

**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, 10<sup>th</sup> June 2012**

(Congress)

**Monday, 11<sup>th</sup> June 2012**

(Morning: Congress/Afternoon: Section Conferences)

**Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2012**

(Section Conferences)

**Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> June 2012**

(Congress)

and

**Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> June 2012**

(Congress)

.....

**PROCEEDINGS**

**DAY ONE**

**(Sunday, 10<sup>th</sup> June 2012)**

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## **FIRST DAY'S PROCEEDINGS**

**SUNDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2012**

### **MORNING SESSION**

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

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, good morning and welcome to Brighton. I welcome all delegates and visitors to the GMB Congress 2012. I call Congress to order for the opening ceremony.

### **BANNER CEREMONY**

THE PRESIDENT: I call Congress to order for the opening ceremony. We have asked South Western Region to form the Banner Party this year. Please stand to greet your National Banner. *(Congress was upstanding for the Banner)* Will Congress please be seated. I thank South Western Region. That was absolutely delightful.

### **VIDEO MONTAGE**

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, we will be starting Congress with a short video montage showing GMB events and campaigns from the past year.

Could you please check that you have switched off all your mobile phones or make sure that they are on silent because the charge may go up this year even though it is a year of austerity.

*(Video Montage shown) (Applause)*

That is just a snapshot of some of the issues that we dealt with this year.

Congress, you will find details of the fire evacuation procedures on page 111 in the Final Agenda and the Congress Guide document. Please take time to look at these and familiarise yourself with your nearest exist.

I will now introduce members of the platform to you. On my right is Malcolm Sage, the Vice President and Kathleen Walker Shaw, our European Officer, who will be assisting the Vice President and myself. Thank you, Kathleen.

On my left, usually, is the General Secretary and Treasurer – nobody knows him – Paul Kenny. Sitting next to Paul is Dolores O'Donoghue, our Executive Policy Officer, who organises us all on the top table and keeps us in order all the year round. Thank you, Dolores.

I welcome the following guests and visitors: the General Member Auditors who will count the votes are Ian Burkett, Steve Dery and Albert Haynes, all from Midland & East Coast Region.

I welcome ex-Regional Secretary John Cope from London Region, who is at the back of the hall. I welcome Vic Baines, Midland & East Coast Regional President. I am sure that you remember that he was the man who was picking me up every day last year. Also we have Vinny Bloor, who is the Birmingham & West Midlands Regional President and his wife. Welcome Vinny.

We have the verbatim shorthand writers, Michael Thear and Phyllis Hilder, who are on my left. They are sitting in the corner, in the dark. Welcome.

Congress we have not had any requests for signers this year. The Congress Hall has an induction loop system fitted and to use this facility you will need to set your hearing aid to the "T" position.

Firstly, could I extend a warm welcome to all first-time delegates. Could I remind all delegates that Congress sessions are transmitted live on GMB Congress TV. This means that your speech will be shown live over the Internet through the GMB National website. Please make sure you remember to state your name and Region clearly for the verbatim record and so that your name can be shown on the screen. Please also mention if you are a first-time speaker. Let me say to new delegates that we have all been there and we know that you will get nervous. So when you come to the rostrum to speak, do not worry. We will be very gentle with you, to a point, that is. I know that Mr. Toomey is here, and you are not a new delegate this year, remember.

I ask delegates to take a moment to check that you have three important documents. The first is a one page Outline Programme. The second is a copy of the final financial accounts: the Income & Expenditure Report. The third is the Final Agenda & Congress Guide. Has everybody got those documents in their wallets? (*Calls of "Yes"*) The combined document gives information on: motions and CEC rule amendments, Standing Orders Committee Report No. 1, SOC guidelines for Congress business, including time limits for speakers, Representation Statements for Congress, Composite motions, Section Conference motions and programme, fringe meetings and exhibitions and seating plans.

All Congress documents are printed on environmentally friendly paper and there are recycling bins in the Hall for paper and plastic.

There is a free tea and coffee bar for all credential holders available from the 2 Bar in the Exhibition area. This has been sponsored by Liverpool Victoria. Please remember to show your Congress credentials.

Next, I would like to thank our sponsors, and for the President's do last night, could I thank Future Plus who produce our magazines and thank them for a very pleasant evening. I would like to thank Pellacraft for refreshments in the Congress Hall; Thompsons Solicitors for the delegate bags and lanyards, Digby Brown Solicitors for sponsoring the GMB Internet Café in the Exhibition Area and Simpsons Solicitors for the Congress T Shirts. We have them. Dolores is going to model them for us.

## **ROLL CALL**

THE PRESIDENT: Would all Regional Secretaries please notify the Congress Office of any changes to their delegations.

## **OBITUARIES**

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, we come to a very sad time. It is now our Obituaries. We had notice yesterday of a very dear friend and colleague of this Congress and Union, Tommy Robertson, who was also a CEC member. All I can say about Tommy, like a lot of our activists, is that he was a trade unionist through and through, both as a boilermaker and as GMB. I knew Tommy for a long time. We have sent our condolences, like we do to all the families, to Tommy's family. His funeral is Tuesday week on 19<sup>th</sup> June in North Shields. Would colleagues please stand.

Names will be shown on the screen and a copy of the Obituary list can be found on page 110 of the Final Agenda & Congress Guide.

*Congress stood in silent tribute.*

I now pass over to Malcolm for his part in the proceedings. Malcolm.

THE VICE PRESIDENT (Malcolm Sage): Thank you, President. Could I now inform Congress that the names of the Regional Tellers who have been appointed are now being shown on the screen. Could I please emphasise that the Tellers must remain in the Congress Hall whilst Congress is in session and that delegates must be in their allotted seats when a vote is taken.

I will now give a demonstration on eligibility for voting. I would like everyone in the hall to put up your hands, please. Could the following now, please, put your hands down: visitors, guests, auditors, full-time officials and regional secretaries, national officers and national secretaries, GMB staff and members of the CEC. Only those of you who still have your hands up are eligible to vote at Congress. Thank you.

The members of the Standing Orders Committee and the CEC Observers to the Standing Orders Committee are now being shown on the screen.

THE PRESIDENT: I would like to say a fond welcome to new Regional Secretaries to Paul Maloney of Southern Region. Good luck to you as this is your first Congress as Regional Secretary. I also welcome John Phillips from South Western Region. Welcome John. I wish you well. (*Applause*)

Could I please congratulate Helen Johnson on her election as Chair of the Standing Orders Committee for a fifth year. Congratulations, Helen. I see you are bubbling and ready to go.

## STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 1

THE PRESIDENT: I now call Helen to move Standing Orders Committee Report No. 1, which begins on page 23 of your Final Agenda & Congress Guide document. With Helen is Barry Smith, who is our legal adviser.

SIS. H. JOHNSON (Standing Orders Committee Chair, Midland & East Coast Region): I formally move Standing Orders Committee Report No. 1. President and Congress, as Mary has just said, you will find a copy of SOC Report No. 1 in your Final Agenda, starting at page 23. I formally move adoption of that report and in doing so the SOC would like to thank delegates and their regional secretaries for agreeing the 20 composite motions that also appear in your Final Agenda, starting at page 81. Would colleagues also note the long-standing Guidelines for Congress Business on page 17 of the Final Agenda. This will help all of you, especially new delegates, in understanding the procedures that the President and the SOC work to.

Withdrawn motions. The SOC has been informed that the following three motions have been withdrawn: Motion 26: Union Membership Fees Making It Easier To Join the Union from London Region; Motion 138: Labour MP's and the TUC Day of Action from London Region. This motion has been withdrawn in favour of the CEC's Special Political Report. The final motion that has been withdrawn is Motion 189: Access to Work from London Region.

Congress motions and Section Conference motions. In accordance with Recommendation 14 of the *Framework for the Future of the GMB Moving Forward*, the CEC Special Report endorsed by Congress in 2007, the SOC is recommending which motions are dealt with by Congress and which are dealt with by Section Conferences. These appear as set out in your Final Agenda with details of Section Conference motions from page 146 onwards.

Existing policy motions. President and Congress, in accordance with the same Special Report, motions which are existing policy are endorsed by Congress without the need for debate as has occurred at each Congress since 2008. The SOC is recommending that the same approach is taken for Congress 2012. The CEC has advised the SOC which motions are in line with existing policy and the SOC has accepted this advice and recommends that these motions are put to Congress, endorsed "Without the need for debate". You will find that existing policy motions are listed in SOC Report No. 1 at page 24 of your Final Agenda. You may also find it helpful to refer to the detailed report from the CEC, which is at page 105 of your Final Agenda. This explains when the policy in question was reached. The letters "EP" also appear by the side of each motion in the Final Agenda.

Motions out of order. The SOC has ruled that the following motion is out of order for debate: Motion 151, Labour Party Affiliations. The motion calls upon the GMB to de-affiliate from the Labour Party. This would require amendments to rules 12.1 and 19.10 to give effect to its provisions. As Congress 2012 is not a rules revision year, the motion is out of order for debate at this year's Congress.

Bucket collections. The SOC will report back to Congress later today on requests for bucket collections. Would Regional Secretaries please note that when a collection has

taken place, the Region must provide the SOC with a written note saying how much was collected so that the President can report this back to Congress.

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

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Helen.

Do any delegates wish to speak on any of the SOC recommendations? If so, please come forward and speak from the rostrum.

BRO. T. PLUMB (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I want to move a reference back to the Standing Orders Committee, which has ruled out of order Motion 151 about Labour Party De-affiliation. I am talking about this without the support of my region. Basically, the members of my branch are saying that we would like to debate this subject at this year's Congress. I think it is not very democratic of the GMB just to sweep this subject under the carpet. If it gets voted out, I haven't got a problem with that, but I have a problem in that we seem to be sweeping it under the carpet and not talking about it. That is the main reason why I have come to the rostrum this morning. I would urge you all to support me in relation to the fact that we do need to debate this issue. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Phillip. Is there anyone else? (*No response*) In that case, I call Helen.

SIS. H. JOHNSON (Chair of Standing Orders Committee): I am responding to the challenge to SOC Report No. 1. Colleagues, the SOC considers whether all motions are in order for debate by reference to the long-standing guidelines for Congress business, which appear in your Final Agenda at page 17. If a motion conflicts with a rule or requires a rule amendment to give effect to the provisions, then it is out of order for debate in a non-rule revision year. The GMB Rule Book further indicates that rule 9.3, when referring to consideration of amendments to rules, shall be restricted to Congress 2009 and every second Congress. Therefore, Congress 2012 is not a rule amendment year.

Rule 12.1 says: "The President will go to the Labour Party Conference as GMB President." Rule 19.10 says: "Where required by the CEC the Regional Council will elect representatives to go to the Labour Party Conference as GMB representatives." The SOC's view is that these rules would require amendment to give effect to the provisions of motion 151. The SOC has made similar decisions in relation to rule 9.3 in the past and Congress has accepted them. Congress 2013 will be a rule amendment year, and amendments to any GMB rules can be considered then as appropriate.

Congress, you will also be considering the CEC Political Special Report in the Monday morning session and, of course, any delegate can contribute to the debate and vote in an appropriate way at that time.

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

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Helen. I am now going to put the Standing Orders Report to the vote. The first vote is for the reference back. As you

Helen say, this is not a rule change year and that is why it was moved out of order. All those in favour of reference back, please show? Those against?

*The reference back was LOST*

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now call the vote on SOC Report No. 1. Will Congress please vote for acceptance? All those against?

*Standing Orders Report No. 1 was ACCEPTED.*

#### ANNOUNCEMENT

THE PRESIDENT: Before I move on, let me announce that we have two birthday girls in the Congress, both celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> birthdays. They are Wendy Reese who is the President of the Southend-on-Sea, a rep for health and safety for Southend Pier. Wendy, happy birthday from everyone in the Congress. Wendy is in the gallery as a visitor to Congress.

We also have Denise Lawrence, who is 50 today. Denise, happy birthday from all of us to you and have a good time. Thank you. (*Applause*)

#### PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, could I now call on our President, Mary Turner, to address Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, can I welcome all of you, delegates, visitors, staff and exhibitors, to Brighton.

I'd particularly like to welcome first-time delegates, and we are delighted that there are so many of you this year. It's terrific to have you with us this week. I'm not sure what the weather holds, but the forecasters say that we should be facing seventy miles an hour gales, lashing rain and storms.

Once again we've got a packed agenda, reflecting the challenges facing our members, our public services, our living conditions, our families' hopes and prospects, our safety at work, our pensions and our security of employment. But there will be a warm and friendly atmosphere in here for all our delegates and visitors.

Congress, I can promise thunder and lightning when we debate the Coalition and their contempt for working people and vulnerable families, because in the last 12 months *Bullingdon* Dave and *Snake Oil* Nick have shown their true blue colours. There are over 250,000 millionaires living in Britain, but they want to make us poorer to keep them and their pals rich. They're doing this by outsourcing our schools, cutting jobs and benefits and attacking essential services, like the NHS.

Let me tell you of just some of the things that they have done in the past two years: attacked pensions; strangled Remploy; cut services; cut welfare benefits; forced disabled people off benefits; slashed Sure Start Centres; frozen the Winter Fuel benefit; means tested Child Benefit, slashed Working Tax Credit; abolished the school

buildings projects; allowed academies to opt out of providing healthy school meals, and there is more to come. George Osborne is now talking about extending regional pay in the NHS and other parts of our public services.

But it's not for MPs pay or their pensions, but for hard-pressed public service workers already struggling to make ends meet in the face of a pay freeze and rising costs. Seventy per cent of public service workers won't qualify for the Working Tax Credit – you may say why? – because they have raised the threshold from 16 hours to 24, and council workers and school support staff still haven't got that £250 that Cameron and Clegg promised them. It's not a lot of money to millionaires – a few nice bottles of Bolly – but money that would put food on the table for low-paid workers and their families. Perhaps it would even buy them a pasty or two.

Congress, I told you that the Tories were still the nasty party. They're still the friggin nasty party and getting nastier with every passing day. They haven't got a clue how ordinary people live and they simply don't care, because by making ordinary people poorer, they can make their pals richer. I'm talking about people like Adrian Beecroft – you know him, the man on telly, Mr Wonga Wonga – who's another one of Lord Snooty's pals, an investor in a company that lends money at four thousand per cent to desperate people struggling to pay their bills. That is who Mr. Cameron asked to look at ways to make employment laws more “flexible”. By “flexible” he means making it possible to sack people just because they don't like the look of them, their sexual orientation, their colour, gender, age or even their accent.

Congress, the basic rights that unions fought for throughout the last century are in danger. Many of us remember the days when women did not get a state pension, when our parents would work overtime without pay, drag themselves into work when sick, do “little jobs” around the house for the boss – cut the grass, decorate their houses – because they were living in fear of being sacked at a whim. That was all just to put bread on the table.

As we know, Labour created the Welfare State, and now the Tories are demolishing it. The NHS is being set up to provide rich pickings for the private healthcare and US vultures so that money that should go to provide healthcare is going to rich corporations and their investors. When America gives free healthcare to all its citizens, then they can show us how it's done. Until then, leave us alone and mind your own business. Look after your own. (*Applause*)

The education system is being taken back in time. Benefactors and interest groups are invited to take over the nation's schools. Mr. Gove, so keen on the US way of doing things – he's another one – has approved a list of a dozen ‘preferred’ sponsors to take over schools. Among them are three leading American ‘for profit’ charter companies: Edisonlearning, K12 and Mosaica. Surprise, surprise! Even more outrageous, Gove has also said that a second term Tory Government – God forgive us – would allow ‘free’ schools to be run for profit. Academies and free schools aren't free. They are at the expense of local authority schools which will be left to wither on the vine.

Academies don't have to comply with the National School Food Standards, and what has been the result? The School Food Trust reports that “in the absence of compulsory

standards, academies are serving foods in the dining rooms that the Standards were intended to restrict or eliminate”. In plain English, that means cheap, junk food.

Academies are also raking in cash from vending machines selling fizzy drinks, chocolates and crisps. All the progress made on schools meals under Labour is now in danger of unravelling.

The public services are being discredited and dismantled before our very eyes. The housing stock has been sold off. Congress, if anyone every tries to tell you that the private sector is better at providing public services, please look at the housing issue. Most ex-council housing now belongs to private landlords who rent it out at exorbitant rates – sometimes back to the councils who sold it to them in the first place – because there is no social housing available and people cannot even get on the housing list. What a mess we’re in!

The Tory answer to the housing crisis is **social cleansing** – forcing low paid and vulnerable people to uproot themselves and their families and find places to live in deprived areas – far away from their communities and schools. Congress, they’ve now announced a new idea: you can build a shed at the back of the garden, you can change your garage into a flat for granny or granddad and you will get it tax free. No, it is not sheds we want for our families. It’s proper social housing, built for people who can live in a proper manner. We don’t want a shed for nanny so that you can improve the welfare of your home. No, that’s not the answer. Of course, I can tell you of one advantage. They’re Tory and they’ll be building sheds that’ll be like cardboard boxes in their back gardens. Well, I wouldn’t want to put my mum, your mother, father or auntie in the garage, because that is where they would remain. Sorry, but that’s not on.

The Tory answer to unemployment is an apartheid society where if you want cheap labour, you can get in touch with a “charity”, which will get people desperate for work bussed across the country during the night, chucked out of a coach in the early hours in the freezing rain and left to get changed under a bridge, put them to work, give them tents to sleep in and then send them back when you have done with them. All for free or just for pittance! And we thought that Thatcher was heartless! This happened last week at the Jubilee celebrations. This has to be an absolute disgrace and we have to be raising the roof on this disgrace continually.

Never, never forget that no-one voted for any of this. Congress, the hard won rights that underpin a fair society for working people are in danger: rights against unfair dismissal, rights to a fair hearing; rights to decent working hours; rights to safe and healthy workplaces and rights to a minimum wage. The Government have already made it harder to claim unfair dismissal and harder to take a case to a tribunal.

Just in case they don’t have enough ideas of their own, they set up “The Red Tape Challenge” to give business the opportunity to vote off anything they may have missed, and there is a lot of legislation that big business doesn’t like: legislation to control gangmasters and their exploitation of poor immigrant labour; legislation to protect people’s rights at work; legislation to compensate people who are made redundant and health and safety legislation that protects people in the work place, and

on and on and on it goes. They say that all this is necessary to make the country “more competitive” and blame the economic position on Labour.

Yes, Labour did get a lot of things wrong, but the economic crisis wasn't caused by people having decent rights at work or not being “flexible” enough. It was created by the greed, arrogance and lack of effective regulation of the banking system.

Congress, I'm sure that some of you remember the words of the old music hall song:

*“It's the rich wot gets the pleasure  
It's the poor wot get the blame”*

That's becoming more true day by day. We have a Cabinet full of multi-millionaires blaming the rest of us for the problems their mates created.

How disgusting was it to hear the “Quiet man” – I wish he would stay quiet – Iain Duncan Smith, saying that all Remploy workers did was sit around making cups of tea and coffee all day. He dismissed our skilled, proud disabled workers as not worthy of support or help to keep their jobs.

Congress, that was an absolute disgrace, and this man should resign immediately. *(Applause)* I read in the paper after the Budget that Cameron cared very deeply about disabled children. Mr. Cameron, do you know that disabled children become disabled adults, and they need protection as well?

Congress, some of you may know that I usually bring in a horsey theme about the Coalition:

*“Two little boys, on their horse so blue  
Or a pantomime horse with Nick's head up Dave's arse.” (Laughter)*

Dave, of course, won't always need Nick, will he? He can nip round to his neighbour and borrow one of Rebekah Brooks' horses any time, and then the poor horse dies. I don't bleedin' blame it with him on its back. I wish he would ride off into the sunset and we call all wave goodbye.

Over the past year I have been proud to see how the GMB has fought for our members: the magnificent turnout for the Pensions march in November, with GMB flags flying and dominating the scene; campaigning against the greedy water companies and demanding that utilities be returned to the public sector; fighting for our members in Southern Cross and the frail and vulnerable people they care for; demanding a new, robust system of financial regulation for care homes; fighting for our disabled members in Remploy to have the dignity and independence of skilled work instead of being sold off lock, stock and barrel to “charity”; supporting our many decent councillors in regaining and retaining council seats and starting to rebuild Labour at the grass roots; fighting for justice for our Cammell Laird workers thrown into prison by Thatcher, and fighting the racism, bullying and intimidation suffered by GMB members working for Carillion at Great Western Hospital in Swindon.

Congress, we have some very important debates this week. On Monday the General Secretary will be moving the CEC Special Political Report.

The next Labour Government will face a huge challenge: Rebuild our public services; rebuild our society; rebuild the very infrastructure of the United Kingdom and, Congress, rescue the NHS, our schools and our care services from the privateers. Of course, they have got to restore full employment rights from day one.

Congress, the Political Report sets out the GMB agenda for the Labour Party to re-establish itself as the Party for working people and return to its values of social justice. It must continue to distance itself from the millionaires' clubs and their ideas of 'progress'.

Congress, there is stormy weather ahead indeed, but it is a storm that the GMB will ride and fight through with you.

Congress, before I take my place on the platform, I would like to thank you all for your support when I was not very well, in particular, my region and my General Secretary. I am here fighting fit, and we've all got to be fighting fit. We've got a long fight back, and thank you all very much. I would also like to say 'thank you' to my region, family and friends for their support during the last few months. (*A standing ovation*)

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

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mary, for that wonderful address. Congress, I now call on Bill Modlock, of the CEC, Southern Region, to give the Vote of Thanks to the President.

BRO. B. MODLOCK (CEC, Public Services): Congress, it is a privilege to come to this rostrum today to move a vote of thanks to Mary, our National President, or should I say "National Treasure". I am the Regional President and CEC member for the Southern Region. I first met Mary about 17 years ago. Don't worry about remembering that, Mary. I'll remind you later. We have a number of things in common, including that we both come from working class areas of London, albeit on different sides of the River, but we won't hold that against you, Mary.

We both worked in schools for many years and we have both been activists within the Union for at least 40 years. We both have a bit of ancestry from the Emerald Isle. So it is nice to have something in common.

Although I met Mary a long time ago, I don't know Mary as intimately as some other members of other GMB, so you will be relieved, Mary, to know that I won't be telling any funny stories or giving away any embarrassing secrets.

I thought about what to say, especially as so many nice things have already been said about Mary over so many years. Everybody in the GMB knows that Mary is dedicated and passionate about the GMB, and Mary's devotion to the members is matched only by her commitment and hard work. Mary also has boundless energy that people half her age – let's say 20, Mary – would struggle to keep up with. So I needed to ask myself, apart from the things that we already know and have already been mentioned, what makes Mary so special?

First impressions are the ones that last the longest. I remember a few years ago attending Congress with my wife, Norma – she is here again today – and after meeting Mary for the first time she commented on what a lovely person Mary was and we both agreed. In her role as Ambassador for GMB Mary mixes with the great and the good, and attends functions in some of the grandest places, but she is unphased by this and, more importantly, untouched by the experience. Mary greets all members with the same warmth, whether it is for the first or if you are an old friend, but the sincerity is the same. You do not look past you or look for somebody more important in the room to move on to. It may not sound like such a big thing, but when you consider Mary's role and all of the people she meets, her sincerity is always the same. Everyone knows who Mary is when they attend Congress, and Mary makes it her mission to welcome everybody with her instinctive warmth and generous spirit. It really is the little things that make a difference.

Mary has been blessed with having a wonderful way around people that I could only describe as a special gift and one that you won't find in a textbook. Once you know Mary, you know instinctively where her heart is. It's with the people from her working class roots. Also, given the choice of a glass of wine with princes or a cup of char with cleaners, or maybe a vodka and tonic, it would be the cleaners every time. Mary has achieved a fantastic amount during her time with the GMB, including many accolades and gongs, and every one is deserved. I wouldn't mind betting that there is one thing that means as much, if not more to Mary, and would doubtless give her the greatest sense of achievement, that everybody in GMB loves Mary. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Bill, very much, indeed, and thank you, Congress.

Congress, before we begin our first debate, I would like to explain some points of procedure. This year we have one central rostrum with chairs in the front for speakers when they come to the front. To save time, I will take motions in groups. When I call the groups, the movers and seconders will need to move up to the chairs ready to speak. I will then ask the CEC speaker to reply to groups, rather than deal with each motion individually. The daily session Programme will show the grouping. Where the CEC is supporting a motion, I will advise Congress of this. Where the CEC's position is something other than straight Support, for instance, Support with Qualification or Reference, I will call on someone to give the CEC recommendation as a reply to the debate.

Could I remind Congress that a large "X" in front of a motion in the Final Agenda and Programme means that the SOC has ruled the motion "Out of Order" as reported in the Standing Orders Report No. 1. Existing policy motions are marked in the Final Agenda with a large "EP" against them. These, as outlined by SOC Report No. 1 will not be listed in the detailed programme and they will not be debated.

The CEC Rule Amendments are to be found on page 94. They are Rule 1, Rule 5, Rule 6 (CECRA3), Rule 6 (CECRA4), Rule 18, Rule 26, Rule 34, Rule 35, Rules 35-68, Rule 54, Rule 55, Rule 58, Rule 60, Rule 61, Rule 2, Rule 48a and Rule 18.

I ask Malcolm Sage, the Vice President, to formally move the Rule Amendments.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC, moving Rule Amendments RA1 to RA18.

RA1 changes the registered office address from Wimbledon to Euston. We are dropping the name “National Office”.

The next group of amendments deal with the problem we sometimes come across in our appeals processes. There have been cases where colleagues have been able to frustrate the procedure by unreasonable delays or behaviour.

Rule changes RA2, 4, 13 and 15 introduce a clause into the procedure to allow the CEC, its Appeals Committee and the Appeals Tribunal to strike out a case as a result of scandalous, vexatious or unreasonable behaviour or excessive delay. This will apply to the disciplinary procedure under Rule 5.

The complaints procedure under Rule 6 and electoral appeal and disputes are covered in Rules 60 and 61. This will help maintain the highest standard of fairness in our procedure and eliminate the rare cases of abuse.

RA3 clarifies that Rule 6 is about complaints rather than appeals. The existing title is misleading.

RA5 clears up some ambiguity about who is qualified for which office and reinforces the lay members’ democracy of the union.

RA18 removes the General Trustees from Rule 18, as their membership and qualifications are already covered in Rule 16.

When the Rule Book was converted to plain English a few years ago, the words “Legal Assistance” were changed to “Legal Help”. The CEC feels that “Legal Assistance” is actually a better description. So RA6, RA16 and RA17 changes “Legal Help” back to “Legal Assistance” wherever it appears in the rules.

RA7 and RA8 delete rules which ceased to apply last year when the new branch finance arrangements came into effect.

Under rule RA9 Rules 36-68 will be renumbered to Rules 35-67.

RA10 and RA12 bring the Disablement and Fatal Accident Benefit rule into line with current practice. Benefit is limited if the member has received a large legal award in respect of the same accident. The rule changes make clear that this situation applies to all legal cases, not just those supported by GMB. The changes also take account of the fact that the benefit is discretionary and that the legal award is related to the maximum benefit payable.

Last year, the General Secretary promised to simplify the rules for Funeral Benefit, which contained some ancient relics which had not been observed for years. RA11 provides a much clearer and much more relevant rule.

Finally, colleagues, RA14 clears up an anomaly in the procedure for electoral appeals. It should be the regional election committee rather than the regional secretary that communicates the decision, and this is now stated in the rules.

Congress, on behalf of the CEC, I urge you to support each one of the CEC rule amendments, 1 through to 18.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Malcolm. Can the proposed rule amendments be formally seconded?

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: I formally second.

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to speak on any of the proposed rule amendments? *(No response)* In that case, I call for the vote on CEC Rule Amendments 1-18. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against?

*Rule Amendments CECRA1-CECRA18 were CARRIED.*

## **UNION ORGANISATION: CONGRESS**

### **REGIONAL MOTIONS TO CONGRESS MOTION 2**

#### **2. REGIONAL MOTIONS TO CONGRESS**

This Conference agrees that it would be good practice, that following the Regional Delegation meetings that take place prior to Congress, for all Branches to be supplied with a list of the motions that have been submitted from their Region and the decision taken regarding said motions.

Also following Congress, the Regions circulate to Branches the decisions reached by Congress regarding the motions from their particular Region.

B41 BIRMINGHAM RUBBER BRANCH  
*Birmingham & West Midlands Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. R. KIBBLE (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I am moving Motion 2. This is my first time at Congress and as a speaker, so I hope I do it justice. *(Applause)*

It is important to move and support this motion because it is good, inclusive and democratic procedure. At regional delegate meetings we make sure that all our decision making is disseminated to each branch. This motion really bolsters our move towards a more democratic Congress. For example, in 2010 the CEC gave a special report, entitled *A Bigger, Better and More Inclusive Congress: New Arrangements to Strengthen GMB Democracy*. If we start to disseminate and make transparent all our decisions at regional delegation meetings, this will allow for a more democratic and acceptable approach for all branches, not just the ones that are represented at regional delegations.

Yes, we have a national website where final agendas are provided with a report of decisions made by Congress on rule amendments, motions, reports and statements. However, I find that there is very little documentation in regard to tracking motions

from when they are submitted from branch level all the way through to Congress and post Congress, especially in comparison with other trade unions.

Whilst researching this speech, I found that Unison has a system whereby branches submit their motions online through a conference database. This motion is tracked all the way through regional delegate meetings up to Congress and all the decision-making processes are disseminated down to branches at all levels prior to Congress, at Congress and post Congress. This is done in an almost instant manner. They have a statement on their conference database which reads: “What is missing today will be there tomorrow”, so all branches are able to have access to all the decision-making procedures made by regional delegations.

What is even more shameful for us is that not only can Unison branches track their motions from submission to region, all the way up to Congress and post Congress decisions, members can track the motions. I, as a non-member, can track that motion. They have motions on their database archived back to 2001.

On that note, I move this motion as a matter of urgency, albeit ten years late in comparison to other trade unions. Other unions demonstrate a much more transparent and democratic approach to motions at Congresses than we do currently, and they operate within 21<sup>st</sup> Century electronic application. I hope that, if this motion is supported and carried, we will seriously think about how we disseminate the tracking of motions, not only from region to branch but at every level of our union network. Thank you. (*Applause*)

BRO. A. ENGLAND (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I wish to second this motion. Rebecca has touched on much of the reasoning behind it. I want to concentrate on one or two small areas. Information and feedback leads to knowledge, and they are the keys to being informed. It is also a feeling of being included and represented that our members would have. Knowledge is also education. Educated and informed members are better able to organise and agitate. The means of dissemination can be through the old norms of paper and reports back to branch meetings, but also, as Rebecca said, in this modern age, through electronic means. I think it is very important that we move forward.

