers, you stop work for one day and we will win this dispute. (*Applause*)

Colleagues, it has been a privilege, an absolute privilege, to work for the trade union, to work for the GMB. I have loads of friends that I will not leave behind but will

keep in contact with. I intend to stay active within the Movement after I retire. It is a privilege to have worked with the shop stewards throughout this union. We have a job of work to do together to get rid of this government. On one last happy note, can I ask Paul Kenny to stop sending me those bloody faxes in the sauna. Thanks, Paul.
(Laughter/Applause/Standing Ovation)

THE PRESIDENT: Phil, thank you very much for that wonderful speech. I feel very humble myself. I know you are retiring and I wish you and your family, who I know, all the best, but you will not be going very far, will you; this Congress knows that. Could I say to Keith and his family, Keith, have a happy retirement and I imagine you have the same commitment; I know you have the same commitment. You will not be going far but I do wish you well, as does this Congress, and to say thank you from the GMB for all that you have done right the way through. Thanks, Keith. *(Applause)*

Phil, you forgot to introduce some historical photos of Remploy workers and their campaigns. We can see those later on. Thank you.

I now move to item 10, Emergency Motion 4, to be moved by Midland & East Coast Region, Job Losses in UK Manufacturing.

EMERGENCY MOTION 4
JOB LOSSES IN UK MANUFACTURING

JOB LOSSES IN UK MANUFACTURING

Congress calls on this coalition Government to follow through on the promises and commitments given to this conference last year by Vince Cable to support UK Manufacturing.

The recent announcement on 31st May 2012 of 600 job losses at BAE Systems Plant at Newcastle, along with the decision to end Hawk manufacturing at the Brough Plant, East Yorkshire, are a direct result of this coalition Government's austerity measures.

Instead of standing idly by while highly skilled and vitally important jobs are lost with the Defence industry, as BAE Systems largest customer, we call on the Government to help to mitigate job losses and save the skills vital to the nation's strategic defence and honour the promises made to this Congress and the UK electorate to support UK manufacturing, and not allow corporations to reduce it and export it.

BAE BROUGH BRANCH
MIDLAND & EAST COAST REGION

(Carried)

BRO. P. BELL (Midland & East Coast Region): Congress, Vince Cable came here last year and as the so-called Business Secretary promised to support UK jobs in manufacturing. Since then more than 270,000 public sector workers have lost their jobs, according to the Office of National Statistics. Youth unemployment rate is running at 22.5%, the highest since 1992. In my own sector, manufacturing has seen

bad news followed by more bad news. On top of the 3,000 redundancies announced in September by BAE Systems, a further 600 have just been added at Newcastle. All these terrible job losses are down to this Coalition government's austerity measures and cutbacks. The dole seems to be this Government's answer to putting UK on its feet and paying back the national debt. Thanks, Vince, for all your support.

Your decisions of cancelling aircraft contracts already agreed, chopping up aircrafts in front of the very workers that built them, such as the Nimrod, and now looking at buying foreign aircraft to replace them placing British skilled engineers on the dole, selling the Harrier fleet of aircraft to the American Air Force for £100m after the taxpayer had just spent £600m to refurbish them is not only a tragedy to the skilled maintenance workers who supported them but a disgraceful waste of taxpayers' money, which has left this country's air capability depleted. We have no aircraft carriers, no planes to put on them, yet this Government has our fighting men and women risking their lives in conflicts all over the world. It is a disgrace, Congress.

BAE Systems' disgraceful decision to end the manufacturing at Brough in East Yorkshire in September with the announcement of the loss of the 800 skilled workers was the start of some really bad news in manufacturing. Not once has Vince Cable even bothered to turn up at Brough, even though he has been invited by the workers and their families at the plant. Again, thanks for all your support, Vince.

BAE Systems decided to end nearly 100 years of aircraft manufacturing at Brough with a total cessation of manufacturing. This was a terrible body blow to the workers who have built the best training aircraft in the world for over 25 years, the Hawk. I am pleased to report, Congress, the action taken by our members and the fantastic support from our regional and national officers, and local MPs, the shop stewards committee have managed to save nearly 220 jobs up to now ensuring the continuation of manufacturing in East Yorkshire. *(Applause)*

The fight goes on to save more jobs and retain as much Hawk manufacturing at Brough as possible. I am also proud to be able to tell you that we have managed to mitigate all 70 apprentices on the site, either by securing them placements at other bases and sites or nearby air bases. This has ensured they do not end up on the dole as many other young workers have done under this Government.

It is the work of the site trade unions with the help of the local MPs who have brought about the turnaround, put pressure on BAE Systems. It is a pity the same pressure was not put on BAE by its biggest customer, the government. They have stood idly by while skilled workers are put on the scrap heap. Not once have they shown any support. Again, thanks for your support, Vince.

We need to support Newcastle, we need to support Brough, and we need to support Remploy and call on this Government to stand good on the promises it made to this Congress by Vince Cable, stop standing idly by while workers have been sacked, help us support the fight for jobs, honour the promises and commitments made to this electorate. UK workers want jobs not benefits. Most of all, we want an end to the job cuts and job losses. We do not want workers picking up benefits. We want action and not empty promises. We have proved that if we stand together we can make a difference. Given one ounce of support from this Government we could have saved

many more jobs. This country did not vote for this Coalition. Go now before we kick you out. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder.

BRO. J. McCROSSAN (Midland & East Coast Region): On this platform at last year's Congress Vince Cable pledged to the GMB a commitment to support UK manufacturing but time and hindsight have proven what he said differed greatly to his actual intent. You only need to look at BAE Systems in Newcastle, Hawk production at Brough, Bombardier, and not forgetting — and I hope that odious little turd Iain Duncan Smith is listening — Remploy. Those are a few examples. There are many more. Maybe he actually speaks two languages at one time, Liberal and Conservative, his promises misinterpreted in translation, but I doubt it. I do not think he is bilingual, I believe he speaks because his tongue is forked. The phrase “speaks with forked tongue” means to deliberately say one thing but mean another, or to be hypocritical, or to act in a duplicitous manner. Believe me, I looked it up. I also discovered another interesting fact, one that will come as no surprise to anyone here, this is a feature common to many species of reptiles and, let's be totally honest, colleagues, a nest of vipers is probably the best metaphor we could use to describe this current government.

The Hawk was the aircraft used by the RAF who protected our freedom from tyranny in the Battle of Britain, but this is a new fight from tyranny against a selective class who would ruin this nation. I ask you for your support for Newcastle, Brough, Remploy, and all manufacturing the length and breadth of this nation. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Congress, I am going to call a very special speaker in this debate because I think it is extremely important. Could I call Les Woodward from, guess where, Remploy, South Western Region.

BRO. L. WOODWARD (South Western Region): Thank you, comrades. Thanks for the support. Comrades, I came up on this platform last year and I said that we are facing the most vitriolic and the nastiest attack on our terms and conditions, and our living standards that our class has sustained for the last 200 years. Make no mistake about it, comrades, these bastards want to send us back where we were 200 years ago when we did not have any education, any welfare, any NHS, or any of the benefits or concessions that the fights of our forefathers and foremothers fought for us.

Comrades, Remploy and all the other fights that we face are all one of the same fight. We are either going to fight to save what we have and reclaim what we had, or we are going to be consigned to the history books and consigned to the scrap heaps. Comrades, I am going to end with this and ask you all one question: are we going to fight and are we going to win? That is what we need to ask. Thank you very much, comrades. Yes. Yes. Yes. *(Applause/Standing Ovation)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Les, very much indeed. We all know of your most sincere commitment, like all the reps. Thank you. I now move to the vote on Emergency Motion 4. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

Emergency Motion 4 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to item 11, Social Policy: Transport, and call the movers of Composite 19, London Region, 210, Southern Region, and 212, Yorkshire Region. Will the movers and seconders please come to the front?

**SOCIAL POLICY: TRANSPORT
PUBLIC TRANSPORT
COMPOSITE 19**

C19. Covering Motions:

208. ATTACKS ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT (*London Region*)

209. COMBATING THE CAUSES OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT FARE RISES (*London Region*)

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Congress is deeply concerned by Government sponsored attacks on rail passengers using the report by Sir Roy McNulty on the future of the rail industry as a smokescreen to absolve themselves of responsibility for their decisions.

Congress notes that the threat to remove or reduce staff from hundreds of station ticket offices has brought together passenger groups, trade unions and others to voice their alarm that such actions will result in stations that are dangerous, unwelcoming and inaccessible.

Congress believes that rail passengers deserve and are entitled to safe, staffed stations and therefore calls on the Secretary of State for Transport to commit to properly staffed stations and ticket offices.

Congress also opposes any plans to reduce staffing levels at London Underground ticket offices for the same reasons.

Congress is also concerned that January 2012 saw the largest hike in rail fares in living memory as passengers are now being asked to help pick up the tab for the folly of bankers and rail privatisation.

Congress notes that national fares increased by an average of 8%, a year on year compound of up to 36% in four years. Congress views such increases as a stealth tax on public transport users.

This Congress agrees:

- profiteering results in annual increases in public transport costs well above inflation and salary increments which impact disproportional on workers and families who are entirely dependant on public transport
- the GMB will work with other transport unions, community groups and the TUC in combating the ever increasing profiteering of privatised transport companies

Congress calls on the CEC to join in campaigning against attacks on public transport

(Carried)

SIS. E. BAKER (London Region): First time delegate, first time speaker at Congress. (*Applause*) Thank you. President, Congress, our railways are under attack. In March this year the Coalition issued a rail command paper the contents of which threaten the future of railway services and the safety of the network. This Government paper is based on the dangerous conclusions of the McNulty Report which last year decided the railway was inefficient and needed to cut its cost by 30%. How to do this: to worsen the service of course. This is a Tory government, after all. What these reports do not tackle are the real reasons for the current costs of the railways.

Since privatisation of the railways in the mid-90s, the industry has been broken up in a way which has benefited only those seeking to squeeze a profit out of this vital public service. From the total cost of the railways the amount that can be directly attributed to privatisation and fragmentation is £1.2bn, every year. Over £400m of this goes directly into shareholders' pockets as dividends, again every year, money from our taxes and our fares, and the Government has the cheek to tell us that we have to accept cuts to our service.

If they get their way what will the impact be? Fares will still rise above inflation and peak time commuters will see prices hiked even faster as train companies are asked by the Government to force commuters to quieter times in the day to deal with overcrowding; not much use if you have to get to work at a certain time, of course. Passenger personal safety and the service at stations will be slashed; 675 stations, a quarter of the total will have their ticket offices closed leaving stations unstaffed. Trains with no staff except the driver will become the norm. All this will hit the vulnerable in our communities hardest. Do we want them on deserted platforms or empty trains late at night with no access to staff in times of need? Will some people want to travel on the railway at all? What will be the effect on railway safety? Potters Bar, Hatfield, Ladbroke Grove, Southall, accidents between 1997 and 2002, which killed 49 people, accidents that many of us remember with horror, accidents that were all caused by the breaking up of the railways after privatisation, the blurring of safety accountability and the introduction of profit into decisions about safety. The Government want to bring this back. They want to break up the running of the track and the signals. They want to give the profit maximising privately owned companies that run the trains the chance to influence decisions on the safety of the track.

What can we do? We need to decide what we want our railways to look like, a better railway, a safe fully staffed, affordable, railway, one that can commit to support UK manufacturing by ensuring trains are still built here, a publicly owned railway run for the benefit of people not for profit. Since we submitted this motion the TUC has launched *Action for Rail*, a campaign bringing unions and communities together to fight for the railways we deserve. I would ask our members and branches to find out how proposed cuts to stations will affect your communities and get involved and for the union as a whole to support and promote union and community action in support of our railways. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Ellie. Secunder.

BRO. W. CONWAY (London Region): At present, both ends of my journey to work have stations being extensively refurbished, both will have the manned ticket offices reduced in favour of machines and the pre-paid Oyster card system. In this year alone

on my journey, on 12th February there was a murder at Penge East, on 20th April two were found guilty of a murder at Victoria, on 16th May two were found guilty of a murder at Victoria. It would be irresponsible to say these murders would not have happened with a greater staff presence but CCTV cameras did not prevent them. Some elderly and disabled passengers need help to travel on the trains, wheelchair users are virtually excluded because of the step between the platform and the train. Neither of these multi-pound refurbishments at Victoria or Bromley will address these. We need staff and railway stations to sell tickets, help passengers, and provide the reassurance and deterrent that a physical presence provides. If I travel home after 10 at night, which I do regularly, I seem to be the only one with a ticket. The stations and barriers are unmanned all along the line, thousands are travelling for nothing. How can this make economic sense? We need the public transport that we deserve, safe, affordable, and efficient. Congress, please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks very much, Will. Motion 210, Southern Region to move, High Speed Rail.

HIGH SPEED RAIL MOTION 210

210. HIGH SPEED RAIL

This Congress welcomes the government's decision to build a High Speed Rail line between London and Birmingham as this will create many jobs in UK construction and manufacturing. This high speed line must provide access for trains from as much of Britain as possible. It should have trains from the Midlands, the North West, Yorkshire, The North East, Wales and Scotland not just the Midlands. In addition there must be a station at Old Oak Common west London to provide interchange with Crossrail, local trains from north, south and west London and trains from Gatwick and Heathrow airports.

Congress believes that this first High Speed line should not be the end of High Sped Rail Lines in the UK; the GMB should join with other unions and the TUC to campaign for more High Speed Rail lines to South Wales, South West England, East Anglia and Scotland.

C60 CROYDON BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

SIS. N. JACKSON-AMPAW (Southern Region): Today we are in a double-dip recession made by a ConDem government. History tell us that one of the best ways of getting out of a recession is expenditure on useful capital projects that benefit the whole country, create jobs, and equip people with skills for the future. We should work on the commitment by the government, even this rightwing Tory government, to construct a high speed rail line from London to Birmingham. This has the opportunity to create jobs in both construction and UK manufacturing. However, we must make sure that it is UK manufacturing that benefit from the decision to construct the high speed line. We must not just import machinery and companies from other parts of the world. The rails, sleepers, wiring and cables, and support masts, must be manufactured in the UK. The high speed line from London to Birmingham must be seen as a first step towards a high speed network in lines in the UK. This line is a good start but we must make sure that trains from the destinations in the Midlands, the North West, Yorkshire, the North East, Wales and Scotland, not just Birmingham, can use the line to speed journeys to these destinations as well.

In London it is important that there is not just a station at Euston but a second interchange station at Old Oak Common in West London to provide an interchange with CrossRail, local trains from North, South, and West London, and trains from Gatwick and Heathrow Airport, so that passengers do not have to travel into Central London and back out again.

Congress, we have seen in France, Germany, Spain, Belgium, and other European countries that high speed rail brings jobs not only to the capital but to the regions as well by improving fast communication across and between the countries. The building of high speed lines should not be the end of high speed rail lines in the UK. The GMB should join with other unions and the TUC to campaign for more high speed rail lines to South Wales, South West England, East Anglia, and Scotland. I move. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Nana. Secunder.

SIS. N. PETRIE (Southern Region): First time speaker. (*Applause*) We heard the Shadow Chancellor speak about the recession in terms of what it means to the unemployed and the less well off all over the UK and we can all imagine what boost it will be for the economy if the construction of the high speed rail is extended all over the country. Not only will it allow massive investment in terms of our transport infrastructure it will also encourage people to look further afield for jobs knowing that access to other cities is available and at a shorter time. Apart from the job creation and other economic benefits that come with such investment, the opportunity to move around the country within less time means that more people will use it for leisure or to visit family, or relatives and, most importantly, people will be able to take on a job that otherwise they will not have looked at due to travel time or distance, thus helping to stop people having to relocate and uproot their families to another part of the country away from their loved ones and their accustomed lifestyle. The high speed rail could be the difference between a business surviving, the difference between a job or not, the difference between getting home at night if you are travelling a long way, the difference between a family life or not, the difference between the haves and have nots; the list is endless.

In seconding the motion I am asking for your support to start campaigning for the high speed rail to be extended to all parts of the UK as part of the boost to the economy, which will create jobs and facilitate access for all people to all parts of London and the country. London to Birmingham, why stop at Birmingham? In getting the high speed rail link we can all use it more. I hope I have kept in the limits of my time as it is important not to cross the red, so please keep the green light on for the high speed rail. I second the motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Nina. Well done. I now ask for the mover of 212, Please Pass Horses Wide and Slowly. Lisa Ryan will be responding. Then I will be calling 198, North West and Irish Region, 203, London Region, and 232, London Region. Thank you.

PLEASE PASS HORSES WIDE AND SLOWLY MOTION 212

212. PLEASE PASS HORSES WIDE AND SLOWLY

This Conference calls upon all motorists to please pass horses wide and slowly on our roads.

In raising awareness we hope to avoid all the unnecessary accidents and fatalities involving horses and riders each year.

ASDA STORES BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

SIS. S. WALKER (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region): President, Congress, this Congress calls upon all motorists to please pass horses wide and slowly if approaching them on our roads. With an estimated 1.2 million horses in the UK horse industry and around 4.3 million riders, there must be many of our members or their families who have at some point had contact with horses, whether it be having a few lessons or being lucky enough to own or loan one.

According to figures from November 2010 to March 2012 there have been 380 reported road accidents involving horses, that is not to mention the ones that have gone unreported or the near misses. Many would argue that horses should not be on our roads at all and in an ideal world I would probably agree but, unfortunately, most riders are not the landed gentry so do not have their own estates to ride around. Most recreational riders are not the nouveau riche but ordinary working people, or children, whose horses are not pampered competition horses but much loved family pets.

Road work for most is a necessary evil to get to the ever-decreasing bridle paths and country tracks where they can exercise their animals. According to figures over 90% who ride out regularly are female and children. Many like me work two jobs to subsidise livery costs. As well as working at Asda I work at a local riding school where I take rides out so I am a regular road user. Many motorists are courteous and pass with care but there is always a minority that do not. I believe the ones who do not fall into two categories: the first being those who deliberately try to scare horses for their own warped entertainment. The second group, I believe, do it because of ignorance. They have probably never had any contact with horses so are totally unaware of how they may react if scared. Horses belong to the flight group of animals, which means if scared they will run away from something rather than stand and fight. Even the most bombproof animal can be spooked and behave out of character. People do not always realise that as well as the damage that could be done to a horse and rider, they can also do a lot of damage to a vehicle.

I know firsthand of the dangers on the road as last year whilst out riding on my horse we were struck from behind by a car. We were only 50 yards from the stables. It was a bright clear day and as I was wearing a "high vis" jacket I thought we were okay. How someone cannot see half a ton of horse and a rider in "high vis" I will never know but begs the question, should they be driving if they could not see us. The best of it was we were not even moving. We had stopped to let traffic overtake as we were approaching a large sign at the roadside. In the ensuing pandemonium all traffic at both sides of the road stopped and the offending driver agreed to follow us back to the stables after they had retrieved their wing mirror from the road. As my main concern

was for my injured horse and I was probably in shock, I never got their registration number and, as you have probably guessed, the driver absconded never to be seen again. They were probably expecting a massive vet bill. Thankfully, there were no broken bones and the wounds eventually healed but for a while we were both really nervous of approaching traffic. I suppose we were lucky as it could have been a lot worse.

We are told in adverts to *Think Bike* but I also ask you to *Think Horse*. Many of the people I take on rides have passed a British Horse Society Riding and Road Safety test which teaches safety awareness and courtesy but many drivers do not understand simple hand signals such as slow down or stop. Horses are living creatures, not lumps of metal, and the adults and children that ride them do not dent like a car, they die. The British Horse Society has a campaign that says, *Hit the brakes, not my horse*. An accident can happen in a heartbeat so please slow down and give plenty of room when passing horses, and remember how vulnerable they and their riders are. In raising awareness we hope to avoid every unnecessary accident or fatality. Remember horses were once the main form of transport and if fuel prices keep going up their time may come again. Please support. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder.

SIS. R. KNOWLES (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region): President, Congress, I don't know a lot about horses, except that they run round racetracks and you put money on them but I could imagine who would probably come off worst if they were in a collision with a vehicle. With the speed and closeness that some traffic goes it must be really scary for the riders, never mind the horses. As you have heard, many children ride out and as we know do not always see the dangers that adults do. We encourage children to get fresh air and exercise; these are benefits that they get when involved with horses. We also want them to be safe and not in danger whilst on the road. As our roads get ever busier, horses along with other vulnerable road users, such as motorcyclists and cyclists, are more and more at risk of being involved in an accident. All we are asking is that motorists take their foot off the gas and give them a wide berth when passing. Arriving a few minutes later is better than not arriving at all or having your actions cause an accident. Surely there is room for us all on our roads and with a little care and consideration we can all get back safe and sound. Please support. Thank you. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Anyone against? I call on Lisa Ryan on behalf of the CEC on Motion 212. Lisa.

SIS. L. RYAN (CEC, Commercial Services): We are supporting Motion 212 with a qualification. Congress, the motion rightly draws attention to the dangers to horses and riders on the roads. In 2009, one horse-rider was killed and 21 were seriously injured in collisions with motor vehicles. There is clearly a lack of awareness of the dangers of startling horses by passing them closely or too quickly. The recommended speed is 15mph. Many motorists may not be aware that this is actually a requirement of section 215 of the Highway Code so, yes, we need to raise awareness of this serious issue. The qualification is that horses and their riders are not the only groups exposed to danger. In 2011, 403 motorcyclists, 405 pedestrians, and 111 cyclists died on our roads. The CEC believes that we should raise awareness of the dangers to all

vulnerable road users. We should publicise the Department of Transport's *Think Campaign* which encourages safer behaviour to reduce the number of deaths and injuries on our roads each year, but particularly vulnerable road users including cyclists, motorcyclists, as well as horse-riders. Please support Motion 212 with the qualification I have set out. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Lisa, very much. Is the region accepting the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you very much. I now put Composite 19, Motion 210 and 212 to the vote. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

Composite 19 was CARRIED.

Motion 210 was CARRIED.

Motion 212 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: I now ask for the mover of Motion 198, Child Detention, North West & Irish Region.

**SOCIAL POLICY: GENERAL
CHILD DETENTION
MOTION 198**

198. CHILD DETENTION

Congress notes that despite promises by Nick Clegg on behalf of the Coalition Government to end child detention (something he described as 'state sponsored cruelty') it has not been done.

Entirely innocent children can still be detained in the UK.

Congress therefore calls upon the CEC and General Secretary to lobby Government and Opposition to commit to ending the detention of refugee and asylum-seeking children, as well as the detention of any child solely for immigration purposes.

T30 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

SIS. L. WINSON (North West & Irish Region): President, Congress, last year in a statement to the LibDem Conference Nick Clegg said that child detention in the UK had ended. Well, he lied. I think we knew that, though. Researching for this motion I contacted the No Borders Action Group that was happy to give me facts and figures that prove he lies. A Glasgow newspaper dated 13th April 2012 tells of the UK Border Agency raiding a family from Azerbaijan, the mother five months pregnant, the child two years old, woken at 6 a.m. by immigration officers in stab-proof vests. They are now interred in The Cedars Detention Centre near Crawley.

The Government claimed that this is not actually detention but as no one is allowed to leave the G4S-managed camp it seems very like detention to me. Many asylum seekers come to the UK fleeing torture and the threat of death, others have left for compelling reasons and claim on this country as a place of refuge but whatever the strength of their case they are likely to be locked up behind bars and razor wire, and so are their children. In December 2011, 17 children were held in detention in the UK.

The charity, Medical Justice, did a study on the effects that detention has on children. It makes upsetting reading. It cites 141 cases of child detention. One 3-year old spent 166 days in detention before she was three, 34 children were identified as having been psychologically harmed, 34 exhibited developmental regression, 6 expressed suicidal intent, and 3 actually attempted it. The Borders Agency admit freely that they fed the children out-of-date food; 48 children witnessed violence, 13 were physically injured, 92 had health issues caused by their detention, 50 were reported to have received no healthcare, and it is alleged that some people were given inappropriate anti-malarial drugs to save time if they were to be pushed out of the country. Thirty-eight children were separated from families after parents were put in isolation. Why, for voicing concerns about their children. It is a damning list.

Detaining children provides a sizeable industry for the private companies who run the centres. Detaining a family of four for a month costs £20,000 but as a means of removing people from the UK it is largely ineffective: 62% of the children in the report were released back into the community and now have leave to remain, begging the question why they were there in the first place. We need an immediate decommissioning of all facilities for the immigration detention of children. The medical evidence alone justifies a call for a full public inquiry investigating how the UK immigration policy led to the routine detention of children for the purpose of immigration control, the harm that it causes and how the UK Border Agency seems to have violated the substance of government announcement. In February this year, the Home Office paid compensation of £1m with another £1m in costs in a case involving 40 child asylum seekers who were detained wrongly by being classed as adults.

This system does not work. This system is flawed. This system is costing Britain a fortune. It has to be stopped. I would like to thank the No Borders Action Group for all their help in putting this motion together. Congress, please support this motion.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Secunder.

