

**GMB**

**ANNUAL CONGRESS 2014**

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

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Held in:

**Capital FM Arena,  
Nottingham**

on:

**Sunday, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2014  
Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2014  
(Tuesday, 10<sup>th</sup> June 2014: Sectional Conferences)  
Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup> June 2014  
and  
Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2014**

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**PROCEEDINGS  
DAY THREE  
(Wednesday, 11th June 2014)**

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**THIRD DAY'S PROCEEDINGS  
WEDNESDAY 11<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2014  
MORNING SESSION**

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

THE PRESIDENT: Will Congress come to order, please? Thank you. Good morning, all. I hope you all had a good evening. I would like to say thanks to Birmingham Region for a lovely evening and to GMB Scotland. I hope you are all bright eyed and bushy tailed this morning. Okay.

Colleagues, before I start, yesterday there was a little bag of money found so if someone lost it, it is up here; if not, it is going into Mary's. Yes, leave it for the Finance Report! Also, a lovely silver bracelet, I will see if I can get anything in the pawn shop on it, if somebody does not come up. It is up here on the top.

At Birmingham's do last night all prizes were claimed except for 316-320. No name at the back. We have a little crystal ball when we find out who owns it. That is up here. It is a bottle of whisky. Winner of Monday's competition for the iPad mini is Philip Hughes, Wales & South West Region. *(Applause)* Collect from the region's stand.

Now we move on to the next point. The winners of the Wortley Hall draw for a bottle of champagne are Nana Jackson, I know where she is, and Sharon Harrison. Please collect from the stall.

Now I will welcome you all back from your Section Conferences. I hope you all put the world to rights yesterday. We all had some very interesting speakers. Can I now move to ask Helen Johnson to give us Standing Orders Report No. 5. Helen, morning.

**STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO.5**

SIS. H. JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): Bucket collections: the SOC has been informed that the amount collected yesterday by Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region for the bucket collection for Joseph Lillywhite's Journey was £501. *(Applause)* President, Congress, I move SOC Report No.5.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Helen. Does Congress accept? *(Agreed)* Thank you very much. And Barry.

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

THE PRESIDENT: I have just one announcement before we get into the business. If anyone has any photos, clean ones, they would like to be included in the end-of-Congress slide show, the funnier the better, then please see Charlotte in the Press Office. Thank you.

**SOCIAL POLICY: THE ENERGY MARKET**

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now call the movers of Composite 22, London Region to move and Midland Region to second. We have no CEC speaker. Then I will call Composite 12 to be moved by London, and 130, 131, 132, and 133. While they are coming up, the movers and seconders, Paul Kenny has just agreed with the committee that we will double the collection for the announcement just made. *(Applause)* Okay, the mover of Composite 22, London Region?

## **FRACKING**

### **Composite Motion 22**

#### **C22. Covering Motions:**

- 232. FRACKING FOR GAS SUPPLIES (*London Region*)
- 233. UK FRACKING RIGHTS (*Midland & East Coast Region*)

## **FRACKING**

Congress recognises the Coalition Government will eventually give the go ahead for fracking for gas supplies throughout Great Britain. One area in the Lake District is thought to contain 172 trillion cubic metres of gas. This is only one of a hundred areas ear-marked for fracking.

The financial markets are now taking considerable interest in “gas exploration” (fracking). Barclays private Sovereign Wealth Fund has started to invest in iGas and Quadrilla, which companies hold the exclusive licences for exploration for this gas. These funds have considerable Middle Eastern and Chinese (i.e. non-domestic) backing. Gas from this valuable resource will be sold at international prices which will have a dramatic effect on all British domestic and business energy consumers, as it had for North Sea Gas and North Sea Oil resources.

Congress therefore believes that this drive for fracking will override all environmental concerns in the pursuit of releasing this resource to private enterprise and the pursuit of profit.

This Conference calls on Congress to demand the rights for extracting shale gas, known as fracking, to be 100% owned by the British people to ensure that gas prices can be set at affordable levels for all the people who are trapped in poverty, the poor, and the most vulnerable in society.

Everybody has the right to be warm in their own home, especially when the gas is being taken from under their feet. This is the only way reasonable prices can be achieved, as selling the rights to foreign companies will only line the pockets of their shareholders and will continue to make energy unaffordable to a fast growing number of people.