All members are assisted by ensuring that all branches are kept up-to-date with motions. Those that were submitted, passed and lost can also generate debate at branches and develop understanding. It can also show lay members how to push their own ideas forward. The members then have a feel for what the union is trying to promote on their behalf. It also shows the union to be a living, functional body, concerned with a whole plethora of issues affecting our living standards and services. Such feedback also shows that we are not just concerned with living standards and workplace issues, but also the wider community and the environment. So I am pleased to second the motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? (*No response*) In that case, I will now put it to Conference. The CEC is supporting the motion. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against?

*Motion 2 was CARRIED.*

## **UNION ORGANISATION: GENERAL**

### **NATIONAL MASCOT MOTION 4**

#### **4. NATIONAL MASCOT**

This Conference asks that this Union's governing body explore the concept of adopting a national mascot for this Union, with a report back to Congress 2013.

ASHFIELD NO.1 BRANCH  
*Midland & East Coast Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. C. MASON (Midland & East Coast): Conference, I move Motion 4—National Mascot. President and Congress, I am asking Congress to consider adopting a National Mascot. A mascot is an ambassador of goodwill, a figurehead, a character that will take our message to a wider audience from the very young to the more mature. Getting our message out to the working public is crucial in our attempt to recruit. Today you will hear other motions calling for ways to energise and motive members in the name of recruitment. Well, a mascot could be an answer to some of those requests. While pressing ahead with new technology, let's not forget mascots which have already been tried and proved successful.

When you have the right mascot, it becomes an instantly recognisable figure that people can associate with. A mascot can be used anywhere and everywhere, from leaflets to website, from publications to the creation of a costume for people to wear. The possibilities are endless with just a little imagination.

I know that there are those out *there* who think that it is just a bit of fun and not to be taken seriously. For those people, I would like to tell you that you are, in part, quite right. Mascots are, by their very nature, designed to be fun, but I mean Fun with a capital "F". Just because the message is delivered in a fun way, this does not make the message any less important. What fun does is make the information more appealing. People are more interested in what you write and what you have to say. So you reach a wider and more diverse audience with your message. Congress, isn't that the whole point?

For those people who do not take this seriously, I can assure Congress that I am not here to waste anybody's time. For the sceptics, pin back your ears. I've a few statistics for you that might change your minds.

Aleksander Orlov! Who, I hear you ask? You might know him as the lovable meercat mascot who promotes insurance. He first appeared in 2009, a mere three years ago, and in that time he has increased traffic to the website from 50,000 visitors a month to over 2 million. That's right. A mascot increased website hits from 50,000 a month to over 2 million. In addition to that, the meercat has over three-quarters of a million Facebook likes, and more than 22,000 followers on Twitter. Have I converted the sceptics yet. Maybe you need a little more.

Who remembers the annoying Energizer bunny mascot that goes on and on? He was the second campaign after Duracell, and he first appeared in 1989. Again, just three years later in 1992 Energizer attributed a 7% increase in sales to having that bunny mascot. I repeat: a 7% increase in three years. Could we match this, or could we do better? If we could match it, ask yourselves what a 7% increase in three years would mean to this union? Congress, there we have probably the two most mundane items, an inert battery and an insurance salesman. Imagine what a mascot could do for *this* union, which is neither mundane nor inert, which is a living and breathing movement, with more facets than the Hope Diamond! What you have to remember here is that this has never been done before. No other union has a mascot. We would be the first. Like anything new that is introduced, people will always say, "It'll never catch on."

Do you remember computers, mobile phones and emails? Look where we are with those things today. I have given you two examples, but it has been proven time and time again that the right mascot increases sales, boosts business and expands returns, the optimum word being the "right" mascot. Choosing the right mascot to represent you is all important. Pick the wrong one and you place limitations on what you can achieve.

In conclusion, if I have failed to convince you of my words, I am truly sorry. I was hoping to enthuse and excite you with my idea because I believe it is something to get excited about, a new tool for us as an aid to recruitment that can grow and adapt as we move forward. It is said that if one person believes strongly enough, they can move mountains. Congress, I can assure you that in *this*, I believe. I move motion 4. (*Applause*)

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

SIS. H. EWAN (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I second motion 4. President and Congress. This idea has been worked out since August 2010, so for almost two years, and during extensive research, we have looked at nearly every creature that we thought might stand as a chance of being our mascot, and it is for you to weigh up the pros and cons of each. Why did we not specify a particular mascot and just leave it open, you may ask? The simple answer is because we do not presume to tell you what to do but we have not come here empty handed. Do you think we have the answer? Yes, we do. As a region, I was more than insistent and persistent until they brought the trial mascot costume, which was tested out at a local event last year. Yes, Congress, Cathy wore the suit and it did do what a mascot should do, which is created a greater interest at the GMB stand.

My concern is that because the choice of mascot has been left open, this idea would get left behind, not because people do not want to support the concept but because, on a scale of things that this union deals with, the GMB deals with job losses and lives at stake. It would be naïve of us to think that other unions do not take an interest in what we say and do here. They would also be interested in the statistics that have been shared with you today. You have to admit that they are quite impressive. If you do not act quick on our choice of the mascot, we could lose out in having the best for ourselves.

As the General Secretary has put in his report, this Congress is this Union's supreme policy-making body. So I say to you, Congress, if you do not know when, and if not you, who should make the decision? If you should feel that the matter has become urgent, I would ask you to act accordingly to prevent others taking what is currently a good idea. To put it in another way, if any union is going to have the opportunity to increase its membership and benefit from a mascot, let it be our union. Let it be the GMB. I am not asking you to support this motion with just a "Yes", but I want you to support it by pushing it until we can get a choice of mascot made. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Helen. We are supporting. Can I have two Duracell batteries for Paul Kenny next time you are getting up? *(Laughter)*

## COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS MOTION 6

### 6. COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

Congress believes that every effort should be made to make our communication systems relevant for the 21st Century and that, by examining and revising current practices, there is scope for considerable savings in time and money, and opportunities for recruitment of new members and the greater involvement of a younger generation of Activists.

Congress therefore calls for a review of the Union's communication systems and mandates the CEC to present its findings and recommendations to Congress 2013.

Specifically, Congress calls for this review to include consideration of the following:

- 1) Ensuring that branches are equipped with, or have access to, computers and that appropriate Branch Officers are skilled, or have adequate training in their use.
- 2) The sending, wherever possible, of national and regional office communications electronically.
- 3) Training of the better and more extensive utilisation of Face book, Twitter et al  
and
- 4) The viability and introduction of electronic meetings.

NORWICH GENERAL BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. K. ROWLEY (London): Congress, I move Motion 6. In my branch a new activist under 40 is a case for celebration. I am beginning to worry that some of us will have to stay patrolling the union citadel well past our sell-by date. We cannot identify someone to become a branch youth officer and we struggle to find committed young members. I suspect we are not so unusual in this respect.

We realise that cultural changes following on top of the political attack launched on trade unionism in the 1980s have marginalised our movement in the eyes of young people. The vast majority of them see us as dinosaurs or as members of some mysterious cult. It is all too easy to bewail the perceived lack of idealism and radicalism of modern youth. Instead, we should reflect on the steps that, perhaps, we

should have taken 30 years ago to guard against such weaknesses. We are struggling to bring our systems up to late 20<sup>th</sup> century standards, let alone the demands of the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

This motion asks the CEC to consider ways in which we can overhaul these systems, and we make some suggestions of a few obvious areas for their scrutiny. We believe that the advantages will be threefold. We will develop the communication tools that the younger generation will be comfortable working with. We will be able to disseminate information more speedily and efficiently, and we will save money in the long run, and quite a bit of it, too.

This movement is fundamental to the wellbeing of our citizens. We must survive to protect those social values we espouse and prevent our society falling even further into the abyss of corporate greed, political expediency and environmental degradation. Yes, we are only talking about a set of tools, but without exploiting the opportunities they offer we won't draw in that new generation of members and activists we so badly need. Thank you.

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

BRO. M. SAYWELL (London): Congress, I second motion 6 – Communication Systems. In relation to this motion I want to talk about what happened in Egypt. They called it the “Twitter revolution” in Egypt. It was not really a Twitter revolution but it was, basically, organisation, which is what we do every day in our working lives, representing our members. It is about organisation on the ground. As organisers, we need to have the best tools available to us. Modern tools of organising, such as Twitter and Facebook, are brilliant ways of campaigning and to get our message out *there*. We need to be active on these systems if we are going to get our message out. That means responding to comments and making us look exciting and interesting in the social media world because it gives everyone a say. It is important, from a union perspective, that we are opening ourselves up for officers and people like that to have their say as well. It can't just be a closed system where communications come from the Communications Department and the message from the organiser comes from the organiser. It should be shared across the board.

Everybody has smart phones and things like that nowadays, so it is important that we are out *there*, but we do see it as a tool in our toolbox and not as a means to an end. It is not a solution but just another way of getting our voice heard. (*Applause*)

## **NEW TECHNOLOGY MOTION 7**

### **7. NEW TECHNOLOGY**

Congress calls for the union to do more to embrace new technology and notes how other unions are far in advance of us.

Congress agrees that in such difficult economic times and with the attack on our facility time, using new media technologies can help us communicate better and faster with our members, thus aiding retention and with getting our message across to the public. For example many of

our Labour Councillors and MPs have huge followings on twitter and through tweeting and re-tweeting; our message can reach thousands in minutes.

Congress asks that the CEC urgently look into modernising our communication methods and help us grow our union and its influence in society.

REDBRIDGE BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. J. COLES (London): Congress, I move Motion 7 on New Technology. The reason why my branch is bringing forward this motion is because we believe it is a case of “Twitter yea not”. With the way our various public and private services and industries have been hit and with the way communications are changing, we believe that the GMB needs to re-think its communication strategy and embrace modern technology. I know that modernisation is often used as a euphemism for job cuts but not in this case. In fact, it is to help us at all levels of the union to engage with our members as we face up to the challenges of funding cuts and the workforce being scattered to the winds. By using new communication methods, we can communicate faster with our members, on the one hand, and also, on the other hand, they can help us to react quickly to events.

Congress, as we know, technology has moved on and we need to move with the times, or should that be the e-times? Nowadays, we can, virtually, “farm” over breakfast, communicate with our members via wi-fi over lunch and, in my case, after Congress I can speak to my Indonesian wife on Skype for free, who is at the moment stuck in Dubai and has been waiting for a visa for eight months.

Whilst we will still need to use tried and tested old technologies that continue serving us well, there are times when we need to enhance these. As you can see, with 45% of our members joining online, and I am told there is even Tweeting in the hall, perhaps about the mascot, with GMB dressing up at work, and even listening to us live over the web now, lots of our members are using modern communication strategies and embracing modern methods.

We understand that the CEC will state in its qualification that GMB has been moving on behind the scenes and this is very welcome, but we still want you to support this motion as we believe that more can still be done and communicated. Thank you.  
*(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder?

BRO. R. SMYTH (London): Congress, I second Motion 7. May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010 is a day that many people still have nightmares about when our current Government got into power. On that day, more 18 – 30 year olds clicked on a social media website than went out and put a cross on a ballot form. This is how big social media is coming and this is why we need to embrace it. It is not just about the youngsters. In 2010 there was a 48% increase in the use of social media. The over-60s bracket saw the biggest increase in usage at 83%.

When most people hear of things like Twitter and Facebook, they think it is all about what Stephen Fry had for breakfast or what Katie Price was wearing that day. It is not. It's about sharing communication with individuals and groups who have the same beliefs and opinions that you want to listen to and share.

With our current right-wing press, when we had the day of action on November 30<sup>th</sup>, it was referred to as a "damp squib". Anybody who attended any of the rallies around the country knows it was not, but our national press at this moment in time will not tell the truth on these matters. By using social media the GMB is able to put the truth out to our members and the public. Please support this motion.

## **COMMUNICATIONS WITH MEMBERS MOTION 8**

### **8. COMMUNICATIONS WITH MEMBERS**

This Conference is asked to develop a National model which uses modern methods of communications such as Social Networking and Social Media to engage and communicate with members.

The GMB needs a consistent, understandable message throughout all media and now that there are direct cost effective methods of communicating this message the GMB needs to ensure that the opportunity is not missed.

R12 THAMES VALLEY BRANCH  
*Southern Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. S. MEMMOTT (Southern Region): I ask this Congress to develop a national model to use modern methods of communication, such as social networking and media. The GMB needs a consistent understandable message throughout all media and this method of communication is cost-effective. We need to make the most of this opportunity for the use of Twitter and Facebook and it should be encouraged as a more up-to-date method of engaging with existing and potential members, such as working parents who communicate with likeminded colleagues and friends, and fellow members, for socialising and a way of keeping up with current affairs. I myself use Facebook to keep in contact with my daughter who is currently working in South Korea as she could not find full-time employment in the UK in her field of expertise. She is over 6,000 miles away so Facebook is an essential, free, everyday modern way of communication, although I do not always like to see what she is up to. We understand that there needs to be clear regulation and rules for effective communication with members across the board. Congress, I ask you to support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Secunder?

BRO. A. GOAT (Southern Region) in seconding the motion said: President and Congress, I think that the communication facets of the motion are very important to us and the future of the union. Twitter, Facebook, email, YouTube, are the way forward for us. As far as the union is concerned, we need to develop a cost-effective single platform that we can use to interface with everybody, especially the youth, the younger generation that is coming up. As pointed out before in this debate, Twitter

has been used and Facebook has been used considerably during our campaigns on pensions, on the national day of action, and to counteract the rightwing press that we have already heard about. I ask Congress to back the motion in full and implement it as soon as possible. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Yorkshire Region to move Motion 10.

## **NATIONAL WEBSITE – YOUNG MEMBERS’ SECTION MOTION 10**

### **10. NATIONAL WEBSITE – YOUNG MEMBERS’ SECTION**

This Conference notes the exceptional work undertaken in the development of the GMB national website.

Our web pages play an important role in demonstrating to those looking for a better world that GMB is at the forefront of the fight back against the ConDem austerity measures and the employers who collude with them. We need to ensure that we utilise this vital forum to speak to the widest audience.

Conference therefore requests that a young members’ space be made within the pages of the national website that speaks to the young workers and students who are key to our current and future campaigns. This section would encourage growth and networking, highlight our involvement in issues relevant to young people, illustrate our disgust on matters such as government negligence of and lack of investment in youth employment, show us standing side by side with students fighting for the right to a free education and reflect the hopes and desires of our young membership. Such a section could then be linked directly to regional pages.

Whilst a web link alone is no substitute to our building a strong student and young worker organisation, it will prove to be a significant signpost of who we are and what we are doing. This will reassure and build confidence amongst our existing young activist base but will also illustrate to those we have still yet to convince that GMB is both the union for present and future generations.

A simple and cost effective way to spread our message further and so aid the growth of our union. Conference please support.

LEEDS CIVIC BRANCH  
*Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region*

*(Referred)*

MOYA O’NEILL (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region): President, Congress, with the increasing use of social networking media and online campaigning, it is paramount that we give our young members a forum within our own national website to organise and activate our union. GMB has to be driven by encouragement and engagement with our young members. Without their input how can we effectively represent them with whose views it is that we are presenting? Young people are unlikely to pick up a telephone for a chat or bother to compose an email when a much simpler alternative is available. They are more than happy to leave a comment or join in a discussion with a few words and an active audience. The proof of this is no more evident than Twitter and Facebook. Whilst this is fine for these methods to be used in their own right we need to be capturing their comments and using them in our work. Let’s bring the fight to us and give young members the tools they need to engage with

us and direct us. The addition to the national website is simple to apply and would not raise any additional cost. We can use this source of Facebook, etc., to advise and promote the new online resources and get people using it. Young people are our future and so is online multimedia. Let's make the connection with the GMB that is presently missing. Congress, please support. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Moya. Secunder?

A DELEGATE: Formally.

*The motion was formally seconded.*

THE PRESIDENT: The seconder is here. Now, that is an experience, Regional Secretary. You are going in the dark room and sit on the step. Carry on.

BRO. M. SHORT (Midland & East Coast Region): Good morning, delegates. Good morning, Mary. Seconding Motion 10.

THE PRESIDENT: Has that been agreed with the region that you second?

BRO. M. SHORT: I think so, yes. I hope it is.

THE PRESIDENT: Sorry, Tim. So, you are moving 11. We have just had the mover of 10. Carry on.

BRO. M. SHORT: I do not feel like carrying on! Are you sure?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, carry on.

BRO. M. SHORT (Midland & East Coast Region): Sorry about this. I support this motion as I feel as a union we have to encourage more young people to join the GMB to understand the principles and the values of this great union. I support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Excuse me, colleague. When you get up next time, when I call you, say you want to speak in favour of the motion. That is the confusion. Don't confuse Mary any more. She is confused enough. Carry on. *(Laughter)* I will get my own back when I am up in the Midlands. Well done. We now move to 11, Wortley Hall.

## **WORTLEY HALL MOTION 11**

### **11. WORTLEY HALL**

This Conference recommends that the national union, all regions and branches consider buying (further) shares in Wortley Hall. This is particularly appropriate as Wortley continue their support of GMB in our ongoing dispute with CO-OP following their de-recognition.

The Hall has kicked their rep off the board and refused all business from them even though times are hard.

Formerly the private residence of the Earl of Wharnccliffe, the Hall is situated in 26 acres of woodland between Sheffield and Barnsley only 10 minutes from the M1 and is steeped in history, this year celebrating the 60<sup>th</sup> year of ownership by the trade union and labour movement.

The Hall offers extensive conference facilities and 3 star en-suite accommodation for delegates with bar and leisure facilities ideal as a venue for GMB meetings.

The Hall is owned by the trade union and labour movement and run as a cooperative with a share register. Each share is £5 with individuals limited to a maximum of £200 with no limit for organisations. Dividend is not paid on shares which remain at face value. Irrespective of how many shares an individual or organisation holds, they are only allowed one vote at the AGM.

[www.wortleyhall.org.uk](http://www.wortleyhall.org.uk)

S99 SOUTH YORKSHIRE RMA BRANCH  
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

*(Carried)*

SIS. M. TAYLOR (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region): At a meeting in May 1950 Vin Williams addressed the local labour Movement activists outlining a proposal that Wortley Hall could have the potential of being owned by the workers and run for the workers' benefit. On 5<sup>th</sup> May 1951, Wortley Hall was formally opened as an educational and holiday centre for the trade union, labour, and cooperative movement. It was in a semi-derelict condition and the workers of South Yorkshire and surrounding areas carried out most of the repairs and restoration voluntarily. Over the last 50 years successive generations have maintained the commitment and the lease of those early pioneers. Drawn from a broad base of labour Movement no one person or organisation can have overall control of Wortley Hall. This is one of its strengths, a truly cooperative venture run by its members for the Movement as a whole. This motion is asking Congress to recommend that the National Union, all regions and branches, consider buying shares in Wortley Hall. This is particularly appropriate as Wortley continues their support of the GMB in its ongoing dispute with Co-Op Funeralcare following their de-recognition. They kicked the rep off the board and refused all business from them even though times are hard. Each share is £5 with individual amounts to a maximum of £200 with no limit for organisations. A dividend is not paid on the shares which remain at face value. Irrespective of how many shares an individual or organisation holds, they are only allowed one vote at the AGM.

I have been lucky enough to use Wortley for courses and weekend school but not as lucky as any delegate who wishes to attend now, no more shared bedrooms and bathrooms, the Hall offers extensive conference facilities, and three-star en suite accommodation with bar and leisure facilities, ideal as a venue for GMB meetings. Some motions in this Congress will not be as easy to make a difference but if we can ask our branches to buy shares when we go back, we can show our support to Wortley for their support for us. Please support. It is Stand 33 if you want more information.  
*(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Maureen. While I am calling the seconder, if anyone wishes to come up and speak on any of the resolutions from 4 to 11, please come forward. Thank you.

BRO. J. STEVENSON (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region): You have just heard from Maureen about Wortley Hall. I cannot add to that. It is brilliant. But, as trade unionists and GMB members we believe in unity when we have a struggle. Wortley Hall has stood by us in our ongoing dispute with the Co-Op. They de-recognised the GMB. They did not have to stand by us and they have lost money by doing so. They have turned business down and they have kicked their rep off. I ask for your support in this motion and show Wortley Hall your support, go back to your regions, your branches, individuals, ask them to buy shares in Wortley Hall. They have stood by us, now it is our turn, let's stand by them. Thank you, Congress. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Before I call Audrey Harry, of the CEC, to reply on Motions 6, 7 and 10, I see nobody coming forward. Audrey, please.

SIS. A. HARRY (CEC, Manufacturing): Congress, the CEC is asking you to support Motions 6 and 7, each with a qualification, and refer Motion 10. The principles behind Motion 6 are sound. The qualification is that a steering group is already conducting a review. Many Branch Secretaries have contributed their online survey. All parts of the union will be consulted and the steering group will report its recommendations to the CEC.

The CEC is supporting Motion 7 with a qualification. It is unfair to say that other unions are in advance of us. Where other unions may have wasted large sums on projects which were untested and often unsuccessful, the GMB is mindful of the cost of getting it right. The GMB's approach is to make use of all relevant technologies as they become available. The GMB Press Office Twitter feed-in has a large and growing following and an interactive GMB is in development as part of the overall review.

The CEC is asking Congress to agree to refer Motion 10 which calls for a young members section on the national website. The website went live in March 2010 and was developed with new technology in mind as well as it will be used by young workers. The GMB website is fully mobile and is full and friendly, and the GMB app is a development. The explosion in new social media and networking could mean that a dedicated section on the existing website may not be the best way to highlight the GMB's involvement in matters relevant to the young people.

The CEC is asking Congress to agree to refer the motion so that we can see how best to achieve these aims in the light of fast-moving innovations in technology and social networking. Congress, please support Motion 6 with the qualification, support Motion 7, and agree to refer Motion 10. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Audrey. Congress, we are supporting Motion 4. Does London Region accept the qualification for 6 and 7? (*Agreed*) Thank you very much. Southern Region, we are supporting the national website. Yorkshire Region do you accept reference? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Motion 11, Wortley Hall, Yorkshire Region, we are supporting. Colleagues, could I ask you, does Congress accept the reference on Motion 10? Speak to Mary. (*Agreed*)

*Motion 10 was REFERRED.*

THE PRESIDENT: I put all others to the vote. Please show. Anyone against? They are carried. Thank you. While we were discussing Wortley Hall, could we extend a message of solidarity to Wortley Hall-Workers Stately Home who are on Stand 33 in the Exhibition Area. As you heard the speaker say, they have supported us in our fight against de-recognition in the Co-Op. Please support them and go along to the stand. Okay, colleagues. (*Applause*)

*Motion 4 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 6 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 7 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 8 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 11 was CARRIED.*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We will now move on to Item 16, which is the Union Organisation: Representation & Accountability, which are Motions 14, Southern Region, 16, Birmingham Region, and 19, Yorkshire Region. Then I will be asking Kath Slater from the CEC to speak on Motions 14 and 16.

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

### **CEC ELECTION PROCEDURE**

#### **MOTION 14**

#### **14. CEC ELECTION PROCEDURE**

Congress notes with concern the low turn out in the 2011 CEC elections.

Congress notes that members have very little information to judge between candidates, and may feel unable to make an informed choice; leading to high levels of abstention.

Congress asks the CEC to investigate whether changes in the conduct of elections might improve the information available to members.

For example, the CEC might consider:

Whether asking candidates to have a threshold of nominations from up to five branches, instead of just requiring one branch nomination, might give an indication of a candidate's ability to demonstrate leadership in their own region. Nominating branches could be listed in the candidate's booklet.

Whether allowing candidates to undertake campaigning would empower members to meet the candidates and make an assessment of their merits.

Congress asks CEC to report any recommendations to Congress 2013, and any necessary rules revisions should be proposed in time for the next CEC elections in 2015.

W15 WILTSHIRE & SWINDON BRANCH  
*Southern Region*

*(Referred)*

SIS. C. VALLELLY (Southern Region): President, Congress, the 2011 CEC elections have seen an incredibly low turnout of only 5%. Five percent is pretty poor

in anyone's book. This motion asks the CEC to look at whether a change in the rules surrounding the conduct of elections may result in more enthusiasm from the members when it comes to voting. I do say "enthusiasm" but I think that may be a big ask. During the elections members often said they actually did not know very much about the candidates. The candidates were allowed to present a small statement and that was basically all the members knew about them, quite often. They asked whether the candidates would be allowed to come round to the branches so they could talk to them, they could ask the candidates some questions, get their views on things, find out what sort of people the candidates actually were, but that is against the rules. The candidates are not allowed to electioneer in that way.

We would like the CEC to have a look and see if there are ways that we can actually make the candidates more accessible to the members. One other thing may be that candidates could be nominated from more than one branch so that that may give members some confidence in those candidates, knowing that they were quite well respected. We are asking if they could look at the rules surrounding the elections, consider some other ways to engage the members — I think "enthusiasm" was a bit of a strong word — and try and get the turnout in the next election just a smidge higher than 5%. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Carole. Secunder? Formally. Thank you.

*Motion 14 was formally seconded.*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We now move on to Motion 16, Birmingham Region.

## **GENDER BALANCE WITHIN GMB REGIONAL SECRETARIES MOTION 16**

### **16. GENDER BALANCE WITHIN GMB REGIONAL SECRETARIES**

This Conference calls upon the CEC to ensure the GMB policy on Equality is applied when appointing Regional Secretaries.

At present there are nine male Regional Secretaries we believe a gender balance should be brought in as a matter of urgency to demonstrate the unions strive for Equality across all areas.

W18 WALSALL LOCAL AUTHORITY BRANCH  
*Birmingham & West Midlands Region*

*(Lost)*

BRO. A. DUDSON (Birmingham & West Midlands Region): Morning, Congress. Delegates, this union of ours is second to none in promoting equality in the workplace but when we look at ourselves we have a male General Secretary — I was going to say good looking but I crossed that bit out — and a female President, and that is good, but when we look at our Regional Secretaries, with no disrespect to any of them at all, all nine are male. So, as our union moves forward with the times can we see some equality and gender balance within these positions. Obviously, this cannot happen overnight but as we look to the future we have some excellent women senior officers. I believe these officers should be supported, trained, and accepted to these positions as and when they become available to show that we not only promote equality but we

action it as well to try to attain a gender balance throughout all positions in our union. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Alan. Secunder?

SIS. S. ELSON (Birmingham & West Midlands Region): Congress, at our pre-delegates meeting concern was raised around this motion in that if women do not apply what can we do. I believe what we can do is ask ourselves, why don't they apply. When I was elected Branch Secretary it was of an all women branch, which I was proud of having. After a comment by another rep that my branch was not very equality friendly, I worked hard to embrace the GMB's equality agenda and now have a mixed group of reps, men, reps from ethnic backgrounds, youngsters. I have a great team. I urge you to support this motion and let's identify the barriers as to why women do not apply and let's see the GMB lead the way in appointing its first female Regional Secretary. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Motion 19, Yorkshire.

## **BREAKING STRIKE ACTION MOTION 19**

### **19. BREAKING STRIKE ACTION**

This Conference believes that any GMB member who breaks a strike should be investigated and appropriate action taken.

Lots of members and stewards broke the last strike on the 30<sup>th</sup> November, when these people joined a trade union to stand with their brothers and sisters, but we do have a number of members who use the union to their own ends, use the resources and time of officers, but when it comes to doing anything in support of the union they are nowhere to be seen and looking after number one!

When you are elected as a GMB representative you should be bound by the democratic decisions of our members.

This Conference calls that when representatives do not, they should face action up to and including their removal from office.

LEEDS LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF BRANCH  
*Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. S. BOOTH (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region): First time delegate, first time speaker. (*Applause*) N30 was an historic moment for me as it was the biggest industrial action this country has seen since the 1926 General Strike. As an activist it inspired and proved to me what a group of likeminded individuals fighting for what is rightfully theirs (or in one word, a union) actually stands for. When I heard reports from the region that stewards had gone into work and crossed picket lines, it made me feel physically sick. It goes against every moral fibre in my body. When you are elected as a rep it is a privilege and an honour. Your workplace looks to you to lead, organise, and have their best interests at heart always. When my old workplace called

me for support on the picket line that is exactly what I did and was proud to do so, standing shoulder to shoulder in solidarity.

The reports were so shocking it has led me to ask Congress to support this motion. I understand that we cannot legally prevent a member from stepping over the picket line but I thought we signed a moral code that as a steward you are to lead the majority opinion and on this the results of the ballot were overwhelming in support of industrial action. By breaking the strike those stewards had robbed their members of the support and trust that the membership expected of them when they were elected. This means that they have also failed to support the wider trade union Movement and defend the hard work previous generations have done to build up our rights at work, including the Tolpuddle Martyrs, the Gas workers, the Durham Miners, and many more. A steward or official of a branch should be bound by the democratic process. If the process arrives at industrial action, then no steward should be able to cross a picket without a sanction. Therefore, I call upon Congress to give branches the autonomy to remove a steward from their role if found to be crossing the picket line. Congress, please support. I move. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Stacey. Secunder.

SIS. D. BALANCE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region): First time delegate, first time speaker. (*Applause*) Had I not been a workplace organiser I would still have supported the union on N30. I would still have stuck by my vote of yes to strike action and made a stand with the masses. I would not have voted yes and then hidden indoors away from my boss for fear of retribution or harassment, or gone shopping for Christmas presents. Why, because I know my union would support me and in return I support my union. N30 was a landmark day and I look forward to the next. To those of you who are sitting squirming in your chairs knowing you should have supported what you are against, get off your lazy butts and join your union physically and not just talk in the wind. Shame on those who sat in their comfortable armchairs moaning that things will not change. To them I say, get off your backsides and make a change, stand by what you voted for, add your voice to the song, show the Government that we will not take it lying down and wait for our bellies to be tickled. Shame on those workplace representatives who crumbled and were too embarrassed to stand on picket lines. Shame on those who did not rally their members to fight for their pensions and pay. Shame on those who left it to people like me to show this Tory Government that we will not stand by and let them stamp all over us. You strike-breakers are a boil on the face of humanity and as such need lancing. I second. (*Applause/Cheers*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Donna. I ask Kathleen Slater of the CEC to speak on Motions 14 and 16.