SIS. B. RAWSTHORNE (North West & Irish Region): President, Congress, children do not belong behind barbed wire. Children deserve a happy childhood not detention. These detention centres are nothing other than jails and we do not jail children. We need to call for a public inquiry. The CEC and the General Secretary need to lobby the Government and the other political parties to make sure they commit to end detention of asylum-seeking children. Nick Clegg needs to keep his promises. Child detention is, in Nick Clegg's words, state sponsored cruelty. It has to stop. Congress, I second this motion. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. The mover of 203, London Region, Closure of Police Stations.

CLOSURE OF POLICE STATIONS MOTION 203

203. CLOSURE OF POLICE STATIONS

Congress deplores the closure or part closure of Police stations across the country as part of the austerity savings.

Congress asks that the CEC lobby all of our sponsored MPs and Councillors on this issue.

ESSEX PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. C. HOLLAND (London Region): Why do the Government think it is okay to close police stations throughout the night? I will take you on a tour of Essex and let you know what is happening in some of the stations there. In Tiptree they spent £1.8m to refurbish the police station building and, guess what, the local bobby parks his car there. Castle Point, closes after 5 p.m. Hadley, Essex, the venue for our Olympics, has been closed. It seems a bit dim, really, but still. Rayleigh, Essex closes after 10 p.m., the nearest is in Southend, Essex and, guess what, on a Friday night Southend has only nine police officers, which, as you can imagine, is really not enough. These places can be a safe house and part of our community. Closing at night makes no sense. We are all assured this will make no difference to policing as a whole but there are incidents in Scotland where the police have taken two hours to attend an incident because, guess what, it went through a call centre instead of a local police station. I could probably go on and on, suffice to say please support this motion. I urge the CEC to lobby the Government. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Cathy. Secunder.

BRO. H. BURGESS (London Region): Madam President, Congress, thousands of residents who live in rural areas will soon be left without local police stations and will have to report crimes to officers miles away. A survey by the national press of 43 police forces in England and Wales has found that at least 361 of some 1,300 police stations have closed to the public in the last two years or due to shut. Some of these stations are closing permanently and being sold off while others are reducing their services and moving into makeshift offices known as police points. Yes, this is down to the Coalition government again with 20% cuts to police funding.

There are pros to some of these issues. At least one of these police stations has been made into a public house. Cons, yes, one, the Cons love the idea of closing police stations. Congress, back on a serious note, we call upon Congress to lobby the Government to stop the cuts and save our police stations and, indeed, the bobbies on the beat. Congress, I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I ask for the movers of 232, London Region.

MOD TO SACK INJURED SERVICE PERSONNEL MOTION 232

232. MOD TO SACK INJURED SERVICE PERSONNEL

This Congress is disgusted at the proposals contained in a leaked memorandum that injured servicemen and women, some only just returning from service abroad, should be included in MoD redundancy proposals.

Congress commits to oppose these proposals should the MoD seek to implement these disgraceful proposals any time in the future.

SOUTHEND ON SEA BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. H. BURGESS (London Region): Madam President, Congress, this Congress is disgusted with the proposal contained in a leaked memorandum that injured service personnel, some only just returning from active service overseas, are to be included in MOD redundancy cuts. It is reported by the popular press that around 5,000 troops who are medically unfit for combat duties, including those seriously injured in Afghanistan and Iraq, are to be ousted out by the Ministry of Defence in a controversial cull to improve efficiency. This is without doubt a betrayal of these men and women who have not only risked their life and limb but given life and limb to service for our nation. These are cases where life and limb have been lost and cases of brain damage caused by explosions, bullet wounds, and these young men and women should not be just written off and thrown on the scrap heap. This will be renegeing on the promise that the wounded could stay in the Forces if they wished.

It is with great pride that we see the British public running round our troops with the creation of Help the Heroes charity but this Government should be taking up the gauntlet and creating veterans organisations to ensure that returning heroes are cared for until the end of their days with their housing and care needs met and any working partner or family member who leaves their job and cares for the heroes also be given the fullest support with increased carers' rights.

It has also been reported in a recent article that claims Help the Heroes is another sham. They also claim an Armed Forces and Veterans Committee would ensure the government honour the pledge to look after our troops returning from combat who are willing to lay down their life for the country was nothing but a smokescreen to hide from a four-year pay squeeze that will leave troops up to £13,000 worse off.

Since this information in December nothing has happened apart from one meeting and this shows the government rhetoric does not match its actions. Servicemen and service women injured in service and who leave the battlefield, care for their injuries must be prioritised. We must support care for these heroes when they return from the frontline. Congress, I urge you to support this motion and oppose the disgraceful proposals the Ministry of Defence seek to implement any time in the future. Congress, please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Harry. Secunder.

SIS. S. HURLEY (London Region): President, Congress, first of all, let's talk about the differences between a leaked MOD memo and an official MOD announcement because the MOD has denied this, after all. Let's be clear, then. This is not what they say they are going to do, this is actually the truth that they have never intended to tell us about what they are planning to do, which makes it likely that it is what they still plan to do. You may think they cannot because they have now denied it. Why not, what is stopping them? The shame, the shame they are planning to give injured soldiers the sack? These people feel no shame. As Brig. Richard Nugee told Sky News when his secret memo was leaked, "I am very disappointed that it has been printed in the paper." Disappointed that they have all found out what they are all up to, I bet you are Brigadier. It is obviously what they are still planning to do. Do you know how I know that for sure, because they do it all the time. In truth they have been doing it for generations, throwing soldiers on the scrap heap once they get injured. It is actually a British tradition. If you type "invalided" followed by a space into Google autocorrect immediately offers you the phrase "invalided out of the Army" a common phrase when you think about it, sufficiently common that it comes up automatically on Google. If you then go to the first search result and look up the definition, there it is, "invalided, to release or exempt someone from military duty because of ill health," in other words, throw the soldier on the scrap heap once they get injured. Oh, and in the beginning of the definition in italics, just in case you were going to give the Brigadier the benefit of the doubt, it says two little words that speak for centuries of military tradition, "chiefly British". Forget the romantic smokescreen and mirrors of mainly Tory politicians, these last 300 years the British top brass has been doing this for generations. Well, not any more. Now Sarah Hurley is here on behalf of the GMB to say that it has to stop. The definition does not say before —

THE PRESIDENT: Sarah, please.

SIS. S. HURLEY: — by the way, not of British position. That is what you might call a new twist. The MOD denies this too, of course, but in a way that —

THE PRESIDENT: Sarah, please wind up; please, right now.

SIS. S. HURLEY: Okay, I could have laid this speech on thick, talked about spitting in the face of sacrifice, but I do not feel the need. I think of poetry and the lack of humanity. There is obviously something wrong with these Brigadiers and their Tory masters. They feel no shame.

THE PRESIDENT: Sarah, please, get down.

SIS. S. HURLEY: Okay. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Anyone wish to speak against? No? Thank you. I put 198, 203 and 232 to the vote. All those in favour please show. Thank you. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 198 was CARRIED.

Motion 203 was CARRIED.

Motion 232 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: I now call on Brian Strutton to report back from the Public Services Section Conference and after Brian has spoken I will then be calling Motions 116, 121, and 122. Hi, Brian.

PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION REPORT

BRO. B. STRUTTON (National Secretary, Public Services): President, Congress, we have faced really difficult times in the past year in public services. The most vicious, unjustified, and unprecedented attacks on public services and public sector workers, not one of whom contributed anything to the financial crisis that as we all know was caused by the bankers and the failure of the authorities to regulate them. Why are our services and our workers getting the blame for it? We know why, don't we? It is to deflect attention away from the real culprits, the Coalition and their friends, when the real villains are Cameron, Osborne, and Clegg. They are the ones responsible for this. They are the ones responsible for deliberately decimating public services, and the 700,000 public sector workers, for instituting long-term pay freezes for workers already low paid, for causing all of you the issues that you are facing at the workplace now and will face going forward. It is against that backdrop, colleagues, that we held the Public Services Conference on Monday and Tuesday. I am going to give you the report back from that Conference.

We started a little late because of Congress business running over but we managed to finish on time and even managed to persuade the England team to hold a football match for our benefit halfway through to keep our delegates amused. I will begin at the end of our business because the last piece of business we had to conduct was the election of the Section President. We are very lucky in public services that your national President, Mary Turner, is also our Section President, and we were delighted that she was re-elected unanimously at the end of the Section Conference.

(Applause) Mary, was described in this morning's *Daily Mirror* by Kevin Maguire as the husky voiced London dinner lady, sexy and svelte, and all iron fist in a velvet glove. The velvet glove comes out with delegates, of course, the way she treats the people that come up here to speak, the way she empathises with everybody, but that velvet glove comes off when she is dealing with the high and mighty as we saw with the guests we had at our Section Conference. Thank you, Mary, and thank you for chairing the Section Conference so well. I must say that from time to time when Mary had to pop out to conduct official business June Minnery from GMB Scotland stepped into the chair and did so very, very well indeed. Thank you, June, for that as well. *(Applause)*

Conferences are about delegates. We had 198 official delegates from this Congress going into the Section Conference. We had a number of additional delegates as well. We had 250 in attendance all together and it was striking to me that the phrase we heard most often during our conference was "first time delegate, first time speaker". You have seen it as well with speakers from this platform. I did not keep count in the Public Services Conference but I would estimate one in three speakers was a first time delegate, first time speaker. It is so encouraging to see so much new blood coming through into our conferences and also so encouraging the quality of the speakers, the people moving the motions at Section Conference, the effort that had gone in and the quality of the speakers was very, very high.

After compositing we had 33 motions to debate, two were referred to the National Committee, and all of the other 31 were carried. There were some key themes that emerged through those, pay and national bargaining, and the attacks on them, academics and the need to constantly campaign hard against them, the care sector, and pensions of course loomed large. The National Committee will take forward all of the resolutions for action.

We also received reports from officers, Rehana Azam, Justin Bowden, Sharon Holder, Paul Clarke, from the National Organising Department, and myself. There were 26 questions from the floor to those reports, 21 were directed at me, and I think I answered three. We had some guest speakers as well. I think all of the Section Conferences were addressed by Miguel Baltren, and worth bearing in mind, I think, what I learnt from him, which is that as difficult as we find things just imagine what it is like for people like Miguel and other trade unionists around the world who do not have the infrastructure of support that we have and how important it is for them that we continue to show our international solidarity for trade unionists around the world.

Our two other guest speakers, both politicians, Ed Balls and Danny Alexander, two very interesting contributors. Ed Balls told us that it was our fault that we lost the last election, it was not their fault, it was nothing to do with policies or the Party, or anything, it was our fault because we did not vote for them. Apart from the sheer nonsense of it, who in their right mind would come to a union conference and say something like that? Then we had Danny Alexander yesterday. Do not be fooled. Mr. Alexander gave a very polished and very smooth speech, very carefully aimed at the audience, making sure that he emphasises many positive aspects, spoke a lot about LibDem history, kept well away from Coalition government and Coalition policies that he is an integral part of. Do bear that in mind when you look at the speakers that we have had and when you weigh them up.

We had a very successful conference and we finished on this note, it has been really, really tough out there and it will continue to be really tough but unions outlive governments. We will see off this Coalition government, they will be out the door and we will still be here fighting. Do not ever lose sight of that. Whilst we have massive, massive challenges ahead of us and we thank everybody for the great work they have done, do not take your eye off the ball, and never be too busy to grow the union. I move the report. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Brian. Thank you for your kind words and thanks to June. I did thank her yesterday. Colleagues, I am sorry when I have to give somebody the red light but when we go on too much I have to do it because we are running very close to time and we do need to take everybody's resolution in. Sarah, it was not only you but others have had the same. I am sorry, we do have to do it sometimes. We have to stick to the rules. Okay?

We will now move on to Motion 116, Minister for the Elderly, London Region, and then 121 and 122.

**POLITICAL: GENERAL
MINISTER FOR THE ELDERLY
MOTION 116**

116. MINISTER FOR THE ELDERLY

Congress believes that it is now time for a Minister for the Elderly. With a growing older population and the recent collapse of Southern Cross and the uncertain future of Four Seasons and other care providers, a Government Minister for the Elderly is a priority.

Congress asks the CEC to do all they can to make this Labour Party policy.

ESSEX PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. C. HOLLAND (London Region): Congress, with many committees, commissions, and Michael Gove, sad man, for the children, and quite rightly so, why do we not have a minister for the elderly? With what is happening in the country at the moment a lot of people think we should and what a good idea it is, homes running out of money mostly because they take the profit before giving the service, and why, because giving the service to the elderly has been the last thing on people's minds. With homes changing owners because of the instability of the industry, it is reaching a critical point. There must be some regulation within the sector for the protection of our elderly. Think on. One thing for sure is that we will all be elderly one day and may need the service. Isn't it what we pay our taxes for, not for company profit but for our care? I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Cathy. Secunder. Hi, Colin.

BRO. C. KERR (London Region): Congress, as you just heard, if ever there was a time for a minister for the elderly now is the time. As a society we are facing a growing elderly care challenge. We should be celebrating the fact that we are living longer lives, particularly disabled people and those with long-term health conditions but the unavoidable challenge we face is how to support the increasing number of people who need elderly care. It is a challenge that this Government are failing to meet. Like many of my generation I am still shocked with the raft of stories that emerge almost daily about the systemic neglect of our frail and vulnerable elderly citizens by callous private care home companies, hired by cost-cutting councils failing to do their job. Elderly citizens have worked all their lives in expectations that the generations which followed them would ensure that they would enjoy a safe and comfortable old age.

Congress, we can do one of two things. We can just sit back and wait for the next report on the failures of a vitally necessary service, which is totally unacceptable, or we can have a minister who can create an elderly care system, one that will prioritise dignity and respect, step up the enforcement of standards, and introduce a new approach to funding. Please support Motion 116. I second.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Colin. Motion 121, North West & Irish Region.

PRIVATISATION MOTION 121

121. PRIVATISATION

This Conference believes that the privatisation of Public Utilities has been the greatest single cause of those services deterioration. We believe that the only way to provide Public Services is through Public Ownership. Only by this can we receive and expect a fully accountable and efficient provision of Public Utilities.

Z32 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

BRO. J. TOOMEY (North West & Irish Region): I am going to be very brief. It is my drinking time, you know. I thought this was after dinner. Anyway, I have here all the companies that have been privatised. They are worth billions. I tell you what we should do with them, the first thing is nationalise them back into public ownership. *(Applause)* I remember the daughter of the bubonic plague selling them. There was madness in her method because in the ages I remember high unemployment and we asked that the retirement age be brought down to 63, "Good god," she said, "they are living too long." So she sold the electric, the gas, everything, and 20 to 30,000, or 40,000 pensioners die each winter from hypothermia, and that was her solution to "we live too long".

What should we do about it? Ed Miliband says he is not New Labour. When I look at Labour I think of what Bill Hughes said yesterday, Ed Balls and his wife, Yvette Cooper, Harriet Harman and her husband, to me they are blue Labour, if ever there was a blue Labour. *(Applause)* I listened to John McDonnell at the Manufacturing Conference, him and Dennis Skinner they are walking saints in parliament, but let me ask you this, in the 20th century who was the best Prime Minister we ever had? Some say Churchill, some say Medusa, Thatcher. I will tell you who the best Prime Minister was, a fellow called Clement Attlee. *(Applause)* The next best was Nye Bevan. When they came to power they nationalised the docks, the coalmines, transport, and the human face of socialism was there, and then it went. Kinnock with his New Labour, Blair, and Brown, they have given us £200 fuel allowance. Why the bloody hell didn't they nationalise it there and then instead of handing money out into the coffers of these people?

THE PRESIDENT: Toomey, wind up, please. I am glad you didn't take a long time. Would you wind up, please?

BRO. J. TOOMEY: What I am saying is, Ed Miliband is an admirer of Clement Attlee; then let him carry out the policies of Clement Attlee and Nye Bevan. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Toomey. Secunder, please.

BRO. K. FLANAGAN (North West & Irish Region): You do not have to look far you only have to look at your press packs this morning, Thames Water chief gets £418k bonus. That is what privatisation is about. How many people would that take out of fuel poverty? Probably over 400,000 people could be taken out of fuel poverty if this guy stopped getting his bonus. That was on top of his £425,000 salary, not

doing bad on the back of our assets, are they? They are not doing badly at all. I think it is time it came to an end. Congress, it is time that we reclaimed our assets. This company is owned by an Australian asset company, like so many of our essential assets that are now in the hands of private companies. They do not do this in Europe, they do not let the French, the Americans, the Hong Kong organisations, take control. When will we ever learn? I have a song, *Where have all the assets gone, stripped out every one, by private firms*. When will we ever learn? Congress, I second.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kevin. He got that bonus from failure, Kevin. I ask for the mover of 122.

REVERSAL OF NHS REFORMS MOTION 122

122. REVERSAL OF NHS REFORMS

This Conference calls on the GMB to campaign and work with the other like-minded Unions and groups to secure real commitment from the Labour Party in its next election Manifesto to introduce legislation to reverse the measure being taken by the present government which are a blatant attempt at the gradual Americanisation of the NHS which if left unchecked and unchallenged will eventually lead to total privatisation of our health service.

B10 BANBURY BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

BRO. S. ROBERTSON (Birmingham & West Midlands Region): This motion is what it says on the tin, we want commitment from the Labour Party, real commitment. None of this, "Oh, we'll look at it when we're back in power." We want commitment now. We want it in the manifesto. The Tories want to flood the NHS hospitals with private patients and give NHS patients the worst service. Previously under the Labour government this started the ball rolling, hospitals could raise 2% of their income through private patients; it is only 2%, but now under Andrew Lansley's Health and Social Care Bill this has increased to a whopping 49% and with the £20bn cuts that the Government want to impose on the health service that means hospital bosses are going to be forced to bring in more and more private patients. The hospitals will be forced to look after those that can pay, the rich, while our people, people like us, will be kicked to the back of the queue and will die in that queue waiting. The Bill is a charter for private companies to make a killing in the NHS and we should have nothing to do with it. We are all proud of the NHS and care about the NHS. It is a wonderful organisation that cares about everybody, the vulnerable, and the disadvantaged. If this Bill is left unchecked it contradicts all the principles that the NHS was founded on, a healthcare for all based on needs, and free at the point of delivery. This is only the beginning of the end. We need somebody to promise to resurrect and bring back to life our National Health and we want real commitment, real promises, in the manifesto to kick Lansley's Health and Social Care Bill into touch where it deserves to be. I move. (Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Secunder.

BRO. T. HACKETT (Birmingham & West Midlands Region): Any private contractor that takes over any NHS trust or the NHS as a whole, will want to make a profit. The only way they can accomplish this is by cutting wages, employment, or services. For example, A&E departments and maternity units will never make a profit so why would private contractors want to keep these open? I have to say it is not just private contractors, the Labour government under Tony Blair pushed through the bill that brought about foundation trusts where within the next few years all NHS trusts must have foundation status. As foundation trusts they are then able to close any service without any public consultation. Also, any directors and chief executives that are not on an Agenda for Change basis, have the power to vote themselves a salary increase. I second this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. I now ask David Noble to address Congress. Is there anyone against, as David comes up? No? David, Motion 121.

BRO. D. NOBLE (CEC, Public Services): If I did not know any better, I think I was set up there to follow Toomey and Kevin Flanagan! President, Congress, the CEC is supporting Motion 121 with a qualification which I will now give. This motion highlights the negative impact of privatisation of public utilities. Congress, fighting privatisation is a longstanding GMB policy. However, it is not just privatisation of utilities that are the issue; it is the lack of effective regulation and the removal of price controls which are the legacy of the Labour Party's love affair with the markets. Congress, the GMB has campaigned tirelessly against the privatisation of all public services and will continue to do so. It is becoming clear that even in times when funding was available, privatisation failed to deliver value for money for the taxpayer, failed the service users, and failed our members working in public utilities. Now, when we are hit by a recession and facing unprecedented cuts to public services, the utility companies are continuing to rip off the taxpayer. Yes, Thatcher's privatisations have left a terrible legacy from which society has never fully recovered.

We must also be critical of the Labour Party's disgraceful failure to regulate and control the utility companies. This is the reason why utility companies can today charge taxpayers extortionate costs for utilities while their directors receive huge bonuses. If these companies were publicly owned they would be more efficient, more accountable, and better regulated. Congress, we must continue to highlight and fight privatisation wherever it raises its ugly head. It only looks after rich shareholders and their directors. It fails those trapped in fuel poverty and the thousands of pensioners across the country that are faced with a choice whether to turn on the heating or eat. Congress, please support Motion 121 with the qualification that I have set out. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Does North West & Irish Region accept the qualification on 121? (*Agreed*) Thank you very much. I will put 116, 121 and 122 to the vote. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 116 was CARRIED.

Motion 121 was CARRIED.

Motion 122 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I cannot finish the business. It would be unfair to you. We have already eaten into a little bit of your lunch. I will take Composite 18 and 194 — hang on — straight after lunch. Sorry about that. I was trying very hard. I have two announcements.

Colombia and the struggle for trade union rights: the fringe meeting is in Syndicate Wing 3, so they would like you all to attend.

As you leave the hall please support the bucket collection in aid of SOVA members from Sheffield who are currently on strike. We have two members with us in the hall. Can you say hello to Mark Bailey and Dean Wragge. Mark, would you like to say a word? (*Applause*)

BRO. M. HINCHLIFFE: President, Congress, my name is Mike Hinchliffe, I am from the Federal Republic of Yorkshire & North Derbyshire. Mark was going to say something today but he fears obviously reprisals from his current employer if he says anything out of turn. I am a self-confessed Congress virgin and first time speaker. (*Applause*) This is just a brief history of the events so far. Cast your mind back to the mid-90s, Conservatives and the Spice Girls were in turmoil, politicians were jumping in and out of bed with each other to further their careers so nothing much has changed in that party.

Sheffield Council ran all the waste services in Sheffield but decided to farm out the dumping sites in the city to a bunch of what can only be described as gypsies, tramps, and thieves. They ran the sites with little control. This carried on until Onyx/Veolia took over in 2001. The operators then re-branded themselves and turned up in smart suits, no doubt recovered from the sites but it was still the same Arthur Daley style operation with funds for recycling disappearing in all directions.

Fast forward to 2008, I was elected as shop steward, did all my basic training, and after attending a GMB course on advanced butchery for road kills, I was left with the abiding message that we need to recruit more. I was a driver who serviced these sites and duly began signing up these 45 workers. After a short while they all signed up and we had an organised workforce. Mr. Daley and Mr. McCann put up some resistance at first but eventually gave in and gave us recognition.

In January of this year a new subcontractor took over the contract headed up by a failed manager from Veolia and a bloke who had openly admitted sexually harassing the previous operator's personnel officer. What a team, I hear you cry. This so-called organisation is called SOVA — Support of Vulnerable Adults. How ironic that the first action of this not-for-profit charity organisation was to put 12 of our members on the scrap heap leaving the rest to work permanent weekends and bank holidays for no extra pay.

Today the guys have been on strike for three weeks, mainly at weekends, but have decided after a vote yesterday to go for an all out strike from a week on Friday. (*Applause*) At present there are nine managers looking after the 36 workers on sites. That is crazy, I hear you say. The solution to this problem is simple, remove the multiple tiers of management and put the money saved back into the workers' pockets. Problem solved.

To close I would like to share an intimate moment that happened last night. I know it is in Brighton but it is not what you think. *(Laughter)* I took the lads out for something to eat and we were approached by a homeless person who was asking for money for food. Quick as a flash Mark dipped his hand into his pocket and pulled out his last couple of quid that he had and gave it to the guy. He turned to me and said, “No matter how bad things get there is always somebody worse off than you.” I was truly humbled. Brothers and sisters, let’s dig deep and create a manual handling problem to be proud of. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, colleague. Congress is now adjourned until 2 p.m. Thanks.

Congress adjourned.

AFTERNOON SESSION

Conference re-assembled at 2 pm

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Congress, it is 2 o’clock. Colleagues, could you please make sure that you complete the delegate Questionnaire which is in your wallets and hand it in at the free tea and coffee point by the end of today.

Your entry will go into a prize draw to win one of the three bottles of GMB whisky signed by the President and General Secretary. The draw will take place tomorrow morning live on stage.

The RMA raffle will be drawn between 4 and 5 pm today, and prizes can be claimed up to mid-day tomorrow from the RMA stand.

A reminder if you’ve not got your T-shirt or history book. You should pick them up from the Ethical Threads stand as soon as you can as stocks are running low.

And while you are there, you might like to call at the Able and Willing stand, stand no. 18. Able and Willing are a supported employer, sponsored by Brighton and Hove City Council. All their sales go to help provide the dignity of work for people with disabilities. While you are there, have a look at *these* mugs, which commemorate GMB Congress 2012.

I want now to finish off this morning’s work. I will call on Composite Motion 18 and Motion 194.

SOCIAL POLICY GENERAL

SOCIAL CARE

COMPOSITE 18

C18. Covering Motions:

192. SOCIAL CARE *(Northern Region)*
193. SOCIAL CARE MOTION *(Northern Region)*

SOCIAL CARE

The GMB deplores the fact that this government, as well as their predecessors, have failed to put in place the necessary financial regulatory framework to ensure taxpayers receive the most effect value for money.