#### **London Region to Move** **Midland & East Coast Region to Second**

*(Carried)*

BRO. T. NOKES (London): President, Congress, fracking for gas supplies – I will have to be careful how I say that one – or to give it its industrial terminology, induced hydraulic fracturing, is a mining technique where a liquid, usually water, is mixed with sand and chemicals and injected at high pressure into a bore hole; this results in fractures in the deep rock formation underground allowing for the extraction of the shale gas. Unfortunately, with these underground fractures comes the risk of earth tremors, even more so as there is no way of knowing if the cracks spread afterwards. As it is, there were two small earthquakes recorded near Blackpool in 2011 after a bout of fracking. There is genuine concern with the Government’s decision to open a consultation on regulatory changes that would make it possible for energy companies to drill for gas under people’s homes without the occupier’s consent. It was also noted that this consultation was opened on a day when Parliament and the UK media were occupied with recent election results. It is estimated that public opposition to these plans is now at 74% and, therefore, it is clear the Government does not have a popular mandate to institute this change. However, this comes at a time when the Commons Energy Select Committee is urging ministers to support plans to resume controversial shale gas drilling across the UK. This

Committee has stated that environmental issues associated with the drilling, such as climate change, water, soil, and air contamination, loss of protected habitat, and lower house prices, could all be overcome by tighter regulations and good industrial practice. Yes, it is that easy, apparently.

It is recognised, therefore, that with all of this government activity supporting fracking it is only a matter of time before the Coalition gives the go-ahead for fracking to resume across the UK. The gas from this valuable resource would obviously be sold at international prices with the financial markets now taking a considerable interest in gas exploration. With vast funding now available from the Middle East and China, this could have a dramatic effect on all British domestic and industrial users. With all of the controversy over the international and local issues related to fracking, there are calls for the process to be suspended until the research into the allegations about the technology are complete.

Congress acknowledges that this drive for fracking will override all environmental concerns in the pursuit of profit. Congress also believes that the rights for extracting shale gas should be owned 100% by British people to ensure the gas prices can be set at affordable levels to assist people who are trapped in poverty, the poor and the most vulnerable. It is appreciated that with all the international backing that is happening to be 100% British owned will be a big ask. I am sure with the GMB's negotiating skills and expertise, and of course the new Labour government next year, anything is possible. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Terry. Will the seconder please come to the front? Terry, I had to make sure I was reading it right, too.

BRO. A. BURGIN (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, this is how the Government propose to solve the UK's energy problems when they should have set up a public-owned company so they could set prices at affordable levels and only sold to British citizens who are the true owners of any resources taken from our country. Please support. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, colleagues. Does anyone wish to come in on the fracking debate? Yes? Come on, Pam.

SIS. P. ROSS (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Regardless of the seismic and environmental issues, and there are many and I actually am a geoscientist, let us be clear about this, fracking in the US has been a major factor in the destruction of what was left of the UK coal industry because the US have now dumped their coal cheaply here and we cannot cope. Also, the use of the gas that they get through fracking, there is no guarantee it will be used cleanly, it is still a fossil fuel and it means that we will not be able to meet our emissions targets. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Pam.

BRO. D. SUTCLIFFE (North West & Irish): President, Congress, I would ask you to take a stand similar to what the MPs did and duck the laws in London there, "not in my back garden". *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Anyone else? Can I call Composite 22 to the vote? All those in favour, please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

*Composite Motion 22 was CARRIED.*

## **INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: PUBLIC OWNERSHIP & CONTROL**

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now move on and ask the mover of Composite 12, Public Ownership of Utilities, London Region to move and second.

### **PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF UTILITIES COMPOSITE MOTION 12**

#### **C12. Covering Motions:**

- 127. UTILITIES (*London Region*)
- 128. PUBLIC OWNERSHIP (*London Region*)

#### **PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF UTILITIES**

This Conference recognises that there is a place in society for public ownership. The corporate greed of the energy and rail companies to control its drive for higher profits damages the standard of living of the British public.

Our members have had enough of struggling to pay increasingly high prices for these necessary services while the wealthy profit from our need. "Competition" doesn't work, public ownership does.

Therefore Congress calls for the next Labour Government to bring into place a plan of nationalisation, and resolves that GMB will pursue every avenue to persuade Government to nationalise the utilities (gas, electricity and water) and also rail and buses.

GMB will campaign on all fronts in pursuit of this aim, now, during and after any forthcoming election.