SIS. K. SLATER (CEC, Commercial Services): Congress, Motion 14 is concerned about the low turnout at the last election for the CEC and suggests a number of reforms aimed at increasing involvement. The CEC agrees that turnout was disappointing and believes that a major reason for low turnout is that the law forces us to run a postal ballot only, whereas other options such as telephone voting and online voting are much more likely to encourage members to take part. The CEC would like to study the various options and report back to Congress and we are therefore asking the movers to agree to refer the motion.

Turning to Motion 16, which calls for gender balance among Regional Secretaries, yes, it is all men at the top. Yes, the entire SMT is male but they, and let's give them credit, have been changing the culture and structure of the union. The gender balance of officers and senior staff has changed too. For some years now women activists have been successfully applying for officer posts and almost unheard of in GMB until recently women from staff grades are moving across into officer posts. This is due in no small part to the personal encouragement and support they have received from their Regional Secretaries, but now we need to go further. We need to put the building blocks in place to ensure women have an equal opportunity to move to the most senior roles in the union, not through favouritism, not through quotas, but through positive action to equip women with the skills and confidence to put themselves forward to senior posts.

Regretfully, we must ask you to oppose the motion because the wording implies that GMB equalities policies are not followed during the appointment of Regional Secretaries. In fact, no women applied for any of the recent Regional Secretary positions, which is why the CEC recently commissioned a project from the Campaign Company to encourage women into the senior structures of the union. On behalf of the CEC I am saying to women officers and activists in GMB, follow the lead of Mary Turner, and many others, and take leadership of your union. Congress, the CEC entirely agrees there should be women in these senior posts: more Mary Turners, more women senior organisers and, yes, women Regional Secretaries. We are taking positive action.

Congress, it is the opportunities that need to be changed, not the process. Colleagues, refer Motion 14 and oppose Motion 16 for the reasons I have set out above. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kath. Colleagues, we will now go on to the vote. Does the mover of Motion 14 accept reference? *(Agreed)* Thank you. All those in favour please show. Any against? That is carried. Would the mover of Motion 16 like his right of reply? No. The CEC is asking you to oppose this motion for the reasons given by the CEC. All those in favour please show. All those against. That is lost. Motion 19, the CEC is supporting this. All those in favour please show. All those against. That is carried.

*Motion 14 was REFERRED.*

*Motion 16 was LOST.*

*Motion 19 was CARRIED.*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We now move on. Could I please call on Helen Johnson to move a short Standing Orders Committee Report No.2.

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

*(Adopted)*

SIS. H. JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): President, Congress the SOC has been advised that the following motions have now been withdrawn:  
Motion 65 — The Choice to Retire at 60 — Birmingham & West Midlands Region

Motion 153 — Labour Party Rule Change — North West & Irish Region  
Motion 163 — Affiliation to Republic — North West & Irish Region  
President, Congress, I move SOC Report No.2.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Helen. Congress agree with that report, please show. (*Agreed*) Thank you.

*SOC Report No.2 was ADOPTED.*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We now move on to item 17, Union Organisation: Union Benefits & Services. Motion 32, Yorkshire Region, and 33, London Region. I will then call on Dana Bruno to speak on behalf of the CEC.

**UNION ORGANISATON: UNION BENEFITS & SERVICES  
CLAIMS CAPTURE  
MOTION 32**

**32. CLAIMS CAPTURE**

This Conference is appalled to note that the insurance industry is unashamedly carrying on the practice of 'Claims Capture.'

Claims Capture (or 'third party capture') is where, following an accident at work, company insurers get in touch with our injured members in an attempt to settle the claim there and then directly with the member.

All evidence suggests that when insurers deal with members direct potential long term medical problems are overlooked, our members get far less in compensation and management fail to deal with the underlying problem that led to the injury. Sadly there have been examples where this has been done with the full knowledge of GMB representatives.

Congress therefore condemns this practice wholeheartedly and reaffirms its policy that members' accident claims should be pursued through GMB appointed specialist solicitors.

KIRKLEES BRANCH  
*Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. G. JARVIS (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region): Barely a day goes by without a report from David Cameron and his pledge to end the so-called compensation culture. He held a love-in on Valentine's Day with leaders of the insurance industry, which has donated substantial amounts to the Tory Party to stitch up a plan that will make it more difficult for injured people to claim compensation. It will significantly boost insurer profits. What Cameron and his insurer mates never mention is that thousands of compensation claims are being generated by the insurance industry itself. It is what is known as "claims capture".

I doubt there are many delegates in this congress hall who have not received an unsolicited text or call suggesting they have had an injury and they may be due £3,250 if they just text "claim". The insurers claim, and the Government parrots what they say, that this is being done by claims management firms and it is the cause of rising premiums. They are right on the first bit but what they do not say is that most of

those claim management firms have strong links to and some are even owned by insurers. The power to keep your premiums low is in their hands entirely.

When you report your car has been hit, you will be asked if anyone has been injured. This is not because the people love you, it is because the motor insurance can sell your personal details to a claims management firm and they can in turn sell the claim to lawyers for hundreds of pounds at a time. When an insurer rings and seeks to settle the compensation claim of the injured person direct before they get legal advice and before any medical expert has assessed their injury, they do it not for the convenience of that person but because they pay out less. When an insurer sells your claim direct to one of their own panel law firms that lawyer is not independent and will not fight for maximum compensation for claimants.

GMB members and family members who have suffered injuries that are not their fault face a bewildering array of organisations all claiming they can recover compensation for them. Daytime TV is awash with adverts from no-win no-fee compensation claim firms. The internet has thousands of websites and advertisements for personal injury experts claiming to be the specialists in any number of types of injuries and disease. When an injured person gets a call from someone offering them money to settle their claim without any fuss, without involving lawyers, it must be tempting but it is wrong. Insurers ultimately want to pay as little as possible. That way they keep up their profits and shareholders happy so they discourage the use of independent lawyers and they settle claims on only basic medical evidence.

At the same time so that they can pay as little compensation as possible to generally injured people the insurance industry is seeking to control the market by capturing cases and by doing so they fuel claims. Rather than put their house in order the insurers whinge to the PM about compensation culture and he cannot jump high enough for them. As usual, he is out of touch and aiming at the wrong target. He should put a stop to claim capture, not access to justice for injured people. That would tackle the rising claims but where would that leave the insurers' ability to pay inflated salaries to their chief executives, and where would it leave the Tory Party coffers. I move. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Graham. Secunder.

BRO. J. SHIELD (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region): President, Congress, I ask you all to support this important motion. We must put an end to the way company insurers are exploiting GMB members. We need to make it known to our members that the quick fix offered by these insurers is not the way to go. Accepting these deals could leave them with less compensation and any long-term medical issues totally ignored. It also means that companies get away with not investigating accidents which will put our members' lives in further danger in the future. In the factory that I work we have improved our safety record with inspections and assessments. This will mean nothing if claims capture becomes commonplace. We must reaffirm that using GMB specialist solicitors is the best policy for all concerned. So let's tell our members that if after having an accident they are approached by the company insurers just say, no. I second. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jim. Mover of Motion 33.

## **LEGAL EMPLOYMENT ADVICE HELPLINE MOTION 33**

### **33. LEGAL EMPLOYMENT ADVICE HELPLINE**

Congress agrees that our members and Senior Shop Stewards and Representatives would be better served by the setting up of a Legal Employment Advice Helpline.

It is well known that employers try to delay disciplinary decisions and appeal decisions to the extent that the time limit to make application to an Employment Tribunal are sometimes very tight. These limits are compounded by the fact that the normal GMB chain of Rep to Officer to Lawyer to member tightens that time limit.

By introducing a Legal Employment Advice Helpline, our Senior Reps could have expert advice on the wording and submitting a protective claim would surely enhance members' chances of success.

All Senior Reps should have sound knowledge of disciplinary and grievance proceedings but they cannot be expected to have the legal knowledge to fully submit an urgent ET1 and expect success.

This branch believes this motion is a win, win situation for members, Reps and the GMB.

HOME COUNTIES GENERAL BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Referred)*

BRO. P. ROBINSON (London Region) in moving the motion, said: Currently we are under siege from companies and we are under siege from the Government swayed by venture capitalists who make far-reaching proposals to reduce the rights of workers and increase the ability of companies to hire and fire at will and with impunity. Mary spoke earlier about recommendations by Adrian Beecroft and if you read those it is quite horrifying. Companies themselves are relying more directly on employment lawyers and less on HR departments, therefore getting direct advice in their favour rather than the employees.

We have to respond to this and make sure that the service we offer our members can compete on an equal footing when our member is involved in the employment processes of grievances, disciplinaries, dismissals, and equality of pay issues. Where these processes actually begin is in the workplace. What I am therefore proposing is that there should be a more direct and immediate link between the union lawyer and the union senior rep on site via a hotline to general legal advice. I would suggest the legal advice helpline be provided as part of the law firm service to the union. Whilst I realise this would have a knock-on effect, only yesterday we were talking at our regional meeting about the subscription fees going up so perhaps we could use some of that to fund it.

Whilst senior shop stewards should have adequate knowledge of workers' rights and employment law, this can never replace the expertise of lawyers. I am not suggesting that that should be the case but we have an inherent weakness, which is length of time in returning legal advice into the workplace. The senior shop steward has to ensure members' individual positions are protected should a tribunal claim be an outcome of

a workplace dispute. There are factors conspiring against this, such as companies knowing the timeframes involved to push the potential claimant beyond their ability to seek redress by delaying the internal process, by ignoring ACAS guidelines, and trying to go beyond the 28-day/99-day window in which to register a potential claim at tribunal. This is coupled with the time it takes for the union's own lawyers to process the facts and return their recommendation via the regional officer to the senior rep and then the member.

I am not suggesting these layers need removing for final decisions on legal representation but currently ET1 forms are being entered without full legal advice in order to keep open the member's ability to claim. These claimants sometimes find themselves later on having to withdraw their case as the union lawyers veto representation at court because of the 60% probability. Quicker direct legal advice would reduce this occurrence and also with the proposed changes in the fee structure to register at tribunal we have to be even more vigilant. If the proposed incoming charge for registration at tribunal is implemented, it is even more important that we go in this direction. With the correct legal advice ET1 forms could be entered with confidence and no valid case would ever lose out due to timeframe restrictions. This would be a win-win situation for the union, its members, and also its credibility. The legal advice helpline would be a positive path forward in modernisation and in supporting the union activities in representing its members and its own interest during a period in history where we all face major challenges within the workplace. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Come along, Jim.

BRO. J. HIOM (London Region): This union's main reason for being is to represent our members. Yes, we may be the best at political campaigning, we may be the best in recruiting, and we may be the best in getting out the vote, but the important thing is representing members and giving them sound and timely advice. At this moment, this motion does that. It is a motion from lay members for all lay members. There is a time for pursuing the process and following a current chain to obtain legal advice and employers do exploit that, putting the time for submission of ET1 in danger. Also, colleagues, in the current system it is not unheard of for a simple compromise agreement to take over a week to sign off. The current legal service is under threat because of the Jackson Report. Congress, let's pre-empt that by getting this excellent idea up and running. I am happy to second. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jim. Does anyone wish to come in on the debate on 32 and 33? No? I call Dana Bruno for the CEC to speak on Motion 33. Dana.

SIS. D. BRUNO (CEC, Public Services): Colleagues, Motion 33 asks us to set up a legal employment law helpline so that workplace organisers can get direct access to urgent legal advice. Congress, some other unions have experimented with similar schemes paying for helplines staffed by lawyers, and other external experts, but they have proved expensive and not always successful. What the union is facing on the legal front are the very challenging changes forced through by the Jackson Report, which will make legal services to members much harder to deliver. If we are not careful, this will prove a boon to insurers of negligent employers and will make it easier for bad employers to exploit our members. So, the union is conducting an

urgent review of our legal service and the CEC will be considering all ideas to help us maintain our members' legal rights and access to justice. The CEC will include the suggestions in the motion in our considerations and therefore we ask you to refer the motion. Congress, please refer Motion 33. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dana. Does London Region accept the reference? (*Agreed*) Thank you very much. Congress accept reference? (*Agreed*) I now put 32 to the vote. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried. Thank you.

*Motion 32 was CARRIED.*  
*Motion 33 was REFERRED.*

THE PRESIDENT: I remind delegates that Motion 34 has been agreed as existing policy as advised by the SOC Report No.1. I now move to the next group, Union Organisation: Education & Training. I ask movers of Motion 34, Yorkshire Region, 36, Voting Education, Yorkshire Region, 37, Equality and Diversity, Yorkshire Region, 38, Training GMB Activists in other Areas of Social Welfare Law, London Region, and 39, Training, London Region, please come to the front.

**UNION ORGANISATION: EDUCATION & TRAINING**  
**VOTING EDUCATION**  
**MOTION 36**

**36. VOTING EDUCATION**

This Conference calls for an education programme to teach members the importance of voting in ballots and other important events and what affect abstaining to vote has on important decisions.

Too often members do not vote simply because they do not know that they are being asked - education would put this right.

LEEDS CENTRAL & SYMPHONY BRANCH  
*Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. A. GLEDHILL (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region): First time delegate, proud Remploy worker. (*Applause*) Thank you very much. This Congress calls for an education programme to teach members the importance of voting in ballots and what effect abstaining to vote can do. Many people abstained from voting for Labour at the last election and we really showed Labour, didn't we, because we ended up with the LibDems and the Constupidives. People do not always realise the power of a vote. We have fought for the democratic vote. Lives have been lost, many hardships have been endured to bring forward the power to vote. Your vote can change policy, your vote can make a difference, your vote can topple governments, but not if you do not use it.

People will vote if they understand. People will vote if we show them the way. We need to educate members with face-to-face meetings. Emails are fine to send out the information, they are fine to raise awareness, they are fine to give facts, but what they do not convey is emotion or passion, or sincerity. If people do not know the causes,

they may not vote. We have to raise awareness and lead by example. Too often members do not vote simply because they do not know what they are being asked to vote on. There is low turnout because people did not know when the vote was or how long it was open to vote. We can build a training programme to correct these problems. We can instil courage so that members are not afraid to vote for industrial action when it is needed. Congress, the way forward is to educate, educate, educate. I move. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Colleague, well done. Secunder.

SIS. A. BURTON-KEEBLE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region): I am guessing here that I am preaching to the converted but there are two main reasons why I value my right to vote. Reason one: the suffragettes. In 1851, the Sheffield Female Political Association was founded. They submitted a petition calling for women's suffrage to the House of Lords. Seventy-seven years later in 1928 women received the right to vote on the same terms as men through The Representation of The People Act 1928. Reason two: countries are still fighting for democracy; for example, Burma. Burma is ruled by one of the most brutal dictatorships in the world. The Burmese Army rapes, loots, burns, tortures, and kills. Billions of dollars are spent on the military while the rest of the population goes without access to proper healthcare, education, and food. Aung San Suu Kyi, the pro democracy leader, spent more than 15 years in detention, mainly under house arrest. In Burma there are hundreds of political prisoners detained without trial.

In this country we should consider ourselves lucky and appreciate our right to vote in a democracy. However, this is not the case. Turnout statistics illustrate this. For example, in the last General Election turnout was 65%. The last local council elections turnout was 32%, the lowest in local elections since the year 2000. Frustratingly, this month there was only a turnout of 30% in the GMB ballot on NHS pension reforms. We need to educate our members and non-members on the importance of voting and hopefully to appreciate what our predecessors have fought hard for and what some people are still fighting hard for. Please support. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Motion 37.

## **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY MOTION 37**

### **37. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY TRAINING**

This Conference calls up on the CEC to introduce equality and diversity training as a mandatory part of the GMB@Work package which all workplace organisers and new officers currently undertake.

As a progressive organisation we must work to create safe environments for our members and employees where they are not subjected to abusive, unfair or undignified treatment as a result of their disability, gender, race, sexual orientation or religious/cultural beliefs.

Unfortunately, discrimination and ignorance is still very much prevalent in society today. A training provision such as this would help ensure that we are equipped to challenge it and to ensure our members and employees are secure and respected.

ROTHERHAM GENERAL & MCP BRANCH  
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

*(Carried)*

BRO. D. THORPE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region): First time delegate. *(Applause)* “This Conference calls upon the CEC to introduce equality and diversity training as a mandatory part of the GMB@Work package which all workplace organisers and new officers currently undertake. As a progressive organisation we must work to create safe environments for our members and employees where they are not subjected to abusive, unfair or undignified treatment” — it happens — “as a result of their disability, gender, race, sexual orientation or religious/cultural beliefs. Unfortunately, discrimination and ignorance is still very much prevalent in society today. A training provision such as this would help ensure that we are equipped to challenge it and to ensure our members and employees are secure and respected.” Congress support. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, David. Well done. Secunder.

BRO. J. BUTTERLEY (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region): First time speaker. *(Applause)* President, Congress, this motion supports and reinforces the very foundation of GMB@Work. GMB@Work was established to give every member the security of representation in the workplace by giving the workplace organisers the training they need to carry out their duties to the best of their abilities. Equality and diversity training should be at the core of our union. None of us are aware of all the issues but some of us have the decency not to ignore its own campaigns, not to ignore its own campaigners, and maybe some of our sponsored MPs could do with a bit of diversity training. This motion calls for the union to give respect in the workplace to all in the workplace through educating our organisers. This is not instead of, this is as well as. I have confidence this motion will receive the full support of Congress. I second this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jim. Well done. Sorry about supporting Sheffield Wednesday! *(Laughter)* Now the mover of 38, London Region.

## **TRAINING GMB ACTIVISTS IN OTHER AREAS OF SOCIAL WELFARE LAW MOTION 38**

### **38. TRAINING GMB ACTIVISTS IN OTHER AREAS OF SOCIAL WELFARE LAW**

This Congress is asked to direct that the union encourage GMB Branch Activists to train in other areas of social welfare law; i.e. welfare benefits, debt, housing, community care, immigration, etc as well as Employment Law to become Community Champions outside the workplace to help recruitment and retention of members from the wider community.

This is to counteract the Government's cuts to the not-for-profit advice sector and Legal Aid to build the strength and density of GMB membership. Our membership is already spread across those communities suffering from public sector cuts which are affecting the availability of advice and representation at Tribunals relating to various areas of Social Welfare Law including employment.

NORFOLK PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. J. SMITH (London Region): Congress, as GMB activists we are trained to enable us to carry out our GMB duties but, colleagues, we are not trained in housing, debts, immigration, and social welfare benefits, etc. One could say why do we need this type of training? Well, colleagues, every day we are either witnessing within our workplaces or reading in the newspapers, or on TV news, of government-induced cuts creating redundancies, closures, and most important withdrawal of legal aid services, unless one is in the mega-rich brackets who can afford legal representation. Our members are not in that bracket. Within the GMB we represent a cross-section of the community that we live in. Congress, we need this additional training which can only enhance GMB@Work and the GMB overall, making us champion community advisers. Also this can assist in recruitment and retention of members as we will be first-class ambassadors. Please support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jan. Secunder.

SIS. J. BATSON (London Region): Congress, there needs to be some development of collective intelligence within our workplace so that we can have more resources available to us to help us carry out our jobs more efficiently, with a consistently higher standard, and to increase performance. I believe that as GMB activists we need to be able to get to the grassroots of how to overcome issues that crop up in the workplace. I believe that training and support from the GMB will help us to achieve this. We should not rest on our past successes of what our founders brought the union into existence for but we should forge ahead and be more innovative and to make use of the technology that is around us and of the resources that we have available to us. Congress, please support us in this motion and help us to equip our GMB reps to perform better and to help strengthen the union through our endeavours. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Judith. Okay, 39, London Region to move.

## **TRAINING MOTION 39**

### **39. TRAINING**

Congress, as well as recruitment, training is a vital part of the GMB.

Considering we are a big union I think that we have the training and trainers at our fingertips. I myself am a Manual Handling Instructor. I am certain that there must be other members within the GMB who are trainers.

If we were to pool all the trainers and instructors that we have, this would be an invaluable training recruitment tool.

The cost would be minimal and it may help safeguard jobs

Congress, I put this to you to strongly consider and endorse.

BRAINTREE & BOCKING BRANCH  
London Region

*(Lost)*

BRO. D. RIGBY (London Region): This great union of ours keeps telling us that besides the dreaded word “recruit, recruit, recruit”, training is the next biggest topic that we should concentrate on. Well, considering that we are a big union I think we have the trainers at our fingertips. I myself am a manual handling instructor. I carry out training at our local authority and in and around the district that I work. I am certain that there must be hundreds of other people within the GMB who are trainers or carry out training of one sort or another, whether in the public sector or private sector. If everyone were to pass on the information to a pool contact within the GMB, then think of the invaluable training/recruitment tool this could be. In this time of hardship for all public and private sector employees, we could pool the resources and train people up in our relevant fields. This would boost the training for the union and possibly be an aid to recruitment. The cost would be minimal and it may be a safeguard to jobs. Congress, I put this to you to strongly consider and endorse. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Doug. Secunder.

BRO. W. CONWAY (London Region): I think we have the potential to support our members through training. By training people to be trainers, identifying the training and learning needs in our branches, we could promote the union’s messages through our membership. Training health and safety is rightly the duty of the employer but it is a vital part of our work too and we should make sure that the employer is doing it properly. Trainers do not need to be specifically trained in their fields, they train others in skills they already have. This is the same as the apprenticeships or NVQs. We should also support the work of Learning Reps. Congress, I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Will, I understand that you work in the House of Commons as a Senior Steward. You must be the most principal trade unionist in there, mate. *(Applause)* Well done. Does anyone wish to come in on the debate for 36, 37, 38, and 39? No? I call Dave Clements for the CEC to speak on Motions 37 and 39, and he will be sailing. Hello, Dave.

BRO. D. CLEMENTS (CEC, Commercial Services): President, Congress, the CEC is supporting Motion 37 with a qualification and seeking withdrawal of Motion 39. There is a slight qualification on Motion 37. A specific training element on equalities and diversity has been a part of the GMB@Work training pack since 2009. Regional officers have been encouraged to include equality and diversity training as they develop and construct GMB@Work courses to their existing workplace organisers. The motion calls for equality and diversity training sessions such as this to now become a mandatory part of all GMB@Work courses for new and existing GMB

representatives. Given that the groundwork has already been done, we can enable this to be implemented swiftly.

On Motion 39 we are seeking withdrawal. The motion proposes that GMB set up a skills database for members with training qualifications and utilise these skills for recruitment specifically giving us an example, the field of manual handling. It is not clear how or whether this would work and in what ways it would assist us to recruit new members. It is worth noting that previous attempts to establish similar skills registers in parts of the union have proven costly and ineffective.

Congress, please support Motion 37 with the qualification I have set out. If Motion 39 is not withdrawn then the CEC is asking Congress to oppose. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Does Yorkshire Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Could I now put 36, 37, and 38 to the vote, all those in favour please show. Anyone against? Okay, I now come to 39. Doug, do you wish the right to reply? I had not forgotten.

BRO. D. RIGBY (London Region) said in reply: Congress, I have listened to everything that has gone on here today and I do not accept that after listening to Motions 6, 7, 8, and 10, which has been supported with qualifications, that you feel that this motion is not worthy of support taking into consideration that 6, 7, 8, and 10, were all to do with communications. We have the communications at our fingertips. I just ask you to support this motion, please. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Doug. By that, Doug, I am assuming you are not prepared to withdraw.

BRO. D. RIGBY (London Region): Correct.

THE PRESIDENT: I was just checking. Colleagues, the region is not prepared to withdraw. The CEC is asking you to vote against. All those in favour of the motion please show. All those against please show. That is lost. Thank you.

*Motion 36 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 37 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 38 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 39 was LOST.*

THE PRESIDENT: We now move to Motion 161, PFI Credits, London Region. As you are aware, colleagues, 163 has been withdrawn in Standing Orders Report No.2.

**POLITICAL: DEMOCRACY & CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM**  
**PFI CREDITS**  
**MOTION 161**

**161. PFI CREDITS**

Congress is called on to ensure that all public funded initiatives that have clearly worded details of how they are to be administered should be adhered to.

In King's Lynn a public referendum was organised by the Borough Council to give the residents of West Norfolk a clear choice of "Do you want an incinerator built in King's Lynn or not". 65,000 people responded to this saying no. This was a larger response than the voting in the General Election.

PFI funding which is controlled by DEFRA clearly states that a general consensus of agreement between all parties must be sought.

It is general knowledge that at least 47% of Norfolk's Councils including parish councils and of course the huge response of the people of King's Lynn and West Norfolk who disagree with these proposals, is not a general consensus.

How can Government and County Councillors be allowed to dictate a different set of rules than those laid down and in doing so ignore the wishes of the public.

KING'S LYNN NO 1 BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. D. KENNETT (London Region) in moving the motion, said: PFI — private finance initiative — a public private partnership which is used to fund large public infrastructure such as incinerators using private and public finance. The £2bn given by the Treasury to subsidise PFI waste projects is controlled by Defra. They state in their guidelines that there should be broad based public support, a general consensus of agreement. This is clearly not being adhered to. As shown in a recent referendum held by the Borough Council in the King's Lynn, Norfolk area when the people were asked the question, do you want an incinerator or not, 65,000 people voted unanimously no. This was a far larger response than voting in the General Election. It is widespread knowledge that 47% of Norfolk councils, including parish councils, have disagreed with this proposal. Is this a general consensus of agreement? We think not. We call upon Congress to ensure that the PFI proposals have clearly-worded details of how they are to be administered and these should be adhered to. Governments and councils should not be allowed to dictate a different set of rules than those being laid down by Defra. They are blatantly ignoring them. By ignoring the rules they ignore the wishes of the public, which makes a laughing stock of the "big society" that we are all in and all in together. This shows how out of touch the Government is when it comes to the public. Congress, I call upon you to support this motion regarding the wording of PFIs and to make certain they are strictly adhered to. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dianne. Secunder.

BRO. M. FOSTER (London Region): Colleagues, PFI is not only private money but public money as well and as such it is only reasonable that the public have a say on where it is spent. However, it is clear that up and down the country this is not the case. Instead, Defra seems to be turning a blind eye and allowing the private sector to use public money to line its own pockets. Therefore, if PFI are to continue then the public that contribute towards them must be heard and have a say on where it is spent. Colleagues, PFIs in their present form are an absolute disgrace and Defra needs to ensure that the public voice is not ignored when they are being considered. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? No? Okay, the CEC is supporting. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That is carried.

*Motion 161 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: I will now move item 20, the “Live Life then Give Life” Campaign. Congress, in your delegates packs you will find a small wallet on blood and organ donation. Alan Duncan and Louise Gilmour from GMB Scotland are here and Alan will say a few words about the campaign. While Alan is speaking there will be some slides to show you. Alan, welcome.

**“LIVE LIFE THEN GIVE LIFE” CAMPAIGN**  
*(Video and photographs shown to Congress)*

BRO. A. DUNCAN (GMB Scotland): I am here with my wife, Louise. We are both Regional Organisers in GMB Scotland. This was our son David. Within your Congress packs you will have seen this wallet that gives details of organ and blood donation. In the back of the wallet you will see this phrase, “I’ll give you one.” It was a phrase developed by the charity, *Live Life Then Give Life*, an organisation dedicated to raising awareness of the need to register for blood donation and organ donation. It is a tremendous phrase, “I’ll give you one,” to focus on. It is the sort of phrase Steve Pryle would have thought up, it has a wee touch of Steve about it, using humour to get a serious message across.

I remember in my years in this organisation years ago the legendary GMB tutor, Mike Smith, on media training courses always said, “There is nothing wrong in using humour no matter how serious the subject is; it captures your audience’s attention.” What he actually said was, “It makes sure the buggers are listening.” You can see how “I’ll give you one,” can raise a smile about a serious subject, organ donation, a truly serious issue waiting for an organ donor. Our family has lived with it.

Our son David, a cystic fibrosis sufferer, had to deal with the illness and his worsening health, and also the unbearable stress of waiting for a lung transplant. David understood his illness perfectly and he was aware how his health was failing while he slowly moved up the transplant list. During that time he had a group of friends which was established through the internet, young men and young women all suffering from cystic fibrosis, all supporting each other, watching as some received successful transplants but others losing their lives while waiting on a donor.

As my wife Louise has previously said to me, as a parent you live with the hope that the transplant will happen and that David will be well enough to undergo what is a very intense operation. Then you worry about the risk the operation brings or that the operation will not come in time. The most frustrating thing is the realisation there is nothing you can do. You rely on the actions of some kind considerate individual who had the courage to sign up to the organ donation register and you dream of your child getting to the top of that list.

Eventually, David got to the top of the transplant list waiting and hoping that every telephone call would be the one, all the time his health worsening. Then one day in 2010 David got that call and the packed holdall that had lain in the bedroom for many years was lifted and taken into the car and off he set to the Freeman Hospital in Newcastle. He was even prep'd for the operation up to the door of the theatre almost but the doctors were unhappy with the donated lungs. It is a sad fact that only one in five of lungs donated are suitable. So, back home it was for David to wait for another call, getting incredible support from his group of friends on the internet. Several months later David got another shout but once again the doctors were not happy with the donated lungs. David never got another shout. He passed away in January last year, aged 25, dying waiting for a donor, his life lost while dreaming of a transplant.

In our country, in our NHS, we have wonderful scientists, doctors, nurses, consultants, and medical staff dedicated to deliverance of successful transplants. What we do not have are enough donors. This is what *Live Life Then Give Life* are campaigning for and why they use that initial catchphrase. They have moved on to a new campaign now, it is called, *Pass it on*, and the focus of that is not only of passing on the gift of life to someone when you pass away yourself but passing on the message to your family that you have signed up to the organ donation register so that they know and understand your wishes.

Earlier I told you of David's group of supporting friends, these young men and women. Shortly after David died one of them, a young woman called Kirsty Mills, from Honiton in Devon, the same age as David, became very, very ill. She knew she was dying. Kirsty was due to get married so she brought her wedding forward arriving at the church door in an ambulance, taken to the altar in a wheelchair, and was married. Shortly afterwards she was admitted to intensive care, put on life support, and hours away from death a donor was found and she underwent a successful transplant and now lives a relatively normal life.