This Conference is appalled that Social Care has moved almost entirely into provision by one sector, the Private Sector and deplores the way in which casino gambling arrangements, such as private equity, have crept into ownership in the Social Care Industry.

This process, which has taken thirty years to happen, has boosted profits of speculators and gamblers, reduced the tax receipts to the Treasury and been allowed to happen by a combination of weak regulation enforcement and weak-willed Government

Conference calls on the Government and Local Authorities to urgently review the provision of Social Care to ensure high-quality continuity of care and improved terms and conditions for a vital workforce, even if that means that some providers leave the market and other providers come back into play, such as the Public Sector.

Conference calls on the Central Executive Council to campaign for a fundamental re-think so that ethical principles of ownership of care homes are matched by effective and robust regulatory control so that the interests of workers, residents, families and taxpayers are safeguarded.

Conference further calls on the Government to fully fund Social Care from the public purse if such an eventuality happens.

Conference calls on the Labour Party to back the resourcing of and return to a mixed economy of social care provision.

(Carried)

BRO. N. COLLINSON (Northern): Congress, I move Composite Motion 18 – Social Care.

Congress, it is truly a scandal the way in which social has developed since the early 1980s. Over the last three decades the provision of social care in this country has moved relentlessly from the public to the private sector. We know the reality of what this has meant in the workplaces. Workers at the sharp end exist on minimum wages and work long hours to make ends meet. Meanwhile, under a Labour Government and over the last decade, private equity companies have come into the social care industry and made a fortune, largely funded by the taxpayers and the banks that we own.

Is it time that the industry was overhauled? There are some excellent providers and we have good relationships with some of them, but there are other companies that want to keep trade unions out of the workplace because they want to keep their workers down, where the directors put the company incomes offshore and they rip-off the taxpayers. The Dilnot report could be a way forward. However, Congress, it is that once-in-a-generation time for change. It's time regulators were made responsible for financial oversight. It is time that private equity was stopped from operating in an industry funded mainly by you and me. It is time that elderly people

did not have to worry about selling off their family legacies to pay for their care in their latter years, and it is time that lawmakers plugged tax loopholes so that money is kept in the UK and taxes are paid on it.

Congress, we want to lead a campaign that promotes a re-think in social care. Nothing less will help our members' interests and the interests of residents, their families and the taxpayers. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Secunder?

SIS. C. LINES (Northern): Congress, I second Composite Motion 18 on Social Care. We know better than anyone how the failed policies of successive governments have affected thousands of residents, families and GMB members. The disaster of Southern Cross is a lesson how not to run services funded largely by the taxpayer. In the 1980s and through to the present day we have seen that Government policy on social care has been taking services out of the public sector and turning them over to the private sector for provision. It is a policy that is based on a dogma that was fostered by Labour.

First, care homes became the fashion, then extra care and then home care was cut back from services, and now Government policy is bringing back home care. Instead of having a proper strategy, policies seem to be made on the hoof with less money to spend. Worst still, the gamblers from private equity were allowed into the industry that was paid for by you and me as taxpayers and yet the profits from the taxpayer that funded the services were put offshore to avoid tax. Congress, what a stupid way to fund vital care services.

However, the Coalition Government decided to kick it into the long grass. Estimates suggest that it would cost approximately £5 billion to put social care on a less vulnerable footing. It is a drop in the ocean. Let us see Labour commit to that. Let's see if they will commit to a better way for social care. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Carole. I call the mover of Motion 194.

NEGLECT OF THE ELDERLY MOTION 194

194. NEGLECT OF THE ELDERLY

This Congress is alarmed at the report out today (23 January 2012) that four elderly and vulnerable patients die each week from malnutrition and dehydration.

Congress therefore believes there should be an in-depth investigation into the lack of care at weekends for vulnerable adults not taking their medication or eating correctly thereby suffering serious problems.

The BDA are also concerned and have a campaign to save the one meal a day. We should join with them in saying that our vulnerable adults deserve this and more.

HENDON BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. B. BENHAM (London): Congress, I move Motion 194. President, the report in January of this year, which gave birth to this motion, is nothing short of a national scandal. How can a government and local councils accept that four elderly people will die each week from malnutrition or dehydration and lack of basic care? Spending on older people's care has decreased by £300 million in the last year. That is a result of the Government's cuts and local councils giving notice to end the contracts of care providers and offering new contracts at lower rates. This is the case in London where boroughs involved in the West London Alliance gave notice to its care providers and told them that they could only be given a contract at much lower rates. That means that hundreds of professional, dedicated and loyal carers lost their TUPE rights, lost travelling expenses and were offered the minimum wage and, basically, gave up leaving the care of the elderly and vulnerable to those who don't give a damn, and certainly most show it.

It is not simply enough to lay the blame for this at the Government's door. Although it is their spending cuts that started it, Labour councils must also be held to account for cutting frontline services so that chief execs can be paid £200,000 a year. Care at home is a vital part of adult social care. Governments, both local and national, must step up to the plate and take responsibility for it. No elderly person should suffer indignity, humiliation or life-threatening risk from no care or bad care. It is simply not acceptable that any old person should die from hunger, thirst or ill treatment. One substantial mean and adequate hydration must be provided on a daily basis.

Congress, let us send a message to the Government and councils throughout the land: care for the elderly or be publicly ashamed. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Barbara. Is there a seconder?

BRO. E. STEWART (London): Congress, I second Motion 194 – Neglect of the Elderly.

President and Congress, the report to which my colleague referred in moving this motion does not only show shameful revelations about care of the elderly in recent months. The Equality & Human Rights Commission revealed a shocking breach of senior citizens' human rights. The report stated that many elderly people who receive at-home care routinely suffer physical and mental abuse at the hands of underpaid and overstretched staff. It goes on to state: "They are treated as invisible while their basic dignity is ignored." It further says that many, particularly those with dementia, do not get proper meals or dense. Hence, the deaths from malnutrition and dehydration.

Following on from the mover's assertion that care standards are falling since the council cuts – the contract rate – there have been many reports of thefts by the carers from the homes of the elderly. When wages drop, standards drop. This motion is not about burdensome red tape, but it is about protecting people from the dehumanised treatment uncovered in these reports. The emphasis from national and local government is on saving pennies rather than providing a service that meets the very real needs of our grandparents, parents and, eventually, us. I second. Please support.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Euton. Colleagues, both Composite 18 and Motion 194 are being supported by the CEC, so I will take them both together. All those in favour? Anyone against?

Composite Motion 18 was CARRIED.

Motion 194 was CARRIED.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 6

SIS. H. JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): Congress, I move SOC Report No. 6. In the matter of time for speakers, President and Congress, you will be aware that in accordance with paragraph 9 of the Guidance for Congress Business, the SOC recommends the times for speakers taking account of the business on the agenda. You will also be aware that, in accordance with paragraph 9 of the guidelines, it may be necessary in order that the business of Congress is properly completed for the speaking times to be curtailed.

This morning, in SOC Report No. 5, the SOC advised Congress that we were considering whether it would be necessary to do so. The SOC has re-visited the position over lunchtime and it is concerned that Congress is significantly behind time. At this time, the SOC is very loathe to recommend formally cutting speaking time and, therefore, asks all speakers to be at the rostrum in a timely manner and to keep within their existing allotted time. If Congress remains significantly behind time at the end of today's session, the SOC is recommending cutting speaking times for tomorrow's session. If this becomes necessary, we will advise before the close of today's session of what those revised speaking times will be. President and Congress, I move SOC Report No. 6. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Do you agree the SOC Report? *(Agreed)*

Standing Orders Committee Report No. 6 was ADOPTED.

POLITICAL HONOURS SYSTEM COMPOSITE MOTION 14

C14. Covering Motions:

164. HONOURS LIST *(London Region)*

165. HONOURS *(London Region)*

HONOURS SYSTEM

Congress agrees that amongst our members there are varying opinions about the bestowing of honours and the morality in accepting them.

However, several of our members have received honours as a reward for their commitment and service to the trade union movement and to charities and the writers of this motion applaud them

Congress agrees that it is neither acceptable nor moral for awards to be given to political party donors or people with criminal convictions for offences such as fraud.

This Congress believes that by awarding New Year's Honours to people like Paul Ruddock who is not only a massive financial supporter of the Tory Party but was one of the key speculators making a massive financial gain by speculating against Northern Rock in the early days of the financial collapse, undermines the principles of honouring people for their beneficial contributions to Society.

If honours are to be given, the GMB should fight to ensure they are for the most appropriate reasons and not as reward for political expenditure or toadyism.

Congress therefore believes there should be some form of impartial scrutiny to weed such people out before the honours are confirmed.

(Carried)

SIS. F. FRANKLIN (London): Congress, I move Composite Motion 14 – Honours.

President and Congress, there are, both within the GMB membership and the nation as a whole, many differences of opinion about honours bestowed by the Queen and the Government of today. There are those who think that they are a uniquely British tradition with our imperial past and should be retained forever. Some, because they are symbolic of our imperial past, think there is no place for them in our civilised society and should be banned for ever. Some wonder why Bruce Forsyth never got an honour for so long. Some wonder why he ever did get one and some people couldn't actually care less. But, colleagues, there is another opinion and that other opinion is certainly valid. That opinion is that if honours are to be awarded, then to make them meaningful they must go only to the most deserving recipients for the most deserving of reasons.

Currently, three members of our CEC and others in our membership who have been bestowed with honours. These have been given for services to the trade union movement, working for charity and working for equality. All of those recipients certainly deserve to be recognised, and the reasons for being given the honours are most certainly deserving.

What is most certainly not appropriate are that honours be bestowed like confetti to all and sundry and for the most trivial of reasons. Nor, indeed, should they be given as a reward for political donations or to people of dubious character. How can it be that Gerald Ronson, sentenced to a year in prison for his part in the Guinness share speculation scandal, a scandal that seriously affected many pension funds, be given an award? How can it be that Gerald Preddie, a convicted gangland drug dealer and a relative of the murders of Damiola Taylor, be judged to be so suitably reformed that he be given an award? Helena Bonham-Carter may or may not be a fine actress, but she certainly is a close friend of David Cameron and Nick Clegg. Is that a deserving reason for the award? I think not, colleagues. These dubious awards were given by this Government only a few months ago. In that round of awards were big donors to the Conservative Party, and that will be dealt with by my colleague later.

What is clearly, however, is that awards such as these demean the principle of the Honours List and only give fuel to critics of the system and increase the call for them to be abandoned. We should campaign to ensure that the Honours List, if it is to be retained, is fit for purpose and rewards achievement instead of political toadying to crooks and best friends. Please support. I move.

BRO. M. FOSTER (London): Congress, I second Composite 14 – Honours System.

President and Congress, as the mover has said, if we are to have honours, then they must be awarded to those who thoroughly deserve them by their actions and character. This is a principle that this Government are happy to ignore. This is proven by giving an award to Paul Ruddock. He is a hedge-fund crook who made £100 million betting on the collapse of Northern Rock. In fact, his short-selling activity probably hastened the bank's demise. So put at risk people's savings, people's mortgages and people's pensions. How can that cockroach be given an honour? The short answer is that he has donated half-a-million pounds to the Tories. His award belittles honours and show the Tories in their true colours. There is no honour in this award, only dishonour. I am happy to second Composite Motion 14. (*Applause*)

HONOURING THE INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE MOTION 166

166. HONOURING THE INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE

This Conference recognises and honours the sacrifices of the International Brigade during the Spanish Civil War. These volunteers recognised the dangers of fascism and were prepared to fight against it whilst the British government of the time turned a blind eye to the armed intervention of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy and to the atrocities committed by Franco's Nationalists.

We call for the names of those who fell in Spain between 1936 and 1939 to be added to war memorials as recognition of their sacrifice.

PARKGATE BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(*Carried*)

BRO. I. KEMP (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I move Motion 166 – Honouring the International Brigade.

President and Congress, this February marks 75 years since the British Battalion of the 15th International Brigade first saw action in defence of the Spanish Republic while the Tory-led Coalition stuck its head in the sand. What changes? As a democratic government was under attack, those brave volunteers, many without any military experience, went to Spain to defend their fellow workers, to defend democracy, to fight Fascism and tyranny.

Despite the brilliant work of the International Brigade Memorial Trust – I hope you have visited their stand downstairs – in trying to keep the memory of the Brigaders alive, the establishment still refuses to acknowledge the sacrifices of the International Brigade. I am talking about men like the writer, Christopher Caldwell, the speedway rider, Clem Beckett and the carpenter, George 'Lofty' Bright. Instead of honouring

them, the establish dismisses them as naïve intellectuals, duped by the Communist Party, yet the majority were ordinary workers with no Communist Party affiliation. At a time when the names of the fallen in Afghanistan are being on to local war memorials, it is time for those who saw the threat of Fascism and made the ultimate sacrifice are honoured in similar fashion.

In asking you to support Motion 166, the words of the sculpture, Jason Gurney^{^^^}, whose career was ended by a Fascist bullet to the hand, can explain better than I why men like him went to Spain and why we should honour and commemorate them. He wrote:

“Even at the moments of greatest gloom
I have never regretted that I took part in it.
The situation is not to be judged by what we know now
But only as it appeared in the context of the period.
In that context, there was a clear choice
For those who professed to be opposed to Fascism.
The fact that others took advantage of our idealism in order to destroy it
Does not in any way invalidate the decision that we made.”

Please support this motion. Remember and honour the heroes of the International Brigade. Further in their honour, when the Tories and their lackies come together again: “No passerán! No passerán!”

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

BRO. J. STEVENSON (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I second Motion 166. I looked at what Ian said, and I could not add anything to it, apart from one thing, and I will keep it short because I know what we are like on time. It is from an American, John Gates, who, in 1959, wrote this:

“Our blood has been shed with theirs, the Spanish people.
Our dead sleep with their dead.
We have proved again that all men are brothers.”

Congress, is it so much to ask that the names of those who fell in the fight against Fascism are added to the nation’s war memorials as recognition of their sacrifice.
Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, John.

ARCTIC CONVOY CAMPAIGN MEDAL MOTION 167

167. ARCTIC CONVOY CAMPAIGN MEDAL

This Conference agrees that those members of both the Merchant and Royal Navy engaged on convoy duties to supply arms to Russia during World War II should have their service recognised by the award of an appropriate campaign medal.

LEICESTERSHIRE 2000 BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(*Carried*)

BRO. D. LASCELLES (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I move Motion 167 on the Arctic Convey Campaign Medal.

Congress, it took the grave actions of young men from both the Royal Navy and the Merchant Navy during the Second World War to supply our Russian allies during the long conflict. These young men, who are now, sadly, few in number and very senior in years, are rightly recognised by the Russian Federation, as they were by the former Soviet Union, as Heroes of the Great Struggle against Fascism from 1939 to 1945.

This year they gathered at the memorial to their lost comrades in Murmansk, in northern Russia, for what must, surely, be the last time. They are proud that school children are rightly taught and greet them as the heroes that they undoubtedly are in Russia. Surely, the recognition by the British Government, their Government, is something that for their dignity and devotion, and our shame, we owe to some of the finest people that these islands have ever produced.

It is at this point, madam President, that I should say to this Congress a medal was issued to the Royal Navy but not the Merchant Navy or to anyone else who was involved in that campaign. There were once 66,500 men. Now there remain only a very small number. A petition of 2,500 signatures has been served by the families of our heroes, but it is besmirched by the Conservative/Liberal Democrat Junior Defence Minister, who this year likened their medal, or that issued by Russia, to those of mad dictators of the order of Colonel Gaddafi. This is not just his shame but it is our shame, too.

I call upon Congress, therefore, to support this motion in the name of justice, dignity and decency, that our boys may never, ever, be forgotten for their courage and bravery in the face of the enemy and for the defence of our allies. May God bless them and bless you for your support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Secunder?

BRO. M. SHORT (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I second Motion 167 – Arctic Convoy Campaign Medal.

President and Congress, when I volunteered to speak on this motion, I thought I would just get a book from the library and say how many ships, men, supplies, which included medical supplies, food and arms, had been lost in these convoys. I then remembered that my father was an old salty seadog in the Navy, so I asked if old salty knew anything about being on a Russian convoy. He then went upstairs, came down with an old box, lifted the lid, scratched around and found a dusty old medal. This was presented to him by the Navy.

I asked him about being on the Russian convoys. He said that the worst bit was being attacked at night by the U-boats. The second worst bit was that during the day you were being bombarded by bombers. I said, “Bloody hell, that must have been awful.” He said, “Not really. The worst bit of all was that the ships used to ice up and then they used to tip over, and you didn’t have any time at all to get into the lifeboats, not as though you could because they were frozen to the ships.” So what chance did you have there? Also, I don’t think that many people know this but the Merchant Navy, as

soon as your ship was sunk, did not pay you. Fancy that? Fancy being sat in a lifeboat all night and not getting paid for it! My God! What a country? These lads deserve a medal, a bloody metal as big as a dustbin lid. That's what they deserve. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Does anyone wish to speak against?

BRO. J. MCKENZIE (GMB Scotland): I speak in support of Motion 166. Eighteen months ago I shared a platform with Thomas Walters at the re-dedication of the refurbished *La Passionara*, Glasgow's tribute to the International Brigade. Sadly, Thomas died in February of this year. He was the last living Scot who had fought in Spain. He was a corporation bus driver who decided to go to Spain and ended up driving an ambulance.

His grand nephew, who Thomas was staying with during his stay in Scotland, was at great pains to say to me that his great uncle was not politically motivated to join the International Brigade. But, as we finished the ceremony with the *Internationale*, Thomas with his fist clenched and hand held high sang every word, putting us all to shame. Later on when I got the chance to speak to Thomas, I asked him, "Thomas, what motivated you to go to Spain?" He replied, "What was happening in Spain was wrong and I thought I could help." Thomas's comrades who died in Spain are war heroes, and it is right and fitting that Britain should honour them as such.

President, if you will, please allow me an indulgence and forgive my attempt at Spanish. I would like to quote *La Passionaria*, which is the passion before the Siege of Madrid: "The Fascists are coming to Madrid. We have little food or ammunition. They are powerful and they are many. They fight for pay. We only have this poor soil within lie the dear ones, the innocent ones, who gave us life and love. Brothers and sisters, it is better to die on your feet than to live forever on your knees. The Fascists are coming, they will come, but they will not pass. No Pasaran! No Pasaran! No Pasaran! Viva la Quinta Brigada". (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I call Eddie Marnell to speak on behalf of the CEC on Motion 166.

BRO. E. MARNELL (CEC, Manufacturing): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motion 166. In July 1936 a military uprising was launched in Spain by a group of generals aiming to overthrow the Republican Government. Hitler and Mussolini sent help to the rebels. Desperate pleas by the Spanish Republican Government for assistance from the European democracies of Britain and France fell overwhelmingly on deaf ears. Appalled at the prospect of another European country succumbing to Fascism, supporters of the Spanish Republican Government from around the world flocked to its aid. Over the coming months these international brigades of foreign volunteers, many from Britain and Ireland, would fight and die alongside the Spanish republicans. To paraphrase of Dolores Ibarruri, the Communist deputy, forever known as *La Pasionaria*: "They are legend. They are the heroic example of the solidarity and the universality of democracy."

The CEC wholeheartedly agrees with the sentiments of the motion, that their sacrifice deserves to be remembered. We are supporting the motion with the qualification that

we would have to ascertain how feasible it would be to add names to war memorials erected to remember those who died fighting for King or Queen and country and not for causes overseas.

There are a number of memorials to the International Brigades in the UK. We are suggesting that it may be more productive to work with the International Brigade Memorial Trust who we are proud to welcome to Congress as exhibitors. One of their roles is to remember those who fell in the Spanish Civil War by preserving, maintaining and assisting in the construction of war memorials. Congress, with that qualification, we are asking you to support Motion 166. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Eddie. Does the region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) With that, I put Composite Motion 14, Motion 166 and Motion 167 to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against.

Composite Motion 14 was CARRIED.

Motion 166 was CARRIED.

Motion 167 was CARRIED.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, before we move into the next part of the debate, I have a couple of announcements. The raffle for the York Disabled Workers Co-operative, will be drawn between 3.30-4.00 today. Please pick up your prizes between 4 pm today and 12 pm Thursday.

The Sova bucket collection raised an incredible £900. A big thanks from all the strikers. (*Applause*) It means so much to them. Congress, we will double that. I will tell the General Secretary and the Finance Director later. (*Applause*)

There is some good news at last – I have to announce this – and for Derby and its workers in the GMB it has been a great success. Bombardier has received an order from NetJet for up to 275 business jets valued at US\$ 7.3 billion. Also an intermarket agreement for fifteen years valued at US\$ 850 million. I say thanks to all who were involved. That must be a great relief for the loyal workers at Bombardier. Thank you. (*Applause*)

There is also good news. As a result of this Congress, the Hounslow Leader has agreed to pay the £250 pay rise that the low-paid staff never got. (*Applause*) They are also looking at the manner in which they can pay the living wage. Congratulations to Keith Williams, the officer in the London Region, and the stewards who have been working extremely hard. Now the rest of the Labour councils can get off their butts and do the same. I should say that they have some decent councillors.

Before we begin the Finance debate, could I please welcome Phil Clarke from our external auditors. Welcome to Congress.

**POLITICAL
RACISM & FASCISM
OPPOSE THE BRITISH FREEDOM PARTY
MOTION 168**

168. OPPOSE THE BRITISH FREEDOM PARTY

This Conference notes the contribution the union has made in the fight against fascism and the continuous support given to organisations opposing the British National Party.

Whilst we welcome the decline of the BNP we note the formation of a new fascist organisation made up of sections of the BNP, EDL and others who are forming the British Freedom Party.

We pledge to organise against this far right group, work to expose their racist policies and urge members to take part in activities opposing them.

BARNESLEY GMB BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

SIS. T. PARKINSON (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I move Motion 168.

Firstly, I would like to say thank you. It was me you missed out last time so you must not want me to speak here. *(Laughter)*

The good news is that the British National Party has lost every seat it defended in the May local elections, losing councillors from Burnley and Pendle, to Nuneaton and Rotherham. The decline of the BNP is very welcome, particularly coming from Barnsley, where the BNP never won a council seat, but they did have a regular Saturday stall in the town centre.

GMB – my union – took part in many activities to get rid of that hated stall by working with other trade unionists, anti-Fascists and Labour Party members, all united in our opposition to the racist BNP. The stall has now gone and it is good to be able to walk through the town centre without seeing them trying to get their tawdry views out *there*. Please, let us not be complacent as there is now a new threat on the horizon with the formation of the British Freedom Party, formed by former senior BNP members which announced an alliance with the English Defence League.

The British Freedom Party is a Fascist organisation, seeking to take over from the BNP. The link with the EDL creates a classic two-pronged Fascist attack with the political wing focused on elections. It also has a violent streak thug wing. All trade unionists supported by their unions should work with their local communities in resisting the growth of the racist British Freedom Party and actively demonstrate. Congress, it would be a mistake for us to ignore this new party. Part of the reason for the decline of the BNP in this country is that there has been a tradition of exposing the far right and calling them what they are: Nazis.

It has been said before that some of the speeches could have come from 1930s Germany. We must not forget that our grandparents fought against those politics and we shall carry on that fight. It has been said, and I quote: “If this new British Freedom Party says that mighty oaks grow from little acorns”, let me say this.

Science notes that the vast majority of acorns get eaten or rot. So, Congress, let's make sure that happens to those acorns. We must continue the fight to expose their garish, vulgar and vile views. Please oppose the British Freedom Party. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder?

BRO. J. STEVENSON (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I second Motion 168 – Oppose the British Freedom Party.

President and Congress, I first took part in anti-Fascist campaigns in the 1970s when the National Front came to the fore. Over recent years, more right-wing Fascist parties have been spawned, to name three, the BNP, the EDL and now the British Freedom Party. Whatever they call themselves, racists are racists. The British Freedom Party was formed in 2010 by ex-BNP members. A pact was formed which allows EDL candidates to stand under the BNP banner in elections. This is a clear indication of how the far right is organising in order to advance their vile, racist and fascist propaganda.

Propaganda attacks the basic fabric of our society, a society of democracy and multiculturalism, a society that millions of people gave up their lives for in fighting Hitler's Nazis, a society that embraces all colours, creeds and religions. This we must never forget.

I know that our union has an excellent record in campaigning and organising awareness against the far right. We must build on our skills and commitment and campaign against the vile British Freedom Party wherever they raise their heads. Comrades, we owe this to our forebears, we owe it to our society of today and of the future. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, colleague. Does anyone wish to speak against? *(No response)* I put Motion 168 to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against?

Motion 168 was CARRIED.

**UNION ORGANISATION
FINANCE & CONTRIBUTIONS
TRAINING FOR BRANCH SECRETARIES ACCOUNTS
MOTION 22**

22. TRAINING FOR BRANCH SECRETARIES ACCOUNTS

This Conference calls for all new Branch Secretaries should be given the appropriate branch accounts training.

