

**GMB**

**CONGRESS 2013**

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

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Held in:

**Plymouth Pavilions,  
Plymouth**

on:

**Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2013  
Monday, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2013  
Tuesday, 4<sup>th</sup> June 2013  
Wednesday, 5<sup>th</sup> June 2013  
and  
Thursday, 6<sup>th</sup> June 2013**

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**PROCEEDINGS  
DAY FIVE  
(Thursday, 6<sup>th</sup> June 2013)**

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**FIFTH DAY'S PROCEEDINGS  
THURSDAY, 6<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2013**

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

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning, Congress. I hope you all had a good evening last night and enjoyed yourself. Can I thank British Gas and FuturePlus for sponsoring last night's event. I would like to say a special "thank you" to all the staff who worked very hard to put the event together.  
*(Applause)*

Congress, all raffles have now been drawn. If you have bought tickets from the RMA Stand 15 or the York Disabled Workers Stand 20, please go there to check if you are a winner.

Before moving on to Congress business, I have a couple of announcements to make. I thank all those 30 members who have joined the Labour Party this week and say that application forms are still available on the stand in the Exhibition Area. Thanks all of you. We have got to be in to make sure that we get our agenda. Would anyone else who wants to, go and join this morning.

I will now draw three delegate questionnaires to each win a signed bottle of GMB Whisky. The first is Wendy Weston from Wales and South West Region; the second is David Lascelles from Midland & East Coast Region, and the third is Martyn Jones from Wales & South West Region. *(Presentations made amidst applause)* Pleasant drinking.

**STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 7**

THE PRESIDENT: I call on Helen Johnson to move Standing Orders Committee Report No. 7.

SIS. H. JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): Congress, I move SOC Report No. 7. Withdrawn motions: Congress will note that Motion 304 Housing/Housing Benefit from London Region, and Rule Amendment 356, also from London Region, were withdrawn during debate yesterday.

Bucket collections: The SOC has been informed that the amount collected yesterday for the bucket collection organised by North West & Irish Region for Zoe's Place was £620. *(Applause)*

Congress, as advised in SOC Report No. 2, the SOC has reviewed the existing system of bucket collections. Following discussions, the SOC believes that the present system should remain. In order to aid the decision-making process, the SOC will be providing regional secretaries with documentation to complete for Congress 2014 so as to ensure that the SOC is provided with the appropriate information.

Congress is reminded that the SOC will always continue to give priority to collections which concern members in dispute.

President and Congress, I move SOC Report No. 7.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Helen. Are there any questions to Helen? *(No response)* Does Congress accept the Standing Orders Report?

*Standing Orders Report No. 7 was ADOPTED.*

THE PRESIDENT: In consultation with the General Secretary, we will treble Zoe's Place. *(Applause)* I am not setting a precedent here. All collections are worthwhile, but when you see these young

children, any money that we can give makes life for them and their parents easier for the short time they have left to live. I am delighted that we can help so much. Well done North West & Irish Region. *(Applause)*

I now move on to the agenda.

**EMPLOYMENT POLICY  
PENSIONS & RETIREMENT  
MOTION 89**

**89. PENSIONS**

This Congress believes the Government's proposals on Pensions will ensure that many low paid workers in occupational pension schemes will pay more, work longer for less return. Congress believes that as such the incentive to stay in an occupational scheme will dramatically reduce over time. Congress believes that apart from increasing the burden on the State in future years, this is a scandalous position for the Coalition Government to take.

It shows their utter contempt for the masses. Congress calls on the Labour Party in Opposition to stipulate their position on the future of pensions in the run up to the next General Election and for this to be reported to the CEC.

GATESHEAD L A BRANCH  
*Northern Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. M. CARR (Northern): President, Congress, I am a first-time delegate. *(Applause)* I move Motion 89 on Pensions. My relationship to pensions could be described as a bit like the relationship between a vegetarian and a pork pie: I once had one, I quite fancy one, but I suspect I won't be having one any time soon. Congress, I'm not alone.

Let's look at the private social-care sector, for example. Clearly, it operates as a minimum-wage industry, one of many minimum-wage industries. There is simply no incentive for workers like care assistants, kitchen workers, cleaners and others who work in care homes in the private sector to save for retirement. It is not that people don't know that pensions are necessary. Pensions are desirable. Pensions are something we should be providing for but, realistically, they simply don't earn enough to afford them. Workers on low incomes, even with more than one wage coming in, are living for today and not for tomorrow. The economic crisis has made this situation far worse. We face the prospects of a cycle of pensioner poverty caused by the failure of the lawmakers in government to bring in proper laws, laws that would help people on low pay and protect those company pension schemes they pay into from speculators and greedy spivs, who want to take over the company, raid its pension fund and sell it on. This applies even in the public sector.

Let's look at pension schemes for those on low wages. People are paying more, working longer and taking out less in a pension when they retire. Congress, the simple fact is that the incentive to save for retirement for the low paid is an absolute nonsense. The rich are getting richer all the while. Those corporate executives and directors who earn fat-cat salaries and put their money offshore are looking after themselves, and don't they always? That's the culture that we are in today. Very little is being done to help the low paid get a decent pension. We all know that the state pension is not a huge safety net and not a great deal of money. Indeed, with this Coalition Government things will only get worse.

Congress, we need a wholesale change in the pensions culture in this country, where everyone gets a decent chance at a works pension. We need to continue to fight for this with this Government and we need to be sure that the next Government, a Labour Government, develops pension policies now to help the low paid to get a decent pension when they retire. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder?

SIS. A. BRYAN (Northern): President, I second Motion 89 on Pensions. Congress, we all understand that the economy is in a crisis and we all know that times are hard, but we all know that we are not in this together. Over the last 30 years, and thanks to the Big Bang of the mid-‘80s the culture has become one of “everyone for themselves”. We have imported an American culture based on a capitalism of Wall Street. Every government during the past 30 years has paid lip service to it. Congress, we might as well be realists. Tony Blair and Gordon Brown played up to the financial services industry. They only saw the pound signs of what they thought the industry could bring into this country. The fact that the financial services industry was involved in practices that were morally bankrupt did not matter, and we know, colleagues, where that has led us.

There are those who say that we can’t turn the clock back. Well, this Government have turned the clock back and managed our economy back to the Victorian times, to the days when the rich gave handouts to what they saw as the undeserving poor. Unless we change our pensions culture back to the days before the Big Bang, we face a bleak future. This is what we need from Labour, and by passing this motion we need to send them that signal. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Next, Composite 2.

## **STATE PENSIONS REFORM COMPOSITE 2**

### **C2. Covering motions:**

- 90. STATE PENSION SYSTEM *(London Region)*
- 92. PENSIONS REFORM *(Birmingham & West Midlands Region)*
- 94. IDS PROPOSED FLAT RATE PENSIONS *(London Region)*

## **STATE PENSIONS REFORM**

Congress notes that the Con-Dem Government has introduced a White Paper and Draft Bill to change the state pension system. Congress views with scepticism the flat rate pension of £144 a week proposed by Iain Duncan-Smith, and agrees it is a CONservative trick.

Although it is claimed it could lead to a higher pension for women, it would be at the cost of higher contributions over a longer period. It would also result in many current contributors getting lower pensions than their contributions merit.

The £144 is substantially less than current pensions for many who contribute to both the basic pension and SERPS. There may also be substantial increases in contributions for Public Sector workers.

Iain Duncan-Smith has not suddenly become Florence Nightingale, the real purpose of this proposal is to save the Government money.

Congress further notes that the Government’s own information shows:

- That there are some winners – but a majority of people will lose out.
- It is discriminatory
- That the Treasury will gain £6bn per annum
- That an additional National Insurance Tax Rise will seriously hit defined benefit pension schemes and their 7 million members.
- That faster and further rises to the state pension age are likely.

This Congress agrees that state pensions should be at a level where means testing is not necessary. However Congress does not agree that any change should be at the expense of any future retirees having to fund the reform. We instruct the GMB nationally to lobby through our Pensions Department to stop this from happening

Congress agrees with the view of the National Pensioners Convention that this scheme is a trick and this motion calls on GMB to continue to campaign for an all round improvement to all state retirement pensions. Congress further agrees we should continue to argue for earnings related pensions.

GMB has been at the forefront of highlighting the truth about this Con-Dem con-trick and this Conference resolves to redouble our efforts to show that this Government is no friend to pensioners or future pensioners.

*(Carried)*

SIS. B. BENHAM (London): President and Congress, I move Composite 2. There is an old saying that if something seems too good to be true, it usually is. If you are offered a Cartier watch for £100, you know it's a con. If a Conservative says that the basic state pension is going to be increased from £107 to £144 a week by 2017 you absolutely know it's a con, especially when the fine print shows that it will save the country money. Yes, Congress, there will be some winners but the majority will be losing out. The self-employed will gain massively. For years they have paid much lower contributions than employed people, and quite rightly. Because of this, they are going to receive a state pension. In 2017 they will receive the single-rate state pension of £144 per week. It has not yet been decided if their contributions are to go up accordingly, but even if they do that is an awful lot for very little, if a self-employed person is due to retire after 2013. That is discrimination. People who do not currently contribute to the second state pension or SERPS and retire after April 2017 will benefit, but those who do currently will only gain pennies, despite having contributed a lot more. That is discrimination.

Current pensioners and those who will become pensioners before April 2017 will not enjoy a flat rate £144 a week. They will remain on the pension they are on now. That is also discrimination. Four hundred thousand women are due to retire between April 2016 and April 2017, but because of the increase in the women's retirement age, in that period they lose out. We will see 400,000 women losing out. Congress, that is scandalous discrimination.

Then we have the case of people in a defined benefit pension scheme, such as local government workers. Because they are in a defined benefit pension scheme they can contract out, allowing them to pay reduced contributions. Congress, under the new scheme, this would not be allowed and then they would, in effect, to pay more for their defined pension benefits, but see no increase in their state pension.

Colleagues, this composite motion mentions the fact that Iain Duncan Smith is not Florence Nightingale. Despite the damage-grabbing headlines of a massive rise in the state pension, close examination, as detailed in this motion, shows that he and his Con-Dem colleagues are modern-day Scrooges, and they should be publicly shown up for just that. To claim it will be a fairer and increased benefit pensions system whilst making a saving of up to £6 billion is immoral. Shame to the Government. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Birmingham & West Midlands to second.

BRO. C. BURTON (Birmingham & West Midlands): President and Congress, suggested pension reforms by the Government would be seen as long overdue. They are currently means tested, not user-friendly and, to a great extent, negligible. Women's pensions are nowhere near the same as men's. However, the funding of these pensions should not be funded by future retirees. If the youth of today and the members of the occupational pension schemes are to be jeopardised in funding this scheme, then we must agree how disgraceful even the thought of this is. Occupational pensions have already been battered to death, most being unavailable to new starters, especially final salary schemes, with the Government using workers' pension schemes to fund their own review of state pensions. It is just not

on. So we have to ensure that this disgraceful thought is nipped in the bud. If so, we would be very happy. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? (*No response*) In that case, I call Mary Hutchinson.

SIS. M. HUTCHINSON (CEC, Manufacturing): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC to qualify Composite Motion 2, which covers Motions 90, 92 and 94. This composite motion deals with the proposals to reform the UK state pension system, which are soon to form the basis of new legislation. The motion asks that we continue to expose the shortcomings of the proposed reforms. We will, of course, continue to do this. It also makes many good points about reforms which the CEC wholeheartedly agrees with. However, the motion also argues for an element of the state pension to be based on earnings. The CEC is worried that this may be too prescriptive. We believe that there should be some flexibility. This would mean that we could argue that the state pension system should allow low earners to fair comparatively better than higher earners. We hope that Congress will agree to allow that flexibility.

The composite also implies that state pension reform today should not be funded by future pensioners. Congress, we agree that it would be wrong to expect our children and grandchildren to write a blank cheque to pay for pensions, but there must always be some degree of subsidising across the generations. If not, there is a real threat of huge cuts in the future for those reliant on their state pensions. We would not wish to see this happen, and for that reason the CEC would wish to qualify this motion to allow some flexibility to retain a measured subsidy. GMB is working to influence state pension reforms under the instruction of decisions taken by Congress, but we face an uphill task as Osborne continues to show us that his priorities are the fat cats. Despite this, we will continue to fight for a dignified retirement for all and, despite what Mr. Balls may say, we will continue to carry on fighting for a universal benefit for pensioners.

Congress, we ask that these qualifications are accepted and that the composite motion is supported accordingly. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I come to the vote on Motion 89 and Composite 2. Does London Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. All those in favour, please show? Any against?

*Motion 89 was CARRIED.*

*Composite 2 was CARRIED.*

#### **ADDRESS BY MONICA SMITH, NATIONAL SECRETARY OF THE RETIRED MEMBERS ASSOCIATION**

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, it gives me great pleasure to invite Monica Smith, the National Secretary of the Retired Members Association, to address Congress. Monica.

SIS. M. SMITH (National Secretary of the Retired Members Association): President and Congress, you will all have heard of the phrase “My, how times flies.” Well, colleagues, once you become a senior citizen time certainly does fly by very quickly. That is why it is a privilege and an honour to be invited to the rostrum to give you an update of the fight we have on our hands, not only for ourselves but for future retired members also, because it is unbelievable what this gang of criminals in No. 10 are capable of. Don’t ever think it won’t happen. They would take the milk out of your tea if they thought there was a profit in it for them. If, by some chance, these people are returned for a second term of office, then we will only have ourselves to blame. That is why I am asking all retired members to attend their regional meetings, and for branch secretaries to pass on the message at branch meetings.