The difference between David and Kirsty was nothing other than a donor. A donor was available to Kirsty but because of the shortage of donors none was available to David. So, if you live your life and you consider supporting and registering for organ donation I would ask you to think of David who was a wonderful, intelligent young man, who died for the want of a donor. Also think of Kirsty Mills and what donor registration meant to that young lady. Someone thinking of others gave that young woman life and this is what the GMB family can do, raise awareness. Perhaps we could even include in every new member's pack information about organ donation. I said to Paul a couple of weeks ago no one can do everything but we can all do something and what we can do is think about it, talk about it, tell your immediate family, tell your big and enormous GMB family, tell your friends, sign up to the organ donation register and then perhaps next year Mary can ask for that old traditional show of cards that will be organ donation cards. Comrades, thank you. (*Standing ovation*)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I have known Alan for a long, long time and I have never been so proud as I am of him today because as a father and mother they have come here to plead with us, the GMB and our members. We will not be able to save David's life but please save other people's lives. So let's get involved in the

campaign with every single effort that we can make. Alan, I hope we can make a difference. *(Applause)*

### **CONGRESS LOCAL GIFT: SENSE SCOTLAND**

**THE PRESIDENT:** Colleagues, we now move on to the next part of the business, the Congress Local Gift. For new delegates, every year we choose a charity around the regions, something the members in the region feel is worthy to receive a gift from this union. This year the gift of £2,000 will go to GMB Scotland to support Sense Scotland, a charity working with deaf, blind and disabled children. Congress, can I call Harry Donaldson, the Regional Secretary of GMB Scotland, to say a few words on the work of the charity. There will be a slide as Harry is speaking. Thank you.

**BRO. H. DONALDSON (GMB Scotland):** It would be remiss of me not to say or not to mention the fact that no one could have been untouched by Alan's presentation and the campaign on organ donation. I did not know David but what I did know and I lived with through that period of time was the rollercoaster of emotion that both Louise as a mother and Alan as a father went through, and I can only say the biggest gift any of us could ever give in our lifetime, and beyond our lifetime, would be organ donation, so please support the charity. *(Applause)*

Congress, just to say that GMB Scotland were very proud and pleased to be able to make the Congress Local Gift this year. As Mary said, it went to Sense Scotland which really is a charitable organisation that works with deaf and blind children, and also very severely handicapped adults, providing a quality of support networks across Scotland. In terms of the charitable gift itself, really I kind of broke with tradition. It is known that I am rather, as we say, tight with finances as the General Secretary reminds me on a number of occasions, but we gave the gift because the charity itself was in the process of wanting to expand. You can imagine yourself the benefit that that can provide to parents and children. We visited Sense in Glasgow, along with colleagues from the regional committee there, and it was quite interesting because if you look at the young lad on your left of the picture, he was very, very shy but the comment he did make and he was overheard to state was, "How much are they giving us for this picture that I'm in?" So, he was very up to the mark in terms of that. There again you just think of it, that profound disability that these young children have and what a difference that Sense can make to their future and their life, and obviously to the parents of these children. In reality, these parents do need help, they do need support.

I think from our experience, and it was a very humbling experience for me personally, your £2,000 is a good donation but in reality what charities need across the whole length and breadth of the UK is much, much more. It should not just be about the giving of people such as caring people from trade unions like ourselves, we have to look towards government. Again, I just wanted to say on behalf of the region, thank you very much for the opportunity, it was greatly appreciated, and we know it has been put to very good use. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:** Congress, normally at this point we would give the cheque to Harry but what is happening now is the nine regions and Head Office will donate the

money to make up the £2,000 for Harry to give to his charity, a well deserved charity. Well done, GMB Scotland. Well done, Congress. (*Applause*)

Congress, you will be pleased to know the first part has nearly come to an end. You can go and have some lunch. I now move to the final announcement and remind you that there are two delegate gifts, one was a GMB T-shirt that Dolores modelled for us and there is a fantastic new book on the history of the GMB, telling the story behind the union from its earliest times up to the present day. It is a terrific read that pays tribute to the struggles and campaigns of our members. I would urge everyone to pick one up from the Ethical Threads stand in the Exhibition Hall. The T-shirts come in various sizes and will be distributed on a first come, first serve basis and remember to show your credential badge. Thank you. Did you want to say anything about the book?

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: We wanted an up-to-date modern history of the GMB. There are many new delegates here, many people who have been around for a few years, and we sort of know a bit about Will Thorne but not much else about the union. This is, if I say so myself, a bit of a cracking read. We commissioned Prof. John Callow to write it. We did not tell him how to write it. We did not vet it in any way. We said, warts and all. We gave him access to all our archives. He spoke to lots of delegates and people around the union and this is what has emerged. I think it is well worth the read. I think it will educate a lot of people and I certainly found out a lot about our own union, what a cracking organisation this union actually grew from. It is well worth picking up. If you go to the Ethical Threads stand you can get your free T-shirt and you can get the book. If you do not want to take it home, you think it is a bit heavy, then I am sure we can arrange to get it to the regional office for you to pick up. Thanks, Mary.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. It makes good midnight reading. Congress, you will see fringe events displayed on the screen. Further details can be found on pages 113-121 of the Final Agenda and Congress Guide. Congress is adjourned until 2 p.m. sharp. Thank you.

*Conference adjourned.*

## **AFTERNOON SESSION**

*Conference re-assembled at 2 pm*

THE PRESIDENT: Can delegates come to order. Colleagues, the first item on the agenda is Standing Orders Committee Report No. 3. I call Helen Johnson to move Standing Orders Committee Report No. 3.

### **STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 3**

HELEN JOHNSON (Chair of Standing Order Committee): President and Congress, I move SOC Report No. 3. On the subject of emergency motions, the SOC has accepted two. Emergency Motion 1 is on the Carillion dispute, standing in the name of Southern Region. The SOC recommends that this emergency motion be heard in the Monday morning session of Congress.

Emergency Motion 2 is on Countering the Rise of American Style Anti Abortion Campaigning in the UK, standing in the name of Southern Region. The SOC recommends that this be heard in the Wednesday morning session of Congress.

Bucket collections. The SOC has received a large number of requests for bucket collections this year which exceeds the number that Congress can give. The SOC has, therefore, had to make some very difficult decisions about granting permission for collections this year. The SOC has given priority to collections for trade union and related issues and of members in dispute or on strike. The SOC has also given priority to those charity which have not had bucket collections at the GMB Congress before. The SOC has, therefore, given permission for the following bucket collections: first, a collection for the Carillion members on strike at Swindon Hospital, organised by Southern Region. The SOC recommends that this bucket collection takes place at the close of the Monday morning session.

A collection for the SOVA members in Sheffield who have now been on strike for two weeks, organised by Yorkshire and North Derbyshire Region. The SOC recommends that this takes place at the close of the Wednesday morning session.

Thirdly, a collection for the *Live Life/Give Life* organisation by GMB Scotland. The SOC recommends that this takes place at the end of the afternoon session today.

The SOC has taken the unusual step of combining two requests which we have received, one from North West & Irish Region and one from the Midland & East Coast Region. Both of these were collections requested for children's hospice organisations. One is for Sunshine House in Hull. I do not actually have the details for the one for the North West & Irish Region. The SOC has agreed with the regions that this will be a joint collection, which will be split 50/50, and we recommend that this takes place at the close of the afternoon session on Wednesday.

President and Congress, I move SOC Report No. 3.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Helen, very much indeed. Does Congress accept the Standing Orders Report? (*Agreed*)

*Standing Orders Report No. 3 was ADOPTED*

THE PRESIDENT: Can we now move on. I will be calling under Political: Democracy & Constitutional Reform, Motions 156, 157, 158 and 159. June Minnery will reply on Motions 157, 158 and 159.

**POLITICAL  
DEMOCRACY & CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM  
BOUNDARY REVIEW  
MOTION 156**

## 156. BOUNDARY REVIEW

This Conference is appalled that at a time when the UK is grappling with the worst economic situation since before the Second World War, a situation made worse by Coalition policies, the Coalition government is engaged in a divisive and destructive boundary review of constituencies.

At a time when MPs should be focused on their constituents and effective lawmaking, the executive arm of Government has MPs focused on their own individual positions.

This Conference calls on the Coalition government to scrap this costly gerrymandering, for electoral advantage, and to get back to the business of governing for the whole of the United Kingdom.

NEWCASTLE AND NORTH TYNE GENERAL BRANCH  
*Northern Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. A. FORSTER (Northern): Congress, I move Motion 156 – Boundary Review. The decision by the Coalition Government to press ahead with changes to Parliamentary boundaries is the worst cases of fixing since the age of the Rotten Boroughs. We are experiencing the worst economic conditions for nearly a century, yet for sheer political gain the Tories and their Lib-Dem lapdogs want to ensure a built-in advantage for their own people.

Congress, in one swoop the Government have focused the minds of MPs on their own futures instead of focusing on the people who they are supposed to serve. Just like with the health changes, this costly legislation is a complete waste of public money.

The Coalition should focus their energies on governing the country, not wasting our money on blatant fixing. Cameron knows that if he returns the same number of MPs that he now has, he will have a Parliamentary majority of about 12. You have got to admire the sheer gall of Cameron and his cronies. They govern for their class. It makes me even more angry when I think of what Labour did with its massive majorities. This Tory and Lib-Dem lot with a cobbled together Coalition govern for their people only. Congress, we need to ram this fact down the throats of every Tory and Lib-Dem candidate wherever they stand. We should learn well from this Coalition Government. We should mobilise our people and our communities for the sooner we get rid of this lot, the sooner we can get people into power who might govern for our own people. I urge your support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Alan. Secunder?

BRO. C. HENWOOD (Northern): Congress, I second Motion 156 – Boundary Review. I bet the loss of 50 MPs will not lead to a reduction in the costs of Parliament. We need our MPs to be calling to account the Executive arm of Government, not jockeying for their positions. All communities are affected. Gerrymandering and blatant bias is the result. Congress, this is the biggest reorganisation of Parliamentary boundaries since the Second World War. It is being rushed through with very little opportunity for public consultation. It has no regard for community links. It is a pure numbers game, and it is being done with one thing in mind: to deliver a Tory majority in 2015. The Liberal-Democrats are going along with their

Tory mates even if they are going to get slaughtered at the next general election. This is all because they want to prevent us from having the kind of majority that they had ten years ago.

Congress, let's not forget that that what we have is this Tory/Lib-Dem version of rotten boroughs. After all, the earlier versions of these two parties used to prevent working people from having the vote unless they voted for the local landlord. Congress, never forget. I second.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Colin, if it is any consolation, your representatives – myself and Andy Worth – have voiced the same opinion, as did the mover. I have to tell you that the Labour Party has been working extremely hard to try and alter the situation, but we know that it is a form of cleansing of whatever description.

## **AN ENGLISH PARLIAMENT MOTION 157**

### **157. AN ENGLISH PARLIAMENT**

This Conference believes that an increasing number of GMB members are unhappy with the Westminster village, now reported to be tilting in the direction of the River Thames.

Belief centres on a system of Government free of Lords and giving governance to England, in a similar fashion to the rest of Great Britain.

Conference calls therefore for the GMB to support an English parliament in parity with the rest of these islands.

SCUNTHORPE DISTRICT & APEX BRANCH  
*Midland & East Coast Region*

*(Referred)*

BRO. D. LASCELLES (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I move Motion 157 – An English Parliament. This motion recognises the better systems of governance granted, and rightly so, to the Welsh by the formation of its own Assembly, to Scotland having its own Parliament, and to Stormont as the governing body of Northern Ireland.

This motion, however, begs the question of what about England? Pretty soon the turnout at election time will be down to single figures as Westminster fails to light anyone's candle, be they young or old. Policies to the betterment of England, and not just to the south, should be voted on by English members, themselves elected by the people from the English counties. This should tell us all that a better system of governance is not only possible but it is a demand to be made of this Congress and to be made by the GMB on behalf of our members. This issue is fast rising up the political agenda, and not just amongst extremists, but from the rank and file of our own members who are dissatisfied with the overpaid, underworked and, often over-pensioned clique in Westminster, with its self-serving attitude and lack of concern for those who have been elected to serve. Your support for change now will enable the GMB to take a positive stance in bringing about a system of government in England that is fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which is more than can be said for Westminster as it stands at the moment. Please support Motion 157. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Seconder?

BRO. D. JOBSON (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I second Motion 157 on An English Parliament. President, it was the script writers, Barry Took and Marty Feldman who, in the 1960s, wrote the joke lines for the BBC's Light Programme about the old men on benches in central London, dozing off in the afternoon. It's called the House of Lords. As much as that was funny 45 years ago, the whole of Westminster with its sleaze and financial corruption now warrants that it be changed for the better.

When NHS prescription charges and children's school meals can be free in some parts of the United Kingdom but not in England, along with all the other anomalies that exist, we need a Parliament that is worthy of a young person's vote at the next general or by-election, a Parliament free of cliques who are often fast asleep in either House, and a Parliament that will listen to the people and act in the best interests of all voters and our country. This need is fast approaching a necessity.

Congress, we must address this carbuncle and lance it now. Vote for Motion 157, vote for change and a better system of Government both for England and the United Kingdom. Let Westminster sink into the Thames and support a fresh, new and more vibrant political environment by supporting Motion 157. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I call Motion 158.

## **REFERENDUM ON SCOTTISH INDEPENDENCE MOTION 158**

### **158. REFERENDUM ON SCOTTISH INDEPENDENCE**

This Conference recognises the Scottish Government's pledge to hold a referendum on Scottish independence in 2014

Conference believes the GMB has an important role to play in leading the debate, just as it did in the establishment of the devolution settlement in the 1980's and 1990's.

Conference calls for an informed evidence based debate inside the trade union movement and in wider civic society. In particular the economic implications of separation and full fiscal autonomy need to be fully understood. And the insufficiency of nationalism as a response to the social and economic challenges we face needs to be properly exposed.

Conference therefore urges the Executive and GMB Scotland to give renewed priority to organising, agitating and educating around a distinctive Scottish labour and socialist movement agenda as we move towards the peoples' decision on the future of Scotland.

GLASGOW CITY COUNCIL APEX BRANCH  
*GMB Scotland*

*(Carried)*

BRO. C. ROBERTSON (GMB Scotland): Congress, I am a long-time motion person and delegate to Congress. Mary, with your indulgence, I have whittled what I am going to say down to 21 minutes.

I move Motion 158 – a Referendum on Scottish Independence. Congress, not surprisingly, I am an avid fan of Scotland but, unlike many Scots, I will be supporting England in the Euros and the Republic, but not the Republic of Scotland that the SNP would like to give us, but the Republic of Ireland. 1979 saw the birth of Scottish nationalism and a referendum on devolution, which was lost. In 1997 a referendum for a Scottish Parliament took place, and with it came tax-raising powers. In 2014 we will be having a referendum on Scotland's independence on the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Bannockburn. Those are all dates that will be remembered in Scottish history, but will history remember the SNP, Salmond's Tartan Tory Army, who are little more than the political wing of the Corries, as the party that ended 300 years of union with England?

Scotland's 1997 referendum was different. Political parties, businesses, trade unions, churches and many civil society organisations planned it all together. The Tories were the significant opponents but they held little sway. The fact is that there are more pandas in Scotland than there are Tory MPs. (*Applause*) That shows you how the Scots feel and regard the society on offer from Thatcher through to Cameron.

The SNP in Parliament are upsetting many Scots by thinking that they can fund an independent Scotland on North Sea oil revenues when the product is in decline. The SNP is upsetting Scots by spending £2 billion on a new Forth Bridge to allow the manufacturing industry in Scotland to leave across it. Salmond is upsetting Scots by his reliance on wind power at three times the cost of coal, gas and nuclear energy. He is also upsetting Scots by the bringing to an end of our proud history of shipbuilding on the Clyde.

The first King of Scotland, Salmond, is upsetting some Scots as he wants to lower the voting age to include 16 and 17 year olds. Well, why not? Congress, we have a ridiculous legal anomaly whereby a 17 year old can have a sexual relationship with an MP but can't vote for them. (*Applause*)

Rangers' fans are also getting upset. If the Union flag were to disappear, what flag would the Rangers' supporters wave at Celtic Park when they are playing the Bhoys? So while the SNP fight, the war of 300 years ago to break up the Union, the trade union movement only needs to look back on the last century when the Labour Party was established to show that it has played a prominent part in British politics.

Trade unionists and Labour politicians as far afield as the Welsh valleys, the north, the east, and west, the Midlands, the Scottish central belt and, from across the country, which is a united country, joined together with the Labour movement to create the National Health Service, to develop a welfare state and to implement health and safety rules in the workplace, and we still fight that fight.

The issue of independence is not so much about which powers are held but how the powers are used. Will they be used to create a more equitable and socially just Scotland, and will there be the political will to challenge a big business austerity agenda? It is not a matter of shifting powers from one Parliament to another, but shifting the powers from those who owned our wealth to those who produced it, from richer areas to poorer areas.

Congress, our union has an important role to play in this process to ensure that this referendum is completely fair, transparent and inclusive. I ask Congress to call for an informed, evidence-based debate around the Scottish labour and socialist movement's agenda as we move towards the Scottish people's decision on their future.

In closing, let us look to the future. The SNP argue that if Scotland was independent, it would be turned into a small European country, a utopia. In Salmond's vision of Scotland we would have the dynamism of Estonia, the corporate investment of Ireland, the healthcare of Finland, the education system of Sweden, the pension system of Norway and, no doubt, the work ethic of Santa Claus and his elves. *(Laughter)*

Congress, I would argue that we should stick with what we know works and what we can see working again in the future. As a trade union, we believe in collectivism and internationalism. Most of all, we believe in solidarity. Until someone can show me that these and all of the aims of our trade union can be better achieved in an independent Scotland, I'll fight against the Scottish National Party who peddles it. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Charlie.

BRO. J. MCKENZIE (GMB Scotland): Congress, I am tempted to say that I agree with everything that Charlie said and then sit down, but I'm not.

Congress, the SNP – we should never forget -- is the party that gave us Thatcher and the Tory governments. Separation from England & Wales would be a disaster for Scotland. The SNP says that a separate Scotland would be a socialist Scotland. Yet that came from a party that kept the Scottish Parliament open in November when trade unionists all over Britain took to the streets in protest against the attacks on public service pensions. The SNP claims that they are the party that now speaks for the trade unions. GMB Scotland has had a political forum to discuss the referendum and the debate goes on, Congress. I call on Salmond to come clean and answer the questions put forward in this motion. I second. *(Applause)*

We, in Scotland, are proud of our shipbuilding and steel industries. Tell me, King Alec, what would happen to these industries in a separate Scotland? Would poverty stop at the boundary? No. Cameron said, "We're in it together". We, in GMB Scotland, believe that we are better together. It is socialism that we want in Scotland, not separation. I second.

## **WEST LoTHIAN QUESTION MOTION 159**

### **159. WEST LoTHIAN QUESTION**

This Conference is aware of the current constitutional arrangements, whereby Members of Parliament from devolved countries within the UK, vote on legislation affecting governance in England, but which have no jurisdiction due to devolved powers in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland.

Conference notes that, historically, Westminster representation in England has been dominated by the Tories and does not want to create an English Parliament.

This Conference, therefore, calls for an open debate within the UK to address the inequity of legislation bringing votes through in Westminster by MPs, where there is no jurisdiction effect in their constituencies.

TEES VALLEY GENERAL BRANCH  
*Northern Region*

*(Referred)*

BRO. C. MASON (Northern): Congress, I am a first-time speaker and a first-time delegate. *(Applause)* Northern Region moves Motion 159, the West Lothian Question.

Let me say, at the outset, that devolution has been good for the UK. It has modernised the UK constitution and devolved power from Westminster, but here is the problem, and I think we need to face up to the elephant in the room. Let's be honest. We needed Labour MPs from Scotland and Wales to vote through legislation in Parliament. It might not have been an issue in 1997 or 2001, but it was the case in 2005. Congress, we increasingly had the ridiculous democratic situation that legislation was passed, as has been described, but it had no effect where devolved powers were in place. Politicians need to show some leadership and tackle the resentment that is growing by this anomaly. We did not want an English Parliament because that is what the Tories want. They want an in-built majority for their class. But, Congress, it is ridiculous that MPs make laws that do not affect their constituencies. There needs to be a proper debate to ensure that Parliament is brought up to date and that lawmakers catch up with the court of public opinion.

While devolution has been a very good thing and there is growing debate about independence or greater devolution, there needs to be a proper discussion of what it means for the whole of the UK. Who knows, Congress, it may even open up arguments for greater devolution in England by focusing on regional policies and regional government. Please support. I move.

*The motion was formally seconded.*

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on the debates on Motions 156, 157, 158 and 159?

BRO. A. NEWMAN (Southern): Congress, I am speaking in support of Motion 157 for an English Parliament. I just want to shoot a couple of hares. The history of the Labour Party in Britain has not depended on votes from Wales and Scotland to get Labour governments in Westminster. If you look at the history of Labour governments, on only two occasions have they relied on votes in Wales and Scotland to get a majority, and that was the February 1974 and the 2005 elections. With those two exceptions, every single Labour government has had a majority of Labour votes in England and a majority of Labour MPs in England. We can win. Labour can win in England.

England is a country that has a liberal and progressive tradition with strong trade unions. It is the most multi-racial and multi-cultural of the nations of the UK and, if there is a constitutional anomaly in the powers that are devolved to Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, there is not an equivalent body in England. What we have seen

since 1997 is the loss of jobs in the English regions because there is no body in our constitution to stick up for Tyneside, Devon and the Midlands about the manufacturing jobs that were being lost.

Comrades, it is not true that the Tories support an English Parliament. The Tories have no position on an English Parliament, but there is a danger of the right making the running on this issue and turning brothers and sisters from England against our sisters and brothers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. We must not let that happen, but that means that we have equality in the constitution. There is, actually, an opportunity for the left to grasp this issue of the English Parliament and say that it is a question of fairness. For the Labour Party to win in England, it means that the Labour Party needs to be worth voting for, which I believe it is, but we can do better. Comrades, I ask you to support the motion in support of an English Parliament. *(Applause)*

BRO. M. SMITH (Southern): This is my first time speaking at Congress. *(Applause)* I will be speaking against an English Parliament, Motion 157. I don't see, particularly, the context of jobs within England that Andy raised previously. There are perfectly legitimate things that the Labour Party should be arguing for, particularly for business, in terms of regional development and so forth, but the question of why Welsh and Scottish devolution originally occurred is because of the demographics of Parliament itself, which largely reflects the south-eastern nature of where the population within the UK is. It politically represents those groups. There is the question of political representation for specific Scottish and Welsh governance, particularly regarding the history and culture of these areas. I would like to hear from the speakers around Motion 157 what specific pieces of political legislation or opportunities do they think that an English Parliament would address. It just seems to be a stop gap. If you had an English Parliament, how is that necessarily going to make legislation better? How is it going to improve the situation? How is it going to create better political representation when a number of cities have, for instance, rejected democratically-elected mayors in the recent local elections.

Andy was right when he said that the left should grasp issues such as this, but it seems ridiculous just tailing on to the right when you are making a show about an English Parliament, which I do not really see is a massive issue for the vast majority of the electorate and an issue that we should be saying is not at the forefront of the industrial and political struggle at the moment. I would urge you to vote against it. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Matthew. Is there anyone else wanting to speak? *(No response)* Then I call June Minnery to reply on behalf of the CEC on Motions 157, 158 and 159.

SIS. J. MINNERY (CEC, Public Services): The CEC is recommending support for Motion 158, but with a statement, and is asking Congress to refer Motions 157 and 159.

The CEC is asking you to support Motion 158 with the statement that I am about to give. The CEC agrees that the GMB has an important role to play in leading the debate regarding Scottish independence, and the need to review the implications of independence. GMB Scotland has already begun the process of engagement and

debate with our members by way of our regional magazine and through our political forum meetings. This provides the space to facilitate the widest possible debate for our members and invited speakers for and against an independent Scotland.

In 2011 Scotland was faced with the result of a Parliamentary election which was never envisaged to be possible under devolution and proportional representation – a clear majority administration by a single party, an SNP victory. Was this a vote for independence? The polls at the moment would suggest not. However, this is still to be determined by the Scottish people through a referendum in 2014. With the debate raging currently over just what question or questions should be in the referendum, there is no consensus within Scotland at the moment. GMB needs to better inform its members on the debate prior to the referendum and look at the question of how an enhanced form of devolution might be advanced and also the need to assess the economics of Scottish independence.

Would independence on the SNP's terms in any way free Scotland's people to meet the challenges of economic and social development in a progressive way? Is it viable or would it be preferable to the Scottish people? The problems of the structural deficit, the prospects of an oil fund, the choice of currency and the future competitiveness of Scotland have also to be discussed and debated. We need to enable our members in Scotland to approach this referendum in the most informed way possible. The autumn of 2014 will determine Scotland's future. This will be the most important decision in a generation that the people of Scotland will face.

But, Congress, until the evidence is reviewed and the consultations with our members has been completed, we cannot and should not commit GMB to any specific campaign at this stage.

Moving to Motion 157, it is calling for an English Parliament which has gathered some support in the media following discussions about Scottish independence, but careful consideration is required. Both the positive and negative implications of an English Parliament must be reviewed before the GMB can take a policy position. There are potential political and economic implications. Therefore, the CEC is asking you to refer Motion 157.

Motion 159 focuses on the West Lothian Question regarding voting rights in the House of Commons. English MPs are not committed to vote on issues impacting on the devolved nations, but MPs from the devolved nations, such as my home in Scotland, can vote on English matters. This does seem unfair. However, we must give careful consideration to this question which impacts on the authority of our Parliament. Therefore, the CEC is asking you to refer Motion 159.

Congress, the CEC is asking you to support Motion 158 with the CEC statement given and to refer Motions 157 and 159. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, June. Colleagues, the CEC is supporting Motion 156. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against?

*Motion 156 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Does GMB Scotland accept the statement with support on Motion 158? (*Agreed*) You do. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against?

*Motion 158 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: I now ask the mover of Motion 157, An English Parliament, if they are prepared to refer? (*Agreed*) You are. Thank you. Does Congress agree reference?

*Motion 157 was REFERRED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Is Northern Region prepared to refer Motion 159?

BRO. W. HUGHES (Northern): We are prepared to refer.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, worthy President. Does Congress accept?

*Motion 159 was REFERRED.*

#### **ADDRESS BY FERN McCaffrey, GMB YOUNG MEMBER**

THE PRESIDENT: It gives me great pleasure to welcome back Fern McCaffrey to Congress. Fern is studying social science at the University of Brighton. She is an active member of the Southern Region and has done a work placement with the GMB. Last year she attended her first National Equality Conference and the TUC Congress and made a real impact, so much so that she was elected to the TUC General Council to represent young people. She is a committed trade unionist and feisty with it – I know – and this is how we like it in the GMB. Fern, please give your address. It is good to see you.

SIS. F. McCaffrey (GMB Young Member): President and Congress, welcome again to Brighton. Many people in Britain have been hit hard by the worst economic crisis for decades, made worse by the austerity measures of the Coalition Government. Young people have also been hit hard. We always seem to bear the brunt of such austerity measures.

Young people aged between 16 – 29 make up 18% of the UK population. Under this Government we have seen tuition fees treble and the EMA and the Future Jobs Fund scrapped. Cameron promised to keep the EMA but all he did was introduce Workfare for us and internships for Party donors' kids and his *News of the World* mob. Worst of all, there have been over a million young people out of work, the highest since records began! No wonder the panic about pensions. These are the future contributors, Congress.

Unemployment for black males has risen to over half. The figure was 55.9% in 2012. Well, that should be expected under the Con-Dem Government. Long-term youth unemployment has risen by more than 60% since the Coalition was formed in May 2010. The current policies for Britain's youth are not fair, but nor do they make economic sense. If young people are unemployed, then they will receive benefits from the Treasury. If they are working, they will pay taxes to the Treasury. Long-

term youth unemployment is heavily linked to mental problems. For many of you your youth might be in the past, but inactivity can drive you to experiment and to get into trouble through peer pressure, but we are currently living it.

Young people have been constantly saying “What hope is there for us?”, as it seems that no one is acknowledging the problems we face. So we in the GMB must face the challenge.

Research conducted by the National Equalities Forum shows that young people when working are usually in low-paid and non-unionised private sector jobs. We are less likely to know our rights or to be aware of workplace grievances, or know how to challenge unfairness. We are less likely to be union members because nobody is selling the union to us with the right tools. What would make young people join a union? What is the role of young people in the GMB? I look around the room today and I can, probably, see a handful of GMB young members. I am urging you to go back to your regions and to, really, reach out to your young members.

In a few years time we are going to be the next CEO’s and heads of department going into the world of work. We really need to get them into the unions. We have over 35,000 young members in the GMB, which is 6% of the total membership. I don’t think we have anything close to that percentage in terms of young members in this hall, and we get told all the time that the future is ours, but at the moment what future do we have? The highest number of young members are in London Region and the North West & Irish Region. We need to learn from their good practices and get more young members involved in all regions.

Nearly 14.2% of young members join GMB online and the highest number of young people joining online are in the London Region and in my own region, the Southern. Young members join a trade union around collective issues, and we are verbally and directly asked to join, especially when other young members do the recruiting. There have been meetings with the Organising Department focusing on developing a workplace-based Young Recruitment Initiative, based on existing national and regional organising targets. We are identifying their email and SMS details of all our young members with a view to communicating with them directly, via national, regional and branch channels, as well as revamping the Young Members’ area on the website and asking regions to participate also.

Following contact with the NUS, discussions were initiated with a view to recruit staff at the NUS with a major recruitment drive from Southern Region at Goldsmiths College, which has resulted in the establishment of a Goldsmiths College branch, which has many young members. I would like you to all to draw me in a round of applause for Southern Region for all its hard work for young members. (*Applause*)

I am not sure if many of you know but I am the Chair of the TUC Young Members’ Forum, which has given me a platform to represent young members of all trade unions. It has also given me the opportunity to highlight GMB members’ initiatives as agreed during some of our regular network meetings. Sharing good practices and using examples seen to recruit and retain young members has been one of the benefits of my being Chair of this forum. That is apart from being very proud to represent the GMB. As young members from the GMB we have participated strongly in various

conferences during the past year. One of the most exceptional displays of GMB spirit, I have to say, was at this year's TUC Young Members' Forum. You should all be exceptionally proud of all your delegates from your regions because they performed amazingly, they spoke so well and you should all be really, really proud.

We, the young members, are the first to acknowledge that there is a lot still to be done to get us to a point where you guys could say that the future is bright and that the future is safe in our hands, but we have already taken the first step and we are here to implore you that when you get back to your various regions, will you, please, try and get your young members involved, so we can all look forward to a future when the GMB will maintain its role as a genuine big player in representing young people and protecting our future, protecting the future of your children and grandchildren, who are the next people in line. We want to protect the future generations of workers in this country against exploitation, so I really hope that we can all work together to do this.