D19 DEVONPORT BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. N. WARN (Southern): Mary, before I start, it is not a plan for me to wear *this* racist T-shirt after having heard the mover of the previous motion, but I am glad I have now.

Congress, I move Motion 22 – Training for Branch Secretaries Accounts. I understand that a training programme is set out for branch secretaries and auditors. Can we please ensure that this training programme happens sooner and not later? I have been a branch secretary for the last year. I have not received any training on branch accounts. I was very lucky to have a mentor, who was the retiring branch secretary. The branch sends the accounts to the NAU in Scotland. I have had information sent back from the NAU concerning my errors on the accounts. If I had had any training on the branch accounts my errors may not have happened. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Nigel. Seconder?

BRO. R. STEWART (Southern): Congress, I second Motion 22. I am a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Training for GMB reps has been touched upon a couple of times during this Congress. Good training and continued support is fundamental to good performance, both as an employee and as a GMB branch secretary/auditor. It is acknowledged that a new training for branch secretaries is now planned, and I believe that the GMB should have been providing induction training and planning continued support for all branch secretaries and auditors certainly prior to recent changes to GMB and branch account accounting practices.

I would be the first to challenge any employers who failed to train and support their staff before holding them accountable for their ignorance, ways or errors. I ask that GMB introduces ongoing training support programmes for its branch secretaries and auditors both regionally and nationally as soon as possible. Thank you. *(Applause)*

REMPLOY WORKERS MOTION 23

23. REMPLOY WORKERS

This Conference recognises that Remploy Workers are the most vulnerable section in our Union and applauds the work of the York Workers Co operative in producing a diverse selection of high quality goods that also provide much needed gainful employment and a standard of living to disabled workers.

Conference also recognises it is not enough to simply rely on goodwill and good intentions of Branches to provide the vital support needed to maintain this sterling work.

Therefore Conference calls upon the CEC to introduce a levy on Branches, set at a level to be determined by the CEC Finance Committee and to be forwarded on a quarterly basis to the Co operative.

B16 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Referred)

BRO. G. SMITH (North West & Irish): Congress, for the benefit of those who were not in the Manufacturing Section conference, I am a first-time speaker and first-time delegate. *(Applause)*

I would like to give a brief update on where we are up to and all the hard work that is going on within the York Disabled Workers' Co-operative. This Co-operative is going from strength to strength and at the same time producing a very high quality product. The success of this business is down to the small, loyal and disabled workforce. At the end of each day, they have achieved their aims by continuing to dedicate their hard work and loyalty in keeping this business trading. Not only the workforce but the very kind generosity and donations from branches across the country and regions, and the continuing support from our National Secretary, Phil Davies, Gerry Nelson and the Remploy Consortium for all their hard work and efforts in raising funds to keep this co-operative going.

I would also like to point out and thank everybody very much that during the course of this Congress a raffle has been taking place in support of York, and this raffle has raised £1,134.17p. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

Let me give a brief up-date on the product. *This* product is a picnic table, and this picnic table will take at least six adults to move it. I have one in my back garden now, and if any single person wants to come to Lancashire and they can pick it up on their own, they can have it and I will go and buy a new one.

We are now in progress of registering a charity. I think this charity is going to be a very good thing. It is needed more than ever now and I am very proud to have been asked to be on the board of this charity. This charity is going to be called *Proud UK* and it is in support of disabled people and bringing them back into employment. *(Applause)* There has never been a more important time to set up this charity with the DWP announcement that it is closing Remploy factories. This will add up to three thousand more disabled workers on the dole within the next 18 months. This shows the importance of raising funds to put us into a charity and put disabled people back into work.

We are all aware that the GMB is not a bottomless pit. I know that the Co-operative, the officers and the Consortium cannot just dig into pockets as if they've got money here, there and everywhere, because we don't. Again, I would like to thank you for all our support and what you have done. I hope you can continue to donate to it.

I would like to finish my contribution by mentioning a word which has been mentioned every hour, not everyday, and that is the word "Remploy". Believe me, folks, this is not a rehearsal. It is reality. It is devastation. We started off thinking it was months. It then went down to weeks and it has now gone down to days. Roughly, I would say, in round about six weeks it could be the end of a business that has been manufacturing for over 60 years. I am asking you, Congress, for 100% solidarity support in helping Remploy to fight this Government. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Can I have a seconder? *(The Motion was formally seconded)*

Does anyone wish to oppose? (*No response*) I am now calling George Fraser to speak on Motions 22 and 23. We agreed that we would not call in any other speakers, other than the movers and seconders and opposers, did we not?

BRO. G. FRASER (CEC, Public Services): Congress, I am responding to Motions 22 and 23 on behalf of the CEC.

Colleagues, we completely support the call in Motion 22 for new branch secretaries to be trained in branch accountancy, but the CEC wants to add that this should apply to all branch secretaries and branch auditors on a regular basis. The new accounting procedures have meant a big increase in accountability for branches. Training has been given by regions to any new staff and has now been followed up by a further training programme rolled out across the union. There have been problems with branch accounts in some areas in the past and the General Secretary has reported on them in detail to previous Congresses.

The CEC firmly believes that training branch secretaries to a high degree of branch accounting confidence and skill is the best protection for the branch, the union and, indeed, for the branch secretaries themselves.

Motion 23 applauds the work of the York Disabled Workers Co-operative and calls for the CEC to impose a levy on branches to raise funds for the Co-operative. You will all have heard of the York Workers Co-operative, and it is a magnificent initiative aimed at providing meaningful work for colleagues who have been shamefully abandoned by Remploy, the previous Government and this current Government. The York Disabled Workers Co-operative has a stand in the exhibition area, and I hope you have all visited it and, more importantly, placed orders for some or many of their excellent high-quality products.

GMB branches, regions and individual members have proudly given practical support to the York workers. We have done this by donations but, more importantly, by giving them orders for sales. The York Co-op will only succeed by the financial stability which comes from successful trading and not from donations alone. The CEC has set up a voluntary branch levy and we are giving that further publicity.

We are asking you to refer this motion so that we can test the waters with branches to find out if there is an appetite for making the levy compulsory. Please support Motion 22 with the statement I have made, and please refer Motion 23. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, George. Does Southern Region accept the statement? (*Agreed*) You do. Thank you. Is North West & Irish Region prepared to refer? (*Agreed*) You are. Thank you. Does Congress agree with Reference? (*Agreed*) Then I now put Motion 22 to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against?

Motion 22 was CARRIED.

Motion 23 was REFERRED.

ANNOUNCEMENT

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I have another great announcement. They are coming in. Lambeth Council Leader, Steve Reed, has also agreed to pay the £250 this year and the new contracts will include the London Living Wage from September 2012. *(Applause)* They will be cleaning and security contracts. Steve Reed is a GMB member and he has agreed to support GMB aspirations on low pay. Well done, Steve.

UNION ORGANISATION

FINANCE & CONTRIBUTIONS

SUBSCRIPTION RATES – WORKING STUDENTS AND APPRENTICES MOTION 27

27. SUBSCRIPTION RATES – WORKING STUDENTS AND APPRENTICES

This Conference requests that a review of subscription rates for working students and apprentices is conducted in order that GMB remains competitive.

This Conference notes that GMB regions differ in the union contributions they collect from working students/apprentices. Some administer a 10ppw/£5.20pa rate whilst others utilise the promotional rate of 85ppw.

Conference therefore asks that a uniform rate across the union is determined.

This rate will need to reflect that Unison offers student nurses, student social workers, student healthcare workers and apprentices, membership packages of £10 per year.

A clear rate, that sets us apart as the union for student workers/apprentices is a key component to our growth in this area.

LEEDS CIVIC BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Referred)

SIS. M. O'NEILL (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I move Motion 27 – Subscription Rates for Working Students and Apprentices. We, as a union, need to look after the issue of subscription rates for these groups of young people for two reasons. One is that we need to ensure that similar GMB members around the country are paying the same amount to belong to our union. The Government are trying to instigate a system of regional pay for public services, and this is being opposed by many people. We need to ensure that, as an organisation, we are not guilty of doing similar things. We stand together as a union and whether you are from Cornwall or Cumbria, you should have the right to the same pay and the same GMB subscription rates.

Secondly, there is an issue of the trade union offering discounted membership to young people. If GMB agreed to adopt this idea we open ourselves up to new members who otherwise may not have joined in the knowledge that they may go on to pay full subscriptions when they enter the world of full-time work. It makes sense to allow cheaper subs in the short term if it brings in new members who will stay for a lifetime.

Brothers and sisters, we need to pass this motion and ensure the future of our union in years to come. If we stop being able to appeal to our younger members, we are not

even treading water. In ten years time all our 30 year-old members will be 40 and 40 will be 50 and so on. Let not this union die of old age. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Seconder?

BRO. K. GILBERTHORPE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I support Motion 27 – Subscriptions for Working Students and Apprentices.

President and Congress, we need to be clear about what our subscription rates are and who they apply to. There seems to be a lot of confusion out *there* from union to union and even within the GMB from region to region around students, working students and apprentices. There needs to be a consistent rate for such roles to ensure a consistent drive in recruitment, clarity in the subscription rates and a uniform rate nationally will help drive forward growth in this area. We need to take into account the rates being offered by other unions and make sure that the GMB is competitive and fair. The GMB is a union for working students and apprentices and our subscription rates need to highlight this fact. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

FAMILY MEMBERSHIP PACKAGE MOTION 29

29. FAMILY MEMBERSHIP PACKAGE

This Conference agrees to develop a family membership package for 2012/13. Discounted membership through a family membership package will not only encourage wider membership of the GMB, it will improve retention rates and encourage members to educate and inform their children about the benefits of trade unionism.

SHEFFIELD HEALTH & LIGHT BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Referred)

SIS. C. GAVIN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I move Motion 29 – Family Membership Package.

President and Congress, when I first saw this motion the wise words of my dad rang in my ears. As I approach school leaving age, which was quite a while ago, he said to me, “Don’t forget, lass, when tha’ starts working, join the union.” As a teenager, I did the “Oh God, he’s off again” and the “Yes, dad” grunts, but if family membership had been available back then I know that he would have paid for myself and my siblings to join the union. I would have been involved in the union 30 years ago and not just three years ago, but, hey, better late than never!

Congress, the GMB is my extended family and I am sure that you feel the same. We have the wisest grandmother of all in Mary. A family package would open the arms of the GMB and truly encompass all and spread the strength further. At the same time, it would update the image of the unions and show that we are not just about strike action and butting heads with the bosses, but that we are supporting those who do not have a voice, encouraging members to grow and reach their potential, giving them the skills

to be safe in their workplace. I feel that family membership will widen the umbrella of the GMB. I ask you to support this motion. (*Applause*)

The motion was formally seconded from the floor.

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone oppose Motion 29? (*No response*) In that case, I call Ann Leader of the CEC to reply on Motions 27 and 29. Ann.

SIS. A. LEADER (CEC, Manufacturing): Congress, on behalf of the CEC, I am responding to Motions 27 and 29, which the CEC is asking you to refer.

Colleagues, Motion 27 asks for clarity on the rates charged to students and apprentices and asks for a standard rate across the union. The CEC recognises that promotional rates have been introduced over time to meet a huge range of different organisational needs and to target particular groups. We are asking you to refer this motion so that we can identify practices in each region and identify anomalies, and of course we will report back to Congress next year.

Motion 29 proposes developing a discounted family membership package to help retention and bring young people to the union. Congress, similar proposals have been examined in the past by the CEC. As recently as 2010, in response to a reference from Congress, the CEC expressed the view that family membership was unlikely to add new members and that there was a danger of reducing income by discounting existing members' contributions. However, it may be timely to re-visit the idea. The CEC is, therefore, asking you to refer the motion.

Please refer Motions 27 and 29.

THE PRESIDENT: Is Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region prepared to refer? (*Agreed*) Thank you. On Motion 29, are you prepared to refer? (*Agreed*) Does Congress agree reference back? (*Agreed*)

Motion 27 was REFERRED.

Motion 29 was REFERRED.

ANNOUNCEMENT:

THE PRESIDENT: Before I move on to the next part of the business, I have an announcement to make. Crown Paints discount cards, approved by the SOC, give 25% off all products at Crown Decorating stores, are being distributed by Shane Allinson, senior steward of the whole site, and Bob Welham, Crown Paints convenor. So all get your paint brushes out and get your cards.

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS & AUDITORS REPORT

CEC FINANCE REPORT

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I am now asking Paul Kenny, the General Secretary and Treasurer, to move the Annual Accounts & Auditors Report and to move the CEC Finance Report.

CEC Financial Proposals to Congress 2012

2011 was another successful year financially for GMB, showing once again how a relentless focus on organising principles, led by imaginative and credible campaigning is the way to build membership and further strengthen our Union. Membership rose from 602,212 to 610,116 during the year, lifting total contribution income to £58,876,000.

The CEC has continued, through the Senior Management team, to keep costs under tight control, so that the Union achieved an operating surplus for the eighth year in a row. Congress has long recognised that keeping costs within income is the essential key to stability and strength for GMB, and the CEC is committed as never before to maintain the level of financial management which will avoid any return to the life-sapping deficits of a few years ago.

These are difficult times for the UK and world economy. The British government perseveres with its mindless attacks on public service jobs, and its failure to spark any sort of growth puts ever more pressure on the job security of our members in every sector of the economy.

Faced with these challenges to our membership, the CEC has had to take a very cautious approach to budgets for the coming years. Higher VAT, energy and fuel costs are all putting pressure on our finances, as is the need to stay ahead with communication techniques to support our core organising imperative. In future years, uncertainty about legal cost arrangements - which have been subject to changes which very much favour the insurance industry as against our members – also presents a financial threat.

The CEC in recent years has shown its determination to keep a firm hand on our finances. This year again, many members will see little or no wage increase, and the decision about contribution levels has again been a very hard one. Congress policy has been for some time that contributions should rise each year with the retail price index of inflation, and the CEC has bitter experience of freezing contributions, which led some years back to a deficit of £ 3 million and ended with Congress having to put contributions up by a massive 25%.

The CEC is therefore recommending what it considers to be the minimum necessary contribution increase for this year. Increasing Grade 1 and Grade 2 both by 5p per week is less than inflation (in the case of Grade 1, approximately half of RPI). The CEC does not propose any increase on the promotional rates paid often by members on very short hours.

The rule book traditionally links the amount of weekly contributions to the amount of the political levy. This year, the CEC proposes that the political levy is frozen and that all of the contribution increase will flow to the General Funds of the Union.

There is one further area of review of which Congress should be aware. The Boilermakers' Superannuation Fund operated for many years in the Boilermakers' Society, before the amalgamation into what was to become GMB in 1982. The Fund

had been made up of special contributions made by members, and was closed to new entrants in 1982. On amalgamation, the Fund paid out £13 per year to beneficiaries who had retired after completing 40 years in the trade as union members. During the 1990s, Congress raised the benefit on four occasions, so that it now pays £64 per year.

GMB Rules state that the GMB will meet the liabilities of the Fund, and the benefit now costs £270,000 per year. In 2007, the Fund was found to be in deficit, and the CEC authorised a transfer of reserves of £1 million to fund future benefits. A recent valuation has shown that the Fund is again in deficit, and the CEC is recommending that, before any further transfer of funds, steps are taken to lessen the burden on the Union.

The CEC proposes four immediate steps. Firstly that the Union ceases to charge the Fund an administrative fee (presently £25,000) and agrees to carry any other necessary charges, such as accounting, actuarial and legal fees. Secondly, that we ensure that beneficiaries are still members of GMB. Any who are not should be offered GMB retired life membership to qualify for continued membership of the Fund. Thirdly, because the benefit is payable to members who have long service in the trade, the application for benefit will require evidence that the member is actually retiring from one of the relevant trades as the rules provide. Finally, we shall carry out an existence check on current beneficiaries, something which is common among pension funds.

As one of the causes of the difficulties with this fund is the fact that GMB has increased the benefit so that it is nearly five times as big as it was at the time of amalgamation, the CEC has considered whether the benefit should be reduced. This is not recommended to Congress 2012, but it may have to be considered at next year's Congress if the funding position does not improve.

Congress is asked to make the following Rule Amendments

CECRA19.

Rule 46 Clause 1,

Line 3: Delete “£2.65”, insert “£2.70”

Line 8: Delete “£1.50”, insert “£1.55”

Clause will now read:

1 Once they join the union, members will pay a contribution in line with this rule.

Members will pay £2.70 a week and be classed as grade-1 members, **unless** they are:

- part-time members employed for 20 hours or less;
- young people under 18; or
- recruited as being unemployed;

in which case, they will pay £1.55 a week and be classed as grade-2 members. However, grade-2 members can choose to pay the contribution rate for, and be classed as, a grade-1 member.

The above grades are only used for deciding what contributions members should pay and the benefits they may receive

CECRA20.

Rule 46, Clause 2,

Line 4: Delete “£2.65”, insert “£2.70”

Line 5: Delete “£1.50”, insert “£1.55”

Clause will now read:

2 Branch committees will have the power to fix the amount lapsed members (members who joined but later stopped paying contributions) need to pay to rejoin. This amount will be between £2.70 and £10 for grade-1 members and between £1.55 and £5.50 for grade-2 members, except in particular circumstances when we may increase the amount with the approval of the regional committee.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you, President. Before anybody from any quarter of the hall gets up and asks if I've got a bulk buy of whitewash from that particular paint firm, the answer is no, I don't.

President and Congress, I formally move adoption of the Financial Accounts for 2011, which was another very successful year. One notable change to those Accounts, as I announced on Sunday, is that the GMB has sold its holdings in Carillion. We want none of our members' money tainted by investments in that company. (*Applause*)

President, we received no questions on the Report so I would like to move, if I could, to the first stage of our visual report and slide 1, which is the membership position. You can see from *here* the growth in union membership since we made the shift in our techniques and arrangements a few years ago.

2011 showed a big increase in membership, over 8,000, and, as I said on Sunday, it proves, if you look at *that* graph, that campaigning and fighting does attract people to the union. So it's been a very, very good year in terms of membership.

Slide 2. We introduced online joining. We were told that people were not particularly interested in. You can see *there* the growth in online joining. It is very useful because when people join online they join by direct debit. Of course, we have an email address for access. You can see over 100,000 people have joined.

Slide 3. *This* is the story, basically, of the GMB for new delegates, and at least 40% of the hall are new delegates. Up to 2004/2005 we were in pretty rotten shape. Each year we were spending far more than we were getting in, the union was in decline and in order, effectively, to try and balance the books each year, any money we got in from interest on shares or any sale of any properties was just absorbed by the loss. So we did not deal with the basic structural losses. When we changed the organisation to *GMB @ Work* at that first great Congress then you can see, immediately, with the changes we went into a growth situation and a surplus situation. That is the basis of success in the GMB over those years. We had a very good year again last year. It was very important given the campaigns that we are engaged in.

Slide 4. This shows you, effectively, that the money that was previously lost, such as on property and shares, helped us to build up that net surplus. *That* is the actual money that the union, effectively, banks each year. You can see the red lines at the bottom. Previously, the union was eating up its assets at an alarming rate each year. So growth in the organisation was despite, in those years where you saw the red lines, people coming back to Congress and looking for well above inflation increases in contributions. The answer, as we have said for some years, is growing the organisation and growing the union. That is the best way, effectively, to get those sorts of figures. Again, it is very good.

It is interesting to note, if you add all *that* lot up, that we have only just really started to recover from the disastrous few years before that. It shows you how much hard work you have to do just in order to recover from the disasters that went before.

Next slide. *That's* what we have been doing. We have been rebuilding the assets of the union. Why is that important? Actually, of course, it is vital. If we had carried on in the way we were going for another few years, then those assets would have gone down to nothing. Rebuilding the assets of the union allows us to plan, allows us to make changes, allows us to employ more people and allows us to make sure that we can guarantee our future. It allows us to make commitments and promises to things like Congress to ensure that the GMB will be here long after Cameron, Osborne and the rest of the crowd are just flicks in a page of history.

So it has been a pretty good performance. That completes the slides. They can go now.

The discipline in running the GMB in that sort of fashion has to remain. It can't be something you do for one year and then wash it all away. I am afraid I have to tell you that we face a huge number of threats to the growth and financial stability of the union. We face real threats to our ability to deliver the very things that you charge the Executive to do, because when you pass resolutions saying that the Executive should campaign for this or the union should do that, we have to factor that in. We face a real threat to organising disputes and support for members in trouble. I go back to the point I made earlier that, actually, the union being active in the workplace and campaigning for the members is where the membership growth comes from. So if you cut back on that, you cut back on the very purpose of the union to start with. So we are facing real threats.

Of course, we face the very real threat to employment and, therefore, membership just from the disastrous and inept handling of the economy by people like Osborne and the rest of the crew. As you have seen from the slides, the GMB is growing. It has been growing every year since we took that fundamental decision that we would shift the whole emphasis away from, effectively, blaming everybody else into getting off our backs and going out and organising, doing what we are really good at. When we change that direction, you can see the results.

Unfortunately, we are not immune from clowns like Cameron who can wreck jobs and membership. That loss of membership, because of the ineptitude of the Government, whether it is in the public or private sector, will change the financial

picture of the union really quickly. Whilst inflation is around 3% that still puts pressure on our budgets. If it goes higher, and I have no confidence that this Government will be able to control inflation, it will hit the union's spend in exactly the same way that it will hit all of your spend.

A big challenge, and one we just cannot ignore, is the implications of what is called the "Jackson report". Some of you here will have already heard it or seen it. Jackson will bring radical change to the rules which lawyers work to. Its effects are to give a massive helping hand to the insurance industry and make it much, much harder for unions to defend our members against lawbreaking employers.

The way the regions provide legal assistance has evolved over many years, and now we can get really good top-class legal help to our members quickly, efficiently and affordably. Because of that we fear no one and we can and do take cases to the Supreme Court and the European Court of Justice when the occasion demands. Jackson changes all of that. It unpicks our legal schemes and sets up barriers which add costs at every step of the way. Congress, some people are blasé about Jackson. They think it will go away. That's not really our way. I, for one, am not one for clapping my hands and jumping about and saying that I believe in fairies or bags of magic dust. We need to plan ahead and we need to do it now. That is why we just can't hope and wait that something will turn up almost Mr Micawber-like. We have, effectively, control our own futures.

We took a decision some years ago that we would no longer manage this union by crisis or panic but that we would plan ahead. The impact on our finances from Jackson could be as much as £4 million or even more a year. That is a serious impact. So we have to make plans for that. There are three potential answers. There is a fourth answer, which we reject – in fact, we don't even consider it to be an answer – which is that we scrap our legal services to our members. Well, you begin to think that if we can't provide that sort of guaranteed support, what are we in business for? So we don't consider that to be an option, despite the attacks. So there are three possible answers. We could put up contributions by 30 pence a week over the next two years. We could grow the union by 30,000 grade 1 members, or we could cut our internal expenditure by close to between £4 million and £5 million over the next two years. They are all pretty hard choices. The truth is that we are going to have to do a little bit of all of them.

It is just unacceptable to me, to you, to the Executive and to the Senior Management Team just to go back to the members and ask them to dig into their pockets for all of our needs. That has not been the way that we have sought to come back to Congress each year in order to report to you on our finances, but we are forced, even in difficult times, to ask for something. That is why the CEC Finance Report is recommending a 5 pence increase in grade 1 and grade 2 contributions. Yet we do know it is a difficult time for so many. We have kept the increase below inflation, which is actually Congress policy each year to come for an inflation-based increase. We have gone below that. We have frozen the rates for those on very low hours or on special contributions.

In order to keep contribution increases to a minimum we have to grow the membership. That has been the secret and the key. We have to campaign and

organise. *GMB@Work* came about because we had to change the philosophy of the union, and it has been successful. We have to continue to examine our spending budgets internally to ensure that we get the best deal on what we spend, because we spend a lot of money on your behalf. We have to examine how we organise our resources internally to ensure that membership support is maintained and improved. Part of that programme was explained the other day, and has been ongoing, is moving more staff-based resources into organising, making a shift, effectively, in the roles that people in the union play, and offering more opportunities to many of our staff members to move into the organising side.

We have to make sure during these difficult times and the pressures that are going to come on us that membership support is maintained and improved. We are going to see how regions can develop joint purchasing, training and services, building on the fantastic improvements and savings that they have already made. We must examine every national commercial contract to see, frankly, where we can get a better deal. We are not immune, and we should not be immune, from the fact that many of the commercial services we use, effectively, we should be negotiating tougher with to get a better deal. So we are in very serious times.

We must have the same courage, effectively, to examine our internal costs that we showed in tackling those losses which were allowed to go before, year on year, those red lines. I want to explain – I know it’s going to be a little controversial for one or two, to explain what we are doing in managing the Boilermakers’ Superannuation Fund, because I don’t believe in doing things underhand. It is better to be up front and explain to people what we are about.