#### **London Region to Move London Region to Second**

(*Carried*)

SIS. A. COUSIN (London): President, comrades, the GMB has been committed to nationalising rail and utilities for a long time but with Ed Miliband recently stating that Labour are looking at all the options on the railways, and his acknowledgement that passengers are paying high rail fares, it is time to step up our campaign. I do not know if you have seen it yet – and you will not see it all if I throw it on the floor – here is today's *Mirror* headline, for those of you who cannot see that, it says: "Dear Energy Fat Cats, Why on earth won't you reduce our gas and electricity bills? Yours in desperation, the Energy Watch Dog."

I will tell *Mirror* readers the answer, nationalising utilities and transport should be firmly on the agenda for the next general election. (*Applause*) It is time the wealthy stopped making more money from those of us struggling to make a living, pay our bills, and keep a roof over our heads. It is not living, it is merely existing. National minimum wage is £6.31, and Ed again had something to say about that. He says a Labour government would set a statutory minimum wage target linked to average earnings but I would rather have a living wage not the very least amount an employer can get away with paying me.

There you are on £6.31, which means if I woke up one morning and decided that it was a nice day, I would quite like to visit, I do not know, say, Nottingham, I would have to work for 14 hours just to

afford the return fare of £90.50. I dare say I could get a cheaper advance fare because I can plan the trip in advance, I have access to the internet, and a card to pay with, but many on national minimum wages do not, so why should those struggling to make ends meet be denied access to affordable rail travel? What if I was to decide against coming to Nottingham but decide instead to do a little shopping in town? That is easier said than done when you live in the country. Rural bus services do not generate the profit the operating companies want so many routes operate a reduced service which may only run once or twice a day, if you are lucky, or once a week if you are not, and let's not forget they even begrudge the free bus passes for pensioners.

Working class people are squeezed enough by the rich, by huge corporations and by their shareholders, paying us minimum wages but charging us maximum prices for our gas, electric, water, and transport. Just to pay for my monthly gas and electric it costs me £135 and, believe me, I try and keep my usage as low as possible but that is still 21 hours of work on the national minimum wage, which begs the questions: why are the poorest in our society forced to choose between heating and eating? Why should CEOs of utility companies get richer every time we run the shower or boil a kettle? Why should getting a train be a luxury? It has to stop. We must demand re-nationalisation of our gas, our electricity, our water, and our trains and bus services. Comrades, please support the motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done.

BRO. J. HIOM (London): If the Labour Party is to mean anything to the people of Britain, it has to start responding to their demands. People now know what corporate greed is. They know it is a lie to believe that private is good and public is bad. Politicians can no longer pull the wool over people's eyes. By god, they try, though. For years we have been ripped off by the energy and rail companies, for years public money has been handed over to upgrade the rail systems and at the same time handing out to shareholders millions of pounds of public money, and in return the public receive another fare increase. It has become impossible for some members of the public to travel by rail because of the high fares and now travel by road. Privatisation has not enriched the British people, it has made the gap between the rich and poor grow wider. If a Labour government wins the next general election, it must start to make a return to public ownership. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jim. Does Southern, Birmingham, and Yorkshire, wish to come in on the debate? No? Okay, does anyone wish to come in on the debate? No? Can I put Composite 12 to the vote? All those in favour, please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

*Composite Motion 12 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now ask for the mover and seconder of 130?

## **RE-NATIONALISE OUR WATER INDUSTRY MOTION 130**

### **130. RE-NATIONALISE OUR WATER INDUSTRY**

This Congress calls on the Labour Party to begin a conversation with the electorate about the future of the water industry. England is alone in the world in having all our water privately owned and poll after poll consistently show that when asked 70% say they want our water back in public ownership.

The electorate are completely fed up of being ripped off by an industry which is largely foreign owned and avoids paying tax by heaping £billions of debt on our most precious resource.

Cuts to our members' pay, pensions and jobs are being used to fund outrageous dividends to shareholders while senior managers are awarded huge bonuses.

The Labour Party must have a dialogue with the electorate, include its findings in its next manifesto and put some urgently needed clear blue water between them and the Tories who are intent on destroying the public sector. The public are crying out for choice in who to vote for not watered down versions of Tory policies.