We, at the RMA, are already protesting strongly by meetings, conferences and rallies. The Tories always pride themselves on being a humanitarian nation. Well, they want to start looking closer to home and at some of the deprived families in the UK. Colleagues, I now I am speaking to the converted but it is up to us to try to bring back the votes Labour lost at the last election. Let us not forget that when gas, electricity and oil were privatised, they continued to raise prices, refusing to curb their corporate greed. If they stop cold weather payments and the figures of premature deaths are revealed – there were 24,000 in 2011 – it will show what a lethal winter we have endured, and we will expose the lazy, inept, don't-care nature of the Westminster elite, whose homes are warmed by the taxpayer. You never hear of a minister having died from hypothermia.

Colleagues, not since the 1930s have we faced a crisis such as this, but the RMA will fight on with the strength of our General Secretary, Paul Kenny, and our National President, Mary Turner. Now is the time to rally the troops, because when you get the likes of Iain Duncan Smith speaking from his rent-free £2 million home, complete with swimming pool, tennis court and room for a pony, saying that he could live on £7.50 a day, what a stupid, idiotic, soul-destroying statement to make. *(Applause)* That is from the Works & Pensions Secretary.

Colleagues, I make no apology to Congress when I go on about the Tory Party. These people have no feelings for mankind and, if given the chance, will drag working-class people back into the 1930s, while they sit back and lead a life of luxury. Colleagues, we cannot and should not allow this way of living to ever happen again.

We, at the RMA, are growing more active under the watchful eye and guidance of our National Co-ordinator, Jerry Nelson. Mind you, he is a good lad. His commitment to the RMA and the GMB is second to none. So let's get the RMA banner out, alongside the GMB banner, and fight for what is rightfully ours. We want a fair day's wage for a fair day's work and dignity in our retirement years. RMA members have more years behind them than what are in front of them, but the fight has all gone, not only for our twilight years but also for your future. The RMA will be active with protest marches or lobbies until we get the message across that enough is enough. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Monica. You put some of us to shame. Well done. Keep the good fight going, as I know you will.

We now move to employment rights at work.

## **RIGHTS AT WORK EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS MOTION 100**

### **100. EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS**

This Congress condemns the insidious attacks upon the rights of employees by the Government, as set out in Vince Cable's statement launching the "Ending of the Employment Relationship" document.

Congress recognises that this statement confirms that the Government has largely accepted the majority of the proposals from the Beecroft Report, despite wider opposition from groups including the EEF, Federation of Small Businesses and The Institute of Chartered Accountants.

These proposals are nothing less than a cynical attempt to both dispossess working people of key employment rights and weaken the influence of Trade Unions who represent them.

Congress calls upon the CEC to oppose these proposals in order to ensure the retention of employment rights for those millions of working people in this country who require fairness at work.

(Carried)

BRO. M. WILSON (Wales and South West): Congress, I move Motion 100 on Employment Rights. President, under this Coalition Government of cronies and collaborators, the employment rights of ordinary working people are fast becoming a relic of a bygone age. Those who seek to suppress us and the rest of the trade union Movement in this country have hatched another set of so-called reforms, which are set out in the Government response to the “Ending of the Employment Relationship” document. The answer to the question of “Why do the Government want to alter employment laws?” is, of course, a very simple and obvious one. Congress, it is all about making it easier for their business friends to hire, manage and dismiss workers. The process began in earnest in April of last year when the qualifying period for bringing an unfair dismissal claim was doubled from one year to two. We then had the announcement that people would have to pay for the privilege of challenging their employer’s treatment of them by paying employment tribunal fees from later this year.

The Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act contains further provisions which have the effect of punishing the victims of bad treatment at work and letting bad employers off the hook. Let’s have a quick look at what those proposals provide for. Firstly, the opportunity for employers to put forward settlement offers where there is no pre-existing dispute. This gives the employer the ability to put forward an offer out of the blue in return for the withdrawal of an employment claim on an individual leaving his or her employment. Workers may be able to refuse an offer and remain in their jobs, but then be bullied and victimised for doing so. Secondly, we have the further cap on unfair dismissal compensation of one year’s pay, subject to a maximum sum of £74,000. Clearly, an arbitrary 12-month limit fails to adequately compensate someone for the breaching of their rights and loss of earnings. This change serves only to allow rogue employers to sack people on the cheap.

Then we have the consultation on the legislation which regulates the recruitment sector/employment agencies and businesses particularly, which the Government claim are too complicated and hard to understand. The real intention here is to deregulate and make it harder for workers to enjoy comparable rights to directly employed people. Throw in the proposals for the compulsory ACAS conciliation before being able to issue a tribunal claim, the giving of greater powers to the employment tribunal itself to sift out claims and allow judges to hear cases alone, then you really begin to understand what the game plan is here. It is making access to justice harder for the workers whilst being treated unfairly.

The Coalition Government also want to move the goalposts when it comes to transfers between employers, insisting that there is scope to remove what they call “unnecessary gold plating”. What this is really about is the intention to weaken the TUPE legislation, making staff more vulnerable to redundancy and susceptible to losing the right to their old terms and conditions of employment. Any repeal of the services changes will, undoubtedly, lead again to a race to the bottom on pay rights and conditions as well, all this, Congress, in a country which has the most de-regulated employment rights system of all the developed economies. Regrettably, Royal Assent was given to the Bill on 25<sup>th</sup> April and Vince Cable has got his way on employment law changes, for now, at least.

We must continue to campaign to restore former rights and to prevent the return to the hire-and-fire culture of the 1970s. Fair employment rights are the hallmark of a civilised society and not something to be given up or traded in for fool’s gold. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Michael. Secunder?

BRO. T. HICKS (Wales and South West): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and first-time speaker. (*Applause*) There is nothing new in *these* legislative changes, is there? Simply, it is Dr. Cable



carrying on from where his predecessors under the Thatcher and Major Governments left off. This Government is giving effect to pernicious reforms under the pretence of safeguarding workers' rights. If you add in the reduction in redundancy consultation periods then you really gain a clear understanding of what this is all about. Does it improve workers' rights? Of course not. Does it retain or create jobs? I don't think so, do you? Does it lessen the burden upon employers? There's no doubt about that whatsoever.

What it really amounts to are the introduction of measures that are designed to allow firms to bully and explicitly discriminate against their workforces. It shows the utter contempt that the Coalition has for the working class. The new measures will also lead to feelings of greater job insecurity. As Paul Kenny said before, it means less confidence for workers to spend as consumers to re-ignite the economy. Making it easier for bad employers to treat people shabbily is not the way to overcome the recession, which certainly was not caused by the protection that workers had in their places of employment.

Cable's plans are all about dismantling employment rights in this country and setting us back decades. Talk of firms being put off from taking people on because of bureaucratic rights' arrangements is just a smokescreen for the real reasons – shifting power towards the employer in the employment relationship.

Congress, let me thank Darren Smith and his legal team at Head Office for all the hard and effective work that they do in opposing reform proposals and submitting consultation responses. They do a great job. So, Congress, let us campaign together against these changes. I second the motion. Diolch yn Fawr. *(Applause)*

## **FULL EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS FROM THREE MONTHS MOTION 103**

### **103. FULL EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS FROM THREE MONTHS**

This Congress is appalled at the current two year time period to gain full employment rights and calls on the CEC to campaign to reduce this to three months.

GMB MID LINGS BRANCH  
*Midland and East Coast Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. J. CLARKE (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I move Motion 103. This motion is not about diluting union policy of full employment rights from day one, as Paul Kenny made clear in his speech, but from a heated debate at a branch meeting expressing anger at the increase again by the Tories to two years and disillusionment with the Labour Party which has just kept quiet and said nothing about this attack on workers' rights. This Congress is appalled at the current two year time period to gain full employment rights and calls on the CEC to campaign to reduce this period to three months. The policy of this Union is full employment rights from day one. Perhaps this union can persuade the Labour Party, for once, to adopt this as its policy in the next manifesto for 2015. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

BRO. C. GUNTER (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I second Motion 103. That the Coalition strives to disenfranchise our members is painfully evident. Like death by a thousand cuts, their policies on austerity and social welfare are slowly eroding away our employment rights. To gain access to justice, they have put an obstacle course in our way with the finishing line further away. This is a barrier to youth employment before they can start. Tribunal costs to be implemented in July is a brick wall. How many of us will finish the course? The Government only want one winner and they will not be happy until we are back to the days of master and servant. Please support this motion. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Colin. Motion 104.

## **OPT OUT FROM EU LEGAL PROTECTIONS MOTION 104**

### **104. OPT OUT FROM EU LEGAL PROTECTIONS**

Congress condemns the Conservative Party proposals for Britain to opt out of the protections provided by EU Laws on Social and Employment Rights, Equality, Health and Safety, Human Rights and access to justice.

Any such opt outs would turn the clock back on workers' rights, promote unfairness, intimidation and exploitation in the workplace and further enrich wealthy employers and others at the expense of the rest of society.

The GMB will not accept further attacks on workers' rights in Britain and resolves to organise a nation-wide campaign to highlight the importance of EU legislative protections for our members, to prevent the Conservatives from putting their proposals into action by working to defeat them at the next General Election and to organise vigorous resistance to all attempts to remove or water down our members' rights at work.

HENDON BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. E. STEWART (London): Congress, I move Motion 104 – Opt Out From Legal Protections. President, even allowing for the protection that the EU employment laws offer to our members up and down the country, let us be very clear that workers in Britain start off at a complete disadvantage. Laws in some European countries make it far more costly for companies to shut a manufacturing plant in, say, France, Germany or Spain than here. Just witness Ford and Vauxhall plants at Dagenham and Luton. They were profitable plants, but when Ford and General Motors had to cost cut, it was very much more effective to shut plants here than in Europe.

Some successful European countries protect their manufacturing industries by law. British laws deserted manufacturing and, colleagues, it doesn't seem to matter which party governs. There are many other advantages endured by European colleagues over and above the basic EU employment rights. I only just found out this month that a German mother can take two years paid maternity leave with the option of a third unpaid. That has got to be brilliant for both the mother and child. Such benefits are denied to mothers and children in Britain.

Congress, Cameron's threat to pull out of existing EU employment rights is not just a kneejerk reaction to UKIP successes or a humiliating olive branch to his rebellious right-wingers. It is an ideological attempt to stamp on workers in this country, to make them subservient, to make them cower and, indeed, to make them know their place. Let us make no mistake that an opt-out of EU employment rights or an opt-out from the EU would be catastrophic for our members. What would be the effect, colleagues? The effect would be rights governing collective redundancies, rights governing insolvencies, TUPE, equality for part-time workers, women and temporary staff, parental leave, the Working Time Directive and even health and safety laws, which the Government are trying to undermine, anyway, whether we stay in the EU or not.

When you add all this up, what the Coalition Government have already done to workers' rights in relation to employment tribunals is just proof of the contempt that the Tory Party has for our members, in particular, to workers in general. It also shows how lily-livered the Lib-Dems are and how they would rather keep their cars and salaries than deal with the sort of justice they claim to champion. This must not be allowed to happen. We have worked too long and hard to secure the employment rights we have. The campaign must go on to secure and even increase our workers' rights. It will

mean a long and hard campaign and one involving other unions and the Labour Party. It will be hard but it is a campaign that we cannot lose. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder?

SIS. S. HURLEY (London): Congress, I second Motion 104. President and Congress, the European referendum is simply the idea of a desperate man. David Cameron is realising that he has already lost the next election. This Coalition Government are hoping that we will forget all the lies that they have told, as well as the damage and poverty that they have caused while in office, by distracting us with the promise of an EU referendum if we allow them to stay. What he is also offering us is to come out of the EU or to stay in with his re-negotiated version, which he has not even set out to the public what that means. His version is purely another attack on the workers of the UK, to change the terms of the Working Time Directive, human rights and more. It is clear that the future for us under his Coalition Government and its 'Big Society' idea with the amendments to the EU is that we are born to work longer and harder to the point where we just die and no longer require a retirement.

It is a fact that our relationship with the EU is worth £91 billion to £92 billion, and trade in the EU is growing every year. So in this time of recession it is stupid to scare away trade from our country. We must tell the people that "Conservative" means "destructive" and "Coalition" means "demolition of our lives". I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Sarah. Motion 105.

## **EMPLOYMENT REGULATIONS MOTION 105**

### **105. EMPLOYMENT REGULATIONS**

This Congress is appalled at this Coalition Government's attack on the Employment Regulations that have been constructed to protect our workers, ranging from risk of injury in the workplace to the right not to be unfairly dismissed under the banner of making it easier to employ people when, in fact, it is designed to make it easier to dismiss and increase the risk of injury and fatality when at work.

Congress, therefore, demands that a future Labour Government should, at the very least, reinstate all that has been taken away by this Coalition Government.

SOUTH SHIELDS 2 BRANCH  
*Northern Region*

(*Carried*)

BRO. R. CLAYTON (Northern): Congress, I move Motion 105 – Employment Regulations. It just goes to show how out of touch the Tories and the Lib-Dems are in this Coalition Government, when, first, the Jackson Review is set out and then Vince Cable brings forward the proposals. The Tories, and especially their right wing, want to make it easier to sack people. They want to cut the minimum wage, they want to cut the rate for the job for our disabled workers and they want to make a free-market style of capitalism where the rich get richer and the poor just get poorer.