Thanks for listening. I know I went for a long time. I wish you all well. Enjoy my home city of Brighton. It is pretty sweet if you know where to look. I hope you all have a nice day. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Fern, thank you very much. You forgot to tell the Congress that you spent four days with me and that you tired me out. I just couldn't keep up with you. I am proud that you and I were at the Women's TUC and you did contribute. Colleagues, *that* is the future. There are no doubts about that. *(Applause)* Thank you, Fern, very much.

**POLITICAL:  
DEMOCRACY & CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM  
VOTES AT SIXTEEN  
MOTION 162**

**162. VOTES AT SIXTEEN**

This Conference believes the voting age in the UK should be sixteen years of age.

Congress instructs the CEC to ensure that a campaign is run to lower the current voting age to sixteen.

BOSTON GENERAL BRANCH  
*Midland & East Coast Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. J. CLARKE (Midland & East Coast): I am a first-time speaker at Congress. *(Applause)* Congress, I move Motion 162, Votes at Sixteen.

President and Congress, at 16 you can have sex, you can get married, you can get a job if you are lucky, you can join a trade union and you can pay your taxes, but you can't vote. Why not? Is not politics for all? The point is that you don't engage young adults in politics by making them sit on the sidelines for two years. This union doesn't make young members wait to vote in our democratic systems, so why should society? Congress, please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Seconder?

BRO. J. MCGROSSAN (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker, seconding Motion 162. *(Applause)*

Today we have an opportunity to help fight against a great social injustice. Sixteen year olds, as it has been pointed out, can drive on roads, choose their own doctor and consent to surgery, have alcoholic drinks with meals in restaurants, receive legal aid, marry and, as my colleague pointed out earlier on, have consensual sex, work full-time, buy a Lottery ticket and even join the Army, but they have no say in the politics that will dictate and shape their future. Confused? I am sure they are. I know I am. Let us show maturity, dispel this crass hypocrisy and give them a proper identity within society. Therefore, I beseech you to support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? *(No response)* In that case, I will put it to the vote. The CEC is supporting. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against?

*Motion 162 was CARRIED.*

**UNION ORGANISATION  
RECRUITMENT & ORGANISATION  
RECRUITING YOUNG PEOPLE  
MOTION 12**

**12. RECRUITING YOUNG PEOPLE**

This Conference recognises that the future of our Union is in the hands of young people. Therefore, we call on the CEC to co-ordinate a national recruitment drive specifically designed and targeted at young workers. We need to motivate and energise young workers to the Trade Union and wider Labour movement principles and values.

NORTHANTS COMMUNITY BRANCH  
*Midland & East Coast Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. L. PETERS (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I move Motion 12: Recruiting Young People. President and Congress, we all recognise that our future is in the hands of young people. I remember my dad telling me the importance of being in the union. My family was active in, first, the union and the Labour movement so it came as no surprise that I became a shop steward. It had been instilled into me from a very young age. However, I feel that not everyone has been as fortunate as myself.

Therefore, we need to inform young people what the trade union and labour movement is all about. According to the papers, all we do is go on strikes and demonstrations, but you need to read the headlines to understand the reasons why. We are trying to make a better place in the world, with better pay, better working conditions and a safe and happy workplace environment where everyone is appreciated and respected. We ask the CEC to coordinate a national recruitment

drive specially designed for young people because the future lies in their hands. Thank you. (*Applause*)

BRO. M. SHORT (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I am speaking in support of Motion 12. I work in a place where we have a lot of young people. When I ask them to join the union, they ask me what can the union do for them? I say, “Think about. Think hard. At one time, we used to do 50 – 60 hours a week. Now we do 37. That’s what the union’s done for you.” The biggest thing of all is that when they are off sick, they get paid. That is what the union has done for them. Ask anything else, and the union has done it. I support Motion 12. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Miles, you got it right. Does anyone wish to come in on the debate?

SIS. H. SMITH (Southern): Congress, I am first-time speaker. (*Applause*) I would like to speak in support of the motion but I just wanted to point something out quickly. I am in the Southern Region Young Members’ Network and whenever members talk about young workers and young members, we get told all the time that we are the future of the trade union movement. The future of the trade union movement is in our hands. We are workers now. It is not about what we are going to do in the future. We are workers now, the same as all of you are. I appreciate that we have young workers’ initiatives, like at conferences, and there are competitions for us to win free iPads or the GMB’s jollies to Cuba. What will get young people engaged in the trade union movement is a trade union that is active and fights for working class people’s rights in the workplace, which is the same as any other worker wants. I wanted to point that out and I wanted to remind everyone that we are workers now, and that’s all we want. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Holly. Holly, when you go to Cuba, it’s never a jolly, believe you me. You will work three times as hard and you travel a great deal. Does anyone else want to speak to this item? (*No response*) The CEC is supporting with a qualification. I call Sharon Holder.

SIS. S. HOLDER (National Officer): Congress, the CEC is supporting Motion 12 with a qualification. The future of the GMB lies in the hands of the millions of working people in Britain of all ages, who don’t yet have a union where they work. The *GMB @ Work* policy aims to build our union to be as strong as it possibly can in every workplace where we have members, making the workplace the target of all our recruitment and organisation work. This is simply because it is in the workplace where our members can most readily build the collective power that they need to take on their employer and win improvements that they can touch and feel. It is in the workplace where we can be most relevant to the lives and aspirations of working people of all ages.

So the CEC qualification to this motion is that to be consistent with *GMB @ Work* and the national recruitment drive aimed at young workers, we will need to do the following: (1) identify and focus on specific workplace issues that can be used to unite young workers and attract them to the GMB; (2) adopt a clear strategy to gain access to young workers in the workplace, to discuss their issues and recruit, and (3)

have a clear plan to organise new, young members to become active, workplace organisers and advocates for the GMB where they work.

Congress, some work has already been done in this area in several parts of our union with work on students and in industries where young people often find their first jobs. It is also worth noting that the number of young workers joining GMB has risen since we introduced online joining in 2006. The motion seeks to build on these foundations. Please support Motion 12 with the qualification that I have set out.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Sharon. Does Midland & East Coast Region accept the qualification?

BRO. A. WORTH (Midland & East Coast): Yes, President.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Andy. All those in favour of Motion 12, please vote? Anyone against? That is carried.

*Motion 12 was CARRIED.*

**EMPLOYMENT POLICY  
RIGHTS AT WORK  
INTERNSHIPS  
MOTION 83**

**83. INTERNSHIPS**

This Conference is concerned about the increase in internships. This system of 'on-the-job' training mainly for white-collar jobs may be paid, unpaid or partially paid (in the form of a stipend), but we call on the GMB to campaign for a change in the British internships system whereby all interns have rights under Employment Law to receive at least a guaranteed minimum wage for the length of their internship and not allow companies to use them as cheap and free labour.

PONTYPRIDD GENERAL BRANCH  
*South Western Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. J. BRADY (South Western): Congress, I am speaking to Motion 83 on Internships. I am a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Congress, we have a great concern about the increase in the number of companies offering internships mostly to young people. Internships are a system of on-the-job training, most in the white collar and professional sectors. Interns usually are college or university students and graduates, but sometimes they can be sixth form students and post-graduate adults. Generally, this work is in exchange for experience between the student and the employer, with students exchanging their cheap or free labour to gain experience in a particular field. They can also use an internship to determine if they have an interest in a particular career, create a network of contacts or gain school credits. Some interns do find permanent and paid employment with the companies they have carried out their internships with, and those employers will benefit as they are now experienced interns, needing little or no training when they begin their full-time regular employment.

We have no problem with the concept of internships, but we do believe that many of these young people, and they are mostly young people, are being exploited as many of these internships are unpaid or partly paid in the form of a stipend.

We believe that anyone who is taken on to be provided with work experience, even if it is part of their degree programme, should be paid the minimum wage for the length of their internship and have the same employment law rights as the other employees who they work alongside.

In this present economic climate with its high unemployment, which has reached a level that we have not seen since 1995, we do not want to see any young person denied access to employment, but we want to see these young people protected and being paid a living wage whilst training or working as an intern. We could also see a two-tier system developing within these roles. We will see those who are able to undertake an internship because they can be funded by their parents, who do not have financial restraints, and those who do not have the luxury of financial family support, who will lose out because they will not be able to undertake any unpaid roles, or work experience without any financial support.

We do not condemn the practice of internship outright. It can be a way to securing work with a reputable employer, and not all of these roles are unpaid. But there are many employers out *there* who are not so concerned about the future of these young people. They are only getting the work done without having to pay for it.

We call on the CEC to campaign for a change in the British internships system to guarantee interns their rights under employment law and stamp out the practice of unscrupulous employers using them as cheap and free labour. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Julia. Secunder?

BRO. A. BAKER (South Western): Congress, I am a first-time speaker. I am seconding Motion 83 on Internships. President, as my colleague has already said we are not against the ethos of spirit of internships, but we do not want to see young people being used as cheap labour. Some companies are promoting these schemes because they know that there are many graduates today who are desperate for work and this situation is only going to increase in today's dire job market.

We know that a graduate placement or internship, which usually means the same thing, can provide a valuable introduction to the world of work, and could boost future career prospects. However, not all of these are paid and unless the person has some financial backing, probably they would find it difficult to take up the opportunity of these positions to enhance their prospects of finding employment.

We believe, regardless, that whatever these positions are called – internships, placements or whatever organisation or company they are working for – they are working. Therefore, they should receive a wage for the work that they carry out, and this should be at least the minimum wage and receive the same terms and conditions as those who work alongside them. Those organisations which exploit these young

people – they are, in the main, young people – should be made accountable for their abuse of power and for using them as a cheap labour source.

We ask the CEC to campaign for a change in the British internship system to protect our young people from being exploited and taken advantage of. Thank you.  
(*Applause*)

## **UNPAID LABOUR & INTERNSHIPS MOTION 84**

### **84. UNPAID LABOUR & INTERNSHIPS**

Congress resolves to lead a campaign alongside the TUC and other unions to stop the practice of using employment “volunteers” to work in supermarkets and other workplaces without any pay and with the threat of losing their benefits if they stop doing it. This is to be done by:

- a) Agreeing a strategy with other unions and the TUC to co-ordinate action.
- b) Negotiating agreements with employers where we have recognition (e.g. ASDA) to stop this exploitative practice.
- c) By actively engaging with the media to publicise this iniquitous practice and our opposition.

LOWESTOFT BRANCH  
*London Region*

(*Carried*)

SIS. A. COUSIN (London): Congress, I move Motion 84 – Unpaid Labour & Internships. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. (*Applause*)

Comrades, the scandal of A4e, which has been highlighted in the media since we were last here in Brighton, has proved that this Government initiative of *Work for Welfare* is just a way of profiteering from those claiming benefits. Work placements are not offering the unemployed the fundamental work disciplines promised by the Department of Work & Pensions, but are instead a way for big business to obtain free labour, and for unscrupulous businesses to make money by claiming to help jobseekers get work placements and permanent jobs.

Evidence is emerging that employers are using work placements to fill the gaps in their businesses rather than give existing employees better contracted hours, rather than pay them overtime or even employ more full-time staff. If employers need to train young people to work in their industry, then they should pay them at least the minimum wage while they train and then the proper rate once they are qualified.

As our President in her Address this morning, over the Jubilee weekend jobseekers were bussed into London from Plymouth, Bath and Bristol as part of this sham initiative. On arrival at 3 in the morning, in the pouring rain, they were left to huddle under London Bridge, they had no access to toilets and had to suffer the indignity of changing into their work clothes in public. These people were either unpaid or on an apprentice rate of £2.80 an hour. Why do they suffer this? It’s not because they are bunch of feckless, workshy layabouts, who are scrounging benefits, as many would have us believe. No. They just wanted to be considered for work during the Olympic Games.

Close Protection UK, the company responsible for their treatment, were quoted as saying: “This was an unfortunate set of circumstances, but not lack of care on our part.” That is unbelievable! You couldn’t make it up, could you?

This Coalition Government is making us work for longer before we can draw our pensions and, at the same time, there is no work for young people because less of us can afford to retire. A recent article in the *Observer* stated that there are plans to significantly extend the scheme, despite there being no evidence that it is working. In fact, the Employment Related Services Association revealed that fewer than one in four of the people who have been on a programme have actually found a job. The GMB is well placed to campaign against these fake work placements. Campaigns on Facebook, Twitter and other social networking sites have already shamed some companies and hit them where it hurts: in their precious profits. Surely, the massed ranks of the trade union movement can bring fear to their pockets? If we can’t stop this exploitation of jobseekers, what can the Trade Union Congress and unions do to protect the living standards and conditions for all of us? We need to coordinate with other unions and the TUC to formulate a strategy for action. It is time to protect not only our members but also those seeking employment. They deserve the same rights and wages as those who they work alongside. After all, trade unions and the TUC have campaigned for a fair day’s pay for a fair day’s work for at least 150 years. Now is the time to finally win the fight and for all workers to get their rightful pay. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Alison. Secunder?

BRO. M. JAMES (London): Congress, I second Motion 84 – Unpaid Labour and Internships. I am seconding this motion as I would like to see this modern-day form and practice of unpaid slavery stopped immediately. I am tired of watching the alleged news bullets telling us daily that “We’re in this together”. No, we’re not “Call me ‘Dave’.” We are not! We are told that to cut the deficit we will have to make savings in the public sector and the private sector will create extra jobs. What jobs? All the jobs that are vacant are being given to the unfortunate souls on Jobseeker’s Allowance and told, “If you do not participate in this scheme, you will have what little you receive” – currently it is £71 a week – “cut.” The very thought of people having to work a 40-hour week for benefits which happens to work at £1.77 an hour makes my stomach churn. Anyone in their right frame of mind will realise that the fat cats at Argos and Greggs, and other stingy employers, will not have to create more jobs. Why bother, when this outrageous Tory-Lib Coalition will provide you with all the free labour you need? This will keep the chief executives’ and directors’ bonuses healthy. So, dear Dave and Nick, who in the private sector are creating these jobs that you and your mates have promised?

We must, as a trade union, fight this battle to the bitter end. We must make this battle a priority with other unions and educate the public to move this degrading and immoral practice, and also replace this out-of-touch Cabinet of millionaires. We should be able to engage with the media on this subject, but I doubt that we would get far with the corrupt Murdoch media which currently exists in the UK. So it is down to you, brothers and sisters, to spread the word: “Attend all employee forums at your

workplace, and, where we have recognition, negotiate with management to ensure that slave/master practices do not happen in your workplace.” Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Conference, the CEC is supporting both Motions 83 and 84.

SIS. H. SMITH (Southern): I want to speak in support of Motion 83, quickly. Chuka Umunna, Rachel Reeves, Keith Vaz, Gloria De Piero and John Robertson are just a few Labour MPs who advertised for unpaid internships in 2011. We should support this motion but, perhaps, before we target companies which are exploiting young people, we should get our own house in order and refuse to hand over our members’ money to people who exploit the labour of young people. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Is there anyone else? (*No response*) As I said, the CEC is supporting both motions. I will take them together. All those in favour? Anyone against?

*Motion 83 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 84 was CARRIED*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We will now move on to Social Policy. I remind Congress that the composites are listed on pages 81-93.

## **SOCIAL POLICY**

### **COMPOSITE 16**

#### **YOUNG PEOPLE – SKILLS & EMPLOYMENT**

##### **C16. Covering Motions:**

180. EDUCATION AND SKILLS (*Southern Region*)

181. THE RIGHT TO WORK FOR THE LOST GENERATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE (*Northern Region*)

182. “YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT” – NOT AN EXCUSE FOR EXPLOITATION (*London Region*)

##### **YOUNG PEOPLE: SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT**

This Conference condemns this Coalition government on its failure of our youth today. Years ago our fathers marched to London for work. Now our children are marching to London for work.

The Conference calls upon the GMB and the trade union movement to seek urgent dialogue with this Coalition government to get our young into work in full-time jobs before they are to be known as the lost generation.

Young people today (or indeed any day) should have the opportunity to learn, work and grow as citizens and not be taken for a ride. Replacing redundant positions with apprentices or work experience is neither fair nor ethical.

Congress is asking the GMB to lobby Parliament to rethink and overhaul the current “work programme”. The current “work programme” has put millions of pounds into the hands of private sector companies with no public accountability of success – This cannot be right.

They and the DWP (Jobcentre) are forcing young people to do work for their JSA and fares while the person doing an identical job next to them is on a wage. In the immortal words of every teenager “it’s not fair”.

This Congress believes that the education system in Britain totally fails to address the needs of young people seeking to learn practical skills and calls upon the Government to provide employment opportunities for young people who currently have no chance of practical work.

*(Carried)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I call London to move, Northern to second and Southern to take priority in debate.

SIS. W. WHITTINGTON (London): Congress, I move Composite Motion 16 – “Youth Unemployment” – Not an Excuse for Exploitation.

Conference is asking the GMB to lobby Parliament to rethink and overhaul the current “work programme”. In the immortal words of every teenager, “It’s not fair”. Young people today, or indeed any day, should have the opportunities to learn, work and grow as citizens and not be taken for a ride. I apologise if this information is not current, but with the Con-Dem Government doing more u-turns than a black cab – 32 were reported last week – I’m never sure what’s going on.

I know the title of this motion is Youth Unemployment, but I think the following details are also relevant for anyone who is unemployed at the present time. The current work programme has put millions of pounds into the hands of private sector companies with no public accountability of success. They, and the Department for Work & Pensions – ie, Jobcentre Plus – are forcing people to do work for their Jobseeker’s Allowance plus fares, while the person next to them is doing an identical job on a wage, with added benefits such as pension, sick pay, etc. This is neither fair nor ethical. Replacing redundant positions with people on work experience is not right, but it has been happening around the country for some time now. An example was last year with the London Underground cutting 800 station staff when only months later a new Workfare initiative was created by A4e, one of the providers of work experience, and I quote, “to make people feel safer at north London tube stations”. So, the need for a uniform presence remains but the paid employment doesn’t seem to.

A4e also takes the liberty of reminding clients by email that unemployment is due to a lack of positive thinking. There was me thinking that it was due to the lack of jobs. Silly me! A4e was also listed as one of the providers which is not averse to using claimants to carry out work on their own premises.

On a separate note, last May A4e had four of its staff arrested for fraud on previous contacts.

G4S, which is another provider, which also runs prisons and detention centres, was awarded its work programme contract on the basis of a bid promising to send a field operative to a claimant's door within two hours if that person was "non-cooperative".

Let's think about the cost of setting up the work programme. Only last month it was revealed that the new Youth Contract will cost nearly £1 billion over three years. It could have been better spent in creating small businesses and new jobs. In some areas of the country less than one job is advertised for every 25 people applying, but unemployment is still being identified as "a personal failing". The work programme is another example of the Government's attempt to discipline and control the unemployed.

Since claimants are now the responsibility of private companies, there is not even a basic accountability afforded by the Freedom of Information Act, and it is difficult to discover which companies are profiting from mandatory work placements. Iain Duncan Smith has actually forbidden providers from sharing performance data voluntarily. This Government obviously think that the less we know, the better.

An organisation called Boycott Workfare – check them out on the internet – has at least managed to name and shame some large companies, like Tesco and Waterstones into not using this form of unpaid worker. Let's hope that more follow. This Government's approach to Workfare is not about helping people into work, but it is about manipulating the unemployment figures for short-term political point scoring. Congress, please support this motion, which asks this GMB to lobby Parliament to re-think and overhaul the current work programme. After all, Workfare is one name for a system that forces people to work for free. Slave labour is another. *(Applause)*

BRO. P. SAWDON (Northern): Congress, I second Composite 16: Young People: Skills and Employment. Congress, this Coalition Government is presiding over a lost generation with youth unemployment at a record high. The answer to the problem according to the Low Pay Commission is to freeze the minimum wage. Who would have thought that 75 years after the Jarrow March another march for jobs by young people would start once again at Jarrow and take their case to Westminster?

Congress, to keep young people out of jobs, cut their education funding, increase their levels of debt and give them less hope than that experienced by their parents and grandparents means we must not be surprised if a mass social problem rises up. You only have to look back at the lessons of the 1980s for the previous example of a callous, uncaring government, that believed unemployment to be a price worth paying, which wrote off a generation of workers, young and old. We are paying the price of that dogma through generations of unemployment in household after household. Then what does the Coalition do? It freezes the National Minimum Wage.

Their friends in the City and the Institute of Directors are fuelling the policy: cut the funding and cut the wages. That was the medicine of the 1920s and 1930s, and look what happened! It was the same as is happening now. Congress, a campaign process must be undertaken to tackle this Coalition's policies regarding our young people. We are doing a massive amount in the GMB in working with our young members to help them get into work and to help and support them at work. However, we must

redouble our efforts at standing up for the youth today. The lack of leadership in Westminster and the lack of urgency by MPs towards our young people leaves a vacuum. Let us help pick up the baton for the young. They are our future, Congress, and our future depends on them. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Would Southern Region like to put a speaker in?

BRO. D. LEAK (Southern): Congress, I am speaking in support of Composite 16. President and Congress, my comments are on education and training. I am an apprentice working on the *Medway Queen* project. Before doing this, I was at Medway College on a two-year welding and fabrication course. Since starting on the *Medway Queen* project, the apprentices have been taken to Belgium to see how practical education is taught there. In Belgium we visited a college teaching welding to 14 year olds at a higher level than I was taught under our system. We have a French lad who has come to work with us for a term. He is 18. The education he has received is far superior to that which we have received. We have learnt more on our first year on the *Medway Queen* project than we even learnt at college. We must address these issues in order to retain skills working for the future. Please support. (*Applause*)

## **YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES MOTION 183**

### **183. YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES**

This Congress notes with concern the cuts in grants in local authorities for non-statutory services such as Young Peoples' Service like Connexions. Cuts in services such as these are short sighted and detrimental to the country's economic recovery. With rising youth unemployment the need for such services are even more vital. Without these support services thousands of young people will be left behind on the scrap heap, with little or no prospects of jobs or further education and we will see another lost generation as we did during the years of Thatcherism.

This Congress instructs the CEC to mount a campaign to defend such services.

ISLINGTON APEX BRANCH  
*London Region*

(*Carried*)

BRO. V. WEST (London): Congress, I move Motion 183 on Young People Services. In this morning's *Independent on Sunday*, Eric Pickles, the Community Secretary, is quoted as saying: "Problem families have had it too easy for too long." Well, Eric, it's not problem families that created the banking crisis. It is certainly not problem families that created a double-dip recession, and it is certainly not problem families that are cutting grants and finances to local authority services, such as young people's services.

These services provide valuable support to young people who have been failed by the normal education system; young people who need support to get real-life options for further education and employment. These young people need support so that a previous generation from the 1980s is not left on the scrapheap. Young people need support so that they do not become what Pickles this morning called "Problem

families”. In my own borough of Islington last year, they were forced to cut the Connection Service by over 75% because of the withdrawal of specific grant-aid from the Government. Those staff had been working daily with young people to give them the chance to get into employment or education. Those staff were ensuring that those young people did not become so-called “problem families”.

Cutting services like the Connection Service creates NEETS: those not in employment, education or training. Cutting services creates so-called “problem families”, and cutting services and introducing austerity measures ensures another lost generation of young people. Eric, you said in this morning’s paper that problem families should stop blaming others. Well, I’m not blaming others, Eric. I’m blaming you and your Government! Thank you. (*Applause*)

SIS. J. PARSONS (London): Congress, I work at Plaistow. When I first sat down to write my speech, I wasn’t sure what I wanted to say, so I emailed friends and colleagues who work in the area and I asked them for some input. It did not take long for the responses to arrive. As I read through them, I noticed a range of emotions: anger, disillusionment, frustration, pessimism and powerlessness. People talked of the decimation of services, increasing workloads, stress and uncertainty, but mostly they talked about the impact on young people. To quote one: “You have no idea how heartbreaking it is to look a young person in the eye and tell them that there is nothing you can do to help”, and “There is no one to refer on to.”

I was shocked by the tone of these responses. These are passionate people who have always loved their work, who talked about the inspiration they got from the young persons they worked with and how good it was to see a young person succeed. Then I realised that the passion and vibrancy came from young people, their total belief of what was wrong, the black and white thinking, the raw emotion. That is what was missing. These cuts are suffocating the spirit of our young population. There is no helping hand, no sense of optimism and no bright future. Is it any wonder, with no hope of employment and little chance of being able to afford a tertiary education, that these young people are angry, if those whose role it is to help and support have no funding and no resources, if thousands of voluntary-sector organisations have closed their doors?

By trampling over the hopes and dreams of the next generation, this Government are destroying not only the aspirations of the youth population but the aspirations of the whole nation. I second. (*Applause*)

## **YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY MOTION 184**

### **184. YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY**

Congress notes that the inclusion of young people in representative democracy is an important issue, which is not being applied fairly and consistently across the country.

Congress resolves that:

- \* The GMB believes young people should have a right to representative democracy through directly elected Youth Councils to provide a realistic experience.

- \* The GMB should call upon the Government and elected representatives to champion directly elected Youth Councillors.
- \* The GMB will work with the Labour Party and its elected representatives to develop directly elected Youth Councils.

LOWESTOFT BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Referred)*

SIS. A. COUSIN (London): Congress, I move Motion 184 – Youth Representative Democracy. President and Congress, this motion seeks to give young people the same rights that the rest of society already enjoys: the right to have their voice heard and their vote counted in their local area. It is an important right enjoyed by the disabled, women, those from ethnic backgrounds, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, just about any other equality strand that you can think of. They can all stand to be councillors and represent their communities, but not young people, as you have to be 18 to stand for public office.

Some local authorities have set up youth councils to give young people a voice in the area. However, unlike adult councils where you could go to a different local authority area and know the process and protocols for becoming a councillor in that area, with youth councils there is no standardisation in approach because various local authorities do things differently. For example, in the London Borough of Islington, young people are directly elected, which is by far the best option for reasons that I will explain shortly. In Kent young people must complete application forms for the role of being a member of the youth council. Where I live in Lowestoft, Waveney District Council has no consistency in approach because appointment to the youth council has been devolved to schools and education establishments. So some let the same representatives attend year after year, while others say, “You’ve had your year. Let someone else have a go.”

This approach has given rise to accusations that the members of the youth councils are either the head teachers’ puppets, hand picked or just there to rubber stamp the authorities’ decisions. This perception is not helpful in either changing society’s opinion of the worth of young people’s views, and it will not encourage young people to come forward to stand for a place on a youth council. So, clearly, the best way is to have directly elected youth councils. It is better because it gives a realistic experience to add to their personal, social, health and economic education by not just mentioning how voting works, but giving young people direct, hands-on experience, experience which could also, potentially, help with their school’s Ofsted results. It is better because it means that young people elected to the youth council are there to represent their peers and they have been mandated to undertake that role. It is certainly better because the young people have experience of procedures around elections and voting.

You would be surprised how many 18 year old, first-time voters, ask, “What do you do when you go into a polling station?” and “How much does it cost?”

We are calling upon the GMB to work with authorities and campaign towards standardisation amongst youth council appointments so that all young people can be confident that they are being represented by their peers, they have chosen their

representatives themselves and their representatives have a mandate to speak on their behalf. Comrades, I call on you to support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Alison. Secunder?

BRO. D. GREEN (London Region): Congress, I second Motion 184. Why do we need the inclusion of young people in a representative democracy? The answers are *here*, right in front of us. The youth are our future. We keep hearing that. They have fresh ideas and new energy which needs to be harnessed and utilised. They add a different perspective to things in any forum, so with the support of the Government, the Labour Party and their representatives, they need to champion youth councillors, give them the experience needed and help them in developing youth councils. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: David, did you notice how the General Secretary perked up when you said “Fulham No. 1 branch”? It’s his branch. (*Laughter*)

Does any Congress delegate wish to come into the debate on any of the resolutions? (*No response*) No. Okay. Thank you. I now call Joe Morgan to speak on Motion 184.

BRO. J. MORGAN (Regional Secretary, Birmingham & West Midlands): I am speaking in respect of Motion 184. Comrades, we are asking Congress to refer Motion 184 for the following reasons. This particular motion calls for the establishment of youth councils around the country. As most of you will know, youth councils are a form of youth voice engaged in community decision-making. Youth councils exist at a local, regional, national and, in some cases, an international level amongst governments. Most of them are consultative bodies and representative political bodies at all levels of government. There are already a number of established youth councils in Britain. An example, comrades, is the Scottish Youth Parliament. This is a democratic, politically independent, inclusive, charity set up by a group of passionate youth workers as a national voice for young people in Scotland.

Also, comrades, in the London Borough of Islington eight youth councillors have been elected by other young people and their particular role is to represent the views of children and young people in Islington, help to determine how money is spent on services and young people, and for them to share their views with the council and its partners on issues affecting young people.

Congress, although the motion asks for consistency, there is no single model or role for youth councils. As outlined they are quite diverse in their make up. Whilst supporting any moves to engage young people politically, we believe that further investigation would be needed on how youth councils should be established, function and relate to the existing democratic processes. This is why, comrades, we ask Congress that this motion should be referred to the National Equality Forum for full investigation and for a further report to the Central Executive Council. Congress, please agree to referring Motion 184. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Joe. Does London agree to refer? (*Agreed*) Does Congress agree? (*Agreed*)

*Motion 184 was REFERRED.*

THE PRESIDENT: I now put Composite Motion 16 and Motion 183 to the vote. All those in favour, please show? The CEC is supporting. Anyone against?

*Composite Motion 16 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 183 was CARRIED.*

## **SOCIAL POLICY: EDUCATION & TRAINING**

### **EDUCATION SABOTAGE**

#### **MOTION 185**

##### **185. EDUCATION SABOTAGE**

Congress is alarmed at the proposals, decisions and attacks on the education system as we know it and the privatised path down which the Secretary of State for Education is driving it.

None of the proposals including University fees, the wholesale transfer of state schools to academies, free schools, the abandonment of EMA or scrapping the agreed schools building programme and many, many more were in either the Tory or Lib-Dem manifestos or part of the Coalition Agreement. All of which are being bulldozed through as a result of his earlier Bill.

Congress agrees there is a need to protect the current education system embracing Local Authorities and the local community against a fragmented system that would produce more losers than winners. To this end we should join with all the other trade unions, and Education bodies seeking to maintain and improve the current system.