EAST OF ENGLAND WATERWORKERS BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. S. FORREST (London): Hoping not to upset Mary on this occasion. In 1989, the water industry was privatised and Thatcher spoke about a shareholding democracy. As we all knew then and we know now that was complete nonsense. It was all part of a neo-liberal agenda and it was backed up by all the debts of the water companies, up to £5bn, and that was an absolute fortune then and particularly back then being wiped off, a so-called green dowry of £1.6bn being handed out to promote the profitability of these companies as they went in to become private companies. It was sold off at 22% below market value. Ring any bells to the postal workers, or the CWU, or us who receive letters now through TNT? Today the proof of the success of this neo-liberal agenda is that of the UK's 10 major water companies only three are quoted on the London Stock Exchange and only three have their headquarters in the UK. The rest are owned by overseas companies of which Thames Water is very indicative. The Chinese Investment Corporation, meaning the Chinese government, own 9% and our old friends that our General Secretary has had many a battle with, McCarry, the venture capitalist, own 40%. That is the reality of water privatisation. It has a customer base of 15 million, 290 pump stations, 100 water treatment plants, 235 reservoirs; it pays no corporation tax, why would it not be a prize asset for a venture capitalist? It made £550m in the last taxable year.

Comrades, and Congress, that is not privatisation, that is theft. Quite frankly, that is theft. Profits created at the exploitation of our members in the water industry and profits created at the exploitation of us, the consumer, up and down the country. Thames Water is proposing a further increase of 11% per year between 2015 and 2020. Motion 130 calls for a conversation with the British people. Quite frankly, I think the British people have had enough conversations on this and they want it returned to public ownership. In a poll in 2012 71% said the same and I think if you went and asked now it would be even higher than that.

Paul Kenny in his General Secretary's speech the other evening mentioned that we want something from a Labour government, we want them to give us something, give us a lead, show us a lead on something, not a two-year energy freeze, not a windfall tax for a year and then give the rest of the profits back after that, but show us something. As he said, look at the badge, show us something. How about starting with the re-nationalisation of the theft of our water industry back into public ownership, bring the industry back in-house, work with the unions to protect our members. *(Applause)* No rip-off of our water companies, re-invest the profits to protect our society in schools, in hospitals, in projects of a local community nature that will benefit society. I will finish with this. If they say it will be too expensive, we cannot do it, one, a Labour government did it in the ruins of the Second World War, it was proved to be done then but, more importantly, if the head of McCarry can prove to me or particularly to our General Secretary that he has a proven need for compensation, I will be absolutely shocked and stunned. I move Motion 130, Congress. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Steve, well done. You behaved yourself. Well done.

BRO. S. FORREST (London): Very kind, Mary. Thank you. Formally second.

THE PRESIDENT: Formally? You did not take liberties, then. *Motion 130 was formally seconded.*

## **RE-NATIONALISATION STUDIES MOTION 131**

### **131. RENATIONALISATION STUDIES**

This Conference notes that despite the support for nationalisation of the utilities, railways and Royal Mail in opinion polls there appears to be no political or academic debate around this subject. This conference calls on the GMB to commission studies on effective ways of bringing these services back into public or common ownership and to promote these mechanisms within the Labour Party and the academic community.

SHEFFIELD MCP & LIGHT BRANCH  
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

*(Carried)*

BRO. G. JARVIS (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Since 1979, the privatisation and marketisation policies of successive governments have delivered the economy into the hands of a narrow set of vested corporate financial interests. The consequences are that decision-making is geared towards short-term profit seeking at the expense of longer-term thinking, and in particular strategic concerns for the common good. Privatisation has also been accompanied by a growing foreign ownership of this country's most strategically important resources and assets. Congress, this has raised important questions about government ability to control important public policy objectives. Private monopolies have failed to provide essential services to the public at the lowest cost.

Let's now look at the energy sector. Privatisation is failing to provide energy security, meet climate change targets, or deliver cheap fuel supplies to the customers. Critical issues such as upgrading and modernising the electricity grid networks are not being delivered because of reliance on or the lack of private investment. In other key areas, too, notably rail and water, they have critical strategic infrastructural issues such as shifting freight from road to rail and the upgrading of an outdated water supply system.

Congress, the delivering of modern public fit for purpose 21<sup>st</sup> century utilities are simply not being met. This is in contrast to the experience with privatisation, the East Coast Mainline being a prime example, proving public-owned railway can be more efficient than the private sector. Congress, there is a need for a more democratic approach to the ownership and management which redistributes economic decision-making power beyond its control by financial corporate and foreign interests. In developing new forms of public ownership, we must look forward and not backwards. In particular, we need to create new forms of public collective ownership that are better able to develop an economy to serve social and environmental concerns over private gain.