Vince Cable, in the Department for Business, shows that the Lib-Dems, at best, are doing the Tories bidding, and at worse they are wanting to make it easier to sack the workers. The Jackson Review shows that the Coalition partners just do not understand the modern-day workplace. For example, the idea of clamping down on employment claims are seen as malicious is really aimed at the trade unions. But we know the trade unions operate their own principles based on whether cases have a reasonable prospect of success at employment tribunals. When we take a case on, it is because there has been an injustice committed, and where the law needs to be tested, it is tested. This is called democracy and the rule of law.

This Government want to turn the clock back to the employment rights of Victorian times. That is their goal. If the Government's proposals come into force, we know what will happen. Workers will face injustice and will be priced out of taking an individual case. Worse still, workers will be much more at risk of injury and death. Congress, we need for these proposals to be scrapped or repealed. Therefore, we call on the future Labour Government to commit to do that. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder?

BRO. N. COLLINSON (Northern): Congress, I second Motion 105 – Employment Regulations. President, the Tory and Lib-Dem Coalition, the Con-Dems, just want to make it easier for the cowboys to water down health and safety standards. We get all we need to know about the Tories, the Lib-Dems and their attitudes to workers in the public service. For example, in setting the council budget in County Durham the views put forward by the Liberal Democrats included proposals to stop all union facility time. In Sunderland, in the setting of the council budget, the Tories also proposed scrapping trade union facility time. So we know what the agenda is of these Tories and Lib-Dems when they are in government, central or local. The two parties are anti-trade union, anti-worker and anti all middle-income people who are desperately trying to get through the economic crisis, a crisis made worse by the Tory and Lib-Dem policies while they continue to support their millionaire backers, their friends and the bankers, whose policies led to this crisis.

We need Labour, both at national and local level, to re-state their commitment to the rights at work for trade unions and their members. We need the proposals that have come out of the Jackson Review and any laws repealed by a first future Labour Government. Our members, other trade union members, need this cast-iron commitment so that we can see that Labour is a credible party on the side of our members. We should urge the Labour Party, when in government, to repeal all laws that are detrimental of trade unions and working class low-paid workers. Please second. (*Applause*)

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

SIS. J. SMITH (London): Congress, having listened to our delegates on those important motions, I am just going to say one thing. I am learning this morning, and what is reported in the *Daily Mirror*, our newspaper, of the shame of David Miliband doing a u-turn on universal benefits. He should be ashamed of himself. He got the support of the GMB and he should respect our wishes. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Jan, we know about David Miliband. I think you meant Ed Miliband. We transported the other one to America, not to Australia. Are there any other speakers? (*No response*) In that case, I call Viv Smart to speak on behalf of the CEC.

SIS. V. SMART (CEC, Public Services): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC. The CEC ask you to support Motion 103 with a qualification. The qualification relates to the fact that it is long-standing GMB policy to call for employment rights from day one. Motion 103 is, rightly, appalled by the two-year time period to gain full-time employment rights. As you know, in April of last year the qualifying period for unfair dismissal was extended from one year to two years. Congress, 2012 carried three composite motions, all of which oppose the change. However, Motion 103 calls for the two-year period to be reduced to three months but, Congress, as you know, GMB policy has for many years been for full employment rights from day one. Therefore, the CEC asks you to support Motion 103 with the qualification that we still support the call for full employment rights from day one rather than three months.

THE PRESIDENT: Does Midland & East Coast Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) I now put Motions 100, 103, 104 and 105 to the vote. All those in favour, please show. Anyone against?

*Motion 100 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 103 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 104 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 105 was CARRIED.*

**SOCIAL POLICY: GENERAL  
REFUGES AND SAFE HOUSES  
MOTION 265**

**265. REFUGES AND SAFE HOUSES**

This Congress demands that funds are made available to prevent the closures of refuges and safe houses.

Those in need of protection will be even more vulnerable if this Government continues to implement the cuts that have forced so many safe houses and refuges to close.

A15 ASDA BRANCH  
*Birmingham & West Midlands Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. M. CLARKE (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I move Motion 265. President, two women every week are killed in this country by a current or a former partner. According to figures last year, 1.2 million women experienced domestic abuse. It is reported that 400,000 women were sexually assaulted, and 60,000 women were raped. Also at least 10,000 women and children have been trafficked to the UK for sexual exploitation.

Violence against women is on the rise year by year. It can come in many shapes and sizes. Isobel sought help when she could no longer cope with the violence she was experiencing at the hands of her teenage son. Lindsay was only 13 when she was befriended and groomed by a man who went on to sell her to other men for sex. Anna was 17 when she ran away to a refuge after her family tried to force her to marry a man she had never met. Jane lost her home and her job when she and her daughter fled her controlling and psychologically abusive husband. When Kate arrived at a refuge, she had a stab wound to the neck and large bald patches where her hair had been pulled out. All of these stories are true, and all of these women were supported on the road to recovery by women's services.

Whether women are experiencing violence or attempting to escape unsafe situations in their lives, many women retreat to women's shelters across the country or seek advice from women's services. These services provide a safe space for women in their time of need, offering help and refuge and supporting women to heal and move forward. Congress, local authorities have slashed their budgets with disastrous consequences. Women's Aid, Rape Crisis England and Wales, Refuge and many more local and national services have reported severe funding difficulties leading to the closure of vital services for women and children. It seems that the most vulnerable in our society will pay the price for these unfair austerity measures.

Congress, these cuts are affecting services for women and their children at a time when demand has never been higher. A tough economic time increases the incidents of rape. Cuts to benefits and a jobs market on its knees further increase women's vulnerability and the need has never been greater for refuges. It is imperative that we ensure safety and support to adults and child survivors who seek help and protection. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder?

SIS. J. INGLEBY (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I second Motion 265. President and Congress, it is clear that Government cuts are impacting on women's economic rights and now on personal issues, too, and their safety. These services can no longer be cut. Violence is the biggest cause of death in women aged between 18 and 44 across the world. One in four women will be the

victims of domestic violence in their lifetime. Huge numbers of women use these services. If they close women and their children could be left in need when they are at their most vulnerable.

Congress, the Government cuts are crippling. We cannot risk losing all the hard work of these life-changing services. I would have loved to have come to this rostrum young, a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker, as I could then join the up and coming young trade unionists in the hall this week. They are a credit and asset to our great union. I am proud to have been here with you. With that, I second Motion 265. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I call Motion 266 – Social Housing

## **SOCIAL POLICING MOTION 266**

### **266. SOCIAL - POLICING**

This Congress believes that the current trend by the Con/Dem Government is in the process of reducing the presence of Police Officers in the community. They are being replaced by Community Support Officers as an on-going trend. We believe this is detrimental to our members and their families.

We ask the CEC to instruct the relevant bodies to stop this practise.

R35 ROCESTER JCB GENERAL BRANCH  
*Birmingham & West Midlands Region*

*(Referred)*

BRO. C. BURTON (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I am moving Motion 266 – Social Policing. President and Congress, this week I have met some absolutely wonderful people and it has been an honour and a privilege to be here. It's been absolutely fantastic. *(Applause)* When I was speaking to one gentlemen, Mr Billy Hughes, he said, "Always put a bit of humour in what you say", so I'm going to start off with a little story. A young man and his wife were at his house witnessing two people robbing his shed. On ringing the police, the police said to him, "I'm sorry but we've got no officers who we can send to you at the moment, but we'll give you a crime number." So he put the phone down and two minutes later he rang back and said, "It's okay. We don't need you to send anyone any more. I've shot them." Within 10 minutes the police were round tenfold and arrested the two robbers. They said to the man, "I thought you'd shot these two robbers?" He said, "I thought you had no officers." *(Laughter)*

Moving on, the trend of the Con-Dems is to reduce the presence of police forces in the community, especially in the market towns and rural areas. Community-support officers are equated to police officers, which we believe is detrimental to our members and their families in these areas. Having a basic number of officers on our streets is essential when responding to crime. The moment when you have to ring the police is enough on its own, without a highly-trained and sympathetic professional officer being available to come to you pronto.

What is also needed is the manpower and infrastructure in place to actively stop crime by dealing with its causes. With an estimated 25% reduction in police officers, this becomes nye on impossible. We need police on the beat, behind the scenes and on our roads. We need community policing to assist in the battle against crime in the community, and more of a presence in the community. We don't need policing on the cheap. Admittedly, Britain is, relatively speaking, as safe as it has been in the past, but the rising crime rate in the last few years has coincided with a reduction in police numbers. Getting rid of research teams and local support response teams has allowed crime to increase again. The Labour Party, which has been criticised for its micro-management of the police force, has asked for much more focus on the Organised Crime Agency to protect and delivery the best service at national level.

We want a strong bridge between police and the communities to ensure policing for the people. We don't want it to diversify, to shut down local stations or police from 20 miles away.

Teresa May says that community safety partnerships and dedicated neighbourhood policing teams are value for money, but I'm not so sure. Some are ridiculed and harassed and not given sufficient credence whatsoever because their real power is limited.

There are 13,000 police in the community, supported by 16,000 support officers, but the numbers in the police force are declining. We believe that this is detrimental to our members and their families. We ask the CEC to instruct the relevant bodies to stop this practice. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Craig, don't let that Billy Hughes lead you astray. Look at the state of me. *(Laughter)*

BRO. G. GOULDSMITH (Birmingham & West Midlands): Madam President, the idea of stopping a crime before it actually happens is fundamental to the ideals and a basic necessity of a law-abiding society. The old bobby on the beat who knew everyone and knew what was going on is a distant memory. We need a police force that is part of the community where public safety is promoted and links are formed. Where the two work together the benefits are improved, creating a mutual trust and respect that the force can be trusted to deliver a safe quality environment in which we all want to live. The closure of police stations – my local police station two minutes down the road closed – means that my nearest one is now 10 miles away. There is a less visible presence of the police. The continued use of Specials – Hobby Bobbies – Community police officers has become crime prevention on the cheap.

Congress, we instruct our union to halt the progress of this practice. It is detrimental to our members, families and communities as a whole. We ask the CEC to ask the relevant bodies to stop this increasing trend. I second. *(Applause)*

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

SIS. T. CHANA (London): Congress, I am speaking in support of Motion 265. The world's first ever women's refuge was opened in Chiswick in London in 1971. It was at a time when domestic abuse was not talked about. Refuges and safe houses depend upon charitable donations and funding. Over 80,000 women and children are fleeing domestic violence a year and need refuge support. Never more than before do these lifesaving and lifeline organisations need to remain open.

In 2008 the then Tory-led council in Ealing decided to close Southhall Black Sisters, a Specialist provider of domestic violence services to black and ethnic minority women facing issues of forced marriage, female genital mutilation and other events. The reason given by the council was that there was no need for these special services for black and ethnic minority women.

Southall Black Sisters have not only provided a safe haven since 1979 to the community but have been pioneers in changing the law on domestic violence and the defence of publication. Refuges do not only provide a basic place to live and stay for women. They provide support, advice, counselling and empowerment. They are run by volunteers who are passionate about fighting domestic abuse. Please support this motion.

SIS. K. HUMPHREYS (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I am a Police and Community Support Officer. I am speaking with the support of my region in opposition to Motion 266. First of all, we do not replace the police. We work alongside the police. As for engaging with our communities, I don't even know where to start. In Nottingham City I implemented Clare's Law, which is the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme. I also speak to young people in schools on knife crime, gun crime and

internet safety. Community engagement is happening all the time. When it is snowy and people cannot get out of their homes because of the weather, and the carers also can't get out, it is people like me who went to the shops to get these old people their food, milk and stuff like that. It might not be stopping crime but it is community engagement. At the moment, I am working with the Youth Offending Team. I am doing work with young people. I was speaking to a guy the other week about "Why do you carry a knife?" Answer, "For protection." We have dispelled that myth with him now and I don't think he is going to do it any more.

My daughter is three, and she says to me, "Mummy, are you police?" I say, "Yes, duck." She says, "Do you help people?" I say, "Yes, duck." She said, "Mummy, you're Wonderwoman. You're the super hero." Please vote in opposition to this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Does the mover wish to reply?

BRO. C. BURTON (Birmingham & West Midlands): The motion actually asks not to replace but to support. Basically, we want more support. We are not asking for replacing these Community Support Officers. We are just asking for more support for them and more police. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: I move to the vote of Motion 265. All those in favour? We are supporting. Please show. Thank you. Anyone against.

*Motion 265 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: I ask Sandra Berwick to reply on Motion 266 on behalf of the CEC.

SIS. S. BERWICK (CEC, Public Services): I am covering Motion 266 on behalf of the CEC. The CEC is asking Congress to refer motion 266. This motion brings to Congress's attention the cuts that the Coalition Government are making to frontline policing. Their retrograde policing has taken us back a decade. Police strengths in England and Wales are at their lowest level since 2002. The last set of figures showed a loss of 4,000 officers in the last year alone. Here in Plymouth, the chief of police admitted last year that the cutting of 200 officers was the cause of spike of 6% in crime. This Government are putting our families and communities at risk.

However, this motion also states that there is a trend to replace police officers with Community Support Officers, and this also is a detriment to our members, families and friends. The conflict that that assertion raises between police officers and support officers is that they work alongside each other, but we should not forget they are also members of this Union. It would be dealt best through the GMB Police Staff Committee on which we have representatives to deal with all our members in the Police Service who are represented. We, therefore, ask Congress to refer this motion to that committee.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sandra. Sandra is a first-time speaker for the CEC. Well done. (*Applause*) Does the region agree reference? (*Agreed*) Does Congress agree reference?