Congress, many of you will not know what the Boilermakers’ Superannuation Fund is. It was a fund that the union inherited when the Boilermakers Society merged with the GMW back in 1982. I understand – I wasn’t around – that a hundred years ago it paid a reasonable pension. It was a relatively small amount but it was a reasonable pension in those times. The fund itself was closed to new entrants in 1982, and the GMB Rule Book now says that the union is responsible for the liabilities of the fund. In 1982 the benefit was £13 a year and the fund, which was made up of a tiny proportion of members’ contributions, stood at £1.9 million in 1982. Since then the benefits that have been paid out from the GMB, as it went on to be, have amounted to £7 million. No Boilermaker members have paid into the fund since 1982 when contribution rates were harmonised across the union. Congress in the early 1990s put the benefit up so that the fund now pays £64 a year. It is not an awful lot of money, but actually it is an awful lot of money if you haven’t got any money in the fund to pay for it. Five years ago the actuaries identified a deficit in the fund and they came to me and to the Executive and we agreed – we brought it to Congress – that we moved a million pounds from the reserve of the union back into the fund in order to put it back into kilter. That was at a time when, again, we were struggling to emerge from the difficulties that we had previously had in terms of building the union’s finances.

Benefits for last year were £270,000. That is the sum that was paid out. So the transfer of funds that we made five years ago have now gone and the deficit has returned. So we need to take steps to protect the union from further losses whilst treating the remaining boilermakers fairly and properly. First of all, we are proposing

to stop charging the fund for running costs. When I became General Secretary and when I first became aware of the situation and the deficit, the first thing I looked at was why we were charging the fund which, in those days, was £100,000 a year? Tommy Brennan was really helpful – he was really loud but really helpful – in pointing out that that was just us taking money out of the fund in order to put it back, and I agreed entirely with Tommy. We cut the £100,000 down to, as it is today, £25,000. We are proposing that we removed the £25,000. There is no point in us taking an administration charge. The administration charge is to cover the costs of the administration of the fund. There are running costs, such as actuarial, legal, IT support, postage and staff costs for administering the fund each year. We will have to bite that bullet and absorb it into the general fund. So that is some small measure.

I want to make it clear, before anybody here makes it clear that the administration cost, when it was implemented in previous regimes, that if you strung it out across all the years that the fund was being paid from the amalgamation, the amount of money that has been put in only comes to a few thousand pounds per year, but that is not the point. Getting rid of it is the right thing. It certainly has gone down considerably since I became the General Secretary.

We have all got to make sure, frankly, being honest about it, that the beneficiaries in the fund, those who get the money, are still members of the GMB. It is not fair that current members of the GMB – all of us – are asked to pay for benefits to non-members. That is a feeling that is held strongly by the Boilermakers section, who have spoken to me about this, as anybody. We also need to take steps to ensure that our lists are accurate and that beneficiaries are still living and, finally, we will improve the application process because there were rules that the Boilermakers applied to the fund which I am not entirely certain, over the years, that we have been as diligent as the Boilermakers were in terms of applying the fund. Those rules are very simple. You have to retire from the trade. That is what the rules say. Once you have retired from the trade, you are eligible for the fund.

Congress, we have to examine all of these things before we consider making a further subsidy. We need to find out the true position of what the fund needs and what the liabilities are going forward. When we have done that, we will come back to Congress next year and report to you.

I am sorry about the lengthy address. Some of you, particularly the new delegates, will be wondering about the mystery and wonders of the Boilermakers Superannuation Fund. Trust me, it is a highly emotional issue for many, many colleagues in this hall. I reassure everybody that we are going to check the numbers, we are going to see through the system, we are going to knock out the admin charge and then, frankly, we are going to see where we are from there. Then we will report back to you.

Mr. Toomey, there have been no underhand moves. It is all out in the open. Whatever we find, we will come back to Congress with next year. On that note, and with another successful year, I move the Accounts, President, the CEC Finance Report and the accompanying rule changes – rule changes 19 and 20. Thank you very much.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. I ask Malcolm Sage to formally second?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I formally second.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Malcolm. This is the point where the very interested people in this hall have been clamouring over me. Put your hand down. I haven't called you yet. *(Laughter)* I will now invite regions who wish to speak on the Financial Report. I call Yorkshire & North Derbyshire first. I call South Western and GMB Scotland. I call Southern, Birmingham & West Midlands and Northern.

BRO. J. BUTTERLEY (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, the 5 pence increase is a bitter pill but it is a pill that we are going to have to swallow. We accept that. We support the broader aspects and totally support the report given. Thank you.

BRO. A. BAKER (South Western): Congress, I speak in support of the Finance Report. President and Congress, it is widely recognised and accepted that the Government's austerity measures continue to impact adversely upon our members' employment prospects and their standards of living. Therefore, as was the case last year, very careful consideration has to be given to the matter of contribution increase. Colleagues, it is absolutely vital that our union continues to prioritise organising and recruiting activities primarily because more strength in the workplace means more protection to each one of our members.

The range and diversity of our members' needs are constantly increasing so we must continue to ensure that we maintain a modern infrastructure that allows us to deliver the type of service that they need and deserve. Congress, it is a simple fact that growth has to be financed. There cannot and must not be a return to the days of the past when the union's finances were not managed properly. There must be a continuing financial discipline and stability. Ensuring a steady increase in membership income is a necessary component of the overall strategy for investing in growth. Congress has an existing and clear policy of raising contribution rates in line with inflation, designed to ensure that expenditure does not exceed income and lead to the creation of operating budget deficits.

South Western Region continues that a 5 pence uplift on grades 1 and 2, together with a standstill arrangement for the under 10-hour rate, will enable us not only to remain competitive but also to continue to sustain the union's financial strength and deliver a premium service to all our members. South Western Region is pleased to support the report. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I call North West & Irish Region. All right, Toomey.

BRO. J. TOOMEY (North West & Irish): While I am sympathetic to your expenditure and the rest, I was looking at your affiliations. I've got a register and I'll tell you why Boilermakers get the superann. If you join the Boilermakers aged 26 or under and you have 40 years membership with continuous pay, then you got the superann, and I think about one in ten got it. The point is that loads of members over the years were run out.

I have a register and I have young lads coming up at 58, who are hoping. For God's sake, £64 is neither here nor there. I am bloody sure that we could make some cuts somewhere else and save that superann. Looking at the affiliations you have, you could get rid of some organisations.

THE PRESIDENT: Now can we have the speaker from the region.

BRO. A. MOSS (North West & Irish): Congress, for the first time in my life I am supporting. (*Cheers*) I actually said it was not enough at the time because I believe that we are under a big attack. We are going to need a lot more money to fight what is coming from this lot. If you thought Maggie was bad, this Government's even worse. It is not just going to attack us by stealth. They are coming at us every way. Just thinking about what they are going to do legally is going to take a lot of our money. I know that it takes a lot of our money. You should support this with everything you have got. Thank you. (*Applause and cheers*)

THE PRESIDENT: Is there anyone else? (*No response*) In that case, I call Paul Kenny to answer any points. Actually, there is only one point by Mr. Toomey.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you everybody. I know the fact that people did not come to the rostrum to speak was not because they were not interested in the debate. It was because what we have laid out over recent years, and particularly for new delegates I will explain. You see, we took a change. We've tried to be as transparent as we possibly can. "Transparent" is a much abused word, but it is better for us to think ahead. We don't want to go and ignore things and then next year, or the year after, have to come here and say, "Oh, well, we need a 30 pence increase" because, frankly, that is not only a tragedy, it is not only difficult for the members but that would be me failing in my job. That is not the route we want to go.

John, I say to you and all the other Boilermaker colleagues, we are going to check the list. I honestly don't know, and I have asked the questions, John. The problem is that we are unsure of those answers. We are going to go back and check. I say, publicly – I hope this is of reassurance to your own colleagues, John – that I don't think we are in the game of cutting payments to people, particularly retired members, that they are already getting. I don't think that that is what this is about. However, I think we should make sure that those who are getting it (a) are still alive, (b) are entitled to it, and (c) they are members of the union. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I now put the Annual Accounts and Auditors Report to Congress. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against?

The Annual Accounts and Auditors Report was ADOPTED.

THE PRESIDENT: I now put the CEC Finance Report to Congress. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against?

The CEC Finance Report was ADOPTED.

ADDRESS BY BRENDAN BARBER, TUC GENERAL SECRETARY

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to the next business. It is my great pleasure – you can see our guest is on the stage – to welcome Brendan Barber, the TUC General Secretary. Brendan has been the General Secretary of the TUC since 2003. He has always been a good friend of the GMB. I'm saying all these nice things now about you, Brendan. Brendan has worked at the TUC in various roles for 37 years. In that time he's done an enormous amount to promote union organising and education and training opportunities for working people. He's also been a driving force behind campaigns for equality in and out of the workplace.

Since the Con-Dems came to power, Brendan has been a fearless defender of our public services and our pensions. In April, Brendan announced that he had decided to retire from the TUC at the end of the year. These will be very big shoes to fill.

Brendan, I would like to invite you to address Congress. (*Applause*)

BRENDAN BARBER (TUC General Secretary): Mary, many thanks, indeed, for those words of welcome. It gives me real pleasure to bring greetings in solidarity from the TUC to the GMB Congress.

Let me begin by thanking Paul, not just for the outstanding leadership he has given the GMB and not just for the huge contribution that he has made to the wider trade union movement, but also for the unstinting and unwavering support that he has given me in his role as this year's President of the TUC. I have to confess that there was recently one moment of discord between us. It took place at the end of April. It represented an unavoidable difference – a conflict of interest – and it involved a matter that is of huge concern to both of us. Yes: Everton 4 – Fulham 0.

Paul, of course, will be back here in September presiding at the TUC's own Congress, and he has proved a very capable chair of the General Council during the past year, but chairing a big conference can be a bit daunting, so I am sure that this week he will have been taking a few lessons at the legendary Mary Turner Charm School. Mary, it is really great to see you here so fighting fit. Having two presidents on the platform beside me I feel a little bit like that James Corden character in this play *One man, Two Governors*, or is that *One speaker, Two Presidents*. I am sure that Paul will be okay at the TUC Congress and if he does want advice I am sure that he will be able to turn to his fellow-TUC General Council member, Sheila Bearcroft, another great TUC President from the GMB school.

I see that you have had a few guest speakers this week. In fact, as a line-up in nearly matches the Leveson Inquiry for top-ranking politicians. From what I have been hearing, you have been giving your guests a harder grilling than Mr. Leveson has been giving them, but you have not managed to capture all the headlines. Of course, even the people who gave us Cedric the Pig couldn't compete with the story of the Prime Minister leaving his daughter in the pub after Sunday lunch. I don't know why anybody should be surprised about that. There have been times when he has even left Nick Clegg in charge of the country. (*Applause*)

I have also noticed that you have been talking a lot this week about the nonsense that is in the Beecroft Report. I will say a word about that in a moment or two. Frankly, I can't believe that even the Tories believe in some of this sort of stuff that he is recommending. After all, if David Cameron really believed in sacking under-performing workers, why is George Osborne still Chancellor of the Exchequer?
(Cheers and applause)

Congress, let me, more seriously, pay tribute to what you have achieved in the past few years. You led the debate on private equity, exposing the effects of corporate asset-stripping. For example, in our care home system, and what a disgrace it is that what happened at Southern Cross is in danger of repeating itself at Four Seasons.

You have achieved recognition for many of your members within Asda, working with the company to provide thousands of new apprenticeships and showing that trade unionism has a real future within Wal-Mart, a worldwide breakthrough by this union. You have also led the fight for pensions justice, not just for your members in local government and the NHS but in private-sector employers, too, such as Unilever, reinforcing our message that all workers, public sector or private sector, deserve a decent pension. So all this and more is recent to be proud, along, may I say, with the union's growing membership strength. I wish I could say the same about every TUC affiliate.

As you know better than me, some huge challenges remain. None is more pressing, of course, than Remploy. Of the 54 factories across the UK, 36 are scheduled for closure this year, with the remainder to go next year. 1,700 jobs are going now, with 2,500 to be lost in total. Congress, this is not just a senseless cull of jobs at a time when unemployment is nudging three million. It's a ruthless attack on some of Britain's most vulnerable workers, and Government ministers ought to hang their heads in shame. *(Applause)* So let's say to all our Remploy colleagues that they can count on our support and solidarity. Their struggle is our struggle, and the whole of the trade union movement is right behind them.

Of course, Congress, the situation at Remploy is sadly reflective of the profoundly tough times facing our movement and our members across the board. Put simply, what we are up against is a Government of the rich, by the rich for the rich. It's cuts are devastating the services we all rely on, with the poorest people in the poorest communities hit hardest. It's reckless ideological austerity has delivered a double-dip recession just as we warned. It's welfare reforms are crippling the most vulnerable, just as millionaire bankers get a tax cut. So let's be clear. We're not all in this together. We never have been. So long as this lot are in power, we never will be.

So in the year ahead there are three key priorities for the whole trade union movement. The first priority is that we must resist the Coalition's wanton assault on employment rights that already rank amongst the weakest in the developed world. It doesn't matter whether it is TUPE or unfair dismissal, tribunals or redundancy provisions, laws on strike ballots or facility time for reps. In every case the direction of travel is clear and it's negative. If Tory donor, Adrian Beecroft gets his way, employers will be able to fire workers simply because their face doesn't fit, a price he thinks is worth paying, despite the evidence that making workers more insecure will further erode economic confidence.

It makes you wonder who is this Beecroft fellow? Well, he's a private equity mogul, who oversaw the destruction of eight thousand jobs at supermarket chain Somerfield. He is a major investor, too, in pay-day loans firms Wonga.com, an organisation that charges borrowers interest rates of over 4,000% a year, that was recently slammed by the Office of Fair Trading for its aggressive debt-collection methods!

Congress, the evidence is clear. Beecroft is bad news for workers, bad news for our communities but it would be bad news for Britain, too.

So moving to our second priority, and that is to protect our public services and the dedicated people who deliver them. From schools to councils, from universities to prisons and from the welfare state to our NHS, the Coalition's cuts, closures and privatisations are laying waste to what has taken generations to build and we must not let them get away with it.

As we defend the services that ordinary people depend on, let's also speak up for the workers who are proud to provide them; the ambulance drivers and paramedics who save countless thousands of lives every year; the care workers, whose selflessness gives the sick and elderly a better quality of life; the refuse collectors who keep our communities clean, come wind, rain or shine. Do you know, they deserve better than the shoddy treatment being meted out by this Government of privilege and wealth. *(Applause)* Why should public-sector workers be made to pay with their jobs, their pay and their pensions for a crisis caused by private-sector bankers? They shouldn't, and our movement has to tackle this injustice head on.

This takes me to what must be our third priority: to set out a credible alternative to austerity, an alternative based on jobs, because we simply cannot afford the costs of mass unemployment, an alternative based on growth because we won't pay down the deficit unless our economy is growing and GDP is rising. We need an alternative, too, based on tax justice. Rather than cuts that scar the poor, we need fair taxes that the rich cannot dodge. Where better to start than with a Robin Hood tax on financial transactions. Now is the time for real change.

In Britain and right across Europe the evidence is overwhelmingly clear. Austerity is hurting – that is absolutely clear – but it is simply isn't working. It is not some temporary sacrifice that will be worth it in the end, but self-defeating, self-perpetuating economic masochism that could be with us for the duration. From London to Dublin, from Athens to Madrid, ordinary people are joining together to say that enough is enough. It is our job to tap into the mood for change, to help shape public opinion, to reach out to anyone and everyone who shares our convictions that cuts are not the cure. So let's campaign, let's organise and let's mobilise.

Congress, don't under-estimate what we can achieve together. We saw that during our historic march for the alternative last year when half-a-million people took to the streets of London. We saw that during our magnificent day of actions for pensions justice in November, the most extensive industrial action in decades. I believe that we will see that again on October 20th, when the TUC holds its next mobilisation against cuts, privatisations and attacks on workers rights. I know that GMB members will be out in force to support what promises to be another momentous occasion. It will be a

chance not just to put pressure on the Coalition, not just to present our case but to shape the battle for Britain's future. So let's get active in our workplaces and communities. Let's make October 20th the biggest event in our history, and together let's give working people a sense of hope about their prospects.

Congress, as Mary has just said, this is my last year as TUC General Secretary, and it has been a fantastic honour and privilege to have served in the TUC for the last 37 years, but I felt that now was the right time for me to make a change and I do so absolutely confident that the leadership of the TUC will be in good hands, and that our movement can go from strength to strength.

When times are tough, and they certainly are now, working people need strong unions as much as at any time in our history, so a huge amount remains to be done. Let's get to it. Thanks for listening. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Brendan, it gives me great pleasure to say thank you for all the years I have known you and the pain in the bum I have been at times ——

BRENDAN BARBER: Never, never.

THE PRESIDENT: We will miss you sincerely and I would just like to let you know that we are moving on as well and that the GMB Executive has nominated Frances to be the next General Secretary, the first woman of the TUC, hopefully. Thank you. (*Applause*) I would like you to accept these gifts. You have seen the whisky. You ain't seen this, though. It is the history of the GMB up to date. It is for you. It is good reading. You will have plenty of time. Then we have the revolution. I gave one of them to what's-his-name yesterday! Then I thought you've got a lot of time on your hands so could I give you, with our love, a card for our Employees Discount Scheme. (*Laughter*) You can come round my house with the dog, all right? Brendan, here is a gift for you to get something that you want for yourself. We were going to give you a Liverpool T-shirt but we thought you might be offended. Good luck and thank you. (*Presentation amid applause*)

BRENDAN BARBER: Can I just say, Mary, thanks so much for those gifts. I will treasure them and I will treasure my memories of all the work that I have done with the GMB over the years. Just to say I did not come entirely empty-handed myself today. Colleagues here may know that Paul and I recently visited Australia, met the Prime Minister down there and the leaders of all the major Australian unions, a really fascinating visit, but there was one slight hiccup along the way so I have brought with me the speeding ticket I was sent for when Paul was driving on the way into Melbourne. For some reason they sent it to me. (*Laughter/Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I will have nothing to do with it. Thank you, Brendan, very much. Take a seat, if you wish. You may join us, Brendan. Let me tell you the last time Paul Kenny got a speeding ticket it was in Canada and he left there and when somebody was going back on holiday he had to get them to pay it. Don't let him out of your sight.

We now move, colleagues to the next business, that is to call Motion 80, 81, and Composite 7, Southern Region to move 80, Yorkshire to move 81, Northern to move

Composite 7 and Birmingham to second. Then Viv Smart will answer for the CEC.
Thank you, gang.

EMPLOYMENT POLICY: RIGHTS AT WORK
SELF-EMPLOYED CONTRACTS
MOTION 80

80. SELF EMPLOYED CONTRACTS

This Conference needs to be aware that, partially as a result of the Agency Workers Regulations, companies are offering their employees "Self Employed Contracts" to carry out the same work.

In organised workplaces this can be collectively opposed however not all workplaces are already organised.

While there are remedies our members need to be reminded that to protect their rights they need to be organised and that prevention is better than remedy.

G36 SECURITY BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. A. GROAT (Southern Region): Basically, how this has come about is that in the security industry to cut costs we have had zero hours contracts used for quite a long time but suddenly since January some of our members have been offered massive pay increases, 60 hours a week, they were on basic minimum wage, the management suddenly turned up and offered them an extra 45/50p or even £1 an hour, but the catch is, and this is, wait for it, they become self-employed so they lose the basic right to a working week hours, they lose any sick pay, and they lose any holiday pay. To add insult to injury as well they have to buy their uniform from their employer, which is branded, and they have to buy their own PPE. If, for instance, they are laid off then they are not entitled to the full benefit package because they do not have a permanent contract. Also as well, some of them have been asked to pay a contribution towards public liability insurance which apparently they are required to work with in those stores. They are dumbfounded. So, we ask Congress to fight this, please, in the best possible way. Organisation in the workplace, make sure the guys are aware of their working rights. A lot of these guys are out there on their own so we are going to make an attempt to recruit but if it works in my industry, and they find they can get results, you can bet your bottom dollar it will find its way into your industry. Please move. Thank you very much indeed. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder.

The motion was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much indeed. Motion 81, the mover?

RIGHTS FOR SELF-EMPLOYED WORKERS STATUS MOTION 81

81. RIGHTS FOR SELF EMPLOYED WORKERS STATUS

This Conference calls upon the CEC to campaign on behalf of groupings of self-employed, for example Private Hire Drivers, Foster Carers and Interpreters helping them achieve worker status.

Many people working in these occupations are substantially worse off than workers with employee status, including working below the minimum wage, not receiving either sick or holiday pay and not enjoying any employment rights.

Even though they are not employees they are often directed by their organisations in a controlling way. Some Private Hire companies insist that their drivers wear a uniform, control their start and finish times, specify the area that they can work in and exclude them for working for more than one company at a time.

Foster Carers are also tightly controlled by the local authority that they are aligned to and are also restricted to fostering for only that authority.

Many people in these sectors are controlled and directed and should naturally fall into the worker category.

More and more self-employed feel the need to organise and join the GMB and we call on Congress to support them in their campaign for worker status.

YORKSHIRE PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS' ASSOCIATION BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

SIS. C. GAVIN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region): Moving Motion 81, Rights for Self-employed Workers Status and in this particular instance, foster carers and private hire drivers. Foster carers, believe it or not, are paid by the local authority yet they are still self-employed. There is no contract between them and the local authority. As there is no contract, the relevant statutes do not categorise them as workers. Foster carers carry a 24-hour 7-day a week responsibility for the children in their care and must be registered with the local authority, yet have no employment rights. The Government wants fostering to be more professional and foster carers have to take relevant qualifications in that area. They receive no allowances, paid holidays, or sick leave and in most cases they are not allowed to earn any other income as they provide 24-hour care to their wards. Yet when they do not have any children, they are expected to get a job to fill in the time and then drop that when they are needed; impossible to do. Foster carers do a fantastic job but they are refused employment rights others enjoy. They still have mortgages, bills, etc., like everyone else, therefore need a steady reasonable income in order to do that.

Private hire drivers also are asked to wear corporate uniforms and only allowed to work for one company at a time, told which shifts they can work and where they are to work. Drivers find themselves earning way below the minimum wage. They have to earn enough money to pay for radio rental and of vehicle hire, and fuel, all before they begin to earn to feed, house, and clothe their families. Let's not forget tax and National Insurance contributions too. They receive no sick or holiday pay, simply if

they do not work they do not earn; all this and still being subject to company disciplinary procedures despite being self-employed.

Being self-employed as a foster carer or a private hire driver has so many restrictions and controls it clearly puts them in a worker status yet they still have no benefits and rights, as I said, as we receive. Congress, I call upon you to support them in their campaign for worker status. I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Secunder.

BRO. M. DOLAN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region): Why should taxi drivers, interpreters, foster carers, in fact anyone have no protection under employment law and be subject to oppressive working conditions? Order a minicab anywhere in the country and odds are that driver who picks you up will be self-employed but, Congress, how self-employed are they really? A genuinely self-employed plumber comes to your house, decides if they want the job, and quotes you a price. If you accept the plumber tells you when it can be done, buy their own materials, and even send someone else to do the job. That is what self-employed should be, the freedom to make a profit or risk a loss on your own terms. Self-employed should not be a master and servant relationship. Often minicab drivers have to pay overheads to the company, such as pay for the radio, plate, insurance, even washing their own car. They are forced into a position where the only one way to make a profit is to put in the extra hours working 60 to 70 hours over six to seven days, unsocial hours. If they work less, they will make a loss. How can it be self-employed working round the clock for one employer? They better not get ill or fall out with the company because there will be no sick pay, no redundancy pay. Congress, this is bogus self-employment, denying basic employment rights and being fired without warning. Congress, please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Martin. Mover of Comp. 7?

NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE COMPOSITE 7

C7. Covering Motions:

89. MINIMUM WAGE *(Northern Region)*
90. INCREASES IN THE NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE *(Birmingham & West Midlands Region)*

NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE

This Conference rejects the neo-con tendencies of the right-wingers within the Tory Party and Government, who wish for the National Minimum Wage to be reduced or abolished.

Conference calls for the Labour Party opposition to:

- commit to a much higher minimum wage as part of its next General Election manifesto and:
- reaffirm a set rate for the minimum wage that is considerably above current trends in minimum wage changes in the UK; and not a penny less than £8 per hour (pro rata)

(Carried)

SIS. V. DAVISON (Northern Region): Congress, a few months ago two absolute lunatics from the Tory rightwing, Philip Davies, the barking MP for Shipley, and Christopher Chope, the former minister, wanted, firstly, to let disabled workers work for less than the minimum wage and, secondly, let the minimum wage be reduced to (in their words) let job numbers rise. The Tories, remember, opposed the minimum wage when it was set up in 1998. They said it would cost hundreds of thousands of jobs. They were wrong then and the two dishonourable members of parliament I have mentioned are wrong now.