The failures of privatisation in other countries are producing a growing trend to take back utility sectors into public ownership. A range of new and hybrid forms of public ownership have been developed in other countries from Latin America to Western Europe and Scandinavia. There are models for the UK to learn from so we can create our own bespoke forms of collective ownership and infrastructure provision.

I call upon this Congress to support the setting up of an academic study to research the concept of public ownership to develop a clear set of policies. For far too long this cosy capitalist consensus has remained unchallenged, the time for new political vision is here right now. Congress, the neo-liberal

mantra that private is always better is than public is just not true. Our friends in the Labour Party have to wake up and see this is not true. The truth is having weak policies and doing nothing new will lead to Labour defeat next year. The truth is, Mr. Miliband, we are the labour Movement and know we can do better than that. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Graham. Secunder.

BRO. K. GILBERTHORPE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): President, Congress, nationalisation was the election commitment of Clement Attlee in the 1945 election. Nationalisation was where the state took control, as we all know, of coal, steel, electricity, and rail. Profits made from these industries used to go to the country. Now they go to the shareholders. The logic was that nationalisation benefited everyone as they were public owned and not just the few who owned shares in those industries. Nationalisation was a long-held belief of the Labour Party putting people before profit. The Labour Party believed in profits but then ploughed back into the nationalised industries and they would always be modern and competitive state, not run down like they are today. Money would always be available to invest and no greedy shareholders to siphon off the profits or hold back. Has anything changed? Is this logic wrong? Are there similar echoes today? In 1945, the country was in a far worse state deficit than today. The British people had come through the collective pain of the Second World War. Today we are still in difficult times; for most of the working class in this country times are still hard. Many GMB members and their families are worse off than they were five years ago. Things are certainly not getting any better; in fact, I think for the first time since the Second World War it is hard to say that the next generation is going to be better off than their parents. In a recent survey the majority of the British public, including a majority of Conservative voters, supported nationalisation on energy and rail. Labour's plan to freeze energy prices for 20 months has reignited the debate over their role. In 1945, there was a spirit of optimism. People are fed up with the same old smug capitalists. They have had enough. We have had enough. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kenneth. 132, Post Office Sell Off, Southern Region.

## **POST OFFICE SELL OFF MOTION 132**

### **132. POST OFFICE SELL OFF**

GMB deplores the selling off of the Royal Mail. Serious questions must be asked about the mistakes made. The royal mail was sold under its market value by £2.2 billion. This not only means that the state has lost that money and will never recover it.

It also means that it will make any future attempt to renationalise the mail service will have huge costs involved. There were also a large number of people who made a significant profit from the selloff, within a very short period of time.

An investigation should be launched into who was responsible for undervaluing the organisation and there must be consequences. There should also be an investigation into who benefited from the undervaluation and by how much.

The Labour party also must start to investigate how to renationalise the royal mail.

S69 SOUTH EAST COAST AMBULANCE BRANCH  
*Southern Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. S. BACCHUS (Southern): It seems bizarre to me that the Business Secretary, Vince Cable, is held in such high esteem and not exposed with the rest of the rogues and charlatans in the ConDem

Coalition Government. *(Applause)* The privatisation of the Royal Mail was not only a scandalous giveaway of a vital national asset at a bargain base price but they also sold our trade mark in the world, the word “Royal” which emphasises everything British. Will the Coalition privatise the Royal Family? They can outsource them to the French, hopefully. They have sold off everything that made Britain Great Britain. Colleagues will remember the Conservative slogan when British Gas was sold off by Mad Mags, “If you see Sid tell him.” Well, if you do see Sid, tell him that the Royal Mail was sold down the river even though the majority of the British public opposed it. Fat cats in the City have made millions, including George Osborne’s best man, and the British public have been stripped of another national asset that will cost us a hell of a lot more to get back. Privatised gas, electric, and water industries have forced increased prices and deplorable services on to the British public. Congress, to maintain a universal service and uniform pricing it is vital for the protection of jobs and rural and remote post offices, and this can only be achieved by nationalising the industries by the next labour government. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder. Formally? Thank you.

*Motion 132 was formally seconded.*

THE PRESIDENT: 133, London Region, Selling of Royal Mail.

## **SELLING OF ROYAL MAIL MOTION 133**

### **133. SELLING OF ROYAL MAIL**

This Congress condemns the cut-price sale of the Royal Mail and calls on the Labour Party Leadership:

- 1) To commit unequivocally to taking Royal Mail back into public ownership
- 2) To guarantee that pay, conditions of service and pensions are maintained  
At or restored to pre-privatisation levels.
- 3) To commit to retaining the pre-privatisation network of post offices.