*Motion 266 was REFERRED.*

## **ANNOUNCEMENT**

THE PRESIDENT: Before we get to the next point of our business, I can say that the winner of the Digby Brown bottle of Scotch is Rosy Wilkinson. Please collect your prize from the Digby Brown stand before 11 o'clock.

I have a message from the Yorkshire Disabled Workers Co-operative. "Come and see us. Branch banners made to order. High quality union banners."



## **INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: PUBLIC SERVICES**

### **DEFENCE CUTS**

#### **MOTION 206**

##### **206. DEFENCE CUTS**

This Congress is called upon to lobby the coalition to shelve existing and future defence cut plans and to re-think its policy of trying to cut, as the world's policemen in places like Afghanistan, Libya, Syria and now assisting in Mali, are using our overstretched and overburdened and dwindling Armed Forces members, which is further putting people's lives at risk.

Unless properly funded, equipped and staffed to do so, they are our sons and daughters, not yours!

GMB EAST DERBYSHIRE BRANCH  
*Midland and East Coast Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. P. BELL (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I move Motion 206. President, George Osborne, the Chancellor, is preparing his spending review for 2015-2016 that has raised the prospects for even more cuts to the Ministry of Defence budget, on top of those already made by the disastrous Strategic Defence Review in 2010, which saw this Government cut the new recognisance aircraft and sell the complete Harrier Jump Jet fleet at a fraction to the Americans at a fraction of the real value, having spent millions updating and modifying them. Defence cuts of around 8% between 2010 to 2015 have also left Britain without a working aircraft carrier and the loss of 30,000 Armed Forces posts. Many brave soldiers have come home from armed conflict not to the sound of cheering voices, Congress, but to redundancy and the dole queue. That is this Government way of helping heroes. The Armed Forces deserve better than posturing from a Prime Minister who came to power promising a bigger Army, but has cut capabilities and manpower.

Tough decisions are necessary in defence, but this Government's plans are rushed and flawed. Mr. Cameron told MPs in the Commons in October 2010, at the time of the Defence Review: "My strong view is that this structure will require year-on-year real-term growth in the defence budget in the years beyond 2015." But here we are now, having made those cuts, facing the promise of even more defence cuts. So we have another Coalition lie.

More cuts in defence means that Britain could fall below the NATO standard of defence spending of around 2% gross domestic product, putting a strain on the UK's ability to co-operate with the United States and the rest of NATO. This is at a time when our Coalition partners need a strong United Kingdom in the face of terrorism threats both in this country and abroad. Further cuts, Congress, could mean that Britain loses its permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, especially if it seen as being unable to defend its own overseas territories effectively.

Written evidence to the Commons Defence Committee by Sir Sandy Woodward, supported by other senior figures, like Brigadier Thompson and others, warned that Britain will be unable to defence itself around the world if cuts continue. In their words, "Britain could be ripe for the taking".

If that is not bad enough, it appears that the Ministry of Defence may have to re-hire thousands of members of staff it has only just made redundant. MPs on the Public Accounts Committee say that the MoD has failed to monitor the skills of staff that it let go under its Voluntary Early Release Scheme. The Committee strongly criticised the MoD for shedding staff before it had even drawn up a new operating model, setting out the Armed Forces' priorities for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Defence chiefs said that they had been forced to make the redundancies to comply with severe budget cuts imposed by George Osborne as part of the Coalition's deficit-reduction plan. Again, Congress, rushed and flawed decisions made by an irresponsible Government are putting this country's servicemen's and women's lives at risk by losing key skills needed to support them in the field.

The average cost of making a member of the Armed Forces redundant is £56,000, whilst the equivalent figure for a civilian member is £32,000. More than 8,000 personnel have already gone, with many more facing uncertainty, even whilst serving their country in war zones. Mr. Hammond, himself, agreed that the cuts represented a challenge to competence and morale within the Armed Forces.

Earlier this year, the National Audit Office, the public-spending watchdog, said that the MoD's spending on consultants had risen sharply because of a shortage of key professionals. The Department's spending on contractors for the technical support programme has grown from £6 million in 2006 and 2007 to over £270 million at present. That is a disgraceful waste of public spending due to rushed and poor spending cuts.

If this Prime Minister wants to go around the world acting big and tough, then he wants to give the Armed Forces the money and equipment it needs. Either that, if you're not going to spend the money on the equipment, bring the lads and lasses home from these conflicts. Either give them the support they need or bring them home. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Secunder?

BRO. W. KERR (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I second Motion 206. President and Congress, as a country we have a proud heritage in our Armed Forces, where counties, towns and cities could identify with ships, regiments, etc, and take pride in their connections. These days regiments, ships and RAF squadrons have been disbanded, amalgamated and scrapped to the stage where the TA is having to boost the full-time forces. That does not mean that the TA is not up to the job, but they are not full-time professionals. What will be next? Dad's Army or even the Scouts. All joking apart, our servicemen and women are still expected to police the world with fewer and fewer resources and backup. They need support and equipment, not cuts in jobs and professional support staff. This Coalition Government are putting the lives of our sons and daughters more at risk with the cutbacks and austerity measures in defence. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 207.

## **WORKPLACE PARKING CHARGE GREATING BIGGER WORKLOADS MOTION 207**

### **207. WORKPLACE PARKING CHARGE CREATING BIGGER WORKLOADS**

This Congress notes that those who travel to work in their own vehicle are not happy to pay the workplace parking charge therefore they are applying to work from home. This creates more work for those that either pay into the workplace parking charge or those that don't have their own transport.

We therefore call upon Congress to support this motion that the workplace parking charge should be reviewed.

NOTTINGHAM CITY BRANCH  
*Midland and East Coast Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. C. CLARKSON (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I am speaking to Motion 207 – Workplace Parking Charge Creating Bigger Workloads. If you are able to walk to work you are one of the very lucky ones, because most of us have to drive. With parking being at a premium in town centres, there is little or no free parking, so you have to pay for the privilege of going to work. If that isn't bad enough, the Labour-run Nottingham Council has put a levy on workplace parking. Some bosses have passed this charge on to the already low-paid workers. On average it costs about £20 month just to go to work.

Some colleagues are trying to work from home, thus retaining their wages without suffering the parking tax. That is fine if that type of working is available to you, but for those who cannot are left to pick up the greater workloads. Congress, why should we have to pay just to go to work. I want this Congress to put pressure on Labour-run councils to review this tax and give free parking for workers. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Seconder?

BRO. J. GOLDING (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I second Motion 207 on Workplace Parking Charge Creating Bigger Workloads. Congress, coming from our Nottingham City branch, this subject applies equally here in Plymouth, with the difficulty of parking at work that is becoming universal throughout the country. The Norman Tebbit “Get on your bike to find a job” mentality has become “Work from home”, when you have a job. The call is to support this motion that the workplace parking charges should be reviewed. Thank you. *(Applause)*

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

BRO. J. DUFFY (North West & Irish): Congress, I for what is classed as a “super council”, which is four councils amalgamated into one. Their brand new idea is to charge their own staff for parking on council car parks. Where I work that is equivalent to £8.80 per day. I have tried to do the sums. There are 178 days during the year that I am in work. That works out at £1,600 a year that I have to find after a three-year pay freeze, compared with the 1% pay increase. The alternative to this new-fangled idea is for all staff to use the Park and Ride, which is £3.40 per day. We are encouraged to use it until July when they are going to take that concession away from us and make us park in a bleeding car park again for £8.80. Staff have been caught parking on council land for years and years, but now if you are caught you are classed as defrauding the council, leading to disciplinary measures and the sack, if they want to. So the message is “Don’t get caught”. The system is in operation now. I work in Parking Services. This rule has come from the chief executive who is on £210,000 a year, and he doesn’t pay for his parking. He counted two election votes last year and he got paid £34,000 for turning up and saying that he won. He thinks it is a great idea for the staff. Please back this motion because this development is coming to a place near you very soon. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Is there anyone else wanting to speak? *(No response)* In that case, I call John Dolan to speak on Motions 206 and 207.

BRO. J. DOLAN (CEC, Manufacturing): *(Wearing a “Keep Calm” apron)* I don’t know whether to call myself “John” or “Joanne” after the other night, when the ladies from Scotland set me up. By me doing this, they have to pay money to my charity. It’s 50 quid. Okay? That’s the charge. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, John.

BRO. DOLAN: I am speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motions 206 and 207. President and Congress, Motion 206 calls upon Congress to lobby the Government to oppose existing and future defence cuts, a position that the GMB has regularly taken. Our troops are called upon to put their lives on the line in the many battlefields they are called upon to engage in, and to the safety they bring to all of us in this country and abroad. Let us not forget that these cuts have wider repercussions. Many thousands of manufacturing jobs at risk when defence budgets are irresponsibly slashed. I ask Congress to qualify this motion to reflect that important fact.

Motion 207 asks Congress to oppose parking charges. We have seen these charges increasingly introduced and jacked-up by employers at town halls and other workplaces, up and down the country. In their desperation to raise a few pounds, bosses are coming to the already stretched pockets of their own staff. That is wrong and we ask you to oppose this.

Motion 207 also states that these charges are causing workers to apply to work from home, but this increases the workload on colleagues who continue or request to work at their traditional workplace. Flexible working, such as working from home, is not something that we believe in this union we should oppose. In many cases it can help to improve the work-life balance of our members, which is sadly missing from our economy. Nor do we believe that it is clearly the case that an increase in home working can be directly linked to workplace parking charges. We, therefore, ask Congress to support Motions 206 and 207 with the qualifications I have just explained. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Does Midland & East Coast accept the qualifications on Motions 206 and 207. *(Agreed)* Thank you. I now put Motions 206 and 207 to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against?

*Motion 206 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 207 was CARRIED.*

## **SOCIAL POLICY: GENERAL THE NATIONAL LOTTERY MOTION 259**

### **259. THE NATIONAL LOTTERY**

Congress should be appalled at the decision by Camelot to double the price of the lottery tickets whilst this country is suffering a recession.

This price increase will hurt the lower paid sections of our society and is totally unfair and unacceptable it could also have serious effects because of people boycotting the lottery with drastic results on organisations and charities who depend on lottery funding.

More than eleven million pounds which includes five million pounds in bonuses has been set aside to pay out to twenty five Camelot chiefs which was announced only a few days after the price increase.

This is insensitive particularly after the scandal of the “bankers’ bonuses” and clearly illustrates the sheer greed and abusive use of power by big organisations.

Congress is urged to oppose this change of events by any means available.

KING’S LYNN NO 1 BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. D. ANDERSON (London): Congress, I move Motion 259 – The National Lottery. We should be appalled at the decision that Camelot has made to double the price of the lottery tickets, especially with the cost of living rising and the benefit taxes which have been introduced. Surely, Camelot must be aware of the impact that this change will have on the lower-paid sectors of our society who, like all of us, are struggling to pay our bills. Camelot has, effectively, doubled the price of a dream. Camelot must be made to realise the seriousness of this decision and the detrimental effect it will have on many different organisations and charities who are dependent on Lottery funding, such as the arts, heritage sites, health education and the vast variety of sports.

Although Camelot does not have a say in how the Lottery funding is distributed, up to March of this year 28% of Lottery revenue has gone to good causes. These causes will suffer if people stop buying Lottery tickets. This is unfair and unacceptable. More than £11 million, which includes £5 million in bonuses, has been set aside to pay out to 25 chiefs a bonus. This announcement was made a few days after the increase. Well, Camelot chiefs get their bonuses, bankers – yes, I did say “bankers” – get their bonuses and we mere mortals get the bedroom tax. This, clearly, shows the incentives to increase the charge to Camelot. It also illustrates the sheer greed and the abuse of power wielded by these large

companies. Why should Camelot be allowed to double the price of someone's dream? I have been asked to put this motion forward and I ask Congress to oppose this price increase using any legal means available. Please support this motion. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Secunder?

SIS. J. SMITH (London): Congress, Diane has spelt out a lot of the reasons why we should oppose and put our weight against the increase to £2 on the Lottery. It was brought in to give us, the general public, the low-paid workers something to have a little flutter with. To increase the charge to £2, as Diane has explained, means that a lot of charities will lose out, so I call on you to support this motion and that the GMB does its best to get them to think again and keep it to £1. I second.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jan. I call the mover of Motion 262.

## **DRUGS MOTION 262**

### **262. DRUGS**

This Congress calls on the Government to introduce a Royal Commission on drug use, and whether regulating supply is the answer to the increasing problems caused by criminal gangs and dodgy suppliers seeking to take advantage of people in some of the most vulnerable communities in the UK.

NORTH TYNE COMMERCIAL SERVICES BRANCH  
*Northern Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. M. GOOCH (Northern): I'm a first-time delegate and first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I move Motion 262 – Drugs. The majority of Britons have said that they disagree with the David Cameron's decision to reject calls for a Royal Commission to consider whether using drugs should be illegal. The Home Office Affairs Select Committee has already recommended that a Royal Commission should be set up. Following a year-long Parliamentary Inquiry, the Home Affairs Select Committee highlighted Portugal's approach, where drug possession has been more relaxed since 2001. David Cameron has said that there is no need for a Royal Commission because our current drugs policy is working. However, his butler, Nick Clegg, disagrees.

According to a recent poll, 60% of the public support a Royal Commission to consider different drug policy options. This support was across all-Party lines, with 59% of Conservative voters, 62% of Labour supporters and 75% of Lib-Dems in favour. There is even a majority in favour of us having limited trials of the Portuguese approach. In 2001 Portugal relaxed the laws on possession of drugs in an attempt to deal with a high rate of heroin addiction and HIV amongst drug users. People who are growing, dealing and trafficking drugs are all still prosecuted, but possession of drugs for personal use has been decriminalised. Instead there has been an increased investment in drug-treatment programmes and harm-reduction programmes.