Congress, the Tories just do not get it in the world of work. They only care about themselves and their people. Let's be clear, their people are not our people. The minimum wage was an excellent piece of legislation by the last government but it is 13 years ago since it came in and instead of letting the culture go on and on where PFI, private equity, and the fast buck could rule, Labour would have been better to put up the minimum wage to at least a living wage. The current rate is £6.08 an hour. Well, Congress, do the sums. That brings in on a 40-hour week just over £240, or just over £12,500 a year. In this day and age how can that be classed as a living wage? And before I hear anyone say, well, yes, but there are tax credits to be taken into account. Yes, there are but they are means tested and the Benefits Agency and HMRC have spent year after year giving with one hand and taking away with another, and in the process have written off hundreds of millions of pounds. Congress, what we need is for employers to pay a much higher minimum wage as the composite says. I would far rather have money that would otherwise be salted away in offshore tax havens used to pay a much higher minimum wage. Labour needs to show it understands the world of work, that it will take on those who want to rip us off, and to show that they are in tune with low and middle incomes across the UK. I move.
(Applause)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ronnie. Secunder.

A DELEGATE (Birmingham & West Midlands Region): I will be very brief. The rate of the National Minimum Wage has to be at a more reasonable level. It has to take people out of poverty. I believe that the current rate of over £6 is there to keep people in poverty and we are trying to get it to £8 to get people out of poverty. It also, I think, helps to give people some dignity and self-esteem that they are not having to rely on additional benefits, but if they can earn a living wage, keep their family, and feed themselves adequately, then we will have achieved something. I very much endorse this. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. I now call on Viv Smart to speak on Motions 80 and 81 on behalf of the CEC.

SIS. V. SMART (CEC, Public Services): Congress, the CEC asks you to support both Motions 80 and 81 with a qualification in respect of each motion. On Motion 80 the qualification relates to the type of avoidance of the Agency Workers Regulations highlighted in the motion. The motion rightly addresses concerns over the general removal of employment rights through use of self-employed contracts. However, the

Swedish Derogation permits an agency to offer a permanent contract of employment to an agency worker thereby avoiding the right to equal pay with permanent employees. The particular issue raised by the motion appears to be specific to the security industry. If the section can provide some examples we will be able to direct our efforts to address the issues in the way that best benefits GMB members.

On Motion 81 the qualification relates to the need for GMB to take the views of the affected members into account. GMB has campaigned for many years against bogus self-employment in areas like construction, private taxi hire, logistics, and other areas where employment rights are routinely denied. This campaign also supports our wider stance against corporate tax dodging. However, bogus terms are so entrenched in some industries that many members are not immediately convinced of the benefit of employees' status, particularly if this leads to an increase in their personal taxation. Therefore, any campaigns should take the views of the affected members into account as well as any plans for conversion to PAYE. Congress, the CEC asks you to support Motion 80 and Motion 81 with the qualifications outlined. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Viv. Does Southern Region accept the qualification on Motion 80? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Does Yorkshire Region accept the qualification on Motion 81? (*Agreed*) Thank you. I now call on the vote for Motions 80, 81, and Composite 7. All those in favour? Anyone against? They have carried.

Motion 80 was CARRIED.

Motion 81 was CARRIED.

Composite 7 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Before we go on to item 9, I have some more good news, it keeps coming in today, Congress last year supported a motion from Leeds General Branch which directed GMB to support groups like UK Uncut who were campaigning against tax avoidance. To date, over £1,500 has been donated from GMB branches in four regions and activists from UK Uncut have been invited to speak. It is, therefore, with great pleasure that I can report to Congress that today UK Uncut legal have succeeded in securing a full judicial review of HMRC's decision to waiver £10bn of tax owed by Goldman Sachs. Very good, that. (*Applause*) We now move on to item 9, Composite 6, GMB Scotland to move, Yorkshire to second, and priority in debate to Birmingham. Mover, please.

AGENCY WORKERS REGULATIONS COMPOSITE 6

C6. Covering Motions:

- 77. TEMPORARY AGENCY WORKERS (*GMB Scotland*)
- 78. AGENCY WORKERS REGULATIONS (*Birmingham & W. Midlands Region*)
- 79. AGENCY WORKERS' REGULATIONS (*Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region*)

AGENCY WORKERS REGULATIONS

This Conference believes that the new regulations on agency workers fall far short of giving agency workers' equal treatment to full time employees. Since the new Regulations came in to

force in October 2011, an increasing number of employers in conjunction with agencies have sought to avoid the equal treatment provisions of the Regulations by putting agency workers under pressure to accept permanent contracts, often referred to as the "Swedish derogation".

The new regulations give employers an option to employ workers on the Swedish Derogation. This will allow employers, in conjunction with agency businesses, to avoid equal pay by directly employing the agency workers on contracts that may offer as little as one hour's work per week.

This Conference deplores the actions taken by certain companies on the introduction of the Agency Workers Regulations by undermining its effectiveness by evoking the Swedish Derogation. We call upon the CEC to lobby Government to halt this unscrupulous practice.

Conference notes that the operation of this derogation in the UK bears little or no resemblance to the practices in Sweden on which it was based where workers are guaranteed higher wages between contracts, and have better guarantees of employment.

Conference opposes this derogation being used as a means of avoidance of equal treatment, with insufficient guarantees on working hours, and unreasonable conditions being put on work offers (long distance placements, use of own transport). If agency workers refuse, the agency then absolves itself of the obligation to pay between contracts.

Conference also notes with concern the undermining of terms and conditions in some in-house pools of agency workers, which are also exempt under the Regulations. Regression clearly goes against the principles of the Directive.

The derogation is also being used to undermine collectively agreed terms and conditions in workplaces, and is blatant avoidance of the equal treatment principles.

The Directive is very clear that Member State Governments must take action against avoidance of equal treatment provisions. Conference calls on the GMB to explore the scope for complaint at EU level and potential legal challenge against the UK Government for none compliance with the provisions of the Directive.

This motion therefore calls upon the GMB to step up a campaign to expose and outlaw the Swedish derogation which will then benefit agency workers and enable them to be treated equally to full time employees.

(Carried)

SIS. B. CARSON (GMB Scotland): Temporary workers have been used by employers ever since I started work. When I started work I was on a temporary contract. It used to be that you would be temporary and then after a year you would be made permanent. Now most employers use a quick fix of temporary agency workers at the drop of a hat. People are working for 38 zero hours without little prospect of continuity of employment or a full-time position.

Congress, in 1970 one of the last acts of the Labour government was to introduce the Equal Pay Act and in 2010 the Labour government was to pass another important piece of equalities legislation, the Agency Workers Regulations. It took the government too long to get to it but get to it they did. It is a sharp reminder of why

the trade union Movement exists, and this union in particular, because if it was not for the union campaign for equality this legislation would not have been passed. If it was not for the union's organisation and bargaining for equality enforcement of these rights would not have happened either. We know it is one thing for working men and women having rights on paper but it needs good trade union organisation to enforce these rights in practice. Since the new legislation came into force in October 2011, too many employers have avoided adopting these regulations putting agency workers under pressure to accept contracts on the National Minimum Wage using the Swedish Derogation. The Derogation is used to undermine collective agreements as well as the rights of these vulnerable workers. British employers are in cahoots with British agencies and ignoring the spirit and intent of the European Directive. Congress, it is about time we named and shamed these employers who are exploiting the vulnerable workers. It is about time we recruited and organised these workers into the GMB. It is about time, like in my workplace in Glasgow, we stood up against the agency working and demanded that all workers are directly employed. It is about time we debated what political and legal actions we take to the British and European courts, if necessary.

Congress, when this union was set up at the very first Congress it was written into the first rule book that one of the objectives of the union was to secure equal pay. We have had many battles down the years, some industrial, some political, some we have lost but many we have won. Congress, it is time for this generation of GMB activists to step forward to take our places and win equal pay and equal treatment for agency workers in this country in the weeks and months ahead and rewrite the chapter in our union history. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Secunder.

BRO. B. GOLDING (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region) in seconding the motion, said: President, Congress, the Agency Worker Regulations brought into force in 2011, everyone would agree, was an excellent piece of legislation but there is an Achilles heel, it is the Swedish Derogation. This allows employers in conjunction with agency businesses to avoid equal pay by directly employing the workers on contracts that offer as little as one hour's pay a week. The Swedish Derogation is in widespread use in the UK. They have recruiters working for Tesco, Morrisons, Premier Foods, and DHL. Those adopting the model to circumvent the law end up boosting 1.4 million temporary workers' rights. On average temporary workers currently get paid about a third less than permanent staff doing the same job, according to the TUC. This composite calls on the GMB to campaign, expose, and outlaw the Swedish Derogation. It is nothing but exploitation. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Does Birmingham wish to put a speaker in? No? Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Malcolm. Moving papers around up here like *The News of the World*. Congress, before I call the vote on Composite 6, I would like to thank Brenda Carson, who moved the composite. Brenda is the daughter of Sammy Barr who sadly passed away five weeks ago. Sammy was active in the Boilermakers Society and then the GMB. He was a leader in the Upper Clyde shipbuilders work-in

and a true working class hero of his and our generation. Brenda, Sammy would have been very proud of you today. So, with that, Congress — (*Applause*) — I will now call the vote on Composite 6. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

Composite 6 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. can we now move to the next item, item 10, Political: European Union, Composite 15, European Anti-Cuts Campaign to be moved by London, Motion 172, Posted Workers to be moved by Southern Region, and 173, Unfair Dismissal of MEPs Staff, Southern Region, and then I will call Nicola Sharpe, CEC, to speak on Composite 15. Thank you.

**POLITICAL: EUROPEAN UNION
EUROPEAN ANTI-CUTS CAMPAIGN
COMPOSITE 15**

C15. Covering Motions:

169. EUROPEAN ANTI-CUTS CAMPAIGN: I (*London Region*)

170. EUROPEAN ANTI-CUTS CAMPAIGN: II (*London Region*)

EUROPEAN ANTI-CUTS CAMPAIGN

Congress notes the struggle of working people around the world against austerity measures designed to make us pay for the global crisis created by the capitalist class.

This Conference recognises that the anti-austerity struggles are similar all over Europe. At the end of December 2011, there was a quasi general strike in Belgium against the attacks on the workers' pensions, very similar to that of the 30 November 2011 in Britain.

Congress believes that the most effective strategy to fight cuts is for trade unionists and our communities to co-ordinate our actions on the widest possible basis within Britain and internationally.

Congress resolves to work jointly with European trade unions and allies globally in an anti-cuts campaign which builds solidarity at all levels including branches and in the workplace. Our campaign should seek to gain the participation of ordinary members and activists by establishing local and national action groups, workplace and public meetings, regular information bulletins and international demonstrations.

Conference asks the GMB leadership to work vigorously towards concerted European anti-cut campaigns, and to involve as many ordinary Union members as possible in the preparatory discussions, programmes and decisions; for instance, holding regular GMB mass meetings at workplace and Trade Union branch levels.

(Carried)

SIS. M. TAYLOR (London Region): Congress, this Government's economic policy is "a death spiral of self-defeating austerity". They are not my words, they are the words of Paul Krugman, a Nobel Prize-winning economist. He also describes this

government as, “economically illiterate and bound to fail”. We now face the worst economic slump since the long depression of the 1870s. Falling investment has driven this slump both in Britain and other industrialised nations. We need more investment, even the capitalists agree on this. The Institute of Directors is calling for deregulation and further cuts in spending to fund investment. Deregulation, we know, means trashing workers’ rights as the Beecroft Report proposes and forcing down wages and terms and conditions. Cuts in spending means slashing essential services to invest in private businesses so they can make more profits and we know what happens to private sector profits, it stays in the private sector and lines the pockets of the wealthy.

At a fringe meeting yesterday Owen James pointed out that we do spend millions unnecessarily on welfare. Firstly, because of the shortage of affordable public housing we pay out millions in housing benefit on overinflated rents and this money goes straight into the pockets of private landlords. The low wage crisis means that workers are forced to claim tax credits, again this is a direct subsidy to private sector employers who are failing to pay a decent living wage. There are, according to *The Telegraph*, 22 people for every job vacancy in Britain and six million people who cannot find full-time jobs. As a result, we are paying benefits to people who want to work.

Congress, we must campaign for investment and no cuts. Public investment in public services will create growth and decently paid jobs. Investment in housing and transport, and education, will create a better society for working people. The Tories are using this crisis to force through vicious rightwing policies and create a divide and rule culture. Congress, they are blaming the unions, they are blaming benefit scroungers, and migrant workers or, alternatively, they are trying to blame the euro or the Greeks, or the Spanish, or the Italians. Congress, we know this is a lie but this diatribe makes it harder for us to challenge the real perpetrators of the crisis and it leads to the rise of reaction on the far right which we have already seen in Britain, France, and Greece.

To challenge this rightwing ideology and build an alternative to austerity it is essential we build alliances with trade unions and progressive movements across Europe and around the world. This is a global crisis and it requires a global response. Working people in Greece are resisting austerity and the banks’ attempts to force them into decades of poverty. In France, a socialist president has been elected and the anti-austerity movements are growing across Europe. Congress, this demonstrates that there is a political alternative, that 20th century socialism can work and another world is possible. We must urgently build a grassroots-based campaign working with European and global workers and communities. We need to fight the cuts and build a better future. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Mel. Secunder.

SIS. K. HENDRY (London Region) in seconding the motion, said: President, Congress, if we are going to fight austerity industrially, as Mel was talking about, it is also essential that we defeat it politically and intellectually. It cannot be a piecemeal response. We must attack the very principles of what austerity is built on, of the market, of competition, of huge distributions and inequalities of wealth and of private

ownership. When the Berlin Wall came down 20 years ago Western liberal capitalists crowed that this was the end of history, in other words, that our economic, social, and political development had reached its highest point and that we should be satisfied with the kind of society we have and one vote every five years. We have political opposition, the Labour party, which has basically offered no political alternative to austerity. Darling said before the election the cuts will be more savage than Thatcher. After the election, Miliband said we will cut but it is going to be a bit slower and a bit less steep, but these mild shifts are not going to defeat austerity. This Sunday the Greeks go to the polls for the second time. If the radical left party, Syriza, which rejects austerity, wins then the political landscape of Europe will change and be altered. A successful anti-austerity political party will give hope to workers and people in other countries that we can defeat austerity and that, as Mel said, socialism is possible and a better world is possible. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kim. Motion 172.

POSTED WORKERS DIRECTIVE AND GMB MEMBERS MOTION 172

172. POSTED WORKERS DIRECTIVE AND GMB MEMBERS

This Congress:

- believes that the Single Market and freedom of movement in the European Union are not ends in themselves, but means to improving the lives of people;
- is concerned that the current EU Posted Workers Directive fails to adequately guarantee equal treatment in working conditions for posted workers coming to the UK from other EU countries, without which local workers are subject to unfair wage competition which undermines established conditions and collective agreements;
- believes that, too often, posted workers across Europe suffer under existing employment legislation, as they are left vulnerable to exploitation by unscrupulous employers who fail to fulfil their obligations;
- notes that many GMB members in Brussels are posted workers from the UK, and that in many cases they can lack even the most basic protections, such as healthcare cover, due to the failure of their employers to recognise their obligations under the law; and
- therefore calls upon the GMB's allies in the European Parliament to take into account the situation of GMB members, both in the UK and in Brussels, who are let down by the current Directive, and to campaign for stricter enforcement of equal treatment in working conditions for all cross-border workers in the European Union, when the legislation on Posted Workers is revised this year.

B59 BRUSSELS BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. K. MERRETT (Southern Region): First time delegate, first time speaker. *(Applause)* Thank you. President, Congress, I want to speak on an issue that affects our members in Brussels but affects many members in the UK as well. The Posted Workers Directive is an EU law that was supposed to ensure equal treatment for

workers who get posted to another EU country to work there. That meant equal treatment on pay, holidays, working time, health and safety, and all other areas. It was meant to ensure equal treatment for the posted workers themselves and also the local workers, so they would not be subjected to unfair competition from workers coming in from abroad.

Our members in Brussels are not generally on big salaries, a lot of them are in precarious or temporary work, a lot of them are young, a lot of them are on low paid internships, and it is those who have been let down by the law. Far too many of the employers that we deal with are unscrupulous and do not follow the law. Some of our members have found at the worst possible time that they were not properly covered for healthcare, some of them were wrongly told that they were not entitled to benefits but they were entitled to them if the law had been applied. We know that if we are experiencing this on the Brussels side, GMB branches in the UK must be experiencing it from the other point of view too, and the law is not being followed here either.

The Commission has just produced a proposal for better enforcement of the law but the problem is, Congress, it is nowhere enough. Like a lot of European governments at the minute, like our own government in the UK, the current Commission is dominated by rightwing politicians with a neo-Liberal agenda and the proposal is not enough to protect the rights of our members there or in the UK. We feel that their proposal, like a lot of the other things they have proposed recently, has protected the freedom of international companies rather than protect the freedom of vulnerable workers.

This is about our members in Brussels and it is about members in the UK as well. It is also about fighting for what kind of Europe we want to see. The GMB Brussels office already does a lot of work for us in this area which has already been mentioned today. We have our GMB MEPs and if we work with other trade unions in Europe, and our allies, we can get something better than what the rightwing is offering us on this. Please support this motion for our members and to send out a message about what kind of Europe we want to see. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kieron. Well done. Kieron, can I say, and you may know it, you may not, we have gone to Brussels and met with the MEPs, some of the MEPs have been dealing with the issues and some have not but we will not give up, and we do support that.

BRO. K. MERRETT (Southern Region): Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder.

BRO. A. NEWMAN (Southern Region) in seconding the motion, said: The Posted Workers Directive is something which affects me in my professional life when I go and work abroad. There are two sides to the Posted Workers Directive. One is the protection it is supposed to give individuals working abroad but the other thing is how it affects the workforce in the country where people are going into.

Two or three years ago we had big examples in Britain of the Lindsey Oil Refinery strike and the Staythorpe Power Station. At the Lindsey Oil Refinery what was happening was that workers were being recruited in Sicily on Sicilian wages and Sicilian terms and conditions, and then living on a ship in Grimsby harbour. It is not all glamour. I live in Swindon and even I know it is not glamorous. They were living in a ship in Grimsby harbour on inferior wages and inferior terms and conditions, and undercutting British workers. At Staythorpe Power Station Polish workers had been recruited in Poland, were working on Polish wages and terms and conditions, even though they are working in the UK. This is both discriminatory against those Polish workers because of course they are earning wages which cannot sustain them with UK house prices and food costs, but it is also undercutting workers in Britain.

I believe that people should be able to move around the world and if some working people want to come to Britain and build a better life for themselves and their families, for me they are welcome. People around the world are all workers but what we do need to be very careful is that unscrupulous employers do not use the Posted Workers Directive to push in a race to the bottom of terms and conditions. Comrades, I urge you to support this motion, a very, very important issue of the Posted Workers Directive, which discriminates against workers, it does not protect workers working abroad and also allows unscrupulous employers to undercut the hard fought for wages and terms and conditions of workers in Britain and in other European countries.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Andy. Motion 173, Southern Region.

UNFAIR DISMISSAL OF MEPs' STAFF MOTION 173

173. UNFAIR DISMISSAL OF MEPS' STAFF

This Congress:

- is concerned that, since the introduction of the 'Assistants' Statute' in 2009, the staff of Members of the European Parliament have been subject to a rule which allows them to be dismissed at any time, subject only to a requirement for the MEP to state a reason for the dismissal, with no suspension, no investigation, no fair hearing, no right of appeal and no compensation;
- is concerned that, whilst the majority of MEPs are exemplary employers, some have used this rule as a licence to treat their staff with contempt;
- notes that it can be difficult for MEPs' Assistants and for the GMB, as the only Trade Union representing them, to enforce their contractual rights when they can be threatened with dismissal so easily;
- recognises that MEPs' Assistants, many of whom are GMB members, provide vital support to MEPs and the European Parliament which should be recognised and valued;
- believes that the European Parliament has been the source of a great deal of positive and important legislation on employment rights, but that in order to have a truly credible voice on employment rights it must set an example to employers across Europe; and

- therefore calls on the GMB's allies in the European Parliament to be at the forefront of efforts to reform the Assistants' Statute and to give their staff greater security and stronger rights at work.

B59 BRUSSELS BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. K. MERRETT (Southern Region): Not a first time speaker any more. President, Congress, you do not need me to tell you that some of the few employment rights that the Tories and Liberal Democrats are not taking away from us are the ones that are protected by laws that we helped to decide at European level and many of you will know that includes working time, holidays, agency workers, and a whole lot of other things. Our Members of the European Parliament, especially our GMB Members of the European Parliament, can be quite proud of the record they have in passing those laws at European level. It is a shame, Congress, that their own staff in the heart of the European political system do not enjoy that same level of protection. I work, like many of our members in Brussels, in the office of a Member of the European Parliament and a clause in our staff regulations says that we can be subject to dismissal at any time without evidence, without compensation, without the possibility of challenging the employer's decision. That is because since 2009 we are not under UK law or Belgian law, just under the EU's own staff regulations and they are decided by our employers, the MEPs. Unfortunately, Congress, it is not just about dismissals but when you are this easy to sack all of your rights and all of your terms and conditions are that much more difficult to defend. We have had MEP staff who have had to accept pay cuts and threat of dismissal. We have had MEP staff who have had to endure harassment and they have been too afraid to speak up because they could so easily have lost their job. Congress, I dread to think how many UK workers may experience this too in Tory/Liberal Democrat Britain when it is that much harder to go for unfair dismissal, or that much harder to go to tribunal.

There is a wider issue, Congress, about political staff. I think you can tell a lot about a politician from the way they treat their own staff. We have discussed what we expect of our GMB supported politicians. For example, we talked about unpaid internships in parliament. I want to go further than that and say we need to make sure that any MEP or MP, or Assembly Member, or anyone that we support, is one of the best employers who sets an example to all the other employers that we deal with up and down the country, in our branches. They are politicians in the public eye and I know that you will agree with me, Congress, that GMB is not the sort of union that will support a bad employer in the public sector, whoever that is. Congress, this is a workplace issue for us but because of our work and the nature of the work that we do, it is also a political issue. So, we need the support of GMB's MEPs and its allies to be at the forefront of this campaign to change the system in the European Parliament. We also need your support so please support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Kieron. Secunder.

BRO. A. DE-BANKS (Southern Region) in seconding the motion, said: I am a first time delegate and speaker. *(Applause)* "You are fired." Even Sir Alan would be ashamed to tell our brothers and sisters in Brussels these three short words but this

does not stop unscrupulous MEPs from taking advantage of our members and their colleagues. Nor does it stop them from ignoring the rules and exploiting their labour so they are no longer deemed useful. How would you like to turn up at your workplace to find your belongings in a box, have a security guard remove your ID, your security pass, and your keys, to be escorted from the site and left with no support from your previous employer, in a foreign country of all places, all of this with no right of appeal. Comrades, this is a chance for the GMB to expand on our work in Brussels, to work hand-in-hand with our brother and sister unions throughout the Continent and to work for the improvement of workers' rights across the European Union as a whole. I call for Congress to support our brothers and sisters in Brussels. I call for support of Motion 173. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Well done. Does anyone wish to oppose? No? Before I call Nicola Sharpe of the CEC to speak on Composite 15, colleagues, we are catching up a bit and with your wonderful support we may be able to get to Motion 195, will somebody tell Dougie, and 196, and hopefully we will get to 200, the Dangerous Dogs Act to be moved by London Region, and will someone make sure that Toomey is locked up outside before we take that. (*Laughter*) Okay, I now call Nicola Sharpe to speak on Composite 15.

SIS. N. SHARPE (CEC, Commercial Services): Speaking on Composite 15, covering Motions 169 and 170 but with a qualification. President, Congress, the broad sentiments of the Composite and Motions are clearly in line with GMB policy. GMB has been at the forefront of local, national, and European campaigns against the cuts and the crushing austerity measures, opposing the impact they are having not only on our GMB members but workers across Europe and the rest of the world. Only last month the GMB organised a major European conference in Manchester on tackling the EU crisis, halting austerity, and promoting growth and jobs. The EU Commissioner for Employment attended and heard local GMB members explain clearly and passionately their experiences of being punished for a crisis they did not cause. GMB is committed to giving a voice to our members at every level to challenge these injustices. European Trade Union colleagues joined us in Manchester and we will continue to work jointly with them and our MEPs building solidarity at every level. GMB produces a monthly EU bulletin covering campaigns and actions by trade unions across the EU for branches to use. The qualification on Composite 15 is that branches should themselves decide the focus and regularity of meetings on campaigns of actions. Regarding involvement in international demonstrations the ETUC and ITUC are now encouraging coordinated national level actions across Europe or globally due to the financial and environmental cost of sending large delegations overseas which few trade unions can now sustain. GMB will continue at every level to play a central role in such coordinated campaign action. Therefore, Congress, please support Composite 15 with the qualification I have set out. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Nicola. To the region, do you accept the qualification? London? (*Agreed*) Thank you. I now put Composite 15, Motions 172 and 173, to the vote. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

Composite 15 was CARRIED.

Motion 172 was CARRIED.

Motion 173 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to Emergency Motion 2, to be moved by Southern Region, Countering the Rise of American Style Abortion Campaigning in the UK.