KING’S LYNN NO 1 BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. D. ANDERSON (London): Congress, very shortly this country will have nothing left to sell. Water works split up and owned by foreign powers, gas, electric, railways, all now in private hands. The branches ask that when labour get into power at the next election that they bring back Royal Mail into public ownership. Royal Mail has proven it can make a profit. Why is it that everything that is good in this country has to be sold and privatised? Congress, I ask you to support this motion. I move. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder.

BRO. B. DUFFIELD (London): I just want to go back on Paul Kenny’s speech the other day. You can see here I have a top here, 2010 Barking & Dagenham Council 51 Labour councillors, BNP nil. Again, this year they jumped on the back of Farage and it was Barking & Dagenham Council 51 councillors, UKIP nil, and also the BNP. *(Applause)* What I am saying is that it is only because of the hard work of the two branches in Barking, Penny Robinson’s branch B10 and B11. We put our

differences to one side, no matter how much infighting, because we are playing into their hands if we don't go and help them. Do you know what I mean? I am hoping everyone this year will jump in their cars, their coaches, buses, whatever, and go and help Labour MPs to get in as well. It has a knock-on effect on local councillors. They get penalised for the ones up in the general election, they get penalised, so we don't want that. I just wanted to reiterate that. So, GMB can do it if you knock on doors, talk to people, you win them over. I am hoping everyone in this hall, no matter where you are from, help the MPs.

THE PRESIDENT: Brendan, I thought you were seconding Royal Mail.

BRO. B. DUFFIELD (London): Yes, I am, but it's short.

THE PRESIDENT: I'll cut you short in a minute.

BRO. B. DUFFIELD (London): President, Congress, on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2013 the Coalition Government did what even Margaret Thatcher was too afraid to do, they privatised the Royal Mail. A great universal public service that's was originally established in 1516. This in itself was a scandal but what was a greater scandal was Vince Cable selling this public asset on the cheap. The sale of the Royal Mail short-changed the taxpayers. The National Audit Office has estimated that the shares were floated at a loss to the Exchequer of around £1bn. There was only one solution to this, bring back the Royal Mail into public ownership. The next Labour government must commit to the policy and they must commit to maintain a universal mail service. This can be achieved in the private sector driven by profit, not service. Congress, the scandal of selling off the family silver on the cheap must be reversed. Bring back the Royal Mail into public ownership. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Brendan. Don't do it again! Anyone wish to come in on this?

BRO. G. WOODS (London): I just wanted to speak in support of the really excellent case for re-nationalisation and for them to outsource them that other comrades have already made this morning. For me what sums that up most of all is the case for the re-nationalisation of the railways. That is an idea whose time has come. I think if anything shows that most clearly it is the case of East Coast Mainline. This is in public hands, it is delivering a great service, it is returning millions of pounds to the taxpayer, and the dogmatic refusal to acknowledge that really shows what the Tories are all about.

I also wanted to say that it is obvious that it is time to end the disastrous failed experiment of privatisation outsourcing and deregulation, it just does not work and we have seen that time and time again as other people have mentioned. I also want to bring to your attention the campaign for a Public Services Users bill. Some of you may already know about this. This would be a critical new piece of legislation that would put power back in the hands of the public, it would allow for the taking back into public hands of outsourced public services in people's local communities. It has proven already enormously popular.

I think those are the kinds of practical things we should be calling on a future Labour government to implement, popular, efficient, accessible, and allow people to reconnect with their public services and make them accountable again. It skewers that private good public bad myth that people have already talked about. Congress, labour should be taking this bill up in its manifesto and across the board, ending the privateering for good. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Anyone else?

SIS. N. PETRIE (Southern): I am tired of us coming up here talking about things that we have lost. Why do we have to campaign for things after we have lost them? What are we doing wrong that we cannot stop things when they are happening? Why? (*Applause*) We campaign when they are happening. As you say, we are running after the horse after it has bolted. Why can't we stop the horse before it has bolted? Why? (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Nina, we do campaign but we do not have the political power; that is why. We need another government. Anyone else? No? Can I call Nikki Sharpe to – sorry, Pat. I thought you were bringing my little friend up so I could say hello to him. I will see him later.