Congress, since the policy has been introduced, there have been higher levels of drug treatment. The justice system has spent less time on drug-related crime, there has been a lower problem of drug use but a higher rate of overall reported drug use. Asked if they would support or oppose a similar programme in the UK, 40% of the public said that they would support such a scheme, 32% are opposed and 27% said they didn't know. However, 54% said that they would support limited trials under the Portugal approach in British cities, while 27% are opposed to doing so, and 19% say they don't know.

So, Congress, the picture is mixed. It is clear that the war on drugs is yet to be won. A Royal Commission has long been talked of but politicians have generally been afraid to act. Now might be

the time to look at how we tackle this massive problem and help some of those who are being exploited. I move because I have a family member who was deep into drugs. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Secunder?

BRO. L. SAVAGE (Northern): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and first-time speaker. (*Applause*) I second Motion 262. Congress, this whole subject brings forward great debate and passionate views on both sides of the argument. However, current policy is getting us nowhere. Criminal gangs, added to poor-quality drugs, have led to vulnerable people in our communities being exploited. In the main, it is people with very little income in deprived areas who are targeted. The problem is largely ignored by the middle-class policymakers. Meanwhile, the state picks up the bill. Congress, this situation cannot go on. We need an informed debate and we need to take a close look at all the options, since the All Party Home Affairs Select Committee advocated having a Royal Commission, some politicians are starting to wake up to this problem. However, in the Government there is a conspiracy of silence, with the cost to the people and the state simply pushed to one side.

Congress, in Portugal, in some states of America and in New Zealand approaches are being taken that aim to tackle the problem in a different way to now. In Latin America, some are looking at changes in this policy. There is a willingness to think the impossible. It is in the interests that at this time Labour seem silent on this issue but, when in power, adopted a tone that seemed more like news management rather than taking into account the evidence. Congress, just like tobacco and alcohol, the issue of drugs may need to be approached in a different way to tackle the addiction, the misery and the deaths in our communities. A Royal Commission is long overdue. Please support. (*Applause*)

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

BRO. P. DUFFY (GMB Scotland): Congress, I am not against this motion. I nearly lost my son two years ago to drugs. Karl Marx once said: "Religion is the opium of the people." It's the only time I disagreed with him. Opium – drugs – is the issue. We take drugs to run away from the reality and hardship of life. We have already got a legal drug in alcohol, which the World Health Organisation puts as the second-biggest killer in the world. While prisons are full of people who use alcohol – I know people who can take alcohol or leave it – if you are a heavy drinker it will take at least seven years off your life. It will affect your heart, kidneys and your liver, and I am quite sure that most of you know about "coffee cultures", when the brain becomes a sponge due to alcohol. That is a legal drug just now, and it must cost this country, not just in the money side but in the misery it causes families, untold sums of money. I am a bit wary about doing anything towards legalising drugs. The best way is to get help. Get people on to a programme so that people can get help and off drugs completely. Thanks, Congress. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone else wish to speak? (*No response*) The CEC is supporting Motion 259. All those in favour, please show? Against?

*Motion 259 was CARRIED.*

I now call for the vote on Motion 262. The CEC is supporting. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against?

*Motion 262 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now move to Social Policy: Transport, and I ask the movers of composite 20, Rail Re-Nationalisation, Northern Region to move and second, 288, Investment for Railways in rural Areas, Yorkshire Region, 289, Transport Links, Wales and South West Region, 292, Eurotunnel, Southern Region, and 293, Campaign to get Cyclists off Pavements, Midland.

## **SOCIAL POLICY: TRANSPORT RAIL RENATIONALISATION COMPOSITE 20**

### **C20 Covering Motions:**

- 286. RAIL RE-NATIONALISATION (*Northern Region*)
- 287. RAIL (*Northern Region*)

### **C20 RAIL RE-NATIONALISATION**

This Congress believes that the rail infrastructure in the UK is in a shocking and under-invested state, with Government indecision and inaction allowing spivs, speculators and incompetent executives to sponge money out of the taxpayer from a cartel captive market.

This Congress calls on

- any future Rail contract that is ended before schedule, is then transferred back to Government ownership so that taxpayer money is safeguarded both by money invested in the industry and potential profit taking which sucks investment out of the industry and ensures passengers and taxpayers get a poor deal.
- the re-nationalisation of the industry and for it to be done expeditiously and for the Labour Party to commit to such a policy change as part of its programme for the next Labour Government.

*(Carried)*

BRO. R. SPEAKMAN (Northern): Congress, the state of our railways is a disgrace. Privatisation under the Tory government, under John Major, has been shown to be a complete farce. To bring in an internal market for the railways never made sense in the first place when the Tories wanted to get rid of the railways into the private sector. Separating the maintenance of the tracks from the operation of it was a recipe for poor health and safety. Tragic loss of life and injuries have shown the system that we have to have become less safe for passengers and those working in the industry. The fact is that there was no evidence that privatised rail companies are any more efficient than what went before. We now have a cartel in the railway industry where companies organise prices knowing that they have a captive market. The rail passenger loses out big style and, what is more, the companies are not operating the ticketed systems in the most effective way. The rail passenger is getting short-changed. The fact that the rail industry is now mainly operated as a private cartel shows that changes are needed. We have private equity firms getting in on the act. We have companies cutting trains and blaming it on the lack of drivers. We have a whole industry built up with hundreds of accountants and lawyers where the money spent on these could be better spent on better services for all of us.

Congress, a few years ago the Labour party used to say they could not renationalise the railways because it would cost too much, the markets would react badly, and the government would be bogged down in legal cases. No one is saying that now. What better way to show that Labour means to get the railways moving again than to say to companies that the contracts when up for renewal would have to go through rigorous testing with the public sector back as a serious option. Privatisation has not worked. We said it would and we were right. Let's get Labour to put this in its policy programme and hold them to account for it. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks very much, Richard. Seconder?

BRO. P. DUNCAN (Northern): Congress, the way central government is involved in the rail industry was shown up clearly in the fiasco of the bidding process for the North West line contract. What a shambles; in my opinion, what a disgrace. It is millions of pounds worth of money that could have been invested in rail, and letting civil servants take the blame shows what the Tory/LibDem government is all about. They will not be accountable for their actions. They hide behind their officials. They just want the power; typical millionaire toffs out of touch with the ordinary rail

passengers. There is the fact that top executives of the rail operating companies, who are not running trains on time or providing decent rolling stock, are getting rewarded for their failure, which shows the system is broken. The quality of service at peak times during the week and the weekends is falling back yet the number travelling on trains is at high record levels. That shows there is a cavity in the market where people need to travel for work and have no choice but to use rail.

Congress, there is no reason for rail companies to be complacent and patting themselves on the back and ignoring reality. We need a completely fresh start for the railways. Twenty years of privatisation has just not worked; it never bloody will. The passengers and the taxpayers are the same thing and they are not getting a good deal yet both are paying twice for this poor service, it is disgraceful. They pay for the travel and they pay for the failure; the investment subsidy comes from low-income people who have no choice but to pay their taxes. The railways need to be brought back into public ownership and the sooner the better. We can say to the spivs and the speculators on the trains, the train is leaving the station and you are not welcome. Please support. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Paul, thank you. Motion 288.

## **INVESTMENT FOR RAILWAYS IN RURAL AREAS MOTION 288**

### **288. INVESTMENT FOR RAILWAYS IN RURAL AREAS**

This Congress endorses a campaign for investment in improving rail links and services between towns, cities and rural areas such as in parts of Yorkshire & North Derbyshire.

This much needed investment would address barriers to employment and increase opportunity for GMB members in isolated areas without adequate public transport.

REMPLOY YORKSHIRE BRANCH  
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

*(Carried)*

BRO. T. POLLARD (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I would like to move motion 288. Let's take the railways back into public ownership. The investment in railways would create thousands of jobs and create rural railways in the rail network. This would give a better outlook on jobs, better paid jobs, more jobs for people living in rural areas, fewer cars on the roads, plus loads of other benefits. Keeping and opening the stations would be a vast improvement in their lives and a better way of life for England. This morning when we arrived, as you can see in this paper the Tories are actually selling some railways off again. This is what the Tories do. This is what is happening to railways. They are going to sell this off and the money from what they are selling off, the amount of money they are making, could be put into rural railways and open up some of these smaller stations. Come on, back this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder?

BRO. P. BRAYSHAW (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Oh, Dr. Beeching, what have you done! For those of you who are not old enough, including myself, I will tell you that his report of 1963 to the Conservative government of the day had a significant impact not only on the Yorkshire and North Derbyshire Region but the whole country. His first report identified 2,363 stations and 5,000 miles of railway line for closure, 55% of stations and 30% of route miles, with an objective of standing large losses. The second report identified a small number of major routes for significant investment. Some of the lines closed, including many rural lines, ran at very little deficit and in fact made very little difference to the overall deficit in the big scheme of things. People were promised cheaper, more efficient buses as a train replacement but the buses were slower and unpopular.



Fact, 1993, John Major's Conservative government started the commissioning of the privatisation of the railways with the Railways Act 1993. Labour, in opposition, fought this ferociously. In 1997, Tony Blair and the Labour Party were in office and with almost 90% of the rail privatisation already completed he breaks Labour's promise of 1993 to renationalise the railways when they got back into office.

Today, with fuel prices rising, the cost of living rising, and congested roads, what we have to ask ourselves simply is, is it working, can people in rural areas get about as freely as city and town dwellers, and the answer has to be no. This is a big detriment to rural workers with many increased travelling costs and a much longer working day from pre and post work travelling. So what do these people do, use cars when there is no train or a poor token bus service, maybe four buses a day in and out?

We have to reinvest in rural railways. When Dr. Beeching 50 years ago decided to cut, cut, cut, when really what he should have been doing was promoting more investment in the railways, both rural and urban, and maybe now we would not be in such a bloody mess. I second this motion to Congress. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Motion 289.

## **TRANSPORT LINKS MOTION 289**

### **289. TRANSPORT LINKS**

This Congress believes a £33 billion north-south high-speed rail scheme planned to extend the HS2 line to the North of England is unlikely to bring benefits to Plymouth or the wider South West.

With rail spending per head in the South West just a third of that in the rest of the country there is concern that Plymouth and the far south west will be side-lined economically.

It's crucial the Government doesn't forget the significance of the South West and the need for investment in our transport system but it appears once again the West Country is the poor relation when it comes to rail improvements and economic investment.

Better transport links would safeguard our member's jobs and would create much needed jobs now and boost our economy.

We call on the GMB to lobby Government on behalf of our members in the far South West for more investment in improving transport links to Devon and Cornwall.

DEVONPORT BRANCH  
*Wales & South West Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. N. WARN (Wales and South West): Disruptions caused by the extreme weather to the regions road and rail networks is said to have cost the West Country businesses £167m. A survey by the South West Chamber of Commerce found that 65% of the businesses in the region were affected by road closures and rail service delays, and cancellations as a result of snow and flooding over the last few months. New statistics show that an average public sector spend for transport in 2010/2011 was just £212 per person in the South West, the lowest figure in the UK, and just over a quarter of the spend per person in London. They say transport problems meant the late or non-arrival of staff and clients, cancelled or postponed appointments and business trips, cancelled holiday bookings, a drop in customers of retail companies, and resource issues for business relying on inward supply of goods. This resulted in the loss of revenue, the loss of working days, and reduced productivity.

The survey also found that 25% of the businesses secured more than 75% of the revenue from outside the South West and a third of the South West businesses use transport links to get to and from other parts of the UK on a daily basis. Plymouth is working with five other councils in the region to lobby ministers to try and improve transport links and has won the public backing of Cornwall County Council.

The Plymouth City Council passed a motion stating: “This Council considers it scandalous that only mainline railway connection to the fifteenth largest city in the country, as well as to the entire County of Cornwall, continues to rest upon a bank of pebbles, which wash away when it rains too much. A 21<sup>st</sup> century city cannot prosper when it relies upon 19<sup>th</sup> century infrastructure.”

Cornwall County Council, supporting, said: the mainline railway from Penzance to London is a crucial transport link to Cornwall and provides improved connectivity to economic markets nationally. Cornwall Council supports the need to improve the resilience of the mainline railway in the face of more frequent extreme weather but also to provide improved capacity to meet the record number of passengers using the railway in Cornwall. Any delay in delivering resilience and infrastructure improvements risks creating a standstill period for rail in the South West.”

It is crucial the Government does not forget the significance of the South West and the need for investment in our transport system but it also appears once again that the West Country is a poor relation when it comes to railway improvements and economic investment. Better transport links would safeguard our members’ jobs and create much needed jobs now and boost our economy. We call on Congress to support the campaign and lobby the Government on behalf of the members of the far South West for more investment in improving transport links to Devon and Cornwall. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Nigel. Secunder?

SIS. W. WESTON (Wales and South West): First-time delegate and speaker. (*Applause*) President, Congress, inadequate transport links to the South West has been an albatross around the neck of this region in terms of economic growth and development for far too long. The vulnerability of transport links in this area are highlighted and exasperated by the loss of the Plymouth Airport, travel disruption caused in times of bad weather, accidents occurring on the M5 and other routes into the South West, and the added pressure in the summer months of visiting tourists. It has been estimated that the Government’s proposed £32bn high-speed rail link between London and the North of England will ignore the West Country and cause its economy to suffer. The chances are that up to 50,000 fewer jobs will exist in the West Country by 2040 if the proposals go ahead. Whilst we have no difficulty with the creation of desperately needed jobs elsewhere, the fact is that the HS2 proposals will result in massive disparity between areas in terms of benefits.