LUTON BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. D. MULLANE (London Region): First time delegate, first time speaker. *(Applause)* President, Congress, who said there would be no increase in university tuition fees: every would-be Liberal Democrat Member of Parliament in 2010. Who went back on that solemn promise: every Liberal Democrat Member of the Cabinet who sold out their principles for a ministerial salary and a car. The decision to allow universities to charge up to £9,000 in tuition fees was a Conservative decision to sabotage the availability of a university education for the working class. Imagine the choice, colleagues, a college degree with a lifetime debt or no degree and no debt. It does not bear thinking about. There are also serious public debt concerns about these increases in fees. The Government will give loans to cover the cost of fees at university but there is no guarantee that all of them will be repaid. Recent estimates show that £100bn will be added to the public debt and a further likelihood that less than 70% of loans will be repaid. This is not sound economic sense.

Then there is the railroading of state education away from local authorities and into academies and free schools. Shamefully, it was the last Labour Government that introduced the academies. Funding for new schools was also available if they were academies. Greedy heads and boards of governors are snatching at the short-term lifeline of increased funding to meet deficits and budgets caused by their own mismanagement and blind to the fact that other schools in the same local authority will receive less money because of their greed. National terms and conditions will be

removed and the local follow-on from that is that education standards will fall because the good teachers will not work at cut-price rates, and nor should they.

Then there is that Gove creation, the free schools, the Conservative whim born from the need to increase segregation in our education system, publicly funded for the moment but with none of the checks and balances required by the local authority, the ability to select what is taught and who is educated, bright kids only need apply and if your child needs extra help go elsewhere. Colleagues, only a Tory could think of that. Sweden started the concept of free schools in the 1990s and they have fallen down the league table of education achievement. A recent report gave the damning verdict that reading, comprehension, and skills in maths and science, have declined significantly. Do we really want that for our children: certainly not.

The abolition of the school building programme is also putting any Labour council in a Catch 22 position: councils who are desperate for new schools can only receive finance to build them if they are built, opened, and run as free schools. Labour councils such as one in the London Borough of Brent must make the agonising decision whether to abandon the needs of their children or support Conservative ideology; colleagues, an impossible choice. Congress, there is no doubt that the Coalition government's policy on education is ultimately to privatise it. This union must oppose that at every twist and turn and I call on the CEC to ensure that happens. Congress, I move. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder.

SIS. H. PURCELL (London Region): Congress, as we have just heard, Gove and his party's ideological policies have been and continue to be an absolute disaster for education in this country and most of all for the future of all our children. That is why we must act together with our sister trade unions, parent and student groups, and other interested education bodies to put a stop to these attacks on our education system. Gove is not improving education for our children. He is putting it back by decades and creating a system which is far more unequal and unjust than it has ever been. Inequality in education can only be addressed by a joined-up system, not a fragmented one as has been created via the academies and free schools agenda. The free schools policy is a licence for the private sector to make money and is not in the interest of children, families, or the taxpayer. Gove gave an unequivocal indication during the Leveson Inquiry that free schools are likely to be allowed to make a profit sometime in the future. This is a shocking approach to take to the education of our children and young people. Education is to be for the good of society, not the coffers of large companies.

As it stands, our union is already doing some exemplary campaigning work in the education sector, for instance, on the free schools and academies agenda and we need to make sure we build on this, making sure we stand together at both the local and national level. Let's face it we do not need to reinvent the wheel on this one. Cross-union town committees, trades councils, and public service alliances already exist in many towns, cities, and localities so let's use these already existing networks and structures and build on them. At national level we need to work together to influence policy by ensuring that our trade union leaders are meeting with one another on a regular basis to discuss joint political campaigning as well as meeting as a group with

other likeminded parties who can influence. The difference will only be made if we act in a concerted and coordinated manner. Congress, please support the motion and let's put an end to these Tory-led ideological attacks on our education system. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Motion 186, Northern Region to move, Education Policy.

## **EDUCATION POLICY MOTION 186**

### **186. EDUCATION POLICY**

This Conference calls for the Coalition Government to publicise the percentage of school leavers attending University, as well as the percentage that are going directly into apprenticeships.

Conference calls on the Coalition Government and opposition parties to ensure that there is parity of esteem across sectors in those attending apprenticeships as well as those attending academic courses, so that future employment prospects are maximised for school leavers.

Conference calls on the Central Executive Council to lobby for greater balancing of education policy so that those going into apprenticeships are not seen as the poor relations by those in the Whitehall Education Establishment

STOCKTON 3 ENGINEERING BRANCH  
*Northern Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. A. BRYAN (Northern Region): Congress, education policy over the last 20-30 years has become heavily reliant on academic courses. Successive governments have commissioned report after report and each one has placed great weight on more and more students going to university. One such report was the Leagues Report of 2006. It compares the UK with China, Germany, Holland, in coming up with its findings. It is widely regarded that the Leagues Report gave the last Labour government the cover it needed for the policy that 50% of students should go to university. It is this policy that helps explain why tuition fees have become the norm in education policy yet a generation ago the gap between rich and poor was narrower. Students from poor estates had at least a good chance to get on in life. Congress, a generation ago an apprenticeship was much admired and sought after. Policymakers in Whitehall have failed to recognise that practical apprenticeships are an important alternative to university and that investment in work-based education is an essential part of the UK's economic future.

Comparing the UK to Germany or China ignores the social contract partnership model that exists in Germany and the sheer scale of the Chinese population in an economy. The UK economy needs to be sustainable and education needs to reflect that. School-leavers who are not academic should get a quality apprenticeship in work. Congress, academic courses are vital but so are apprenticeships. We should lobby for genuine parity between academic courses and apprenticeships. The Whitehall education establishment needs to bury its snobbery against practical qualifications. Students of all abilities need to get the best possible start and help to maximise their talents. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Alyson. Secunder.

BRO. R. CLAYTON (Northern Region): Congress, in supporting the proposal of this motion it is important that a balance is struck between those who want to go to university and those who want to go into the world of work. The Whitehall education establishment is largely based on the Oxbridge culture. It is not like that in Europe. Our competitors recognise that practical qualifications earned in good quality apprenticeships complement degrees.

Congress, higher education finance in the UK needs to be focused on the school-leavers right through to the mature students. Higher education finance should be focused on school-leavers going to university. It should also focus on those who want to part-time degrees or higher education qualifications. Congress, we need to lobby for a much greater balance in the incentive and numbers going into both degree study and work-based apprenticeships.

The UK economy must become more diverse if it is to grow and thrive for future generations. Focusing solely on academic qualifications is raising the cost to students yet it is not narrowing the gap between the rich and poor. We need a fundamental rethink. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Richard. Composite 17, Apprenticeship Schemes, South Western to move, London Region to second.

## **APPRENTICESHIP SCHEMES COMPOSITE 17**

### **C17. Covering Motions:**

187. APPRENTICESHIPS (*South Western Region*)

188. BOGUS APPRENTICESHIP SCHEMES (*London Region*)

## **APPRENTICESHIP SCHEMES**

This Congress notes the epidemic of bogus apprenticeship schemes, especially in the building and maintenance industries that are designed to deliver Labour for unscrupulous employers while failing to teach young people the skills necessary for a growing and vibrant economy.

This Conference calls on employers who offer apprenticeships to make sure that:

- these are bona fide apprenticeships
- full training and education is provided throughout the full apprenticeship programme
- and that indentures are issued on completion of the full term of the apprenticeship scheme.

We also call for all apprenticeships to be monitored to ensure that apprentices are trained and educated appropriately and that when their apprenticeship is completed it will enable them to get gainful full time employment.

Congress therefore calls on the CEC to ensure, that in conjunction with other unions and the Labour Party and other Labour Movement bodies that a model apprenticeship scheme is drawn up that could be put forward as part of a credible alternative economic strategy to get young people back into work.

*(Carried)*

SIS. G. BRINKWORTH (South Western Region): President, Congress, we are concerned about the situation regarding the apprenticeship system. We believe that those lucky enough to be offered a place should be given full training and education throughout their programme and that proper indentures are issued at the end of the term. All schemes should be monitored to ensure this. There needs to be many more apprenticeships on offer as we are now suffering a skills shortage because in the Thatcher years they nearly died out and we are seeing a two-decade skills gap that is not easy to fill. Now we need to look to the future.

National Apprenticeship Week was held at the beginning of February and figures suggest that more employers will take on apprentices over the next year. Although the Government may have promised £1.4bn to create new apprenticeships, is the funding going to the right places. Not really. Despite the Government's efforts to encourage small businesses to create jobs for Britain's one million unemployed 16-24 year olds a new survey reveals that just one-fifth of SMEs are planning to take on someone under a training, internship, or voluntary scheme whilst another quarter said they are considering it. There is a continuing problem that places are outstripping demand. We are now seeing on average 80 to 100 applicants for every placement. Employer engagement in the UK lags behind the rest of Europe with only 30% of companies with more than 500 staff having schemes compared to virtually all employers of that size in Germany.

We believe unions have proven to have a very positive effect on the success and sustainability of apprenticeship schemes and can play a vital role in engaging employers. By working with employers and stakeholders in succession planning for future skills and job requirements and implementing joint targets for recruiting and sustaining higher levels of apprentices, we can ensure these schemes are of high quality, have career development opportunities, and should not be used as a means of subsidising employers to deliver occupation-specific training. The unions in these sectors, such as construction and engineering, can play an important role in monitoring delivery through joint industry boards and this should be widened to include in other sectors apprentice frameworks where unions have significant recognition. It is important that there is an emphasis on equality and diversity as gender segregation remains a problem in some traditional apprenticeships and the number of apprentices from ethnic minorities and those with a disability is low.

Things are looking a bit more promising in Wales where apprenticeships within local authorities had diminished over decades. There are good signs that this trend could be reversed. Several authorities are planning for enhanced apprenticeship schemes with some intending to almost double the places over the next year and we hope our colleagues throughout the rest of the UK will see this replicated.

Although we want young people to be taken on as apprentices we do not want to see them being brought in to displace existing employees, especially in the current economic climate when redundancy programmes and apprenticeship recruitment are running simultaneously. We must be opposed to them being recruited as a cover for job substitution and we have to play a part in ensuring apprenticeship agreements are

developed to ensure that such practice is not allowed. We call upon the CEC to lobby for stricter monitoring of apprenticeship schemes to ensure that they are bona fide apprenticeships with indentures when the full term is served. It is vital there are more opportunities for our young people to get on a scheme turning out highly skilled workers and we as a union can play a full part in ensuring that they are treated fairly and go on to fulltime employment. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gwylan. Secunder.

BRO. M. WALTON (London Region): President, Congress, most people in this hall will be aware that our country has at least one million people under the age of 25 unemployed. It is likely that most people in this hall know someone in this position. This situation is not only economically stupid, it is immoral. We can argue until we are blue in the face about the reasons for this but what we cannot afford to do is let the situation continue. There is broad agreement that the advancement of proper and meaningful training through an apprenticeship scheme is one of the ways in which we can start to address the problem of youth unemployment. Even the current ConDem government apparently agree with this saying, and I quote: "Boosting apprenticeship schemes is a key government aim." Well, they are boosting something. They are in fact boosting the profits made by unscrupulous private companies that are exploiting our young people.

What we are seeing is the subcontracting of training to agencies that provide sham apprenticeships and short-term work placements. The key point here is that there is no real job. There is no contract between the actual company and the individual and there is no obligation to train anyone. Many of my family and friends who worked in the construction and service sector now realise just how damaging subcontracting was to their industries in the 1980s but at least they had the opportunity of a real apprenticeship which they often completed with reputable companies. With the current scams in place our young people are not even left with this.

Congress, what is needed is a root and branch review of apprenticeship schemes. We need to develop a nationally devised model apprenticeship contract which has been agreed with real employers, unions, and other interested parties. Most importantly, what is needed is an end to the sham contracting out of training and an end to sham apprenticeship schemes. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Mick. Does anyone wish to come in on the debate, 185, 186, and Composite 17? Come along, Brian. I was your youngest apprentice; get up there!

BRO. B. BURTON (Southern Region): I listened to the debate here and there are a couple of comments. If we are going to attack and we are going to have proper apprenticeship, we have to take on the colleges as well. What is being taught in the colleges does not give people an apprenticeship in the future. I would just like to make the point that we must address this issue if we want proper trade apprenticeships, and that is what it has to be about. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Brian. Anyone else? With those comments, and thanks, Brian, I am in agreement with you, I now move to 185, 186, and Composite

17, the CEC is supporting. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

*Motion 185 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 186 was CARRIED.*

*Composite 17 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, before I move to the next item of business, I have an announcement to make. We are asking you to visit the York Disabled Workers Co-Operative Stall, take home a bird box or wine rack, or ballot box, buy a raffle ticket, IOUs are accepted, and please support this wonderful York factory cooperative. They do need your money. Thank you very much.

### **GMB SPECIAL AWARD**

THE PRESIDENT: Before we move into the Equality debate, we cannot finish our debate on apprentices without mentioning the great work our stewards do, in particular one steward who is with us here today. This special award goes to Joe Murphy from BAE Systems Maritime–Submarines based in Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria. BAE Systems is one of the largest employers of apprentices in the UK with 1,000 apprentices in training. Joe has been instrumental in ensuring the training programme runs and a vital skill base is not just preserved but the inspirational work that Joe does as a mentor and trainer is ensuring that the future for young apprentices in BAE is bright and skills flourish. The commitment and passion that GMB activists and members like Joe deliver is a tribute to everything we do. Congress, before presenting Joe with his award, we will watch a short film on his work. Thank you.

*(Video shown to Congress)*

THE PRESIDENT: On behalf of GMB I would like to present you with the Silver Award. Well done. Congratulations. Thank you. *(Presentation amid applause)*

BRO. J. MURPHY: President, Congress, what can I say? It is a fantastic honour you have given me today. I will cherish this all my life. I was sat listening to people talk about young people and I agree with everything they have said. Our young people are our future. We must skill them up because without these young people we do not have a future. I know I have been a member of the GMB for 48 years now, and my father and my grandfather, who was the treasurer of Number 2 Branch in Barrow, instilled into me the importance of being part of the union. So, I am over the moon with this fantastic award. Thank you very much GMB for everything. Thank you. *(Applause/Standing Ovation)*

THE PRESIDENT: The drinks are on you tonight, Joe! Colleagues, can we now move into the next part of the programme, which is part of the Equalities. We move to Motion 40, to be moved by GMB Scotland, 43, Southern Region, 45 London Region, and 46 London Region. I will be asking Tim Roache to reply on behalf of the CEC to Motion 46. Could the movers and seconders please come forward?

**UNION ORGANISATION: EQUALITY & INCLUSION  
NOMINATION TO NATIONAL CONFERENCES  
MOTION 40**

**40. NOMINATION TO NATIONAL CONFERENCES**

This Conference welcomes the formation of the National Equalities Forum and the National Equalities Conference.

The conference now has no facility to nominate delegates to national conferences, ie, TUC and Labour Party.

We call upon Congress to re-establish this link and nominations to the other major conferences, especially when it enables delegates to attend, who wouldn't normally have a route to get a nomination.

FIFE PUBLIC SERVICE BRANCH  
GMB Scotland

*(Carried)*

SIS. A. DRYLIE (GMB Scotland): I think I can speak for every region when I say that we welcome the formation of the National Equalities Forum and the Regional Equality Forums throughout the organisation, and the Equality and Inclusion Policy that has been part of the movement. GMB Scotland would also like to thank Kamaljeet and the members of the NEF for all the hard work throughout the year since its formation. Congress, the NEF's predecessors, the Equalities Advisory Committees, played their part as well. There was work done and roles played, although they may not have been fully inclusive of all the strands that are furnished today.

What makes our union? The members. The members need to be fully integrated and have opportunities to experience the wider picture not just hear about things on the grapevine or through the media. One way of doing this is the re-establishment of members being able to attend national conferences such as the Labour Party, TUC, TUC Black Workers, LGBT, Women's, Disabled, and Youth Conferences. Nominations to these were always done for an individual at the GMB Black Workers and Equalities Biannual Conferences. This link has now gone. Re-establishing this would give the members an opportunity to experience this through an alternative avenue. Due to structures if a member is not on a regional council there is no avenue open to them to participate as part of the national delegation where they would have the ability to network with not just their own union but with other trade unions and organisations.

I myself had the privilege of attending the Labour Party Conference in Bournemouth a number of years ago but I probably will not get that opportunity again having set off the fire alarms in the hotel. *(Laughter)* With the shower, I hasten to add! Members have the opportunity to attend a National Equality Conference from their regions, members who are not on a regional council do not have another route open to them.

I call upon the CEC to re-establish this link and become more inclusive by taking nominations and voting on delegates to attend a national conference at the National

Equality Conference, thus strengthening the representation of the six strands and giving an opportunity back to the members. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Annette. Secunder.

SIS. J. COOPER (GMB Scotland): Annette gave a passionate plea to Congress on a subject that is dear to our heart and one which I feel Congress should support. The members of this great union are the heart of the GMB but, as we all know, do not always want to get involved in the politics, the local argy-bargy, or the face-offs with management, but many feel strongly about other issues. Equality has a very high profile. Every one of us here deals with it on a day-to-day basis and it is a passionate and motivational subject. At this time GMB members have lost a valuable route to attend the National Equality Conference and this could stifle representation of our members, many who could be the leaders for the future. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Well done. I now ask for the mover of 43, Fawcett Society, Southern Region to move and second, please?

### **FAWCETT SOCIETY MOTION 43**

#### **43. FAWCETT SOCIETY**

This Congress agrees that the GMB affiliates nationally to the Fawcett Society. Very nearly 50% of our members are now women and this has been a big area of growth for our union. We need the GMB to be seen to be at the forefront of women's issues, and seen as a union that takes these issues seriously.

Fawcett is a leading campaigner on many issues affecting gender equality, including how the cuts affect women, highlighting the low pay of women workers, and the appalling position of women regarding pensions. After this Government's last budget Fawcett launched a high court challenge calling for a judicial review of the gender impact, which led to the Government having to admit to not having carried out any gender impact assessment on the budget.

Congress agrees that GMB should join the other unions already supporting Fawcett in the important work it carries out.

W15 WILTSHIRE & SWINDON BRANCH  
*Southern Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. C. VALLELLY (Southern Region) moving the motion, said: President, Congress, this motion calls for Congress to agree that we join our sister unions in affiliating nationally to the Fawcett Society. For those of you who do not know what the Fawcett Society is, they are named after Millicent Fawcett, one of the suffragettes and have been fighting for women's equality since 1866, so they are a quite well-established group. Its vision is: "A vision of a society where women and our rights and freedoms are equally valued and respected and where we have equal power and influence in shaping our own lives and the wider world." You would not really think that was too much to expect, especially in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

There is an assumption amongst a lot of people that actually women do have equality nowadays. We have the Equality Act, we have the Equal Pay Act, but despite those Acts we actually do not have equality at all pretty much in any shape or form. Despite the Equal Pay Act, women still earn on average for a full week's work £140 per week less than a fulltime male worker, £140 difference. Is that equal pay? I do not think so. When women retire their pension is on average £6,000 a year less than men's pensions; totally not equality where pension is concerned. We have to remember women's pensions have been blooming hard fought for. We did not used to have a pension at all. We used to have a husband instead and rely on one of those to provide for us. Luckily, we do not have to rely on them any more but we have to fight really hard for that pension because it was such a fight to get it in the first place.

The onslaught of attacks on women in particular that are faced from this Government mean we more than ever need to fight and campaign for gender equality in our society. We need to fight hard, not just to gain more but to keep the gains we have made already. In the final quarter of 2011 twice as many women as men lost their jobs and we know the figures given are just a percentage of the women that are actually unemployed because a lot of unemployment amongst women is hidden. It is hidden unemployment so the figures they give us are not true figures anyway.

The cuts in the public sector obviously are affecting women more than men because more women are employed in that sector; they make up more than 60% of public sector employees. The cuts to the benefits have sent many women back into poverty and we all know if you send women into poverty you send their children there as well. When you look at all the money this Government is raising from its tax, 75% of it is coming directly from women, 75%. That is not fair and that is not equality.

The Fawcett Society launched a High Court challenge to the Government after they announced these cuts, and the Government was forced to admit that no gender impact assessment had been carried out. I do not think they had even thought about it. We need to support Fawcett so it can continue to challenge inequality and fight for women's equal representation in politics and public life: for equal pensions, equal treatment in the justice system, and finally more than 40 years after the Equal Pay Act we need to fight for equal pay. Please support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Carole.

SIS. C COTTERELL (Southern Region) seconding the motion, said: President, Congress, historically women have been paid at the lower end of the pay scale. Healthcare assistants, school support staff, these people make up 50% near enough of our membership. These women often go out and do qualifications in their own time to enable them to do their job better and give them more of an understanding but, guess what, it does not mean to say they are going to get paid for it. For the past two years the public sector have had their pay frozen and obviously with the tax credit cuts, the child benefit cuts, the changes in legislation, and the increase in pension contributions, is it any wonder we have women now using food banks more so that they can support and feed their families. This is not right in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Congress, I urge you to support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Can I now move to 45, to be moved by London Region, Jobcentre Plus “Two Tick Symbol”.

**JOBCENTRE PLUS “TWO TICK SYMBOL”  
MOTION 45**

**45. JOBCENTRE PLUS “TWO TICK SYMBOL”**

This Congress calls on the Jobcentre Plus to robustly review all employers that have been awarded the Disability “Two tick symbol”. This prestigious award is displayed by employers who have made five commitments to the Jobcentre Plus to recruit, train, retain and raise disability awareness and display a positive attitude towards the disabled workers and job applicants.

We call for the Jobcentre Plus to remove this award from employers found not to be adhering to these five commitments and not showing a positive attitude towards disabled workers and job applicants. This motion also calls on employers who have had their “two tick symbol” removed by Jobcentre Plus to be publicly named.

A36 ASDA BEDFORD BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. M. LANCASTER (London Region): Congress, for too long now the Jobcentre Plus Disability “Two Tick Symbol” has been a tokenistic award, a symbol at the bottom of an application form or in the back of an employer’s handbook with no real value or worth to the workers it was set up originally to protect and support. The disability symbol is made up of two ticks and the words “positive about disabled people”. For a company or organisation to be awarded the Two Tick symbol they must be able to demonstrate five commitments towards workers with disabilities: around recruitment, retention, raising disability awareness, and having a positive attitude towards disabled workers and applicants.

This Congress calls on the Jobcentre Plus to review all companies and organisations that have received this award and hold them to account if they are found not to be able to demonstrate the five commitments made to receive this award. Some may ask why should we worry about having a disability award when we already have employment legislation to protect disabled workers and other protective characteristics. My answer to this is simple: many large companies and organisations can sidestep legislation if unchallenged or make substantial cash payouts to avoid appearing in court if they are. However, many companies and organisations rely heavily on their public image to attract business, for example, the large UK supermarket chains.

Having this symbol removed and publicly naming companies that cannot demonstrate that they have a positive attitude towards disabled people would have devastating consequences to their public image seen by the customer base, hitting them where it hurts, in their profit margins. If the Department of Work & Pensions wants to hand out an award to employers who have a positive attitude towards disabled people, we must ensure that it has worth, value, and accountability. Then if a company or organisation displays a Two Tick symbol we could be confident that they truly earned it and they can take true pride in displaying this prestigious award. Congress, I am pleased to say that this motion has already been fully supported at both the London

Region Equality Conference and at the National Equality Conference held this year in Coventry. Please give this motion your full support as well. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mick. Secunder.

BRO. A. THOMPSON (London Region): First time delegate and speaker. *(Applause)* The Two Tick symbol has been awarded to employers for over 20 years. Any business that agrees to confirm to these five commitments is permitted to use the symbol, but the scheme is voluntary and failure to follow a specific commitment is not automatically grounds for a complaint of discrimination. However, the Jobcentre Plus can revoke the award if they decide the employer is not playing by the rules. They hold periodic reviews of all companies that display the symbol and accept this to be an adequate measure of the scheme's success. Simply put, it is not adequate enough.

All too often the employer's responsibilities within the scheme are overlooked and sometimes slyly disguised by senior managers, one example being commitment to the agreement, which reads: "To ensure there is a mechanism in place to discuss at least once a year with disabled employees what they can do to make sure they can develop and use their abilities." Unfortunately, some employers will expect this to take place at the point of the employee's review in relation to their performance at work. Now, many employers and employees forget to raise this issue and if you do not raise it, well, then it is your loss. We all know there are some awful employers out there and so, surely, the Jobcentre Plus must pick up on some of these and revoke the awards. At first it looks like they do. Of the 8,387 businesses that signed up to the initiative since it was introduced the symbol has been withdrawn from almost 2,500 but there is one problem with that, that is the Department of Work & Pensions do not keep a record of the specific reasons an employer has had the award removed. This makes it a little harder to name and shame the baddies. In fact, according to the rules, the company that goes through a business merger, or even a company that goes out of business entirely, is completely inseparable from those that fail to meet their commitments. The review process needs to be more stringent and those employers that have their award revoked for all the wrong reasons need to be named. Therefore, I ask Congress to support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. I now move to 46, Stephen Lawrence, London Region to move and second.

**STEPHEN LAWRENCE  
MOTION 46**

**46. STEPHEN LAWRENCE**

Conference welcomes Mr Justice Treacy's comments that he now expected the other suspects of Stephen Lawrence's murder, as well as any other suspects involved in this hideous crime, to be investigated.

Conference is also reminded that the Stephen Lawrence murder followed a series of other murders and racist attacks in South East London, where the British National Party (BNP) had

opened its headquarters and that the authorities, local and national, had refused to act against the BNP at that time.

Conference notes that the Stephen Lawrence murder exposed deep rooted and profoundly dangerous levels of institutional racism which resulted in the Macpherson Report branding the police as "institutionally racist".

Conference notes that the Lawrences' demand for justice spread into the Trade Union Movement, with Neville Lawrence receiving a standing ovation at the TUC Congress in 1998 and the unions organising a massive anti-racist march in East London.

Conference notes that the Stephen Lawrence Trust is currently in severe financial difficulties.

Conference also notes that, little if any, progress has been made in the implementation of the 70 or so recommendations in the Macpherson Report published on 24 February 1999. Further the Con-Dem Government now plans to remove many of the statutory powers and duties of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to enforce the Public Sector Duty or undertake investigations such as on stop and search.

Conference believes that it is the duty of all trade unionists to continue to support the Lawrence family in their continued quest for justice over the death of their son, and that this campaign GMB must support as a priority in the months and years to come, as we have done in the past.

As a result, Conference calls on and instructs the CEC to:

- \* Support the call by the Society of Black Lawyers for the prosecution and conviction of the other suspects;
- \* Call on the TUC to invite the Lawrence family to this year's TUC National Conference and the next TUC Black Workers Conference, as well as inviting them to our own National Equalities Conference;
- \* Call on the TUC to work with the Lawrence family to campaign for the prosecution and conviction of the other suspects;
- \* Work with other wider anti-racist forces in this campaign, including but not restricted to, organisations such as The Stephen Lawrence Trust and the Society of Black Lawyers in support of this continued campaign or just by the Lawrence family;
- \* To make a donation to the Stephen Lawrence Trust;
- \* Raise the campaign for this continued fight for justice through all structures of our union, including the National Equality Conference, Regional Equality Committees, as well as within all Committees, regions and branches; and
- \* Call for a further public enquiry into institutional racism and into the allegations of direct police corruption that have surrounded this case from the outset, with a view to giving the Lawrence family full justice and full disclosure.

HOLBORN APEX BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

**BRO. M. SAYWELL (London Region):** Stephen Lawrence, a black teenager, was stabbed to death at a South East London bus stop in April 1993 by a racist gang. David Norris and Steven Dobson were found guilty of his murder in January this year. That was an historic moment. It has taken 19 years to bring them to justice but other members of the gang are yet to be convicted. Stephen's killing and his family's fight for justice has shaped the battle against racism for a generation. The murder itself

was horrific. Eye witnesses to the murder told the trial that they saw a group attack Stephen after shouting at him across the street. After he was attacked the gang walked away quite casually before Stephen collapsed and bled to death. One bystander, who saw what happened, said to another, "Looks like he got it 'cos he was black."

The police reaction to the killing was shocking. The Met failed to arrest the murder suspects saying there was a wall of silence in the area but in reality detectives received 39 tip-offs during the two days after the murder. The vast majority named all, or some, Neil Acourt, Jamie Acourt, Gary Dobson, Luke Knight, and David Norris, as the gang members involved. The police then allowed these suspects to dispose of clothes and other items even though they were under close surveillance.

When Doreen Lawrence asserted that no police officer had attended her dying son because they did not want to get their hands dirty with a black man's blood, the reverberations shook British society. Stephen was the third victim of racist murders in South East London within two years. This current killing took place 200 yards from where racists killed 16-year old Rohit Duggal a year earlier and two miles from where Rolan Adams, 15, was murdered the year before that. It is no coincidence that the Nazi BNP had just opened its headquarters in South East London when these occurred.

For weeks afterwards thousands protested against Stephen's killing. The Lawrence family and supporters launched a campaign for justice and tens of thousands of people came together in a unity march in October 1993, which the police attacked. The police refused to arrest the racists who killed Stephen but could smash those who wanted to end racism. We did not let the issue drop and a campaign in support of the Lawrence family grew.

We all know about the Macpherson Inquiry launched nearly five years after Stephen's murder exposed what the majority of ordinary people knew, that the Metropolitan Police is institutionally racist. It does not end there. There was corruption in the Met as well and this helped to shield the killers of Stephen Lawrence from conviction. There is to be a new inquiry into police corruption in the Stephen Lawrence murder investigation after two recent separate inquiries claimed police corruption did not affect the investigation. Scotland Yard and the police watchdog, IPCC, believe their own reviews show no new allegations or evidence that would merit further investigation yet the case was dominated by racism and corruption throughout.

The first Lawrence murder inquiry's detective sergeant, John Davidson, was accused by another police officer of being paid by a drug smuggler called Clifford Norris. He is the father of one of Stephen's convicted murderers, David Norris. He also met Detective Sergeant David Coles at least three times at a pub in 1988 and exchanged packages with the cop. Coles was later part of the Lawrence investigation. The trail of corruption goes back to criminals from South East London connected to the Brinks- MAT gold bullion robbery. Those involved include Kenneth Noy, who had corrupt links to police officers. One of Noy's criminal associates was Clifford Norris. The circle keeps growing. Police intelligence files say Davidson was a major player in a ring of corrupt detectives operating as a professional organised crime syndicate. Another corrupt officer, former Metropolitan Police commander Ray Adams, was an

investigator in the Lawrence murder. He was never disciplined and like Davidson had denied any wrongdoing. A police super grass recently gave evidence under oath at the Old Bailey that Davidson had told him “bent cops looked after old man Norris.” Davidson never faced criminal charges and was allowed to retire on ill health grounds to run a bar in Minorca. It is called The Smuggler. The true scale of the police corruption is still to be revealed.