BRO. P. DUFFY (GMB Scotland): President, comrades, the Royal Mail. My wife got a letter through the door two weeks ago. We used to get all our mail roughly about the same time every day and this letter from the area manager says they could not guarantee when we would get the mail. How is that for privatisation? It is time to take every utility back into public ownership. I will tell you something, I would not give them one penny of compensation. I would tell them to bugger off and give us it back. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Anyone else? No? Can I call Nikki Sharpe from the CEC on Motions 131 and 133? Morning, Nikki.

SIS. N. SHARPE (CEC, Commercial Services): Morning, President, Congress. Speaking on behalf of the CEC and asking you to support Motions 131 and 133, each with a qualification. Motion 131 and re-nationalisation studies correctly draws attention to the absence of any political debate on public ownership. There is a lack of engagement by all political parties on this issue even though there is great support amongst the electorate for many essential services to be re-nationalised. However, it is not quite right to say that there is no academic or other debate. It does go on but the politicians simply choose to ignore it. They are totally wedded to the so-called market solutions. They refuse to recognise the failures of the market.

The CEC's qualification is this. GMB is not constrained by the refusal of politicians to engage on this important issue. In conjunction with organisations that share our aims, like the trade-union funded Research Unit at Greenwich University we have commissioned research into the benefits of public ownership. Congress, GMB is also the only union with members in the water industry to consistently call in public for water to be re-nationalised. The unit at Greenwich has produced a mountain of research work and this shows how privatisation has failed citizens but it has also lined the pockets of investors. If funds allow it, GMB will of course continue to commission research in support of re-nationalisation.

Turning to Motion 133, this calls for Royal Mail to be taken back into public ownership. The CEC supports this motion but with a qualification about the guarantee on restoring pay and terms and conditions to privatisation levels. It is possible that this might involve rolling back improvements which the unions win for their members in the meantime. So in the event of any re-nationalisation of Royal Mail GMB would wish to guarantee the pay, pension and conditions of Royal Mail workers subject to working with the key unions that represent Royal Mail workers.

Congress, the CEC is strongly in favour of these motions on re-nationalisation and asks you to support Motions 131 and 133 but with the qualifications that I have outlined. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Nikki. Does Yorkshire Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Does Southern Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) London? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Can I now ask everyone to vote on 130, 131, 132, and 133? All those in favour, please show. Anyone against? They are carried.

*Motion 130 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 131 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 132 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 133 was CARRIED.*

## **EMERGENCY MOTION 1**

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now ask London Region to move Emergency Motion 1, The Royal Mail's Diminishing Role.

## **EMERGENCY MOTION 1**

### **THE ROYAL MAIL'S DIMINISHING ROLE**

This Congress is alarmed at correspondence received by some of our members in March 2014 headed "Royal Mail Deliveries in your Community, Dear Royal Mail Customers".

That goes on to say that "TNT Post UK is now collecting, sorting and delivering mail to addresses in North West London postcode areas". We understand this also applies to other areas in the UK.

The letter goes on to say that TNT is a competitor of Royal Mail, and does not have to observe the same day to day collection regulations.

Congress, this appears to contradict the absolute assurances by ministers in the run up to Royal Mail privatisation, that the 6 day collection and delivery would be maintained with no TNT caveat.

We should, therefore, request of the CEC that they launch a campaign to expose the contract and determine who agreed the contradiction to the Coalition's guarantee of 6 day collection and delivery and what other measures have been or are being considered that could undermine the previous high quality services provided by Royal Mail.

LONDON REGIONAL COMMITTEE

*(Carried)*

BRO. V. WEST (London): Congress, in March 2014 people in North West London, including Mary, our President, received this leaflet through their letter boxes. I will read a couple of extracts from it. "Dear Royal Mail Customer, I am writing to you about important changes to postal services in North West London. A company called TNT Post UK is now collecting, sorting, and delivering mail to addresses in North West London post code areas." The leaflet goes on to say: "TNT is a competitor to Royal Mail and is able to choose where and when to deliver mail. Generally, it delivers every other day to households and is not required to meet the regulation standards, unlike Royal Mail. It collects directly from businesses and does not have post boxes to accept mail from the general public." In other words, Congress, cherry-picking the profitable bits of Royal Mail's universal service.