Congress, much needed enhancements to transport links should not be confined to investment in the existing rail network. Although the M5 is a key route into the West Country, the A30 and A303 are also major entry roads which are in need of improvement works which were first proposed as far back as 1983. Colleagues, for too long this area has been the Cinderella of the country’s transport structure. Regional prosperity is vital to and for the jobs of people who live and work in the West Country yet investment requirements have been neglected by successive governments for far too long. Strong transport links to the region are essential to its future. Better investment is needed in road, rail, and air transport and the case for this has to be made in Whitehall. Please support the call for the GMB to lobby government to make this happen. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Motion 292.

## **EUROTUNNEL MOTION 292**

### **292. EUROTUNNEL**

Congress notes with concern, the ever increasing dominance of Eurotunnel in the highly competitive Ferry, coastal shipping and tunnel market.

Congress urges the GMB leadership to lobby and campaign with its various partners in the UK and in Europe, to ensure a level playing field in an industry facing immense challenges in recession Europe.

Congress notes that the Channel Tunnel Treaty was signed by Thatcher and President Mitterrand and much state sponsorship was provided for the construction of a fixed link between the UK and France/Europe. Congress further notes, due to the underlying unsustainable business model created by construction costs, shareholders have taken a 'substantial hit', leaving the current business unburdened by the building expense. The ferry owners do not enjoy the effective benefit of having expensive ship construction costs written off.

Congress is alarmed by the dominance of Eurotunnel, heightened further by the purchase of former Sea France ships, following the collapse of the French Rail subsidiary. Congress is further alarmed by the expansion policies of Eurotunnel, which now see as part of its plans, a wish to control the Northern France ports of Dunkirk, Calais and Boulogne.

Congress believes that Eurotunnel already command many unfair advantages as opposed to the ferry companies and in a world dominated by Oil and an ever rising Oil cost burden, which has no impact on the Tunnel, there is a serious possibility of a totally dominant player, surrounded by a fractured and weak Ferry industry, which is in no one's long term interest.

Congress Requests the GMB leadership to work in the UK and in Europe, with Government and other social partners, to ensure a true level playing field and eradicate any unfair competitive advantages, in the industry which provides vital trade links and moves people and goods around Europe.

X23 DOVER FERRIES BRANCH  
*Southern Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. P. GOODACRE (Southern): Good morning, Congress, President. Congress, we note with concern the increasing dominance of Eurotunnel on the nationally vital cross-channel route. Construction of Eurotunnel began in the early 1990s. It was initially funded by a consortium of banks and a general widely publicised share offering. Costs quickly spiralled and the opening delayed. The estimated initial cost of £4.5bn nearly doubled to over £10bn. Despite the obvious unsustainable commercial nature of the project it became too big to fail. Sound familiar?

In the years after opening there were continuous re-structural exercises during which most of the shareholders lost most of their capital. The fixed link became literally and figuratively a black hole down which capital disappeared. Having had large chunks of construction costs written off, Eurotunnel has enjoyed other advantages not shared by its competitors. Much of the infrastructure, such as the high-speed rail links that service Eurotunnel and Eurostar, were built with public funds. It is not unfair to say these advantages can be reflected in the prices it can charge, an unfair advantage over its competitors.

Now on a secure financial footing, Eurotunnel has sufficient means of ambition to widen its interests. Eurotunnel has expressed an interest in running the ports and infrastructure that services competitors' vessels. It recently chartered three ships made available by the demise of Sea France, itself a beneficiary of French state aid for many years, and leased them to a company in direct competition to Eurotunnel's competitors. The exact involvement of Eurotunnel on this new venture may have implications for the short sea market but also importantly on competition rules.

This motion calls for GMB through its connections to have these issues critically and thoroughly examined with appropriate action by the relevant authorities, if necessary. The whole issue of Eurotunnel's increasing dominance on the vital Channel route requires an examination and action. A monopoly position on such an important route will run contrary to public interest. This motion has been overtaken by events somewhat. Apparently in the last couple of hours the competition authorities have ruled that the link-up between Eurotunnel and My Ferry Link is illegal and has been given six months to wind up. Anyway, Congress, please support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder? Secunder? Formally? Thank you. He's still in the tunnel, is he!

*Motion 292 was formally seconded.*

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 293 to be moved by Midland.

### **CAMPAIGN TO GET CYCLISTS OFF PAVEMENTS MOTION 293**

#### **293. CAMPAIGN TO GET CYCLISTS OFF PAVEMENTS**

This Congress calls for the GMB to campaign for safer pavements for pedestrians, by improving provision of cycle paths and cycle friendly routes.

At particular risk from pavement cyclists are those with visual and auditory impairments, mobility issues, the elderly, young children and parents with prams, all of who suffer at the wheels of cyclists who choose to ignore the highway code, or who don't realise that the highway code applies to them as well as all other road users.

LEICESTER SERVICES BRANCH  
*Midland & East Coast Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. D. JOBSON (Midland & East Coast): Congress, sisters and brothers, let me first say that I think cycling is a great method of transport with a comparatively low impact on the environment. There are many cyclists who abide by the Highway Code section on cycling, much of which is based on and supported by the Highways Act. There are some cyclists, who, even though they go against the clear statement in the Highway Code, cycles are not to be ridden on footways, do at least ride with a measure of consideration for pedestrians. Whether the pavement cyclists are aware the Highway Code applies to them or that failing to abide by road signs and traffic lights is actually breaking the law is almost another matter entirely. But there are those who ignore the legislation in many ways, essentially considering themselves above the law with the right to ignore red lights, pedestrian crossings, No Entry signs, and treat the pavement like a road or a race track by hurtling along.

These people might complain that roads are too dangerous to cycle on or that one-way systems do not give them a direct enough route for where they want to go, so instead they cycle in such a way as to make it more dangerous for all manner of road users, and the pedestrians are apparently seen as an inconvenient obstacle with no right of objection, unless you are prepared to receive a tirade of abuse for having the audacity to point out the error of their cycling ways, even though they only just missed you or even actually collided with you.

So, we call upon Congress to make pavements safer for pedestrians by campaigning for the creation of more cycle lanes and cycle-friendly routes. Where a pavement is wide enough to accommodate both cyclists and pedestrians, make it safer for both. Where roads can be made to facilitate a cycle lane install one, even as a contra-flow on a one-way street. Where new road schemes are being considered, adequate provision for cycling should be integral to the design, not an afterthought, or no thought.

Congress, everyone has the right to be safe when travelling from A to B on footways, cycle routes, and roads, whether that be by pram, wheelchair, two-wheeled horse or Shanks's Pony. Congress, I ask you to support. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Dave, on your bike! (*Laughter*) You think you are getting the right to reply on a tandem you've got another shock coming!

BRO. M. RALSTON (Midland & East Coast): Madam President, Congress, I am a keen cyclist living in an area with good cycle routes, however many cars and vans block cycle routes and force cyclists to constantly change lanes. Many cyclists lack the confidence and are intimidated by drivers. They use pavements as a safer alternative to causing problems for the road users. The motion calls for cycle routes and, in addition, I think we need more education for all road users and enforcement of existing regulations. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Matt. Anyone wish to come in on the debate? I am not looking that way! Anyone else?

BRO. R. POLE (London): Good morning. Congress, President, urging support for composite 20 on rail renationalisation. Comrades, I declare an interest. I like trains. I like trains that will get me from A to B quickly, reliably, safely, and are affordable. I joined British Rail on leaving school and have worked for transport trade unions for many years. I particularly like what Paul Kenny said in his General Secretary's address — see, I am not always critical — that rail should be taken back into public ownership. I do not like it if I have to travel from A to B at peak times in an emergency that means I need a second mortgage to afford a ticket, the ticket office is not staffed when I arrive so I am forced to use the machine that does not give me the cheapest option, and when I arrive at night at B the station is deserted with no one to assist, poor lighting, and an increasing likelihood of antisocial behaviour.

Congress, rail renationalisation is already our policy within GMB and is actually a Labour Party policy following a conference some years back. The fact that nothing seems to be happening by Labour to me is an absolute no brainer. It is a vote winner, unlike the disgraceful cuts on the welfare spending announced yesterday, and it has massive public support, even according to a recent poll among *Daily Telegraph* readers. It will be an issue in the run-up to the next election and the TSSA union this Saturday launches its political strategy highlighting plans to organise campaigns, particularly in and around marginal constituencies, where the number of rail commuters exceeds the ConDem majorities. This will include campaigns to mobilise the backlash against rip-off fares and the profits generated for the fat controllers. I urge you to get involved. The collapse of the rail franchise system shows that not only are privatised railways ludicrously expensive, they are broken. The railways should be a public service not for profit. Please support composite 20. (*Applause*)

BRO. J. KNIGHT (North West and Irish): President, Congress, supporting composite 20 and motions 288 and 289. The motion from Davenport says that HS2 high-speed rail is unlikely to bring benefits to the South West. Let's be clear, Congress, it is unlikely to bring benefits to the North and the Midlands. It is suggested that HS2 will revitalise the economy of the North and the Midlands yet this is a passenger railway that will not carry one single ounce of freight. It is a railway for the rich. It will be there to provide quicker travel to and from London for senior executives and politicians, like my former MP who always travelled first class because he did not like to have to mingle with the masses. Far from greening travel, it will simply encourage longer commutes. Whole swathes of farmland, woodland, wetland, and other vital habitats will be devastated. My own home borough of Cheshire East includes the town of Crewe, one of the biggest railway hubs in Europe. HS2 will not link with Crewe; it will in fact tunnel underneath the town so that the privileged passengers will not have to sully their gaze with the urban streets.

As the composite and the two propositions spell out, investment is badly needed to improve the existing network, to improve connectivity, improve facilities, reopen closed lines, and restore the railways to their proper role as a public service in the public sector. HS32 is a vanity project, pushed by Conservatives, LibDems, and Labour alike, in pursuit of political kudos. It is a diversion which will sideline huge amounts of money and resources away from all that. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Come on, Paul.

BRO. P. COLES (London): I am speaking in support of motion 293. As a recently converted cyclist I am aware that often the only safe place to cycle is on a path. This is especially true when I am cycling with my two young children. This is due to inconsiderate drivers and the lack of designated cycle lanes. Congress, there are many benefits to encouraging and supporting those who wish to cycle rather than travel by car. The benefits include financial savings, improvements to the quality of the environment, and many health benefits. I am testament to some of these health benefits. Although I clearly do not have an athletic frame, many of you who have known me for a while will know that I have lost a considerable amount of weight recently. This has been achieved mainly through cycling for leisure and for work. Unfortunately, some of that weight has come back on this week! Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. No one else? Thank you. Can I now call Paul Hayes to speak on composite 20? (*Applause*)

BRO. P. HAYES (London, Regional Secretary): The last time I was here was 26 years ago and this old left leg was doing an Elvis Presley tribute. You will notice that that old left is standing still but I tell you if you see the right leg it's going like mad! Anyway, President, Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC, asking Congress to support composite 20 with a qualification. Renationalisation of the rail industry is a longstanding GMB policy and the motion rightly calls on the Labour Party to include a commitment to this in its next manifesto. The composite refers to the consequences of rail franchises failing to deliver on a contract before it has run its full term. This occurred when National Express reneged on its East Coast Mainline contract in 2009 and the Department of Transport took it over. However, the CEC qualification is that, although it is well intentioned to call for any future rail contract to be transferred back to government ownership, the motion is slightly at odds with GMB policy, which is for the railways to be renationalised as soon as possible. (*Applause*) This could be achieved by scrapping the franchise system so that all contracts are ended before schedule and come back under the Department of Transport, which would effectively renationalise the railways without spending billions of taxpayers' money.

Congress, I get some personal satisfaction by responding to this composite motion when looking back to the smug and disgraceful stance of John Major and the Tories when they privatised our industry deliberately, deliberately breaking it down in such a way making it as difficult as possible to return to public ownership. What the Labour Party needs to do when they take office is enact the necessary legislation to bring the industry back into public ownership with the same disdain for others' use as the Tories showed under Major when robbing us of this vital service. (*Applause*) Ed, let us tell you, we can assure you that if you have the courage to do it, the GMB and the general public will support you. I will tell you this also, this will help to regain the five million lost Labour voters that run away from the Party in the last general election. (*Applause*)

Congress, the CEC asks the movers to accept the qualification and for Congress to support the composite. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Paul, "*And now the end is here, and so we face the final curtain.*"

BRO. P. HAYES: All right, all right, that comes later when the hat will go round! (*Laughter*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Well done. Right, can I now move to the vote? Can I ask Northern Region will they accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. With that, colleagues, can I move composite 20, motions 288, 289, 292, and 293? All those in favour please show? Anyone against? They are carried.

*Composite 20 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 288 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 289 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 292 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 293 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Congress. Congress, we are coming near to the end of our Congress this year but before we go into the final session, can I personally thank all of you for the wonderful attendance that we have had this week. You should be very proud and the regional secretaries should be proud of their delegates. Can I also say to the new delegates, and some of the old delegates, but to the young delegates you are a credit to yourself and your union; and to our visitors up there, thank you for spending your time up there looking down. So, good luck, and thank you. I am going to wish you a safe journey whether you are going home by Shanks's Pony, a penny farthing, a bike, or whatever. Thanks on behalf of Malcolm and myself.