Speaking before the verdict in January, Doreen Lawrence said that the police failed to catch the killers of Stephen Lawrence 18 years ago “because of the colour of my skin”. She added: “If we do see justice how many others are not? We are just one family among hundreds of thousands still suffering.” After the verdict she said: “This day should have come 18 years ago if the police had not failed so miserably.”

I wanted to add that the Stephen Lawrence Trust is in severe financial difficulty and we want to make a donation. I am really pleased that the London Region has made a significant donation of £1,000 to the Stephen Lawrence Trust. I think that is a fantastic move and I thank the region for their support. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Matt. Secunder.

SIS. J. BATSON (London Region): First time delegate and speaker. (*Applause*) I am seconding Motion 46 and this motion is about the work and detailed investigation of the other suspects who were involved in Stephen’s murder. Congress, we need to get to the root of the corruption that was in the Metropolitan Police which took place with the other attacks that happened in the area at the time. Congress, please support this motion to see justice is done and that all suspects are brought to trial. Congress, please support the Stephen Lawrence Trust as they are facing financial difficulty. There is racism in the police and as well as trying to clamp down and to stamp out the racism it would be a good opportunity to bring some positive reinforcement into raising awareness of the benefits of equality and having equality for all, and not having a kind of each man to their own but where everybody is looking out for everyone and where justice can be done for the Lawrence family. Thank you. (*Applause*)

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

BRO. M. SMITH (Southern Region): Matt when originally moving the motion was right to mention the BNP having their headquarters a couple of miles away from where Stephen was murdered. If you look through the last 20 years, the issues of where the far right emerge and the issues of police racism, the issues of economic recession and difficulties amongst working class areas rear their head and link so contextually with where society is at the moment. If you look at where the economic recession has hit at the moment, the current issue of prevailing Islamophobia we see in our society, from the media, from the press, it was very similar in the 1970s to the baiting of the South Asian community, and in the 1920s of the Jews. It always rears its head during an economic recession. If you look at the BNP, the English Defence League, and where the British Freedom Party we presume would like to get a presence, you see racist violence and prejudice emerge.

If we as a labour Movement, the organic representation of the working class, cannot step up and challenge this when the far right is small, if we cannot step up and make noises about the police corruption within the last 20 years, about the amount of people who have died in police custody with no police officer ever convicted — if you remember the context of the London and UK riots more generally with the gangs, and with the murder of a black man, Mark Duggan, then you can see that during the economic recession, which seems to be as though it is getting considerably worse if you look around the world at the moment, when you hear that only 15% of the cuts have been made and working class people predominantly being asked to pay for it, you will see groups on the far right, you will see the arms of the state such as the police, and you will see the issues of racism in all areas of the labour Movement as the English Defence League have attacked the North West Region Headquarters of Unite, starting to rear their heads.

If you look at all the Lawrence family, they have been such inspirational figures over the last 20 years. I hope alongside the London Region all other regions, and my own, Southern, will contribute to this. I would also add that I would love to see next year at the GMB Congress we could invite Doreen Lawrence to come and address us here as well. She has been such an inspirational figure over the last 20 years. I grew up watching this. I urge you to support Motion 46, to speak to your regions in their own congress and urge them to support the Stephen Lawrence Trust as well. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Matthew, Doreen has spoken at this Congress and we did invite Doreen to speak at Swindon but, unfortunately, she could not do it. We are in touch and she is welcome here any time, any time. Thank you. Anyone else? No? I ask Tim Roache to speak on Motion 46.

BRO. T. ROACHE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Regional Secretary): Thank you very much, President. First of all, may I congratulate the author of a fantastic motion, and the three speakers. That was some really stirring stuff. Comrades, in February this year Gary Dobson and David Norris were convicted for the murder of Stephen Lawrence, at last. Others remain free. It has taken Stephen's parents, Neville and Doreen, 19 years to receive any form of justice whatsoever since that awful night in April 1993 when Stephen was murdered, and while he bled, as you have heard, bled to death the police stereotyped Stephen as the participant in a gang fight. What a disgrace. Why is that? As the Macpherson Inquiry revealed, there was direct and indirect racist discrimination in the Metropolitan Police, and beyond, a culture of discrimination that nurtures and sustains negative stereotypes.

Just as an aside, my brother was a Metropolitan Police officer. He went to Hendon College straight from school and enjoyed a number of years in the Metropolitan Police. A strange choice for me, I have never much liked the old Bill, to be honest, but my brother is all right. In 1994, he left the force in disgust, absolute disgust at the institutionalised racism that he told me went on.

The CEC is proud that the trade union Movement strongly supported the Stephen Lawrence family's campaign with public meetings, fundraising, and organising the biggest anti-racist demonstration in Britain in 1996, and the establishment of the TUC's Anti-Racist Respect music festivals. Congress, much has changed since the

murder of Stephen. However, some things remain the same. As working people in this country now experience the hardest economic conditions since the 1930s, it is a damning fact that unemployment levels experienced by black communities is two-and-a-half times the national average. Stop and Search of African Caribbean people is 27 times more likely than white people. Young African Caribbean boys are disproportionately more likely to be excluded from schools. Clearly, there is lots to be done.

The Stephen Lawrence Trust continues to raise awareness and support young people into education but financially it is struggling, and that is where we come in. We will be putting out a request for donations in the GMB magazines and to branches but if you would like to make a donation, hopefully it is on the screen and you can see it, text the word SLCT18 followed by any amount from a pound to a tenner. Please do not sit there and say how disgraceful all this racism is and then do not get your mobile phone out and text a couple of quid. GMB will always fight against racism. Currently highlighted by the Carillion dispute where our members have Goa-Indian origin are subject to bribery, shakedown, bullying, and blacklisting. Doreen Lawrence has expressed her own support of the Carillion workers saying: “My fight for justice has been a long fraught journey and I still don’t know how long the road ahead stretches but with your support and the public’s support all of us, Carillion workers and I, will see justice.”

Congress, you heard the mover talk about a wall of silence. Martin Luther King who met his death when supporting striking bin workers in Memphis said: “There comes a time when silence is betrayal.” Let us salute the Lawrence family for keeping up the struggle and never remaining silent. Let us today resolve that we as the GMB will never be silent in the face of justice. Support the Stephen Lawrence Trust, text now, text and pledge a few quid, and support Motion 46. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tim. Does London Region accept the statement? (*Agreed*) Thank you. I now put 40, 43, 45, and 46 to the vote. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

*Motion 40 was carried.*

*Motion 43 was carried.*

*Motion 45 was carried.*

*Motion 46 was carried.*

## **PRESIDENT’S LEADERSHIP AWARDS FOR EQUALITY**

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I now move to the next part of the business, and it gives me great pleasure to announce the President’s Leadership Awards for Equality. Congress, we launched the President’s Leadership Awards for Equality at GMB Congress in 2009. There are four awards and these will be given to members who have inspired and championed various aspects of the equality agenda. You will find more details about the winners in a separate document in your wallets. We would like to thank Pellacraft for supplying the awards. It gives me great pleasure to announce the winners of each award and invite them to come up to the platform to collect their framed certificate and trophy.

For the Most Inspirational Individual on Equality in the GMB or at Work, could I ask Mick Lancaster from the London Region to come to the platform, please?  
*(Presentation amid applause)*

The next award, and believe you me this is a joint choice on separate occasions by the Vice President and myself, the Most Inspirational Regional Equality Forum goes to the London Region. Would they please come forward?  
*(Presentation amid applause)*

Congress, I am just going to diverse for a minute. The two awards I have just presented to the region have been hard won with an awful lot of work and commitment, and I have to say this, by an individual who was a staff officer some time ago, then became an officer, and her commitment to the equalities for this union knows no boundaries. So, Sue Hackett, can London and this Congress salute you.  
*(Applause)* Sue, just to show how much your ex-staff members appreciate you, two of them have actually travelled from London today. Up there Julie and Frances have been hiding from you all day to say, "Well done." Right, girls, you can come down and join her now. They are there! Oh, naughty. Okay. Thanks. Well done.

I now move on for the Most Inspirational Equality Project for Organising, it is my proud pleasure to present this to Colin Puckett, from South Western Region. Colin. Steve said he has heard all the one-liners before — *Puckett*. Well done, South Western Region. Well done, Colin.  
*(Presentation amid applause)*

I now move to the Most Inspirational Project for Making a Difference at Work, and we have joint winners. I am in trouble now: Jose Estrochio and Paulo Fernandes — shop stewards for Carillion. Jose and Paulo, please come forward. Are they not here? You will make me go through all that again tomorrow? Thank you. I will have learnt it overnight! We will present it to them tomorrow. Thank you and well done.

Now we have the Yorkshire Regional Equality Forum for their work with local communities. Well done, Yorkshire. Where are you? Nicky has said that is for everyone in the region, not just for her, so well done, Yorkshire and well done, Nicky. Thank you.  
*(Presentation amid applause)*

Congress, as well as the award winners I am also pleased to announce the following Highly Commended GMB members. These winners will be collecting their framed certificates from their Regional Secretary, not from the platform, but I will read out their names now so that Congress can acknowledge them.

Highly Commended Inspirational Individual is Carole Vallelly, Southern Region, leading the Carillion debate. *(Applause)*

Highly Commended Regional Equality Forum is Southern Region again. Well done to the members of this forum, and well done to the officers. *(Applause)*

Highly Commended Inspirational Project for Organising is Annette Drylie from GMB Scotland. Well done, Annette. *(Applause)*

Colleagues, that is the end of the awards but can I say that I hope next year we have more participants enter into this. It really is a fantastic area and so many of our members do get so involved and really care about it. Hopefully, we will see a lot more participants next year, Malcolm and I, and thank you all very much.

As we are running a little late, later than scheduled, please can you be advised that we will take Items 13, Motions 195, 196 and Item 14, Motions 200, 201, and 202, when time permits later in the week. If you are all sitting there with your resolutions — I am not laughing — keep them in your bag or your pocket because you will never know when you are going to be called. We will plod through and see how far we can go and put some of you out of your misery. Let's move to the next business. Employment Policy: Health, Safety & Environment, and I will be calling Composite 1, Motions 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 57, and 58. Composite 1, Southern Region to move, London to second, priority in debate to Northern Region; 50 is Birmingham Region; 51 is Yorkshire; 52 is Midland; 53 is Yorkshire; 54 is South Western; 57 is London and 58 is Yorkshire.

## **EMPLOYMENT POLICY: HEALTH, SAFETY & ENVIRONMENT ATTACKS ON HEALTH AND SAFETY REGULATIONS COMPOSITE 1**

### **C1. Covering Motions:**

47. HEALTH AND SAFETY REGULATION BY MYTH AND PREJUDICE (*Southern Region*)
48. CODED ATTACKS (*London Region*)
49. HEALTH AND SAFETY (*Northern Region*)

### **ATTACKS ON HEALTH AND SAFETY REGULATIONS**

This Conference is alarmed at the Coalition Government's actions, backed by the antics of Tory backbench MPs, to water down Health and Safety legislation.

Congress is deeply concerned with the amount of coded messages coming from Coalition Ministers and others including Cameron and Osborne about removing red tape and easing health and safety restrictions, together with Francis Maude's references to Facility Time Agreements.

This conference is saddened and appalled at the Prime Minister's (PM) comments with regard to Health and Safety (H&S) regulation. He used the old chestnut and proven myth of children having to use goggles to play conkers to justify a stinging attack on "the monster that is excessive (H&S) regulation" (Maidenhead, 5<sup>th</sup> January 2012).

These are all unmistakable messages as a prelude to attacking the minimum levels of protection for workers at all levels in the Public and Private Sectors.

We agree with Richard Jones, Head of Policy and Public Affairs at the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) who replied "Labelling workplace (H&S) as a monster is appalling and unhelpful as the reason our legislative system exists is to prevent death, injury or illness at work, protecting livelihoods in the process".

The proposal to increase the speed limit on motorways to 80 MPH is another example of policy incentives based on myth and prejudice, rather than sound evidence. The British Medical Journal are "amazed" saying "a comparable speed increase in the US in 1995 led to a 16.6% rise in fatalities" and "there was little evidence to support claims of economic benefit".

A major role of Government is to protect the individual against the abuse of power, be it a criminal, an unscrupulous employer, or a speeding motorist.

The PM and this Government clearly is not concerned about the wellbeing of the individual, they play to the gallery rather than base their policies on sound evidence. If regulation is worsened as a result, then many lives will be lost, numerous injuries and ill health will be caused.

While we approve and encourage better regulation, prejudging any review in this way is dangerous Government by myth and prejudice.

Congress agrees that each and every one of the messages should be challenged along the lines of a full explanation of what they are ultimately intended to achieve including a weakening of Employment legislation and a reduction in standards of Health and Safety at work.

We are justly proud of the (H&S) of this country and the part of the GMB and its activists have played in bringing it about. We will do all in our power to protect reasonable regulation as the only way to control those with power, who have little regard for the Health, Safety and Welfare of others.

Conference calls for a clear statement by the Labour opposition to repeal the watering down of Health and Safety legislation in the workplace when it returns to Government, and to confirm that it will do so as part of its policy-making process.

Conference calls on the Central Executive Council to monitor developments on this policy, moving forward and to report back to Congress with progress.

*(Carried)*

BRO. R. REEVES (Southern Region): President, Congress, this composite motion is about the way this Government is changing the culture of the country by legislation from one of caring fostered by the Labour government to one of money counts at the expense of the wellbeing and lives of those least able to look after themselves. One result is the decimation of the Health & Safety Executive. Because of devastating financial cuts several major offices have been closed. They have been ordered to cut regulation by half and are now calling workers in farms, docks, and manufacturing, low risk despite these industries being up to four times more dangerous than buildings. Such workplaces will no longer be subject to spot-checks. Investigators will only go in after a death or serious incident ignoring injury or ill health.

At least 200,000 injuries were reported, 171 workers killed, resulting in 26.4 million working days lost, costing society an estimated £14bn. Many more lives will be lost and ruined. The Health & Safety inspector is no longer an inspector but a prosecutor with no one doing the policing. The Government proposals start with a whim, that sounds good to us, and are based on what they can get away with. Will the public stand for it, and then it is, will our friends with money and influence approve so that they will give lots to us and support us to win the next General Election. Remember the bankers' bonuses and the abolition of the 50 pence tax rate in the Budget? Worse still, parties are given at Number 10 for individuals giving large sums of money so they can influence policies and legislation. Also, News International is given privileged information prior to their bid for BSkyB to keep them sweet. I call it corruption. As Ed Miliband says, the shadow of sleaze will hang over this government. It is a pattern with this Prime Minister: Andy Coulson, Rebekah Brooks,

and now the Culture Secretary. When is he going to realise it is time to stop putting his cronies before the interests of the country?

The Public Administration Committee of MPs said in a report: “The Government is driving short-term policies that do not reflect the long-term interests of the nation, which could have catastrophic consequences for the country. We have little confidence that government policies are informed by a clear strategic approach, informed by a clear assessment of the national interest.” Even some Conservative MPs are not happy. Nadine Dorries accused Mr. Cameron and Mr. Osborne of being, “two arrogant posh boys who show no remorse, no contrition, and no passion towards understanding the lives of others”. So much for Mr. Cameron’s “big society”. Legislation should be based on evidence, be good for all, not just the wealthy. They are not likely to have an accident at work or need a union to support their claim but they may have to pay out some compensation. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. London to second.

BRO. D. BYRNE (London Region): We are all tired of hearing these coded messages coming from the Coalition ministers about removing red tape and easing health and safety restrictions. The ultimate intention of this government is to weaken employment protections for workers in the name of flexibility, competitiveness, and alleged growth. The process has already begun with the increase in the amount of service needed to bring a claim for unfair dismissal and the plan to introduce fees to further deter workers from attempting to challenge the basis of the dismissal. Worse is set to follow with the Government’s next big idea, protected conversations. The aim is to short-circuit formal procedures to allow employers to have off-the-record discussions with an employee about alleged poor performance and workforce planning. The union’s solicitors, Thompsons, have suggested this amounts to nothing more than a rogue’s charter for managers looking to bully, cajole, and abuse. The key feature of these protected conversations is that the content of the conversation cannot be relied upon in an employment tribunal as part of a claim.

Colleagues, scrapping protection against unfair dismissal and putting workers in a situation where they are in constant fear of losing their jobs will do absolutely nothing to boost the economy. The purpose of this motion is to demand that the Labour Party leaders challenge these coded messages and fully expose what is happening so that no one is under any illusions that the Tories and their Liberal Party lackeys will seriously weaken what remains of our employment legislation and further reduce the standards of health and safety at work unless we do something about it. The motion also calls for the Labour opposition to repeal the watering down of health and safety legislation in the workplace when it returns to government and to confirm that it will do so as part of its policymaking process. In addition, we call upon the CEC to monitor developments on this subject moving forward and to report back to Congress in due course. I second the motion. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Danny. Northern.

BRO. B. TAYLOR (Northern Region): Congress, in supporting this motion we need to be clear in what the Government are doing. The Tories want to take powers back

from Europe, especially on employment and health and safety laws. The Liberal Democrats in the end will do what the Tories tell them to do. Many people in the Northern region have worked with harmful materials, such as asbestos, and now as a consequence suffer from respiratory diseases. The GMB has a proud record of campaigning for people who suffer from asbestos and related diseases. Congress, it is not just people who work in heavy industry who are affected. For instance, many public buildings have been built with asbestos-based materials which cause many problems. Many of our members and their families could be affected by asbestos for decades to come, suffering pain and anguish from this terrible disease. We must continue to fight to improve health and safety legislation and not allow the Government to water it down. Also, Labour must not just offer warm words of comfort and support; they must act now to stop the spivs and gamblers putting health and safety in the workplace on the backburner. Please support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Motion 50.

### **REINSTATEMENT OF THE HSE INFOLINE MOTION 50**

#### **50. RE-INSTATEMENT OF THE HSE INFO-LINE**

This Conference is to recognise and lobby this government for the re-instatement of the HSE info-line. HSE has severely streamlined the way that the public communicates with the regulator. Rather than contacting a local inspector for advice, concerned workers and safety reps are expected to trawl the HSE Website for online guidance. No provision has been made for those workers who do not work with computers, or do not have regular internet access.

C80 DUDLEY BRANCH  
*Birmingham & West Midlands Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. S. HORTON (Birmingham & West Midlands Region): Vice President, Congress, the dwindling numbers of HSE inspectors has put extra pressure on safety reps and concerned workers. The HSE Infoline was a useful tool in the safety rep's armoury. It was convenient and easy to use rather than spending hours trawling the HSE website. The removal of the Infoline has also put our more vulnerable workers who do not work with or have access to computers at risk. I work for the local authority in Dudley and I have members who work outdoors for most of the day, litter-pickers, green care gardeners, parking attendants, etc. These are the vulnerable workers the removal of the helpline is affecting.

The TUC say there are over 8.6 million people in the UK who have never been online and figures released in August 2010 by the Government's Office of National Statistics revealed 45% of adults without any formal qualifications have never accessed the internet. This means that 8.6 million people have been left vulnerable by the removal of the helpline. This ConDem government is slowly diluting the HSE right in front of our eyes. The removal of the Infoline is just the beginning. Would you expect anything less from a government who wholeheartedly support the greedy? The one thing we do have on our side is that this government has made so many U-turns they must be dizzy by now so getting them to U-turn on the reinstatement of the Infoline may be a little easier. I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Secunder.

BRO. S. ROBERTSON (Birmingham & West Midlands Region): Vice President, Congress, even if you are computer literate, which a lot of us are not, shop stewards do not always have computer access, they do not have the facilities, they do not have the time to trawl complex websites for information that might not even be there on the site, or might not be easy to find. This might seem like a small thing, it is just an Infoline, just a telephone line, but this is to deprive us of information. These wee cuts are attacks and they are small cuts but these Tories are piranhas. They will nibble away and nibble away until there is nothing left and all of these wee cuts and wee small things all add up to a big massive assault and a reduction in our employment and health and safety rights and information, if we have it. I second. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Stevie. Mover of 51?

### **HSE/EA MOTION 51**

#### **51. HSE/EA**

This Conference requests that guidance be drawn up and issued to all H&S representatives to assist them in dealing with the competent authorities such as the HSE and EA Inspectors.

Representatives are unsure what their rights are in dealing with visits and interviews when our members are involved.

There is also concern about the HSE/EA holding secret meetings with management without informing the GMB representatives.

CIBA CHEMICALS BRANCH  
*Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. K. BARNES (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region): I am a first time delegate and speaker. (*Applause*) Congress, I work at a large chemical plant and throughout the years we have had regular contact with the Health & Safety Executive, and the Environment Agency. This has meant visits, inspections, and interviews, some under caution. Some of these visits we have been made aware of, usually by management when they want us to support them, particularly when facing a notice being served, and some we did not even get to know that they had been to the site until we get a letter weeks or even months afterwards. They always, and I mean always, inform management in plenty of time before arriving but not always the GMB representatives. We have sometimes to rely on the company grapevine for this information.

When HSE have been to the site we usually get a letter saying the following: “Under section 28 of the Health & Safety at Work Act it states that I am obliged to provide employees with information on matters which may affect their health and safety or welfare at work.” What does that mean exactly? It basically means that they must provide the representatives with any information they obtain related to their workplace and health and safety of the people who work there, and that they will give any further information on any action they have taken or propose to take. What does it mean in reality? The HSE arrive on site most of the time without telling us. They

sometimes meet with management without us being made aware and we usually find out weeks afterwards. Any information is sent months after the initial contact sometimes. The HSE website is pretty vague when it comes to talking about representative rights during inspections, meetings, and interviews. It says representatives may come into contact with inspectors but does not highlight much in the way of protocol. Do we have a legal right to attend every inspection and every meeting? Who is the onus on to inform us of a pending visit or inspection? What are our members' rights when being interviewed? Do they have the right to representation? Congress, the biggest worry we have is when our members are being interviewed under caution. This is terrifying to some people and they panic. There are not many of our representatives equipped to deal with this situation and members usually ask if the GMB is going to provide any legal support for this. Congress, this motion is asking for guidance to be drawn up on dealing with the competent authorities. It needs to give GMB representatives information on exactly what their rights are and what to do if they feel they are not being properly consulted. I would ask that consideration is given in future GMB representative training on what we need to do when we represent members under caution. President, Congress, I move Motion 51. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder.

SIS. J. EARLY (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region): First time delegate and speaker. *(Applause)* Congress, the previous speaker has raised some interesting points and issues that we need to address. As we are all aware and the General Secretary more than most, the Health & Safety Executive are coming under pressure from the Government to cut back and make savings, and the question has been asked whether they are more interested in having meetings with management as a way of raising money because they can charge the company for their time rather than actually looking after the interests and safety of our members. The HSE places great importance on work involvement and consultation which has proved to be a key factor in improving health and safety in the workplace. It is fine talking about workplaces, getting workers involved in improving health and safety but too many times the HSE avoid informing the safety representatives that they are visiting the workplace and when they have visited we do not get that information in good time. We have to ensure that our representatives are aware of their rights when they are not involved about visits and inspections and what the protocol is for receiving information about our members' health and safety in good time. We do need some guidance and training on how to deal with the inspectors when they caution our members under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act. When this has happened in the past it has been the company that has made the offer to provide legal representation. Should this be the case? Representatives need knowledge, even if it is just advising members what they are getting into when they are cautioned and what the Police and Criminal Evidence Act means because most, if not all, of our members are law-abiding citizens and will never have been cautioned before. We need knowledge and guidance. Congress, I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Johanna. The mover of Motion 52, please?

## **SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES MOTION 52**

### **52. SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES**

This Conference requests a campaign to impose a penalty on employers who do not respond to the request for two or more Safety Representatives to form a Health & Safety Committee, as stated in the Safety Representatives & Safety Committee Regulations 1977.

ASHFIELD NO.1 BRANCH  
*Midland & East Coast Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. C. MASON (Midland & East Coast Region): “When two or more safety representatives request a Health & Safety Committee an employer shall establish it in accordance with the following provisions: the committee shall be established not later than three months after the request for it.” Yes, I am quoting direct from the Safety Representative and Safety Committee Regulations 1977, Regulation 9, Section 2, Part C, to be precise. There is nothing wrong with the regulations, they are clear and easy to understand but, and isn’t there always a but, where this fails is when the employer simply ignores the request. The rep is left in a kind of limbo. They could report it but that is no way to build a good working relationship with the employer and many reps just do not feel secure enough to do this; apart from that, there is the fact that the regulatory body has been slashed to virtually nothing. What I am asking for is simple, if requests for Health & Safety Committees are made in accordance with the regulations, employers who do not respond within the given time should be fined. This is a basic statutory right, you break the law, you will be fined; end of. Remember Health & Safety Committees not only care and improve the welfare of our members but they are also building blocks for recruiting new members by getting them involved in matters that directly affect them. We cannot let the establishment and employers chip away at the foundations we build our union on. As you are all aware, undermine the foundations long enough and eventually the whole thing will collapse. Congress, stop this and stop this now. Please support this motion. I move.  
*(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Cathy. Secunder.

SIS. M. LOWERY (Midland & East Coast Region): I wish to second the motion and ask that we campaign to impose penalties on employers who do not respond to a request made by two or more safety representatives to form a Health & Safety Committee as laid out in the Health & Safety Representatives Act 1977. During my research of the issue the statistics I found are disturbing, to say the least. There has been a 50% cut in inspections carried out by the Health & Safety Executive inspectors in the last 10 years and due to the Government spending review carried out in 2010 HSE will lose £84 million off the annual government contribution to its budget by the time the full cuts take effect in 2015. This full-blown attack places additional importance on the role of the workplace safety representatives. If the UK safety enforcement body is robbed of its ability to function correctly, then it falls upon the shoulders of the passionate, hardworking, and committed safety representatives to do the job for them. It has been proven that a 50% cut in workplace injuries, illnesses, and accidents, can be directly attributed to having workplace safety representatives and functioning safety committees. They play a valuable role both to the employees

and the employers alike in making sure that the workplace is a safe environment to work in, but it needs employers to abide by the current legislation. If the employers choose not to follow this legislation, then they should be penalised for not doing so. The trade union Movement and the GMB have fought long and hard for us to have these rights at work and we must carry this fight forward. Those employers who follow the rules have nothing to fear but for those who choose profits over the lives and limbs of their workers we should make it clear to them that we do not intend to allow it to continue. Please support this motion. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Maryann. The mover of Lone Working, Yorkshire Region, 53.

## **LONE WORKING MOTION 53**

### **53. LONE WORKING**

This Conference calls upon GMB to campaign against employers who leave staff to work alone.

Risk Assessments may show on paper that staff are safe but in practice this is a different matter.

Our members **feel** at risk, this affects their health and their ability to carry out their work. Being left to feel unsafe and vulnerable at work is not acceptable.

Some companies do not allow their staff to work alone in certain areas at certain times. This includes the police force.

If it's not acceptable for police officers, how is it OK for community support workers?

Risk assessments do not take into consideration how staff are made to feel. This needs addressing.

LEEDS CIVIC BRANCH  
*Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. S. CARTER (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region): First time delegate, first time speaker. (*Applause*) Lone working can occur in many occupations, anything from home care workers and security guards to electricians and police support officers. All lone workers face risks while just trying to earn a living. One of the most common risks for lone workers is violence. Violence can occur when lone working in various situations, sometimes dealing with people under the influence of drink or drugs, working late at night, or early in the morning, and sometimes just because of the job that is being carried out. So, why should the GMB campaign? Campaigning is at the heart of GMB@Work and it is what we do best. As an active Health & Safety rep I have found that local campaigns have helped me to recruit and organise within the workplace. Our campaigns help to educate our members to know what their rights are in relation to health and safety and enables them to stand firm with their employers. Members are assured that the GMB will pursue those employers who play fast and loose with our members' wellbeing. Perhaps we could research into who is lone working and is this an increasing concern within

workplaces, especially on the back of the current economic situation, for example, one person covering the job of two. Thankfully, we have some reasonable employers who already engage with our safety reps and work directly to minimise or eradicate the risks. We should continue to strengthen and engage with these employers but, unfortunately, due to the bad mouthing of health and safety in the press and the ConDem attacks to the Health & Safety Executive, the bad employers out there will think that they can shake their responsibilities. They need to know that the GMB will bring them to task. This is why I think we need to keep lone working and health and safety high on our campaigning agenda. After all, a GMB organised workplace is a safer workplace. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder.

SIS. S. WALKER (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region) in seconding the motion, said: President, Congress, lone workers need us to campaign on their behalf so that they can feel safe whilst at work. Every worker deserves the right to a risk-free working environment and to know they will return home at the end of their shift safe, sound, and in one piece. Many lone workers work nights which double the dangers. I know someone who is a lone worker on nights for one of the utility companies moving sewage. He and his colleagues have been subjected to incidents ranging from threats of having the diesel stolen from their wagons to being shot at. Many of the so-called safety measures that the company have put in place are useless. When arriving on site they have to call a control centre and give an agreed time they will be there. When the job is finished they call back to cancel the previous call. If they do not call back an automated system tries to call them and if there is no answer someone in person will try to call them. If there had been an incident, by the time the alarm was raised and someone got out to them, it could be too late. They have been threatened with disciplinary action if they boycott certain sites but recently management had to backtrack due to an incident in which the police were also attacked. Many employers have no idea of the dangers as they have never had to do it themselves and giving out orders from their ivory towers is nothing like being on the front line. We need to put pressure on the offending companies: if they will not do it, then neither should our members have to. Congress, please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Motion 54, South Western Region.

## **EXTEND DSE REGULATIONS TO COVER MOBILE WORKERS MOTION 54**

### **54. EXTEND DSE REGULATIONS TO COVER MOBILE WORKERS**

This Conference agrees there is a requirement to extend the current DSE Regulations to cover mobile workers.

At present there is no cover for this in the current regulations and it is a fact that computers are now used just as widely outside an office as inside. Vehicles were not ergonomically designed for using computers in. We are seeing an increased number of repetitive strain injuries associated with mobile working. There is also the increased risk of violence against members using this equipment as they become targets for theft.