**COUNTERING THE RISE OF AMERICAN STYLE ANTI-ABORTION
CAMPAIGNING IN THE UK
EMERGENCY MOTION 2**

**COUNTERING THE RISE OF AMERICAN STYLE ANTI ABORTION
CAMPAIGNING IN THE UK**

Congress notes:

- the rise of groups like '40 days for life' who carried out their first vigil outside abortion clinics in the UK in February and March 2012. 40 days for life used aggressive tactics, including filming women accessing abortion clinics and comparing abortion to the holocaust This is a worrying development and we oppose any tactics and behaviour that intimidates women

- the anti-choice lobby are becoming increasingly influential on government policy. The ConDem government plans to press ahead with allowing organisations opposed to abortion to run NHS-funded counselling services. In spite of identical proposals being rejected by MPs in parliament in September. In January 2012 Diane Abbott-Shadow Health Minister resigned from the cross party group on abortion counselling dismissing it as 'window dressing for what is an aggressive anti choice campaign'

- trade unions have been at the forefront of campaigning for access to safe, legal abortion for many years, and that when abortion is restricted it is working class women who are hit hardest.

- the enormous impact that the availability of contraception and safe, legal abortion have had on the economic, educational and political prospects of our female members.

- we already have a pro-choice policy and are affiliated to Abortion Rights UK, who are the national grassroots membership-based democratic campaign working to defend and extend women's rights to abortion and to maintain safe and free abortion services for those that require it

Congress resolves to:

- update the GMB website in order to publicise the affiliation to Abortion Rights under the GMB campaigns section, as well as providing a link to the organisation's website

- actively oppose groups like 40 days for life and their ilk, and ensure that any pro-choice campaigns and protests are publicised through branches, and members are encouraged to attend

- purchase and distribute the TUC leaflet 'abortion – a trade union issue'
- encourage individual branches to affiliate to Abortion Rights and to encourage members to get involved with local pro-choice organisations
- to support Abortion Rights campaign against changes to abortion counselling services.
- to encourage our sponsored MPs to vote down any proposals by the Government to press ahead with proposals which strip non-statutory abortion providers such as Marie Stopes and BPAS of their role in offering impartial advice and counselling to women considering abortion, and will enable anti-choice organisations opposed to abortion to be contracted to run NHS services that counsel women.

**W15 WILTSHIRE & SWINDON BRANCH
SOUTHERN REGION**

(Carried)

SIS. C. VALLELLY (Southern Region): President, Congress, this motion calls for several things, actually, one of which is to publicise our affiliation to abortion rights campaign. A lot of people do not even know that we are actually affiliated to it so we need to publicise this. We need to make people aware of it. We would also like to encourage individual branches to affiliate themselves. We also need actively to oppose the aggressive campaigning tactics of groups such as 40 Days for Life. Anti-choice groups have used ever-increasingly forceful and aggressive tactics to campaign against a woman's right to choose. For example, here in Brighton a group has regularly staged protests outside abortion clinics, handing out leaflets comparing abortion to the Holocaust; rather emotive language, I am sure you will agree. There have been protests with placards that have shown gruesome pictures and leaflets given out that have totally false information in them. These people have been outside clinics. They have been trying to intimidate and terrify women that are going into these clinics to stop them going and getting the abortion that they do have a right to get.

While these groups are ramping up their tactics we need to do the same. We cannot just sit by and watch them continue with this. We need to challenge them. We need to pressurise the MPs that actually share our values. I was going to say sponsored MPs but I was listening to Paul earlier and there are a lot of MPs that share our values out there so we need to talk to them, we need to put pressure on them. They have to oppose the changes that the rightwing Tories have been trying to get through parliament, and they will try again. They are not going to leave it there. They are going to keep trying to get these acts through parliament that will attack the rights we already have. Do we really want to go back to the days when terrified desperate women were butchered by backstreet abortionists? I really don't think we do. If we do not carry on fighting this, this is where we are going to end up. We have fought for the rights that we have and we need to keep fighting so we retain them. I move this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Well done. Do we have a seconder?

SIS. S. MOTHERWELL (GMB Scotland): Congress, this is of great concern, the proposals our colleague has just spoken about, proposals which will deny women access to objective and informative information on safe and legal abortion. As we heard, the UK government is to review counselling regulations in association with the provision of termination services in England. The proposals include retaining the current pre-abortion counselling system, introducing independent counselling preventing abortion providers from offering this service, or a system of voluntary registration which would allow any organisation to provide this service, including anti-choice groups as long as they met the minimum standards. Congress further notes that the Scottish government has given a welcome assurance that it has no intention to change regulations in Scotland and suggests that this position be reflected in any consultation response.

Congress also notes with concern a recent decision by two midwives to challenge Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board over the rostering and staffing responsibilities in provision of termination services at the Southern General Hospital claiming violation of human rights with reference to the conscientious objection clauses of the 1967 Abortion Act. This case was rejected in February 2012 but the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children in April this year announced funding the midwives' case to go to the Court of Appeal in Edinburgh with a date now set, Friday, 27th July. This is a worrying development which has the potential to undermine women's rights to access free, safe, legal abortion that our members have fought for. The GMB needs to work, as my colleague pointed out, with abortion rights UK and service providers, and responding to this consultation, and to support their campaign to highlight the threat to the service provision that is contained in the Edinburgh case. To quote from Meryl Hoffman, an abortion rights activist, "Between the church, the state, and the women, there is only one person who should decide when or whether a woman should be a mother." I second this. Please support.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Colleagues, I am going to put Emergency Motion 2 to the vote, is there anyone who wishes to speak against? No? Thank you. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

Emergency Motion 2 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to item 12, Industrial and Economic Policy: Social Justice, and will now call the movers of 100, Midland Region, Composite 8, North West to move, Yorkshire to second, Composite 9, Northern to move and second, 107, Bail Outs, Northern Region, 108, Sovereign Debt Crisis, London Region, and 109, Support the Occupy Movement, London Region. There we are, a full house.

**INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: SOCIAL JUSTICE
EQUALISING WEALTH BY SETTING A MAXIMUM INCOME
MOTION 100**

100. EQUALISING WEALTH BY SETTING A MAXIMUM INCOME

This Conference is disturbed and distressed by the ever increasing income and wealth disparity of top earners both in the UK and internationally, whilst the pay, conditions and public services for our members and the poorest in society continues to fall and/or be cut.

committees to control the income of the wealthiest, and views the inept approaches by Government for worker representation on such bodies as just another con trick and a distraction from the real causes of poverty.

This Conference resolves to campaign to secure a national and international maximum income in parallel with current policy for an adequate minimum wage.

LEICESTER SERVICES BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Referred)

BRO. D. JOBSON (Midland & East Coast Region): Colleagues, I would like to start by giving you a couple of facts and figures to highlight the disparity in pay between those in the top 10% and the bottom 10% of earners. Please bear with me for a moment. In 1985, those at the top averaged £31,700 and £3,900 at the bottom, a ratio of 1 in 6. In 2009, those at the top averaged £54,800 and £4,700 at the bottom, a ratio of 1 in 12. Evidence collated by the campaign, One Society, indicates that the following ratios have been identified, 1 in 15 in local authorities, one in 10 in large charities, and a huge 1 in 262 was found in the FTSE 100 companies. But it is not just high pay. There is the bonuses as well, with some bosses' bonuses up by 187% since 2002. The boss of RBS, Mr. Hester, is paid a salary of £1.2m per annum to do his job and he gets a huge bonus, as our own Paul Kenny said back in January this year, paying him a bonus of nearly a million pounds looks to ordinary people like he has won the lottery with a ticket we paid for. We would all love a guaranteed win like that. At some point you have probably asked yourselves a couple of questions: are those at the top really worth what they are paid, are their salaries and bonuses really a reflection of good work and performance. Occasionally, yes, but generally it seems they are not as has been seen this week by the boss of Thames Water, who has been paid £418,000 in bonus for effectively failing or should that be failing effectively. In November 2010, the High Pay Commission was set up to run for one year as an independent inquiry into high pay and boardroom pay across the public and private sectors in the UK. In November 2011, they released their final report, *Checks with Balances: Why tackling high pay is in the national interest*. The report covers such things as the business case, the economic case, and also the social case for fair pay which will help inform on how to tackle the problem that we see. Although this work was done in relation to the UK, I feel in a similar vein to a Robin Hood tax the global economy would benefit from a maximum income.

Congress, this motion calls for a campaign to secure a national and international maximum income. This will contribute to a fairer national and global society. The fight for a decent minimum wage was fought and won. It is still being fought and that has gone towards bringing the lowest earners away from poverty. Now we should consider a bigger fight, a fight that will be far-reaching, it will be a long and difficult

fight without a doubt, but most worthy of our efforts. Colleagues, when the fight begins I ask you to support it and drive it forward to success, both nationally and then internationally. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Secunder.

BRO. J. CLARKE (Midlands & East Coast Region): President, Congress, tell me if a picture is worth a thousand words, here you are, there is a diamond geezer, 800 times what an average worker in this country gets paid, which is 25 grand. What is the minimum wage, about twelve-and-a-half. Let's introduce a glass ceiling for them at the top, narrow the pay gap, and all move forward together in a fair and just society. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Thank you. Composite 8, North West to move.

PAY DIFFERENTIALS AND BOARDROOM SALARIES COMPOSITE 8

C8. Covering Motions:

- 101. BOARDROOM SALARIES *(Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region)*
- 104. PAY DIFFERENTIALS *(North West & Irish Region)*

PAY DIFFERENTIALS AND BOARDROOM SALARIES

This Conference notes with concern the increasing pay gap between the wealthiest and poorest workers in the UK and around the world.

This Conference condemns the greedy directors who award themselves massive increases in salaries and bonuses whilst their employees in many cases live on barely enough to survive. The merry go round of directors being on each other's remuneration committees must stop. Employee representatives should by law have a seat on every company remuneration committee.

Big bonuses to failed bank bosses paid for in cuts to front line services are just one example of the imbalance of responsibility and consequence for poor decision making in society.

Worse, research published by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) identified the UK as the nation with the highest increase in inequality of any wealthy nation since 1975.

Congress calls on the GMB to fight the squeeze on purchasing power by campaigning and negotiating for the regulation of the fair distribution of wealth so that every worker is given a fair proportion of the value they create for any profitable organisation.

Congress instructs the GMB to lobby the High Pay Commission to produce a report that will set out recommendations for regulating top earnings by relating it to the lowest earnings of that organisation. This would influence competitiveness of small and medium sized businesses and impact on national and multinational industry.

(Carried)

BRO. N. SMITH (North West & Irish Region): President, Congress, this Congress notes with concern the increasing pay gap between the wealthiest and the poorest workers in the UK and around the world. Big bonuses paid to failed bank bosses, paid for in cuts to frontline services are just one example of the imbalance of responsibility and consequence for poor decision-making in today's society. We have seen public sector jobs cut, job security vanish, living standards decline, and public services weakened all in the name of austerity, which has now taken us into recession. It is hurting and it is not definitely working. Worse still, research published by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development identified the UK as a nation with the highest increase of inequality of any wealthy nation since 1975.

Congress calls on the GMB to fight the squeeze on purchasing power by campaigning and negotiating for the regulation of the fair distribution of wealth so that every worker is given a fair proportion of the value they create through any profitable organisation. Congress, I ask that the GMB lobby the High Pay Commission to produce a report that will set out recommendations for regulating the top earners by relating it to the lowest earnings of that organisation. This would influence competitiveness of small and medium sized businesses and impact on national and multinational industries. Please support. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Secunder.

BRO. T. POLLARD (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region): President, Congress, what can I say, greedy directors yet again, massive increases in income and bonus, the gap gets bigger every year, the rich get richer, the poor get poorer. How can this be right when the directors vote their own wage increases and bonuses? Workers should be on a remuneration committee to cut out the imbalance directors have over shop floor workers. It stinks. I second Composite 8. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Composite 9, Northern to move and second. Oh my god, I am trying to make time up, not lose it!

REGULATION OF THE BANKING SECTOR COMPOSITE 9

C9. Covering Motions:

- 105. BANKS (*Northern Region*)
- 106. REGULATION (*Northern Region*)

REGULATION OF THE BANKING SECTOR

This Conference notes that it has taken over three years since the banking crisis first appeared and still government is no nearer sorting out the banking sector.

Conference notes that the current Government has dithered on whether there should be a separation of Retail and Investment Banking of a so-called firewall placed between them

This Conference believes that the Tory/Lib Dem Coalition Government should unequivocally say that the way to ensure lessons are learned from the Banking and Euro crisis, is for effective regulation to ensure that corporate governance and due diligence are embedded within companies operating within the UK.

Conference does not accept that banks will simply up and leave the UK and believes Government should reject such threats and blackmail.

Conference calls on the Government to legislate to force banks to separate their retails and investment operations so that taxpayers and bank account holders are properly protected from future banking shocks.

If the Government fails to do so, this Conference calls on the Labour Party to commit to legislate and state that it supports this position and is prepared to write this into its next General Election manifesto.

This Conference asks that the Central Executive Council monitors progress on policy developments.

(Carried)

BRO. W. HUGHES (Northern Region): Can I just say, Worthy President, it was a great surprise and sadness that I have just heard of the death of Sammy Barr. Sammy Barr and I go back a long way to the days of Danny McGarvey. I tell you what, Sir Danny had a real reputation but when Sammy Barr got the bit between his teeth even Danny went to hide. *(Applause)*

Worthy President and Congress, moving Composite 9 on the regulation of the banking section at the speed of the Flying Scotsman but finding it very difficult with National Health false teeth. *(Laughter)*

Colleagues, it is exactly one year and one week that I moved Motion 151 on Executive and Director Bonuses. The banking crisis with the emergence of nationalised banks shows no sign of being resolved. Obscene amounts of bonuses are still being paid out of the public purse and again we are paying for the gambling greed of others. Why is this allowed to go on? Quite simple, the Tories are funded by their friends in the City and are not going to bite the hand that feeds them, are they? I thought the whole idea of the Turner Report was to get to the bottom of what went wrong with the banks and then do something about it. Congress, the splitting up of banks and the break-up of this casino banking culture is long overdue. It seems that Labour in opposition has learnt very little from its time in power. The retail day-to-day banking needs to be separated from the investment part of banks. It has been done in the past where retail investment operations were kept separate. Labour can lead the way on policy on banks. Labour politicians should stop pussyfooting about. They should tell the voters they intend to legislate to separate retail investment banking, or is that too much of a commitment to make? I just found out what Shadow Cabinet really means.

Remember the Blair government, don't do this, don't do that, for goodness sake don't rock the boat. Oh, no, keep that zipped. Now we have don't upset the bankers, they might put the zip on the briefcase and walk away. So what? Good riddance. Get shot of them. Let them go. We want a banking sector that will last, a banking sector that builds confidence, a banking sector that will survive and grow. Then when the banking casino culture is ended, let's see Labour politicians show some bottle, how they perform and report on their progress.

Here, Worthy President, I have to slow down at this juncture because what I have to say is very important and I wanted to get it off my chest all the week. We come up here, each delegate, and criticise the Tory Party, Worthy President, the biggest critic of the lot, when we know, we know that the Tories are the cream of society, they are thick, rich, and full of clots. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Worthy President, for observing the lights. First time ever; the first time for something. Seconder. Formally, thank you.

The motion was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: I am glad you did not tell him that before he went up. He would have wanted that time as well. Motion 107, Bail Outs, Northern Region to move.

BAIL OUTS MOTION 107

107. BAIL OUTS

This Conference is appalled at the failure of successive governments to get a grip of companies such as banks, when taxpayers' money is used to bail out.

Companies that derive profit from communities across the UK should have a stake in them.

That includes how they treat their workers, as well as their customers.

This Conference calls on this government to clearly set out how its approach to bailing out organisations will develop over the next few years and should legislate to ensure that trades unions are fully recognised in those organisations helped out by taxpayer funds in future.

This Conference calls on the Labour Party to be unequivocal in adopting this position as part of its economic and social policy agenda for the Central Executive Council to monitor progress.

MIDDLESBROUGH 5 BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

BRO. M. SISTERTON (Northern Region): Congress, this motion to us as trade unionists is as clear a message as you could get: any taxpayer money used to bail out any company or organisation comes at a price. We are fed up to the back teeth of the culture that has developed since the early 1980s of something for nothing, of rewarding failure. Congress, we have seen a development under all governments of a steady culture of public provision bad, private provision good. Well, the banking crisis, PFI, private equity, and many more, have blown a hole in all those arguments. Quite simply, what this motion is asks for is a presumption that workers have and take a stake in any future bailout by automatic trade union recognition. Never mind the Liberal Clegg claptrap of selling banks and giving the taxpayer an automatic share, we all know of shareholders and democracy and where it has got us. The worst recession since before the Wall Street Crash is where it has got us.

Congress, working people should not have to pay for their jobs and they certainly should not have to pay to go to work. That is what a bailout is without any strings attached. What we want is a much greater focus on trade union recognition as public

money is going into companies in the future. If they are business people who want to take from the public purse, they must play the same rules as everybody else. Congress, this is a test for Labour in opposition sorting out its policies. We need to call on Labour to account for our members. We need to call on employers to account for taxpayers. Congress, please support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Secunder. Thank you, Billy.

The motion was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 108, Sovereign Debt Crisis, London Region to move.

SOVEREIGN DEBT CRISIS MOTION 108

108. SOVEREIGN DEBT CRISIS

Congress, in the light of the “sovereign debt crisis” Government policies on cuts to jobs and pensions and the continuing corruption and greed of banks and bankers. Congress resolves to work with TUC and other unions to lead a challenge to banks and withdraw our cash in a pre-arranged campaign. The issue is now the opposition of democracy and high finance. The replacement of elected leaders with appointed bankers to rule European countries is an example of this. In addition, the campaign would also give TU support to the various “Occupy” movements.

LOWESTOFT BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. A. COUSIN (London Region): President, Congress, this time last year I sat up there in the gallery admiring Mr. Hughes. You were all here debating bankers, their bonuses, and the economy. You were appalled by the huge bonus payments still being made, you were disgusted by the huge corporations using legal loopholes to avoid paying billions of pounds in tax, and you were angry, angry that our hardworking members were paying the price for the greed of bankers, billionaires, and capitalists.

So, 12 months have passed and what has changed? I am stood here at the podium and I now know that Billy Hughes is a very hard act to follow but, apart from that, nothing has changed. Bankers are still getting a nice fat bonus, tax loopholes are still wide open for the accountants and lawyers of the rich to exploit, and our members are still paying the price, but it has gone up as our wages have gone down.

So what can we do? Individually, very little. I bank with Lloyds TSB and I am sure that if I dropped into my branch tomorrow and threatened to take out my monthly pittance of a salary and the few bob I have stashed away for a rainy day as a protest, they would not give a damn. But what if all GMB members made the threat to withdraw our hard-earned cash? They might just pause for thought. Then what if we all joined together with other unions and the TUC, and all union members in the country threatened to withdraw their cash on an agreed date. What a great negotiating position we would find ourselves in then. We would be as powerful as the bankers, billionaires, and capitalists, but with a difference. We have morals. We have a sense

of injustice. We have passion, passion to close the tax loopholes and ensure that those who earn the most pay their taxes in full, passion to abolish ridiculous bonus payouts and, most importantly, passion to make sure that those who got the country into this mess are the ones who pay the price to put things right. Comrades, please support our motion. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Alison. Secunder. Formally, thank you.

The motion was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: I now ask Motion 109, London Region to move. Hi, Matt.

SUPPORT THE OCCUPY MOVEMENT MOTION 109

109. SUPPORT THE OCCUPY MOVEMENT

This Congress recognises that across the world people are spontaneously gathering in City centres with a collective sense that all is not right with the way the world is governed by undemocratic institutions that encourage corporate greed and destruction of the global environment.

The Occupy Movement is an international protest movement which is primarily directed against economic and social inequality and uses the slogan “we are the 99%” to highlight the concentration of wealth amongst the top 1% of income earners compared to the other 99%.

We call on Congress to support the Occupy Movement, a broad based movement supported by people from across society calling for a new, fair economic model.

HOLBORN APEX
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. M. SAYWELL (London Region): Comrades, we have all been told throughout this Congress that austerity is not working because the programme of cuts is not helping working class people or creating jobs. What I want to tell you is this, austerity is actually working. The programme of cuts is doing exactly what it was designed to do. Comrades, the austerity measures we are going through serve one purpose, it is to ensure that in tough economic times those millionaires at the top of society, those millionaires in Cameron’s government, and there is enough of them, do not have to pay more, do not have to work longer, and can retire on bigger and bigger pensions, golden handshakes and bonuses. It is working class people that are being used to ensure their wealth is protected during the economic crisis. It is the services working class people use that are being decimated to ensure their revenue streams continue.

The Occupy Movement and its slogan, *We are the 99%*, struck a chord in a world ravaged by crisis and austerity where 99% of society who have seen none of the benefits of the massive increases in wealth over the last 30 years as opposed to the 1% who have been enriched to an enormous degree in the same period, has refocused the bitterness and anger in society in a clear class direction. The slogan reflects the reality of the deep and growing inequality of wealth, the determination of the richest

to make the rest of society bear the burden of the crisis and to use the recession as a political weapon to push through further austerity and attacks on working class conditions and a developing sense of the role of the state in stifling collective democratic protest and protecting the 1%, and a determination so far to meet such repression with resistance.

Occupy London began just six weeks before the 2.6 million strong public sector strike on 30th November. The camps' founding statement declared solidarity with the workers' strike. Occupiers toured picket lines and groups of workers marched to St. Paul's. So why should we support the Occupy Movement, because we have the expertise in research and organising working people. The Movement has the potential to unite the creativity and initiative of the protesters with the day-to-day struggles and the power of the trade unions to place the organised working class at the heart of a movement that poses an alternative to the system as a whole and in the process to forge new leftwing politics. Please support the motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Matt. Secunder. Formally, thank you.

The motion was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Anyone wish to speak in opposition? Against?

SIS. H. SMITH (Southern Region): Whilst of course I am supportive of people taking part in social justice movements, I have quite a few reservations about us as a union officially supporting the Occupy Movement. Firstly, they are not a democratic body. Groups are literally made up of whatever random individuals turn up at a certain place. There is no accountability, as was proved when an incident of sexual violence happened against a female activist in an Occupy camp in Scotland. If branches want to make a democratic evidence-based decision to support their local groups in their own areas, then of course I think that should be up to individual branches to decide, and that should be encouraged if that is what they want to do. I think that for us to have a national policy where we unilaterally support this loose undemocratic unaccountable group of activists may well have repercussions for our union. In these times of austerity people are looking for an alternative and, Congress, we should be that alternative. Instead of just affiliating to these loose protest groups that spring up, that are unaccountable, we should be engaging with these activists and encouraging them to join the organisations of working class people that have the means to affect social change, trade unions. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Holly, thank you. Matt, whilst we are supporting this, do you wish to reply to that point?

BRO. M. SAYWELL (London Region): Just to follow that, I think the accusation that was made about some sexual misconduct in Scotland, I am not aware of that but that is not characteristic of the movement as a whole. In the US unions in California, New York, and elsewhere, have been at the forefront in supporting the Occupy Movement, practically providing showers, food, and medical assistance to protesters. Such combined action and reciprocal support between anti-capitalism and organised workers can represent a real breakthrough and poses exciting possibilities. I would urge you to support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Can I call Brenda Fraser for the CEC on Motions 100, 107, 108, and 109. Brenda.

SIS. B. FRASER (CEC, Manufacturing): President, Congress, speaking on behalf of the CEC and asking Congress to refer Motion 100 and support Motions 107, 108, 109, with the qualifications I am about to give.

Motion 100 quite rightly condemns the Coalition's rejection of the High Pay Commission's recommendation for worker representation on remuneration committees, and proposes a maximum income. The CEC would like Midland & East Coast Region to refer this motion so that the CEC can carry out an analysis on how these aims could be best achieved.

On Motion 107, the CEC absolutely agrees that publicly funded banks should be forced to pay back their fair share of tax, work in the country's best interests, keep production within the United Kingdom and, above all, protect jobs. The qualification is that it would be difficult in law to force an organisation or company to recognise a trade union without any reference to membership levels, organisation activity, or indeed which union should be recognised. Instead, colleagues, we will seek commitments in Labour's next manifesto to increase access and the right to recruit and organise in every workplace.

Motion 108 wants unions to use financial power and membership strength to obtain leverage over banks' behaviour. The qualification is that any GMB actions would be part of the TUC's current work and exploring ways to use union funds in a proactive way against banks engaging in unethical practices. The involvement of the Occupy Movement would be a matter for discussion at that level. Also this year GMB has supported the *Move Your Money Campaign* which aims to encourage people to change their bank accounts away from banks involved in the crash but who are also paying huge dividends and bonuses. Congress should note GMB already operates an ethical investment policy regarding its pensions fund and its own finances.

Finally, colleagues, on Motion 109, the issues highlighted by the Occupy Movement are in line with our broad objectives and policy. The qualification is that this should be kept under review and support should only be given where it is appropriate and in the best interests of GMB members.