Right, please can I ask regional secretaries to ensure that card voting booklets are left in the regional red trays at the end of Congress so we can reuse them next year?

Could all the regions please collect their regional banners where possible? Any hanging ones will be returned in due course.

All those in favour of those please show? The resolutions, I mean. Anyone against? No. Thank you.

## **CLOSING PROCEDURE OF CONGRESS**

THE PRESIDENT: We are now commencing the closing procedure of Congress, which begins with the omnibus vote of thanks, this year to be given by George Fraser, from the London Region. George, please come to the platform. (*Applause*)

## **OMNIBUS VOTE OF THANKS**

BRO. G. FRASER (CEC, Public Services): President, Congress, George Fraser, extremely proud to be given the honour of moving the omnibus vote of thanks on behalf of the CEC. Colleagues, this has been a wonderful week. Plymouth is a wonderful city. The weather has been kind, just like Paul Kenny promised! The introduction of the regional branch banners has been a great innovation and, more importantly, Congress 2013 has been especially good.

But, colleagues, Congress does not just happen. There is an awful lot of work done before, during, and after Congress by a lot of people, and I am going to seek to pay tribute to them all. Hopefully, I will not forget anyone but if I do, please forgive me.

Firstly, we must thank the management and staff of this wonderful venue. They have been very helpful and friendly throughout the week. (*Applause*)

Then there are the first smiling faces you see on entering the venue every morning, the stewards, all members of Wales and South West Region, and very ably organised by Roger Hunt, and he did a great job. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Sponsorship is very important and we were very lucky to have Congress materials, refreshments, and the internet café sponsored by Pellacraft, Thompsons, Liverpool Victoria, and Digby Brown. There were two other sponsors, British Gas and Future Plus, who sponsored last night's President's Night, and I blame them for my headache. *(Applause)* Once again, Robert Badlan has done an excellent job organising the exhibition, year on year the numbers of exhibitors has increased and it is all down to him, so well done, Robert. *(Applause)*

This wonderful stage and backdrop was erected by the boys from T5, who do an excellent job every year. *(Applause)*

Then there are the people who have to be here to allow Congress to progress. The two people who work very hard are the verbatim shorthand writers, Michael Thear and Phyllis Hilder. *(Applause)* Every word is faithfully recorded. How they do it with the variety of accents, especially mine from this rostrum, is well beyond me so thank you. Well done.

Then there are people who have to be here but did not have to do anything, the GMB auditors, Ian Burkett and Steve Dery, and the nine regional tellers. No card votes this year. I really feel sorry for the tellers. They have to be in the hall for every session of Congress, sitting there with their legs crossed, waiting for a card vote that never comes. Personally, I thought London Region got stitched up on reference back on motions 36 and 159, but the President and I have had that conversation earlier.

Also, colleagues, Congress cannot operate without a Standing Orders Committee and we have an excellent one ably chaired by Helen Johnson and advised by Barry Smith. They provide good advice to Congress and enable progression of business.

Then there are the people who actually make Congress work, Steve Short and the Head Office team do a really good job. *(Applause)*

Then the Regional Secretaries' PAs and regional office staff, who support the delegations superbly. *(Applause)*

We have the best press team in the trade union Movement, Rose Conroy, Laura Jagdev, Charlotte Gregory, and the one and only Steve Pryle. *(Applause)* Colleagues, it is not by accident all these stories about Congress appear in the press. They make sure they get there.

Colleagues, congratulations to Ida Clemo for a successful first year on the platform. Both Ida and her team, her policy team, were flat out to ensure the programme of business was carried out to the full extent. Thank you, Ida. Well done. *(Applause)*

Now, colleagues, I am going to move to our National President, Mary Turner. Despite health problems for herself and her husband, Denny, she continues to be the best President we have ever had, kind as always but authoritative where necessary, and committed to Congress, GMB, and the trades union movement. Colleagues, I would like to take this opportunity to commend Mary for her courage, honesty, and diplomacy when she noticed she had made an error on voting procedures and faced up to it, apologised, and allowed redress. *(Applause)* Mary, that was brave and honourable.

Moving swiftly to Malcolm Sage, our National Vice President, once again Malcolm has supported Mary throughout Congress and the year. He has taken more responsibility in the chair and has performed admirably. Congress, the best right-hand man in the business! *(Applause)*

I would also like to thank the Congress visitors, along with Mary, the people who sit up there and give up their time to be part of this. They sit in the balcony never missing a session and their commitment is well and truly recognised. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*



I want to turn now to our guest speakers who provided interesting and different topics. There was Emma Lewell-Buck, newly elected MP for South Shields, colleagues, what a breath of fresh air. The first woman MP in South Shields, a working class woman GMB member, a result of our policy of getting real people into the House of Commons, a tribute to our new political team, and a tribute to our activists in the Northern Region. Well done to all of you. (*Applause*)

We have a video message from Ed Miliband. It is good he wants to communicate with us but it is time for a more positive message. Cameron might be an “Eton Mess” and Ed is right to point that out but we want to hear about positive proposals from him. Let’s get it going.

Andy Burnham, Andy appears sincerely genuine. He appears committed to making sure NHS services are provided by the NHS. His question and answer session with NHS staff and delegates was well received by Congress. He could be a winner if he was more positive. So, Andy, bring it on.

Hopefully, Ed and Andy recognise the influence we in the trades union movement have and hopefully they realise we need more MPs like Emma. (*Applause*)

It is not often we get a GMB Regional Committee member addressing Congress on behalf of a city council but this year we did. Peter Smith, Deputy of the Plymouth Council and a member of Wales and South West Region’s Regional Committee, is another example of GMB promoting itself politically. (*Applause*)

Then there is Stephen Hughes, a GMB stalwart in the European Parliament. He will be missed there. He has had great success in improving the lot of our members and he really deserves the award of the Gold Badge this week. Thank you, Stephen. (*Applause*)

Monica Smith, I think she has been addressing Congress on behalf of RMA since I was a boy, but every year she gets better and better, and this year was very impressive, so thank you, Monica, that is great, keep it going. (*Applause*)

Author of a newspaper column, Mr. Owen Jones, colleagues, was he not good. He gave a blueprint for Utopia. His address made so much sense and coincided with our own ideals; and his question and answer session was so impressive. I think it is a pity he does not make the leap right up to MP and then we might get things done. (*Applause*)

Congress, the evil of blacklisting was brought home to us by Dave Smith. His story was really heartbreaking. The details held about him by the Consulting Association would do credit to the KGB. He was denied work for years and years because he complained about health and safety. But I was struck by his resilience. He will not give in and it is for Dave and the other 3,212 on the blacklist that we, the GMB, must win this campaign. (*Applause*)

Congress, I believe the most inspirational speech of the week was by Margaret Aspinall, of the Hillsborough Family Support Group. She spoke with feeling, she spoke without notes, and I am certain there was not a dry eye in the house. Let down by government after government, having to put up with the vile ranting of Bernard Ingham, his shameful lies of the failure of Liverpoolians, and the indignity of lost loved ones having to undergo breath tests, and CRB checks. She carried on until the battle was finally won. Yes, colleagues, the battle was won but reparation has not been made. What struck me most was her determination, a determination only surpassed by that of the scum of South Yorkshire Police Force so determined to lie, falsify, and deny to avoid any complicity in the murder of those 96 people.

I want to refer you to Jan Jepson of Northern Region, and Julie Hunt from London, who so eloquently moved and seconded composite 17. That motion was about Orgreave during the miners’ strike in 1984

and 1985. It is asking for a public inquiry into the atrocity of that same scumbag police force on the picket line at Orgreave.

Colleagues, if there is any justice in this world, the murderers of the 96 and the police offenders on the picket line will be sent to Wakefield Prison, the same prison where so many of our innocent miner brothers were incarcerated. (*Applause*)

Colleagues, I have talked about the good, and in South Yorkshire Police Force I have talked about the bad. Let me now turn to the General Secretary! (*Laughter*) His address to us on Tuesday was moving, relevant, attacking, inspirational, and drew a well deserved standing ovation. The Finance Report on Wednesday showed a secure GMB is in his hands. I am reminded of a TUC Congress I attended in 2008 when Dave Prentis of Unison was the president and in his presidential address Dave thought he would crack a joke. He said, "Dave Prentis and Paul Kenny, the Little and Large of the British Trades Union Movement." That was a cheap joke to try and get laughs in a very lackadaisical speech. What he did not know was how prophetic that speech was going to become. Five years later Dave Prentis is the Little of the British Trades Union Movement and Paul Kenny is certainly the Large, and that is not because he is half an inch bigger round the waist. (*Applause*) It is because of the stature that he has in the trades union movement, it is because of the regard and esteem he is held in by his peers, his colleagues, and his friends, and the utter fear he instils in his enemies. We should not forget, colleagues, that he sacrificed a well-deserved retirement to steer the GMB through a potentially difficult time. That is a debt GMB will never be able to repay so, I thank you, Paul. (*Applause*)

I also want to commend to Congress Tommy Brennan, the retiring Northern Region President. Tommy has been a great servant of the union and I am sure you will want me to wish him a long and happy retirement. (*Applause*)

I am coming to the end now, colleagues, so if I have missed anyone I am really truly sorry. There is only one more thank you to do, colleagues, well, actually it is 400 thank you's, one for each and every one of you delegates, the real stars of this show. Your contributions have been better than at any Congress I can remember and I am amazed at the number of first-time delegates. Each and every one of you performed magnificently but I want to mention just a few.

I have already mentioned Jan and Julie but some first-time delegates were exceptional, especially some of those not moving or seconding but speaking in support. Caroline Campbell of GMB Scotland spoke in support of the Mental Health motion. It was not only her first time as a delegate, it was her first ever day at Congress. It is some achievement to get a standing ovation on your first day at Congress so, well done, Caroline. (*Applause*)

Other first-time speakers also got great response while speaking in support, Jeff Sutton of Wales and South West, on Disability, Graham Avery of Northern on Carillion, and Henley Smith of London on Remploy, you all did excellently well. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

I join with the President and welcome back Pamela Ross of Yorkshire and North Derbyshire. She has been away far too long. (*Applause*) My wife, Brenda, and I had a little side bet as to whether Pamela Ross or Ian Kemp spoke most in Congress, so I am going to ask Tim to decide that tonight and let me know; yes? Hopefully, I will win!

Then there is the return of Kevin Flanagan to Congress, who reminded us all what a wonderful public speaker he is; Kevin Flanagan from North West and Irish Region. (*Applause*)

Then we had the badgers! Leila Williams and Dean the Badger Gilligan, or Dean Save our Hospitals Gilligan. How many passions do you have, Dave? How many votes do you get? That was great. That was a good show.

Then, of course, there is Billy Hughes of Northern Region. He always gets a laugh, doesn't he? I have got down here, Billy Hughes FTD. He is not a first-time delegate so I think that means Fergie's Time Delegate.

Seriously, you are all great. Thank you. But it is not only your performance that made this Congress great, you are all elected or appointed under rule to be members of the parliament of the GMB and you have carried out that duty with honour. You were so good you turned over the CEC three times. Colleagues, that is democracy in action. (*Applause*) That is democracy alive and well, and living in the GMB, and on behalf of the National President, the National Vice President, General Secretary, and all of the CEC, I salute you. (*Applause*) President, it is with the greatest of pride I move the Omnibus Vote of Thanks. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, George. Thank you. (*Standing ovation*) Very well done, George. I now call on the General Secretary to make his closing speech. My voice is lasting, or just about giving up!

### GENERAL SECRETARY'S CLOSING SPEECH

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Ah, see, George, I get the last word! Ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha! Listen, thank you, George. I think that was a fantastic and really encompassing and moving vote of thanks, and well presented. I just have to say, George, one thing, the CEC only got turned over three times; God, it felt like a lot more! (*Laughter*)

The review of the week, George picked up a lot of the points I was going to do and I could not do them better than he did. I think it is thanks for the week, and a bit of sadness, actually, believe it or not, that the week is coming to an end. Maybe for some people in other unions they cannot wait to get the final hammer down and get away and do whatever they do in their own lives. I think for all of us coming together brings us this spirit of camaraderie, it brings us friendship, we laugh a bit, we are serious, and I actually will be quite sad when the lights close down, but I will go back from here renewed with a passion and an energy that comes from just being part of the GMB. So it has been quite a week, as George said.

First-time delegates, we have a fair number of them, great growing change showing people coming and joining and getting active in the union; 65 of the new delegates actually spoke, first-time delegates actually first-time speakers, 65. (*Applause*) They were all brilliant. There were people who came here and spoke from the heart. There were people who came very nervous. There was a particular colleague from Northern, Billy Hughes. (*Laughter*) What we all saw was the fantastic courage of a delegate who came here probably never ever expecting to would stand up in front of 600 or 700 people and make a speech. I actually give you the star of the week for having that courage to come here, make that speech, and finish it. Well done. (*Applause*) And our seasoned delegates did not let us down either, seasoned, that means Yorkshire. (*Laughter/Cheers*) You want to know, George, was it Pam or Ian, God, I couldn't tell you, nor could anybody else. At times it felt like the *Ian and Pam Show*. Brilliant! Great contributions.