CARDIFF WATER BRANCH  
*South Western Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. P. HUNT (South Western Region): First time delegate, first time speaker. (*Applause*) President, Congress, this Congress believes there is a requirement to extend or change the current DSE regulations. Currently, the regulations only cover office-based workers but with advanced technology being used by an increasing number of companies our members are being put at risk. The problems our members are facing are musculoskeletal, mostly associated with the position they are sitting in whilst operating onboard fixed computers. This is due to the fact that vehicles are ergonomically designed for driving and not used as a mobile office. The seat is designed to keep the driver in a comfortable forward-facing position but whilst using an onboard computer they are not; they are at an angle and looking upwards, hence the problems. We have also identified other issues with this type of system as it is also designed to be used as a mini-laptop and in some instances when vehicles are not fully kitted out the “Tough-Box” (as they are known) is used on the driver’s lap or steering wheel which in itself brings safety issues. That is, facial injuries if the stationary vehicle is hit and causing the airbag to go off. Additional problems users can encounter are people trying to steal them. We also have members using small hand-held computers and these give rise to different problems, such as repetitive movements with either the small keypad or stylus they have to use. All systems give problems to our members ranging from bad back, neck, or arms on the fixed systems to bad elbows or wrists on the hand-held devices, and we believe these problems are not just associated with our company, who through discussions with representatives and fulltime officers have put in place a policy which restricts continuous use to 20 minutes at a time. We know that universities are now starting to do studies on these problems but we believe this will be a long drawn out process.

We call on the CEC to petition the Health & Safety Executive to commit to treating this as a priority to protect mobile workers from contracting muscular and other health problems from the use of these devices. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder.

*The motion was formally seconded.*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Motion 57, London Region to move, Fire Prevention.

**FIRE PREVENTION  
MOTION 57**

**57. FIRE PREVENTION**

Congress is alarmed that the law requiring all municipal buildings should be fitted with water sprinklers is being ignored.

No new build should be given planning consent or signed off unless this law is fully implemented, by Local Authorities.

Congress agrees that saving life must come before saving money.

HENDON BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. E. STEWART (London Region): President, Congress, it is beyond belief that the new build municipal buildings are being built without planning for the installation of a fire sprinkler system. It has been proven time and time again, colleagues, that water sprinkler systems save damage to property and, more importantly, save lives. At the first sign of smoke they operate automatically and will deal with the fire before it gets out of hand. They allow timely egress for staff, customers, and visitors, and service users, by their very nature.

Municipal buildings attract a large cross-section of the population. It may be a town hall with all the associated council enquiries, it may be a library and, yes, colleagues, there are some new libraries being built filled with young and old, reading and studying, it may be a council care home operated by a contractor of course, but filled with vulnerable people, less mobile and more likely to be trapped in a fire. Why are these municipal buildings being built without adequate water sprinkler systems: quite simply because of the cost. Councils up and down the country are strapped for cash and they claim the cost of installing a sprinkler system would put another frontline service at risk. Care home contractors would rather maintain profit than maintain life.

Congress, this is a short-sighted policy and no real savings. First, the absence of a water sprinkler system increases insurance premiums and increases the likelihood of claims against the council for negligence. One of the largest municipal insurers, Zurich, advocates a mandatory sprinkler policy to mitigate fire risk. Local authorities should also be advocating this because it is absolutely their duty. Congress, please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder. Hi, Jim.

BRO. J. RICHMOND (London Region): President, Congress, fire is a killer. It does not discriminate in relation to its victims, young, old, able-bodied, or disabled, those of us who are vulnerable and those of us who are not. Fire can be started spontaneously by accident, by error, or on purpose. Recent figures show around 20 schools a week are damaged by fire and arson is by far the biggest cause of these fires. The cost of these repairs is estimated at £65m a year. That is more than the cost of installing sprinkler systems in 32,000 schools in England and Wales. It is amazing, colleagues, that less than 500 of these 32,000 schools have sprinkler systems installed. This is a wilful disregard for the safety of pupils, staff, and parents, and the abandonment of fiscal responsibility and, colleagues, it can only get worse. Given the number of new academies created by Gove the necessity to make money will lead to more corners being cut and greater risks being taken with life and property.

The principle behind this motion is sound and must become law that every new-build municipal building must have a planned water sprinkler system in its plans before planning permission is granted. It will save life, limb, and property. Congress, please support. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Jim. Motion 58, Street Lighting, Yorkshire Region to move.

## **STREET LIGHTING MOTION 58**

### **58. STREET LIGHTING**

This Conference calls upon GMB to campaign against local authorities switching off street lighting in an attempt to save money.

This course of action puts the lives of GMB members working in the community at risk, carrying out essential services visiting clients in the dark.

The safety of our members should never be compromised in this way.

LEEDS CIVIC BRANCH  
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

*(Carried)*

BRO. P. O'BRIEN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region): First time delegate, first time speaker. *(Applause)* I call upon Congress here today to support the motion for GMB actively to campaign against local authorities up and down the breadth of the country. Despite fears of increased accidents and crime, blackouts have been imposed in residential and rural areas by at least half the county councils across the country to turn off street lighting in an attempt to save money, some with hidden agendas behind the green agenda. This move not only endangers the public in general but places our members' lives at risk while carrying out their duties in local communities. These dedicated GMB members should not be placed at risk because of money-saving measures brought about by none of their own doing but the thoughtless greed of others who continue to reap the benefits while working in complete safety. Our members should not be compromised because of this Coalition government cutting public sector funding whilst protecting those that put us in this position in the first place. Local authorities are either switching off street lighting or looking to fit dimmer switches: blackouts not known since the Blitz. Are we really that desperate that we need to go back 71 years to 1941?

The crazy thing in all this is the desperate need to save money. In Suffolk £2.5m is being spent on the sensors that will control lights remotely which will save £550,000 a year, therefore taking four-and-a-half years to pay for itself before any savings are realised. In a similar move, Nottinghamshire is dimming or switching off every one of its 90,000 street lamps. In residential areas they will be turned off between midnight and 5.30 p.m., dimmed on main roads between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m., and switched off entirely in remote areas. Richard Jackson, Cabinet Member for Transport, said: "We will continue to light crime and accident blackspots and monitor the project carefully." Why are they not tackling the crime and the accidents if they know where the blackspots are? This measure is expected to save £1.25m a year although it will cost £3.2m to make the changes, again taking two-and-a-half years before savings are realised with our members still at risk. Do we really stand by and watch our members be placed at risk whilst authorities spend to save in the first instance? The answer is a clear and resounding no.

GMB members are patrolling the streets, carrying out essential repairs, making safe dangerous incidents, visiting clients in their homes, delivering essential services where there is a risk even when street lights are lit, never mind turned off. Even motoring organisations and the police have warned that this move could lead to an

increase in crashes as motorists fail to spot pedestrians. If you pay your taxes you should have the services you pay for because there will be no rebate for this loss of security and safety on our streets. GMB prides itself on the health and safety of its members and should campaign vigorously against these so-called money-saving moves that endanger our members. Congress, please support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Secunder.

BRO. M. HIRST (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region) seconding the motion, said: First time speaker and delegate. *(Applause)* There are just a couple of points that I think should be raised on this. Ambulance crews, doctors and carers, find it hard as it is to find numbers on doors in the daylight but will be totally impossible to find in complete darkness. Not only this, the risk of accidents on these workers having to go into gardens in total darkness with obstacles on paths and in gardens must surely rise. I know when I go to work I expect to be kept safe, I do not expect to have an accident, and I expect to be looked after. We are told this is to save money. Surely, the small amount of money saved will be offset by a rise in compensation claims against the council from these groups of workers, and people, tripping up and falling over on our badly neglected paths and roads, which cannot be seen in the dark. This also raises a health and safety concern. The ambulance crews, doctors and carers, are our GMB members and their welfare and safety should never be compromised. Cost should never be a feature when it comes to our health and our safety. I ask you for your support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Michael. Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? Who said no? Anyone else?

BRO. A. GROAT (Southern Region) in support of Composite 1, said: I just call on the GMB to campaign vigorously against the death by a thousand cuts that the HSE is experiencing, which will have a direct impact on our membership, and to campaign in every possible way through the media, through our MPs, and through the Labour Party, to put back in position whatever the Government takes away from us. We have a fundamental right to a safe working place and our membership has a fundamental right to a safe working place, and profits should not be put before the welfare and wellbeing of our membership. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Congress, can I ask John Phillips to speak on Motions 51, 53, and 54, and just to let you know this is John's first time speaking at Congress. A new delegate. *(Applause)*

BRO. J. PHILLIPS (South Western Regional Secretary): Thank you, Mary, not exactly first time delegate, first time speaker but privileged to be speaking on behalf of the Central Executive Council as Regional Secretary for South Western Region. Thank you for that. *(Applause)* Colleagues, the CEC is supporting Motions 51, 53, and 54 with certain qualifications which I will briefly outline.

With regard to Motion 51 the qualification is that the rights of safety representatives when dealing with inspectors at the workplace are clearly defined under the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977. Inspectors should be

challenged when they do not make adequate contact with GMB health and safety reps and the development of updated guidance would assist in making those challenges. The qualification is that any underhand practices should be reported to the union for investigation.

Turning to Motion 53, colleagues, the qualification here is that it would be impossible for the union to campaign against all employers who have lone working practices, particularly where the GMB has consented to such arrangements. The GMB can, however, campaign for better expressed risk assessment for lone workers and for the development of improved lone working policies and communication strategies.

Finally, colleagues, with regard to Motion 54, the qualification is that whilst we support the motion in principle, the current review of the European Union Directive on Display Screen Equipment may supersede events. We cannot campaign effectively on this issue until the outcome of the directive negotiations is known.

Therefore, Congress, please support Motions 51, 53, and 54 respectively, subject to the qualifications I have set out. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, John. Well done. Yorkshire Region, do you accept the qualification? Speak to Mary. (*Agreed*) Thank you. Does Yorkshire Region support the qualification on 53? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Does South Western Region accept the qualification on 54? (*Agreed*) Thank you very much. I now put all the resolutions to Congress, Composite 1, Motion 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 57, and 58. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried. Thank you.

*Composite 1 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 50 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 51 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 52 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 53 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 54 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 57 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 58 was CARRIED.*

## **DANIEL DENNIS HEALTH & SAFETY AWARD 2012: WINNER & RUNNER-UP**

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to the next item of business. This is a very special area for this Congress and this union. This is the sixth year that we are presenting the Daniel Dennis Health & Safety Award, keeping Daniel's memory alive. I will announce the winners in reverse order. I am pleased to announce that the runner-up and Silver Badge goes to Stacey Booth from Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region. (*Applause*) Stacey is from L30, Leeds Local Government Staff Branch has helped put in place the new safety procedures and training for Community Support Assistants. This has resulted in risk assessments being completed properly, better guidance for working in a difficult environment, better safety equipment being supplied as well as enhanced Personal Protective Equipment being issued. All this has led to 40 new members joining and many others being retained, all due to the profile Stacey's proactive work has brought. Stacey, well done. (*Presentation amid applause*)

SIS. S. BOOTH (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region): Thank you for this award. However, I would like to share this with the Community Support Workers I represent in Leeds. I was shocked at how badly health and safety was within adult social care. The management team looked at me as an alien when I questioned how using bleach in a customer's home with no data sheets or safe systems of work in place was a common practice. In fact, the response from one manager was, and I quote: "Well, they use bleach at home, don't they?" It led me to question if they did have an accident in a customer's home where was the First Aid? To cut a long story short, we now have all CSA's carrying portable First Aid kits and bleach tablets whilst working to keep them safe at work. Our current campaign is lone working and our region has a motion at Congress to raise awareness.

Health and safety at work is continually overlooked by managers in favour of getting the job done cheaply and quickly. The lives of our members should not be handled in such a throwaway manner. Thank you for this award and be assured that I will continue to fight for the correct procedures and assessments being established for all. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Congress, it gives me great pleasure to announce the winner of the Daniel Dennis Safety Representative of the Year. It is Ray Beekman from Midland & East Coast Region. Ray is from the Nottingham City Branch. He has succeeded in getting a lift installed at Wollaton Hall, thus improving the safety of the public and the staff. This resulted in two non-GMB workers joining up. He has worked with the other reps on asbestos in schools checking out the work of the contractors. This has led to the recruitment of cleaners and maintenance workers in these areas. Ray is involved in a wide range of training for GMB members, including asbestos awareness. He takes part in risk assessments across the authority. While he would not claim all the membership increase is entirely down to him, in this difficult time for local government 300 new members have joined. Ray cannot be here in person as he is on holiday but his Branch Secretary, Gary Chambers, will be collecting the award on his behalf. (*Applause*)

BRO. G. CHAMBERS (Nottingham City Branch Secretary, Midland & East Coast Region): I am receiving this award on behalf of Ray Beekman and he has asked me to read out his thanks to Congress: "First of all, I would like to say a big thank you. It is a great honour to receive this award and I will endeavour to keep applying safe practices of health and safety in the workplace. Can I just say that my grandfather was killed along with 15 other men in a mining disaster in Scotland. When I moved to England back in the 60s and started work I became interested in health and safety. I saw so many things that were wrong and thought back to my grandfather's days when health and safety was more or less non-existent. I therefore decided it was time to take on a safety rep's role. I must say health and safety has come a long way since my grandfather's time but there is still a long way to go. As safety reps we must play a vital part in the workplace to make it a safe working environment. It would be remiss of me not to mention the tremendous help and the support I receive from all my branch colleagues as we work together very much as a team. Once again, thank you so much for this award. I am so honoured." (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, the Daniel Dennis Award is extremely important to this union and it is extremely important to make our members aware of what unscrupulous employers can do to a young 16-year old when they first start work. They have no care for their safety or anything else. As a result, Daniel died on his first day at work. That is why this award is so important and it was this union, and his region, that fought for his parents to get justice for Daniel Dennis. Remember, we do win and we do bring justice at a time when it is so important. Thank you.

We now move on to Item 13, Social Policy. Oh, we are not. Where is Toomey? I was dying for him to get up for the Dangerous Dogs Act. (*Laughter*) Sorry, John. Who let the dogs out? John did. Hang on.

Colleagues, this gives me great pleasure, I now call on Paul Kenny, our General Secretary and Treasurer, to move the General Secretary's Report and to address Congress. Paul. (*Applause*)

### **GENERAL SECRETARY REPORT AND ADDRESS**

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you, Mary, President. Can I just say from my point of view how fantastically wonderful it is to have you on the rostrum, Mary, as President. It has been a fantastic journey and long may it continue. (*Applause*)

Colleagues, I am moving the General Secretary's Report, which is a bit slimmer this year, unlike me of course, but it contains all of the information and reports and updates, including some of those things that some of the delegates were saying we never actually tell them in there, about how motions have gone, where they have gone, and what we have done with them, and including all the regional reports.

I was struck this morning listening to one of those early debates about the union's need for new technology and for communications. I have to say I think we are trying. I think we are struggling but we are trying. I want to let you into a little insight of how things are going. You all know, of course, that we have three sections in the union and three wonderful National Secretaries. There was one voice said yes, anyway!

I was not actually present but I understand that these three National Secretaries all recently spent a little bit of time in a steam room, a sauna or steam room, naked. Now, I know some of you want to go out tonight so I will not ask you to wrap your eyes round those three but apparently the three of them were in there sort of telling each other what a great job they did for the union, the members.

The first one, let's just say the first one had glasses. There was this sort of brrr-brrr-brrr noise. They are all looking at each other because they are naked. There was a brrr-brrr-brrr noise. The one with glasses said, "Oh, I'm ever so sorry, I've got this new technology, you know, I've got this pager that's in my arm." The other two looked at him, "Yeah, yeah, he's a show-off."

About five minutes later there was a phone ringing noise. Again, there are no phones because they are all naked. Let's just say one of the three who has a Scottish accent said, "Hello," and just held the palm of his hand up to his ear, "Hello". He went,

“Yes. Yes. Okay.” The other two are looking at him and they said, “Well, what’s this all about?” He said, “Oh, I’m ever so sorry, new technology. I’ve had a mobile phone put into my palm so I am right at the forefront, the cutting edge of technology. I am in touch all the time.” “Oh, yeah,” the other two went.

Anyway, the third one, there is only one left so I will leave you to guess who it is, left the sauna room for about five or 10 minutes and then came back and, quite embarrassingly I suppose, had a load of toilet paper protruding from his bottom. The other two feeling embarrassed for this poor soul said, “Oh, look, look, look. Oh, dear, oh, look,” and he said quickly, “Ah, I must be getting a fax.” (*Laughter*)

All I would say to you is, sometimes we are at the edge of technology and sometimes we are victims of it.

I wish I could make all this speech as funny, I hope, as you found some of that in good humour but since last year a lot has happened both inside and outside our union. We are trying to keep to our ideals. We have kept on organising, campaigning, the work that is enshrined in GMB@Work, and our union continues to grow. In 2011 we were up to 610,000, and that was up 8,000 members on the year before. In May this year our membership stood at 622,000. That is a remarkable achievement.

During that time we have had many challenges that have been put in our way, many; in fact, far too many situations have arisen where GMB members were left with no option but to fight for their jobs, their living standards, their pensions, their futures, because of attacks from employers and government, tough, difficult, working times for so many. There are parents worried about what the future holds for their sons and daughters, our sons and daughters. For the first time in my lifetime I worry that my children and my grandchildren will have less opportunity and worse prospects for the future than we did.

One million young unemployed people denied access to education or work, a senseless slaughter of talent. Press-ganging people of any age into unpaid short-term envelope-licking jobs, just to cover up the inability of a nation to use and develop its assets, its people, is just simply wrong.

I want to say a word about Adrian Beecroft. I guess most people had hardly heard of him before the last few weeks. Adrian Beecroft, a Tory donor, a private equity squib — I should have said spiv; no squib, he is a squib — privileged, out of touch. Who better for David Cameron and the posh mob to appoint for advice on how to treat workers in Tory Britain?

It is hardly surprising, really, that Beecroft came up with a sick bag of suggestions to cure the ailing British economy. Deal with tax evasion by the super rich, no, that was not in it. Give employers the right to sack people without reason. Get the money from governments and the banks into businesses desperate to have investment for growth, no, funnily enough that was not there either, but to remove parental leave, sweep away maternity rights, water down or scrap almost everything that gives workers either protection or rights from victimisation, prejudice, and discrimination. No wonder Cameron sat on the report for five months. Even he must have realised what complete and utter trash the report is.

Returning the country's labour laws to the 1800s will not create a single new job. Its skills, its education, its ideas, its investment, government policy on a stable energy market may help, a state investment bank which gets money into companies desperate for investment growth, and maybe tax rates only for those who create jobs and wealth, not tax-free status for those offshore investors who invest in PFI-owned hospitals and schools. Pushing women's rights backwards will not add a single step forwards for the recovery of our economy or our country. Of the 36 top most prosperous countries in the world, you know where Britain comes in terms of employment rights, where we come in the league table of the top 36 most prosperous countries in the world, we come number 35. In Britain we have such a low standing on employment rights amongst our competitors it should be a cause for shame, not acclaim.

Regional pay, another idea to cut the living standards of millions across the country, and it will not create jobs, it will cost jobs. Less money means less to spend in shops, on services, in restaurants, homes, damage to local economies; it will not improve services, it will weaken them. People will be forced to follow the money. Communities will lose good workers, good key workers, teachers, or medical staff, because they will not be able to afford to pay them the rates. It is the Tory way, really, of saying parts of our country are second-class citizens and deserve less for doing the same work in the same country. Where a loaf costs the same, where electricity and gas cost the same, where motor fuel and public transport costs can be even higher, then regional pay Tory-style is ludicrous nonsense with nothing but inbred Tory dogma and hostility to working people at its core.

This union, the GMB, must fight as a national union to defend national rates of pay and to say, no, to cutting the living standards of workers in this country, no matter where they live in this country. *(Applause)*

Throughout the length and breadth of the GMB people have been fighting back. From the GMB Scotland and the NHS Ambulance Service members, who fought a great and fantastic battle about bringing the Ambulance Service in line and on par with the other emergency services, to the members at Unilever who stood up and said, "We are going to fight for our pensions." Remember the Asda Distribution members, over a long period of time, broke fantastic new ground in securing the first collective bargaining agreement with Asda/Wal-Mart anywhere in the world. That was a fantastic achievement. *(Applause)*

We must remember the Remploy disabled workers who already suffer prejudice and discrimination. When the Secretary of State, Iain Duncan Smith, the man who is sacking thousands of Remploy workers, accuses them of sitting around all day drinking coffee is beyond a joke. From the GMB Conference, Iain Duncan Smith, you really are a berk! *(Applause)* Why don't you read the latest Remploy report: production up 20%, many factories making money or breaking even, despite the fact that they have got a crap board, a second rate management and a Government that wants to close them? Yet they fought back and they are there for a real reason. They don't want insults. They want work and commitment. They want the right of any other person to go to work without prejudice in our society. I say, and I've said it for years, Remploy workers are amongst the finest trade unionists that this union has ever produced. *(Applause)* I am so proud that we are at the forefront of that fight. We

have to have that fight, and we are going to have that fight. It's been round the country and there's more to come.

Talking of the Government – I don't normally slip this in – Eric Pickles! Do you know, he is the only one of the Government who I don't mind being photographed next to. *(Laughter)*

What about the flying Murdochs? I said the “flying Murdochs”. Last year, you will remember that we had Tom Watson who came. I am not sure if everybody actually knew who Tom was when we put him up, but he told a story that has unfolded before our very eyes over the last 12 months. Trade unions are not strangers to feeling the wroth of the Murdoch empire. Their power was obvious to so many of us and it is now stripped bear. I think that when the dust settles a little bit and after the judicial process gets out of the way, and maybe when a few of them get out of prison, they will make a great film, because I think they should play themselves. I don't think anybody would be able to impersonate the bastards that they are! *(Applause)*

Of course, November 30<sup>th</sup>: the biggest strike by public sector workers since 1926 and it may have been even bigger than that. I don't know because I wasn't around then. Worthy President from the Northern Region, was it bigger than 1926? Yes, it was.

A “damp squib” Cameron told the House of Commons. Do you remember that? He said it was a damp squib as they watched it! Of course, no one believed it. His own MPs didn't believe it, and they were watching on their TVs. They were watching it in the Strangers' Bar, where Will Conway spoke earlier. They could see from all round the country two million workers demonstrating against the attacks from that Cameron government. There were demonstrations in Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, from Torquay to the Tyne, Glasgow, Leeds – the whole country. You couldn't disguise it. “Damp squib”! I'll tell you what. He would like a damp squib like that.

Our members at Swindon Hospital, employed by Carillion, tomorrow will take their 20<sup>th</sup> day of action, and they are coming to this Congress. Carillion is an employer which shrugged off complaints from their workforce about bullying, discrimination, intimidation and shakedowns. Staff were being forced to pay money in order to obtain holidays, annual leave, or even get a job. There were shakedowns and corruption! These complaints were known by the company yet they did nothing. Then the workers turned to the GMB, when all others had ignored their plight. They joined the GMB Swindon Branch and Andy Newman and Carole Vallyelly took up their fight. I am very proud that they are both delegates here at Congress this week. You did a fantastic job. *(Applause)*

Carillion kept saying that there was nothing in this complaint, that the union were being unreasonable and maybe they didn't understand, because they are foreign, you know. You don't believe the crap that we have to take sometimes. Finally, they were pressurised into an investigation. We all thought, “Well, you know what investigations are like when they won't even allow the unions in to make the case half the time”, but they agreed to the investigation. Finally, in that investigation, such was the level of evidence that they had to conclude that bullying had taken place, that shakedowns had taken place and that managers were allowed to resign and disappear. Discrimination against the workforce was found but described as a “misunderstanding

of company policy”. Those Carillion workers will be here tomorrow. Please give them the support they deserve.

Whenever you are involved in a dispute, it is very difficult. When you are involved in a long hard-fought dispute to get basic rights at work and respect, the fact that the rest of the union is behind you can be a fantastically empowering and strengthening thing. I hope that when they come tomorrow, we will give them a real rousing GMB Conference support. They deserve it. They have suffered lies, cover-up and more lies.

They forced us to look at Carillion. We had not really put the spotlight on them before, but we did. We found out a lot of things about them. They paid union-busting firms to check on prospective employees, and these firms held information which Carillion themselves knew that if they held it, it would be illegal. We have been through employment tribunal judgments against them and cases that have been taken for them. We have been to Bury St. Edmunds and been through the files. I am letting you into some of our secrets about what we do now. We went through the sort of things that have absolutely shocked tribunals. We are not shocked, but they were shocked about the injustice to working people.

It is now time for the victims of Carillion – by the way, there are thousands of them – to be given apologies and compensation. They have been targeting trade unionists for years. Sometimes they targeted people who just had the temerity to ask were there health and safety rules on site? “Could we possibly have a handrail up on a scaffolding four floors up?” That would be enough to get you an entry into a book and the next time that you were looking for a job and Carillion wanted to know about you, that would effectively disbar you.

Tomorrow we publish a report into the Secret World of Carillion -- you will all get copies tomorrow – and others who have checked up on literally thousands of people to see if they were trade union activists, and revealed details of who these people are, the areas they come from and how to find out if you are also on the list held by the Information Commissioners. It is time for all to speak out and demand that companies like Carillion, who get rich on taxpayers’ money, respect the citizens of our country and cease their discrimination and cover-ups, which are clearly endemic within the culture of the company.

But be assured, we intend to chase this fox. The GMB intends to pursue Carillion and expose its behaviour, its tax arrangements, and particularly the way the way it seeks overseas’ investors for PFI projects, like Swindon Hospital, on the basis of UK tax-free profits.

Today I want to say that the GMB is going to disinvest itself of all Carillion investments and we are calling on other unions who have them to do the same. We have written already to a number of unions whose pension funds invest in Carillion or their subsidiaries, and ask them that companies like this which practise these sort of activities should not be in receipt of money from trade unions either in investments or in pension funds. *(Applause)*

I would say this to anybody out there who has money invested in Corillion, get it out quick because if we can get a run on this lot, the quicker the better once we get the real money out. No company, by the way, or any other organisation, is going to stop us legally defending our members at Carillion. Andy and Carol know what that means. Nobody is going to gag us from talking of their illegal activities and the fact that people did not support them previously, and we are not going to be gagged about talking of their scurrilous discrimination activities; we are going to drag it out into the sunlight.

Forgive me but I am going to leave the Labour Party till tomorrow: too long. We also have to look at our own internal challenges. In 2005 we presented to Congress in Newcastle — it was a fantastic Congress — an agenda for growth, development, lay member empowerment, and accountability. We listed a whole range of things we wanted to do. If you look in your General Secretary's Report you will find that actually they are all ticked. Some are ongoing and will continue to be so, but they are all ticked. We have been constantly looking for the challenges. We did things from rewriting the Rule Book in plain English to a complete lay member elected executive, from introducing GMB@Work to eradicating waste and getting better value for money. We did all those things we said we would do, from rebuilding our equality structure to opening up Congress to a wider more inclusive delegate election process, and this Congress is certainly evidence of that.

At the heart of that vision in 2005 was the complete desire from the union, a hunger for change, to recreate the union into the wonderful beautiful thing it was always created to be. In 2012, it is time to do it again, I am afraid. It is not time to rest on our laurels. Over the next 12 months the CEC and the senior management team will look at and bring forward in the next year proposals and actions to address very important issues for the future of the union, positive action to encourage and secure more women into officer posts, and from within more of our women officers applying for senior roles in the union.

We must take a long hard look at how we do really simple things, like just getting membership cards to new members, waiting four or even six weeks for a welcome pack and your card is unacceptable. Some parts of the union can do it in 48 hours and if they can do it in 48 hours, we will all have to do it in 48 hours.

We have to shift huge resources to the servicing and organising functions of the union. New technology should free up thousands of office-based hours to be replaced by workplace and member interface, or in plain language face-to-face. Services provided in one region, like education or pensions advice, can easily be adapted and expanded to encompass a wider remit and regions are already thinking and talking about how this can be done.

We have to face the daunting prospect of Tory/Liberal government attacks on employment right, and the damage that the Jackson proposals, which will directly hit our legal services, will do to access to justice for so many of our members, and major organisational and financial restructuring implications for us over the next two to three years, do it we will because do it we must.

It is just wonderful to be part of the GMB. Sometimes I continually have to remind people that being part of such a fantastic organisation is a wonderful thing; it is not a chore, it is a wonderful thing. I am really proud that I, like you, have played a small role in the history of our great union, but the union is the sum total of all its parts; it cannot nor should it ever rely on one person. Our strength, effectively, is our freedom from fear and our union belongs to us all. The GMB is growing, it is fighting, it is campaigning, and it is seeking social justice and trying to help those who deserve help in the wider community.

Be very, very proud of what you do. You stand for ideals and morals, and values, that far too often other parts of our society lose, forget, or were never ever taught. I know that if Will Thorne and Eleanor Marx walked through that door here today not only would they be very old, they would be very proud of you. They would think that you have picked up the ideals and the inheritance that they set down. I say to you on behalf of me, the Executive, and the senior management team, thank you very, very much for what you do for the members, what you do for your communities and society, without you, trust me, there would be no union.

Thank you very much. Mary, I commend the report. (*Standing ovation*)

BRO. D. HENRY (wearing mask): Ladies and gentlemen, I cannot make out what that contestant was, whether a baritone or a soprano. The strength was not there. Now, I am sorry, but I believe all your buzzers are broke but I've got mine and I've got it all. If you wish to put this contestant into the final of Britain's Got Talent please be upstanding and applaud now. Thank you very much. (*Laughter/Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Which one is Cheryl Cole? (*Laughter*) I think that was Mr. Simon Cowell. He thought it was Nick Clegg, Dougie, so you did not do a bleeding good impression there. (*Laughter*) Where's Toomey's smoking dog?

Okay, colleagues, I have a couple of announcements to make. There is a lovely note here from Wortley Hall: "Thanks to GMB National Congress for its wonderful support. Best ever response from any conference. Fraternal greetings to our friends old and new. Please take this opportunity to enter our free draw for one night's dinner and bed and breakfast for two people. Simply fill in your details on a sheet of your conference notepad and hand it into the Wortley Hall stand and the draw will be made Thursday morning. Thank you all so much. Steve Parkin. President of Wortley Hall." Thank you very much, Steve. (*Applause*)

The next announcement is for the Commercial Services Committee. We are not finished, Dougie. Would the Liverpool & North West Irish Region please sit down! "Commercial Services Committee meeting after this afternoon's session in Syndicate Rooms 3 and 4 in the Syndicate Wing, leave by doors at the back of the stage, turn right to Syndicate Wing. All national committee members of the Commercial Services Section are asked to attend promptly, please, for a short meeting. Your Highness, Kevin Flanagan."

I now ask does anyone have any questions on the General Secretary's Report? No? You accept? (*Agreed*) Thank you.

*The General Secretary's Report was ADOPTED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress is closed till 9.30 tomorrow morning. Thank you all.

*Congress adjourned.*