Therefore, colleagues, we are asking Midlands & East Coast to accept the reference back on Motion 100, the CEC is also asking Northern Region and London to accept qualifications on Motion 107, 108, and 109, and we would ask Congress to accept the referral and the qualifications. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Brenda. Does Midland & East Coast accept reference? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Congress accept reference? (*Agreed*) Thank you very much. Does Northern Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. London Region, do you accept the qualification, on 108 and 109? (*Agreed*) Thank you. I now put Composite 8, Composite 9, and 107, 108, and 109 to the vote, please. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 100 was REFERRED.
Composite 8 was CARRIED.
Composite 9 was CARRIED.
Motion 107 was CARRIED.
Motion 108 was CARRIED.
Motion 109 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, before I move on we are making up some time. I will be calling 195, London Region, 196, Birmingham Region, and 200 Midland Region, Dangerous Dogs Act, please. Thank you. Let's move on. Item 13, Motion 110, to be moved by Northern, 111, Northern, and Composite 10 to be moved by Northern, Yorkshire to second. Thank you.

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: TAXATION
PRIVATE EQUITY
MOTION 110

110. PRIVATE EQUITY

This Conference condemns private equity companies that pay little or no tax in the UK, but derives profit from UK business activities.

This Conference calls on the UK Government to legislate to ensure that private equity companies pay their full tax liabilities, including the closing of offshore loopholes.

Conference calls for the Labour Party to pledge to ensure this policy is part of its next General Election manifesto.

STOCKTON FTAT BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

BRO. R. CLAYTON (Northern Region): Congress, one of the biggest mistakes of the last Labour government was failing on tax loopholes. In fact, let's be clear about it, Labour cosied up to private equity and used PFI as a way of getting round public spending rules. This led to a culture of casino capitalism with bad lending and money put offshore to avoid tax liabilities. What a scandalous way to run an economy. As Labour develops its policies over the next few years, it needs to recognise that courting these spivs, gamblers, and speculators, is not the way to get back to power. A few months ago the Labour Home Secretary, Jacqui Smith, indicated that Labour should go on another prawn cocktail offensive. What a load of rubbish. Do these people never learn? Tax authorities need to collect taxes. Never mind being wined and dined by the companies and then give them a lower tax bill.

Congress, the GMB led the way against private equity when we said it would all end in tears, and it has. Look at the private care industry, it is largely funded by the taxpayer, private equity has come into the industry not because they care about the elderly and the vulnerable but because they can make easy money, place profits offshore, and pay no UK tax. In Southern Cross a small number of uncaring spivs made a fortune, mainly through Blackstone. The same happened with Four Seasons.

Congress, this cannot be allowed to continue. Labour needs to pledge that things will be different if they get back to power. Companies trading in the UK should pay their

dues here. If Labour signals that it will do things differently it will be in the tune of the British people. Please support. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Secunder. Formally, thank you.

The motion was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 111, Taxation Policy, Northern to move.

TAXATION POLICY MOTION 111

111. TAXATION POLICY

This Conference recognises that the last Labour government achieved much for our vulnerable communities by targeting tax revenues through such measures as tax credits.

However, time has moved on and for the Labour Party to be able to reconnect with low and middle income households, it is important that Labour, in opposition, demonstrates that it understands the realities of the pressures that our people are under.

This Conference calls on the Labour Party's taxation policy direction to build on the work of the former Chancellor, Alistair Darling, and pledge to use tax thresholds and differential rates of income tax, which along with other measures, will go some way to helping low and middle income households, as well as ensuring that higher earners pay more.

This Conference calls on the Labour Party to adopt this position as part of its Economic Policy and for progress to be reported back through the Central Executive Council.

SOUTH SHIELDS 2 BRANCH
Northern Region

(Referred)

SIS. S. KANE (Northern Region): First time delegate and speaker. (*Applause*)
Congress, Labour went after middle England. In this the worst economic situation since the early 1920s, core and swing voters can be found in lower and middle income households across the UK. It is this mass group of people that Labour must base its taxation policy on, not those on top income levels. The gap between rich and poor is greater now than in the 1970s yet low and middle income householders are taking the strain and feeling the pain of a deep recession that was not of their making.

Congress, the last Labour government did much for the working class people yet the work of former Chancellor, Alistair Darling, started the work of raising thresholds to help the majority of British people. The use of the 10p tax rate and other measures would help lower and middle income households. Tax credits have definitely helped many people in need. However, they are means tested. This means that they can be costly and the good intentions of the money put in may be blunted. Labour needs to rediscover its competence in taxation policy so that it is relevant to our people.

Congress, an efficient taxation policy is not built on the 24-hour media. It is not a short-term academic game. A practical set of taxation policies that helps low income households but also has several bands that helps middle income households, is the

way forward for the Labour Party. The Shadow Chancellor comes across like his mentor, as someone who thinks he knows best. Well, Congress, remember the argument when they thought they knew best by getting rid of the 10p tax rate, they do not know best. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Secunder. Thank you.

The motion was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Composite 10, Northern Region to move.

VAT COMPOSITE 10

C10. Covering Motions:

112. REDUCE VAT *(Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region)*

113. RETAIL SECTOR *(Northern Region)*

VAT

This Conference calls upon the government for an immediate reduction of VAT back to the previous figure to help with this recession and to gain some stimulus in what are very tight trading conditions.

Such a move to reduce VAT would lower costs and consumer prices and enable the retail and distribution sector to attract spending which, in turn, will lead to an increase in UK's jobs.

(Carried)

BRO. T. WINTER (Northern Region): Congress, the problem with the Coalition government is that it is hell bent on killing our economy and our members' jobs and livelihoods. Pushing up the rate of VAT means only one thing, it increased inflation when people could ill afford such a rise but it had another effect, it cut spending and also led to job losses. Like me and those of you who can remember, this was the recipe for the Tories of the 1980s when they used dogma to run the economy. Now they are doing it again.

Congress, anything that hit's the consumer spending in retail is bad for the economy, it is bad for jobs, and particularly it is bad for our members. The knock-on is that the distribution s also affected. A reduction in VAT will enable people to get a little bit of relief at a difficult time. It will give an opportunity to stimulate the economy, to boost the employment, and to take some of the heat out of the horrendous trading situation that is taking place currently. Investment alone will not get us out of recession. We need consumer spending back. Congress, please support. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder.

SIS. R. KNOWLES (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region): President, Congress, as you all know as soon as this Government were elected one of the first actions they did

was to increase VAT to 20%. A cut in VAT would surely be the single most helpful move in easing the effects of austerity. George Osborne should bring in emergency VAT cuts to boost the ailing economy, which could increase public spending. This issue should have been resolved before this time as the longer the 20% VAT stays the longer the economy will be in the state it is in. Please support this motion. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Does anyone wish to speak in opposition? No? I call Paul Maloney on behalf of the CEC on Motion 111. Paul.

BRO. P. MALONEY (Regional Secretary, Southern Region): Speaking on behalf of the CEC and seeking referral of Motion 111, Taxation Policy. Congress, the CEC believes that Motion 111 raises a number of important issues regarding future taxation policy of the Labour government. The GMB is right to seek to ensure that the Labour Party adopts policies that appeal to GMB members and working class voters. Taxation is one area where the Labour Party can put clear water between the Labour Party and the Tory Coalition that only cares for the 1% of the wealthy people in this society. However, taxation is a complex area and we want the Labour Party to look at its mixed track record. They did introduce the 50p tax rate but they also took away the 10p tax rate. They also gave massive tax breaks to private equity industry that caused so much devastation to thousands of GMB members up and down the country and wrecked our economic system. We are asking Congress to agree to refer this motion so that GMB can thoroughly research Alistair Darling's work in the area and consider alternatives that might be appropriate. We want to be absolutely clear in the taxation policies we expect a future Labour government to adopt. Therefore, Congress, please agree to refer Motion 111 for full research and consideration. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Is Northern Region prepared to refer? (*Agreed*) Thank you very much. Congress accept? (*Agreed*) Thank you. I now put 110 and Composite 10 to the vote. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 111 was REFERRED.
Motion 110 was CARRIED.
Composite 10 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Before I call 197 and 199, I just remind London Region that we will be calling 195, Prostate Cancer Awareness, and 196, Birmingham Region, and 200, Dangerous Dogs Act, Midland & East Coast. Someone make sure Toomey is locked out, won't you? (*Laughter*)

SOCIAL POLICY: GENERAL PAY DAY AND SHORT TERM LOANS MOTION 197

197. PAY DAY AND SHORT TERM LOANS

Congress is deeply concerned at the possible disastrous consequences that can befall those on low pay and/or benefits who fall foul of the penalties that accrue if for whatever reason, they fall behind with their payments.

We acknowledge that for those who need a quick small loan they are able to repay on time, that may provide a worthwhile service but the accrual rate for those who fall foul of the penalties is outrageous.

To this end, Congress agrees we should, in conjunction with other involved and interested parties, lobby for a legal cap to be put on this type of loan.

BARKING & DAGENHAM LGO BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. B. DUFFIELD (London Region): President, Congress, the one real growth industry at the moment is the rise in firms providing payday and short-term loans, such as Wonga and Quickquid. They present themselves as the easy way to obtain credit for life's little emergencies but in reality they prey on hundreds of thousands of people desperate to make ends meet in these troubled times. They prey on people who cannot get credit from conventional sources. They aim their markets directly at low paid families, singletons, and students, people with very low incomes and at greater risk of failing to make repayments, and that is when the market goes into overdrive enticing debtors to roll over these loans or take out new loans to pay off the old ones that just drags them into a never ending spiral of debt caused by late payment fees, and the ever increasing interest rates of between 3,000 and 4,000 percent. All this is known to MPs of all parties and some are effectively campaigning for these companies to be regulated, especially Stella Creasy who published about one of her constituents who was pursued by Wonga for £1,600 because she was late paying only £800. Colleagues, they continue to be allowed legally to wreak havoc and misery on the most vulnerable of people. It is no coincidence that they open an office in the poorer parts of town of working class areas because that is their prime market. These companies say that they are providing a necessary service and there may be a little truth in that but irresponsible lending at telephone number interest rates is hardly a necessary service.

There is a solution to this, Congress; it is not to ban them, rather to regulate them. Bring them under control of the Financial Services Authorities, limit the interest chargeable, monitor the terms of these loans and put an end to the multiple loans. We should also force the bailed out banks to relax their strict lending criteria and make affordable credit available to more. There is no time like the present, colleagues, because Wonga is opening a service for small businesses because banks will not lend to them either. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Brendan. Secunder. Thank you, Brendan.

The motion was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 199, Business Rates, Northern Region.

BUSINESS RATES MOTION 199

199. BUSINESS RATES

This Conference deplores the Tory-led Coalition Government's plans to devolve business rates to local councils in such a way that it penalises differentially areas of the country.

The UK economy is fundamentally skewed against effective Regional Policy and the facts are that the UK is heavily reliant on certain geographical areas based in and around the City of London.

Conference is appalled that the Tory/Lib-Dem Coalition is proposing a business rates policy that adversely affects local authority areas, especially those areas that, historically, have extensive Public Sector assets in their areas.

Conference calls for the repeal of this policy to be adopted by the Labour Party in writing its next General Election manifesto.

NORTHUMBERLAND COMMERCIAL SERVICES BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

BRO. J.A. WINTER (Northern Region): Congress, the Coalition government have just announced their policy on devolving business rates to the local councils as part of their plans to centralise as much as possible to the local areas. However, we do not want to be fooled by warm Tory words. Eric Pickles has as much in common with our people as the man in the moon, in fact this could be an instance of the man in the moon.

What the Tory LibDems are doing is privatise local government finance, not look into the fairness of the system. Regionally, there is longstanding emphasis on political centre jobs and assets. This has historical significance. Congress, as part of a drive to deal with poverty in the last 100 years local authorities have been using this in the way of rebuilding communities in areas like slum clearance, the public housing improvements, education, and to look after the frail and the vulnerable. Coupled with that certainly up to 40 years ago there was a regional policy based on new town developments and regeneration. In the last 20 years there has been brought in regional government departments and development agencies.

Congress, the facts are that the public sector asset base is greatest in areas of deprivation because the public sector has helped to step in time and again to deal with problems that the private sector is incapable of doing. The Coalition government's business rates policy gives little or no credit for public sector assets. Therefore, those areas of the country relying on public sector will not be able to bring in as much money in business rates as more prosperous areas. Congress, the political dogma behind the Government's proposal is scandalous. It is certainly a policy that needs to be repealed and Labour should put local councils on notice that it will reverse this diverse and disjunctive policy that favours wealthy areas over poorer ones. I move.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder?

BRO. D. LEYLAND (Northern Region): Congress, the Government's proposals for the business rates are a blatant attempt of putting local area against local area. The proposals are very badly thought out and they have united key groups of little communities and the local government against them. Once again, the Tories have someone in Eric Pickles who knows the price of everything but the value of nothing. Tinkering or radically changing how local government finance operates is known to be difficult. Congress, local authorities should be able to raise more of its money locally but not by penalising different areas of the country. This is the worst possible time to be dissolving business rates due to the state of the economy and it is a blatant attempt to do what former Tory minister, Nicholas Ridley, wanted, that is, for councils to meet once a year to set the budget and then go home. Congress, these proposals are a charter for privatisation and cutting local government funding. Let's see if Labour will pledge the repeal of this law. It will need to if it wants to win. I urge your support. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Anyone wish to oppose? No? Thank you. I put 197 and 199 to the vote, please. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 197 was CARRIED.

Motion 199 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Before I move on to the next business, I just want to remind you that there is a bucket collection tonight, Northern Ireland Children's Hospice, from North West Region, and Sunshine House for Terminally Ill Children from Midland, and as you know they are going to split the bucket collection so please give generously. Thank you. I am now moving on to the new business that we left on Sunday. I call London Region on 195, Prostate Cancer Awareness, 196, Cosmetic Surgery Social, Birmingham Region. *(Bro. D. Rigby with certain parts of jeans cut out) (Laughter)* There is a word to say to that, isn't there — "And the same to you." Dougie, I know this is a very serious subject.

PROSTATE CANCER AWARENESS MOTION 195

195. PROSTATE CANCER AWARENESS

Congress, in December 2010 the branch received a request from one of our members to raise awareness of prostate cancer. After a request to London Regional Office an article appeared in the summer 2011 edition of "CANDID".

In 2009 a member of the Braintree & Bocking Branch was diagnosed, after a routine check-up at the doctors, with the early stages of prostate cancer. Our member received seven weeks of radiotherapy, but as a result of the early detection our member was able to return to an active and productive life.

Prostate cancer is responsible for more deaths than any other cancer, except lung cancer, "About 1 man in 6 will be diagnosed with prostate cancer during his lifetime....." (Da Vinci Surgery).

With greater public awareness, early detection is on the rise and mortality rates are declining. As a large organisation concerned with the health and happiness of its members it is hoped

that Congress would consider promoting its male members of the importance of early detection by having a blood test.

BRAINTREE & BOCKING BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. RIGBY (London Region): Congress, in December 2010 my branch received a request from one of our members to raise awareness of prostate cancer. Like a gentleman said earlier this week, you have to make things a little humorous for people to take advantage of it, and that is what this is. Okay? After requests from our branch in the London Regional Office, an article appeared in the summer of 2011, an edition of *Candid*, highlighting prostate awareness. In 2009, a member of the Braintree & Bocking Branch was diagnosed after a routine check-up at his GPs with the early stages of prostate cancer. Our member received seven weeks of intense radiotherapy. As a result of the early detection our member was able to return to an active and productive life.

Congress, ladies go and have mammograms if they suspect they have problems, they also go for smear tests after they reach a certain age, but we rough, tough men for some reason find it hard to go and get our prostate examined. We fear it. There are more ways than one to get the test done. There are three ways. PSA test, a blood test, rectal examination, and rectal ultrasound. Prostate cancer is responsible for more deaths than any other cancer except lung cancer. One man in six will be diagnosed with prostate cancer during his lifetime. Greater public awareness and early detection is on the rise and mortality rates are declining.

The GMB is a great organisation concerned with the health and wellbeing of its members. It is hoped that this Congress will consider promoting the importance of its male members taking the test early for the detection of this terrible disease. I ask you, Congress, to back this motion wholeheartedly. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Doug. I am not tempted! *(Laughter)* Secunder. You will need the next one, cosmetic surgery. *(Laughter)*

SIS. J. BATSON (London Region): According to the Everyman Survey, 19% of men regularly check themselves for testicular cancer. Everyman is running a campaign to help raise awareness and get men to check for this disease by launching a DVD and website that encourages men to check for signs of cancer with the message, *Don't die of embarrassment*. If caught early, the treatment can bring full recovery. There is new radiotherapy treatment that has been trialled and has brought considerably good results. Congress, I urge you to support this motion and to help raise awareness by encouraging men to get themselves checked and to watch their lifestyle, to eat well, and also perhaps press employers to offer more duty of care in regards to exercise and nutritional awareness as to how to prevent these incidents occurring in workforces where men, especially, are given long hours to work and very poor access to nutritional food throughout their working shift. Congress, I urge you please to support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Motion 196, Cosmetic Surgery Social.

COSMETIC SURGERY SOCIAL MOTION 196

196. COSMETIC SURGERY SOCIAL

This Conference finds the fact that the National Health Scheme is being asked to fund some mistakes made by certain Private Clinics. Conference asks the CEC to pursue the relevant bodies to ensure these clinics are adequately covered by insurance to fund such mistakes.

R35 ROCESTER JCB GENERAL BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

SIS. S. MAYBURY (Birmingham & West Midlands Region): First time delegate and speaker. *(Applause)* Congress, breast implants made by France's Poly Implant Protheses, PIPs, were banned in 2010 after it was discovered that they contained industrial grade silicon which has more contaminants than the medical grade gel they should have used. The low-grade silicon was used in the cheaper end of cosmetic surgery trade but was originally meant for use in mattresses. Yes, I did say that, mattresses. Its use as an alternative was purely to cut down the cost of the implants. It has now been discovered that the implants have a higher than normal instance of rupture which could cause inflammation, scarring, and fibrosis. PIP was once the world's third largest supplier of implants, 300,000 women in 65 countries around the world are thought to have had them fitted both for cosmetic reasons and in some cases for reconstructive surgery following treatment for breast cancer. The implants were widely used across Europe and it is thought that 50,000 women in Britain may be affected.

In the UK women who had their implants paid for by the National Health Service will be able to have them removed free of charge, after consultation with their doctor. The British Government says it expects companies that fitted implants privately, usually for cosmetic purposes, to offer the same deal but these clinics who have made a very fat profit from the women they have treated are saying they cannot afford to do so. Women are therefore coming back to the already strained NHS for both removal and replacement of these implants.

Congress calls upon the CEC to pursue the relevant bodies to ensure that these clinics are required by law to hold adequate insurance to fund these mistakes and not let the burden of their greed fall onto the already overburdened NHS. Congress, I move.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder.

SIS. M. CLARKE (Birmingham & West Midlands Region): Concerns over PIP implants has led to a call for greater regulation of the plastic surgery industry. If it is going in your body, if it is a pill, if it is a medical device, it should be regulated by the government. The consumer does not know what is safe and what is not. All private clinics should have liability insurance to pay for any mistakes that have occurred through no fault of the patients who have undergone the elective surgery. The NHS cannot afford to pay for elective cosmetic surgery. Insurance protection should be

built into the system. I genuinely do not understand why the plastic surgeons that fitted the implants are not responsible for removing them. They charge a small fortune for the procedure and it seems they have been let off the hook and everyone else is paying the price. Have the makers of PIP been punished financially? Why don't the collective governments of Europe make them set up a kitty from their vast profits and let them pay for their mistakes? Congress, please support this motion.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. I will take the vote now. Does anyone wish to oppose? No? I now put 195 and 196 to the vote. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried. Dougie, well done.

Motion 195 was CARRIED.

Motion 196 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: I now come to Social Policy: General, Motion 200, Dangerous Dogs Act, Midland Region to move.

DANGEROUS DOGS ACT MOTION 200

200. DANGEROUS DOGS ACT

This Conference calls on the Government to amend the 1991 Dangerous Dogs Act to deed not breed.

LEICESTERSHIRE 2000 BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Carried)

SIS. L. GUBB (Midland & East Coast Region): Congress, before I start I will stress this, I am a dog lover. This Congress calls upon the government to amend the 1991 Dangerous Dogs Act to deed not breed. The DDA was introduced in 1991 following a series of high profile attacks on children and then amended in 1997. Apart from stipulating four prohibited breeds it is designed to target the owner of any animal that becomes dangerously out of control in a public place. Any breed of dog is defined as dangerous if it injures a person or behaves in a way that makes a person believe they will be harmed. However, statistically most dog-bite incidents involving children occur within the home by a dog they know thus making the Act ineffective.

The law does not work because it focuses on the dog and not on the owners, targeting a breed or a type as dangerous and lulls people with dogs not of a banned breed into a false sense of security when in fact any dog is capable of biting. They have their off days too. The way a dog behaves is largely a result of its inherited characteristics and the rearing and training given by the owner. The problems caused by dangerous dogs will not be solved until the owners realise that they are responsible for the actions of their animals. We expect people who drive to have to learn how to operate a potential killing machine, but anyone can own a dog. Without some kind of training it has just the same potential. I would just like to bring attention to today's *Daily Mirror*, on page 27, *The thickest dog owner in Britain*. He had a dog and he thoughtfully had it micro-chipped. Then while out hunting rabbits the dog supposedly attacked him, he

shot his own dog in the head ten times, slashed at it with a knife, tied a noose round its neck, and left it to die on the side of the road. Is that a responsible dog owner? I do not think so. How would he like to have that done to him.

I urge this Congress to call upon the government urgently to review the DDA with a view to drawing up legislation not on types of breed of dog but on responsible ownership. As it stands today there are too many grey areas within the DDA. Urgent action is needed and a good place to start would be with deed not breed. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Secunder.

BRO. D. BREARLEY (Midland & East Coast Region): President, Congress, the Dangerous Dogs Act came into being with the best of intentions but any breed of dog can be dangerous if it is not treated and trained correctly and any animal, however docile, can have a bad day as do we. All dogs should be made the responsibility of the owner to train them and to keep them in a safe way to the public and possibly be micro-chipped. I second the motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Does anyone wish to speak on the motion? No? Come on, then. Woof, woof.

BRO. J. TOOMEY (North West & Irish Region): There are dangerous dogs all right, two-legged ones, Cameron, Osborne, Clegg, you name them. (*Laughter*) Do you know, there have been dog attacks, we must admit it, children have died, but it is the dog that gets the blame. Who is the bloody blame for the dog, the bloody owners, and they should look after them and train them proper. (*Applause*) If you look *here*, there is a guide dog and they have been attacked in public. Now, you could not get a more noble animal than that. These bastards are letting them run loose and attacking them. So what do we do? As far as I am concerned, get the owner and break his bloody kneecaps. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Toomey, I believe you were supporting that resolution! (*Laughter*)

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: I think he was!

THE PRESIDENT: You know now why I moved it from last Sunday. Okay. Colleagues, do you wish to have a little chat with Mr. Toomey? No? Okay. I now put 200 to the vote. No, I won't, I have to call Ann McLaren just to deal with this one.

SIS. A. McLAREN (CEC, Manufacturing): The CEC supports Motion 200 with a qualification. The motion is calling on the government to amend the 1991 Dangerous Dogs Act to deed not breed. This Act was rushed through following a series of high profile attacks on children. Apart from stipulating four prohibited breeds it is designed to target the owner of any animal that becomes dangerously out of control in a public place. The deed not breed campaign says that no breed or type of dog is more likely to attack than any other. Lack of proper training and responsibility by the

owner is much more likely to create a dangerous dog. Indeed, banning any breed runs the risk of making it more attractive as a symbol of status or weapon dog.

Congress, the CEC accepts that the dogs are not to blame. There are some people in society who simply should be banned from dog ownership. The qualification is that we do not think amending the 1991 Act is the answer, instead that Act should be scrapped. It clearly is not working. Since its introduction in 1991 dreadful attacks on adults and children have continued, some of them fatal, sometimes in family homes, sometimes in parks and streets with dreadful mauling, faces bitten off, and permanent disfigurement. Many of our GMB members are in daily danger in their workplaces, particularly when this brings them into private areas at homes which are not covered by the 1991 Act. This is why GMB supports a policy of responsible dog ownership. We want a new law that focuses on the owner rather than the breed. Compulsory registration and micro-chipping for all dogs not just particular breeds and because as the deed not breed campaign says most dog attacks take place in family homes we want it to apply in both public and private areas. Congress, please support Motion 200 with the qualification that I have just set out. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Ann. Midlands do you accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. I now put 200 to the vote. All those in favour please show. Anyone against please show. That is carried. Thank you.

Motion 200 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I thank you for your patience and your cooperation this afternoon. I wish you all a pleasant evening and see you all in the morning when Congress resumes at 9.30. Thank you.

Congress adjourned.