Where would we be, colleagues, without the long serving dedicated activists who have kept the union alive and well and, frankly, ready and fit for the next generation to inherit. No Congress, as George said, works without you, the delegates, but neither does it work without those who put it together to make it work every day. Can I ask you to thank the National Office team, who are lined up at the back there, and I am going to read out their names. (*Applause*)

As I read out your name, if you would wave: Pat Gannon, her first Congress: Pat. (*Applause*) The queen of the mic, Laura Jagdev. Where are you, Laura? (*Applause*) Paula Keane, also her first Congress. (*Applause*) Marion Healy. (*Applause*)

Steve Short; I endorse entirely what George said. *(Applause)* He is a much respected executive officer and this is someone who just works incredibly hard on our behalf and never ever at any time, I get in early in the morning at the office, at 7.00, and he is there. This is someone who works passionately and tirelessly for the members. Thank you for all you do all the year round and thank you for Congress, Steve. You are a real, real patriot. *(Applause)*

And Emmanuel De Lange, it is his first Congress. Emmanuel, come on. *(Applause)* There he is. Emma Golding. *(Applause)*

And a word for Rochelle Channer, she has been up there each week when those names appear, whether it is Dean the Badger or Dean Save our Hospitals, she has been the one tirelessly up there working. Thank you, Rochelle. It is also her first Congress. *(Applause)*

Kevin Panton, I think this is your 35<sup>th</sup> Congress. He still has not spoken. Thank you, Kevin, mate. *(Applause)*

Fantastic IT support from Bob Robinson, John McCargo, and Kevin Sweeney, again they have worked tirelessly. Thank you, boys. *(Applause)*

The political team, Cath Speight, Lisa Johnson, Gary Doolan, Steve Kemp, Heidi Benzing, and Hilary Perrin, we are on the road. *(Applause)*

Mick Balfour and Phil McEvoy have kept records of all the decisions and have never been able to leave the hall. They have extra long curtains and two buckets. Well done! *(Applause)*

And our press and media team, I am going to repeat what George said, I think they are fantastic, Charlotte Gregory, Steve Pryle, Rose Conroy; what a campaign organisation, absolutely brilliant. *(Applause)*

Robbie Badlan, as George said, works tirelessly putting together the sponsorship and making sure we can get here. This year he managed to cajole, induce, con, I do not know what the word is, over £100,000 for the sponsorship of Congress and for the stalls outside, and that made the major contribution. Well done, Robert. *(Applause)*

The Standing Orders Committee, I know sometimes people think they give us a hard time but they certainly do a fantastic job and we are always grateful for their oversight to maintain the democracy, the lay democracy of this organisation. Thank you, Helen, thank you, Barry, and thank you to the Standing Orders Committee. *(Applause)*

This week, really, the themes are what we always think they should be, it is about social justice, it is about fairness, and people have mentioned what Ed Miliband said this morning, or is about to say, and there are some interesting things, frankly. There is a load of old tosh about a two-tier unemployment benefit. No thanks. I am not sure how you go down and buy something in the shop and say, "Well, actually, I'm unemployed but I'm only on the second tier of unemployment benefit, can I have a cheaper loaf of bread." What a load of old tosh. The fact the *Daily Mail* printed it, sorry, Jan, I've got a bit of an old shock for you, cock, they don't always tell the truth.

But, actually, Ed Miliband said a lot more and the bits about unemployment benefit, well, no thanks. We'll have our arguments about that. Actually, he said a lot more and you should read that bit because that is the bit I am interested in. Actually, he said that we need to build social housing, we need to cap rents, we need to stop money going into the back pockets of private landlords and use that money to build social and affordable council houses for people to live in dignity. That's what he said and that's what we are going to hold him to. *(Applause)*

He actually said there should be a living wage for all. That's what he said. (*Applause*) And the bit I liked best, you've got to read it carefully but it is in there and I'm going to make sure it's in there, he said, the employees should be paid a living wage and if the employers cry that they can't afford it, well let's means-test them, not the employees. (*Applause/Cheers*) It is simple. It is really simple, isn't it? You set a living wage and firms that can pay it can pay, and bloody well should pay. If they say they can't pay, fine, come and we'll have a look at your books: corporate means-testing. (*Applause*) I wonder how many of them will be rushing round to colleagues in the PCS and order for the PCS to have a good look at their books. I don't think there will be many.

He also said zero-hours contracts should be outlawed. (*Applause*) He said the exploitation of agency workers should cease and they should have effective rights alongside permanent workers. He also said that we should end and finish the exploitation of allowing companies to recruit workers overseas and import them into the UK and set them worker against worker on lesser rates than the indigenous population, underrating the terms and conditions that they get. (*Applause*) I don't know about you, Jan, but that sounds pretty radical to me from a Labour leader.

Now, the proof of the pudding is always from the sound bite to the statute book. That is the trick. Actually, to get them to start talking about it is what we need to do. Now, I am not one to say much but, Christ, it don't half sound like what we've been talking about this week. It does a fair bit, you know. So, we've got it on the agenda but we are going to have to battle hard to make sure it translates into real life. I will tell you this, if you do that lot, plus the tax dodging stuff we have talked about, you won't have to worry about actually maintaining Universal Benefits because you will have a stack of money to do it. You won't have to worry about the health service because you will have a stack of money to do it, those people who should be paying will be paying. For me, that is the battle ahead. I think there was a lot in what we did this week, some of it I hope has a good impact, but there is one thing for certain, we are not going to surrender any of those key issues that we talked about this week. They are all linked absolutely directly to the justice and the fairness that people have a right to expect in a country as rich as ours.

I want to thank Leila and Dean, as George did. What a pair of badgers! What a pair of badgers! (*Applause*) Appearing at the Wimbledon Theatre next week, I hope, as *Badgers in the Wood*, or something like that. Brilliant!

I also want to thank Barbara Casher, who works with me and who works so tirelessly for me, absolutely brilliant. Barbara, thank you very much indeed. It is an honour to be working with you. (*Applause*)

Kathleen Walker Shaw, star of the GMB in Europe. (*Applause*) She is an absolutely stunning asset. I have said it year after year from this rostrum, absolute stunning asset, committed and passionate about the rights of working people. Thank you, Kathleen, you are an absolutely brilliant asset to the union. (*Applause*)

Malcolm, well, Malcolm I just come to over the years, Malcolm is just Malcolm. He is absolutely a rock. He is just a wonderful person, he is warm, but he is also solid. This is the person you want in the road, nobody is going to get through to the members of the GMB to attack them if he is in the middle of the road. Malcolm, you are a wonderful person. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Ida (Ada, or I-d-a) I think probably a couple of years ago Ida would have thought, "I can't do that." I think she is very, very good but, no, she couldn't do that. It is a sort of testament, the same with all of us in this room, we have been told many of us almost from when we were *that* big what we couldn't do, what we couldn't have. Now, maybe we've got the funny accents, maybe we came from different backgrounds, maybe we didn't go to the right schools, who knows, but we have always, it seems to me, been told what we couldn't do. So I have made my life a process of encouraging people to do

what I know they can do. I think during this year, and Ida has been taking over in the General Secretary's Department with Steve, we have had the best preparation for a congress certainly during my time, I think we have had the calmest, and I think that she has displayed the most incredible levels of professionalism and commitment to the union, and from me and Steve, and everybody, all of your colleagues, thank you, Ida, you were absolutely wonderful. (*Applause*)

I just want to pay tribute to one particular exhibitor, a special lady, I have long conversations with her; it's my wife Pat, who is at the back. (*Applause*) I make no secret of saying how much I love her, how much she has supported me, and what a fantastic person she is. Some of you know she has not been well for a couple of months and I am proud to say that not only is she well on the mend, but I think being here with you this week has actually been the best tonic and the best medicine that anybody could give anybody. Pat, my darling, it's great to see you. (*Applause*)

Now, the other woman in my life, our Mary. I do not know, Mary just seems to get stronger and George picked on Mary's own personal difficulties but it was never in doubt that she would be with us. I do not know what word you would use to describe Mary except Mary, her kinship with people, the way that she is able to relate to people. She has been a passionate person working and battling all of the years I have known her. There are stories that I could be here till Tuesday telling you about.

There was how she led a rent strike and she did not tell her husband, Denny, she was leading the rent strike until he picked up the local paper one week and there is Mary on the front page saying she is leading the rent strike. "M-Mary," he said, he did have a little bit of a stutter at the time, "what's this all about?" "Don't worry about it," she said, "don't worry about it." The next day there is a knock on the door from the rent office, and the bloke said, "Did you know you haven't paid your rent for three months?" Denny said to Mary, "What's it about?" "Don't worry about it. Don't worry about it." And Denny told me that after that he didn't worry about anything to do with Mary. I know Denny is incredibly proud of you, Mary, as you are of Denny and the rest of the family.

Can I just say honestly with no false modesty, I just think every one of us not only is proud of you but we consider you to be our friend, our Mary; what a great President. (*Standing ovation*) Great!

You know, you come to Congress, it's wonderful because actually people talk to you, they do, they come up to you and normally it might be about half past 11, you have maybe had a couple of pints and you are just thinking of mellowing and someone says, "I don't want to bother you but..." You just know. You are writing it down for a tattoo, "*I'm not gonna bother you but.*" Lots of people do talk to you. Is Brian Newman anywhere in the house, from G19 branch? Maybe he has gone. I know he is from G19 branch, Wales and South West Region. Where is he? There you go. Hello, mate. Can I have that tenner back? (*Laughter*)

Actually, Brian came and said to me, "Look, Paul, can I just say I have been in the union 30-odd years, great, I've got my certificate, and I am really pleased, but actually I'd like a badge. I would just like a badge to signify that I am a long-serving loyal GMB member." I thought, "That's a really good idea. Why didn't I think of it before." So I have thought of it now. (*Laughter*) I think it is a great idea and I think we should do it. I think we should have a badge that people could wear because people are proud about being in the union. If you have been in the union that long, you should have one. Mate, we're going to do it. Okay? (*Applause*)

Les Woodward, I know you are here; there you are, mate. Les Woodward said to me, "Paul, can I have a word with you?" (*Extremely loud voice/appalling Welsh accent*) (*Laughter/Applause*) It was about Remploy. Remploy has never been off our agenda, mate, and it never will. I have said on many occasions I cannot think of a better and more proud group within the union. They are wonderful members. They have been treated, frankly, abysmally, worse than abysmally. I think the word is a swear word and I am not going to use it. It is heartbreaking. The only thing that has been keeping me

going is the determination of the Remploy members, those who left and those who still exist, to carry on fighting for justice, not just for Remploy workers but for people in society who have ability but who are labelled “disabled”. This union is never going to turn its back on Remploy, ever. I hope that we can get people to understand that in a perfect world everybody would have an opportunity and that prejudice would not exist, but until we live in that perfect world we need to create employment areas where people can be safe, they can grow, and they can actually develop those skills, and that is what Remploy did. *(Applause)* It was not some basket-weaving club, it helped people’s lives. I know and you know the tragedy of those who have been thrown on the scrapheap and as we predicted the numbers who have gone from secure employment, dignity in employment, paying taxes, paying National Insurance, something to do with groups of people that they worked with, into being shut, effectively, at home, isolated and without the dignity of employment. Those numbers are massive. We do not know yet, we keep asking for the figures of who has actually been employed. We knew the weasel words of Maria Miller and the others. We have heard them all before. I give you that assurance.

Les said to me, “Paul,” he said, “that old banner there,” — and I cannot do the accent, sorry, mate — “it’s about time we had a new banner.” I will let you into a secret; that is actually a copy. The original banner disappeared around about the time we changed the organisation. No one knows where it is. Maybe it will turn up one day. We had that one made quickly as a copy. It is a lovely banner. The original was fantastic. Les said, “Maybe we should have a new banner.” Les, I think you are right and I can’t think of a better place or a better group of people to make that banner for us than the York Disabled Workers Cooperative. *(Applause)* While you’re at it, if I can get three benches in my garden, all of you can get at least one. They have a brochure; it is fantastic. It is actually branching out, flags, banners, equipment. People are not looking for a handout, what they are looking for is for you to spend the money with trade unionists actually making things for trade unionists rather than go and spend it in a multinational shop that exploits workers elsewhere. Please use it.

In terms of the week, Owen Jones and Margaret Aspinall were absolutely inspiring. They were welcome, and it was great, but the real stars, as George said, were you — passion, humour, determination, anger at injustice, proud to be union, proud to fight unfairness, proud to be independent GMB. We know the battles ahead. We don’t fear battles and we don’t fear bullies, whether they are at work or from government. We will work with other unions, with community groups, and likeminded individuals, to bring about our social justice. Our members, our communities, and our country, need and deserve it. Thank you for what you do and what you stand for. You are union and you are proud. That is the most fantastic thing you could ever be. Thank you, delegates. *(Standing ovation)*

THE PRESIDENT: Paul Kenny, General Secretary, you have praised everybody here today, and this week. You were a bloody nuisance up there keep touching my knees, but I forgive you. *(Laughter)* When are you coming back? It’s all right, Pat. We’re okay. Paul, we mean this most sincerely, you are the best General Secretary this union has ever had in my lifetime. *(Applause)* And you are not only the best General Secretary of this union but you are the best General Secretary the trades union movement has had right the way through. Well done. *(Applause)* Thank you, Paul, very much.

## **CLOSING CEREMONY**

THE PRESIDENT: We now come to the closing ceremony which is in two parts. We will now have a short slide show with some highlights of Congress. The music this year is *Proud* by M People. I hope none of you are asleep along there because your cards will be marked!

*Short video shown to Congress.*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, can we now all stand and sing *The Red Flag*, please.

*Congress sang The Red Flag.*

THE PRESIDENT: Safe journey, everyone, and your families. See you next year in Nottingham.

*GMB Congress 2013 concluded.*