A month later, in April, this article appears in the *London Evening Standard*. The Standard has found out that TNT has dumped or delivered polling cards for the recent elections to wrong addresses. Residents had spotted that TNT were leaving sacks of mail unlocked, on bikes, unattended, for up to an hour. TNT, it turned out, now has contracts with the 11 London councils so not only was this happening in North West London, it was also happening right across London. Not only has Vince Cable done what even Margaret Thatcher was too afraid to do and sell off Royal Mail, and sell it off on the cheap with a loss to the taxpayer of millions of pounds, but we now see the start of the break-up of the universal postal service.

Congress, the demands of this motion are really modest, calling on the CEC to expose the contracts and to research what else is going on to undermine Royal Mail's regulated universal service, a service to everybody at one price anywhere in the UK. In reality, Congress, what we should be demanding is that companies like TNT have no contracts with Royal Mail and are terminated immediately and that Royal Mail is re-nationalised. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Vaughan. Secunder.

SIS. E. HUGHES (London): Good morning, Congress. Good morning, President. If you are looking online for a new work opportunity you might be tempted by this one: "Join one of our regional door-to-door drop distribution teams if you are over 16. To deliver door drop media in your area click here." What is this exciting opportunity, an opportunity for a 16 or 17 year old threatened with loss of benefits to earn just £3.72 an hour for a major distribution company.

Here is another one: "Self-employed contractors required to deliver the Ikea book door to door. TNT Post (DDM) Ltd have the contract to distribute the Ikea catalogue. Applicants must have a car and storage, and applicants will be supplied with a map and street listings.... Full training will be given.... The contract runs from 18<sup>th</sup> August for three weeks only. The pay is 7.5 pence per book, although supplements are payable in the most difficult areas." I do not want to think what they are. I think of flats, delivering lots of Labour leaflets!

Be sure of one thing, comrades, Ikea are paying a damned sight more than 7.5 pence per catalogue to TNT. To destroy what has been worked for, for more than 100 years, and to covertly implement a secondary service is not only unacceptable but shows the absolute contempt that this Government have for the Royal Mail workers, and for all the workers in this country. Clever Vince Cable has managed to sell off one of the jewels in our crown for peanuts.

We know it is wrong that the Tory Government has allowed TNT to take over swathes of the UK mail delivery service. We know it is wrong to leave mail when it cannot be delivered. We know it is wrong to underpay people to deliver mail and we know it is wrong that further inroads will be made to save costs and ignore some delivery services where costs can become prohibitive.

Our need is for the Labour government to return the postal service back to its original owners, to us, the British people, and this has to be as fundamental quest of the GMB. I second this motion and ask you to vote in its favour, comrades. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Anyone wish to come in on the debate? No? Can I just add to that because I did get that letter, at the same time that night on our local television sacks of mail were found in people's gardens with bank cards, bank statements, and hospital appointments, that had been dumped there by someone in TNT. That is how secure our mail is. Colleagues, I am now going to

take the vote. All those in favour of Emergency Motion 1, please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

*Emergency Motion 1 was CARRIED.*

## **SOCIAL POLICY: TRANSPORT**

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now call the mover of Motion 248, Southern Region, and then I will call 228, 229, 230, and 231. Will all movers and seconders come down the front, please?

### **ENERGY RISES AND RAIL FARES MOTION 248**

#### **248. ENERGY RISES AND RAIL FARES**

This Congress supports the proposal by the Labour leader Ed Miliband to freeze energy prices for 20 months under a Labour government. This proposal will help working people whose energy bills have increased eight times faster than wages since 2010. Energy prices have increased by 37% in this time compared with inflation that has only risen by 10.7%.

This Congress believes that this sensible policy should also be applied to rail fares. This year rail fares have gone up by 3.1% yet wages have risen by less than 1.0%. Rail passenger fares have risen by more than inflation for more than 10 years. Today Rail fares in Britain are now the highest in Europe and many people can no longer afford to travel by train.

Energy and transport along with food take up a far higher proportion of working people's income and a freeze of energy prices and rail fares is in the interest of working people and pensioners who are struggling to make ends meet. Therefore this Congress believes that GMB should campaign for a freeze on rail fare as well as energy prices.

C60 CROYDON BRANCH  
*Southern Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. N. JACKSON-AMPAW (Southern): President, Congress, the painful truth about our energy and transport infrastructures is that they belong mostly to foreign governments and multinationals. This means our lights could be switched off from France. The excuse we get from our government is that we need private investment to maintain all the associated structures, such as the power grids and the rail tracks. But we all know that selling off our national assets to their friends is feathering their own nests and giving the bunch of thieves licence to print money because that is what they do. We have heard of the reduced cost of these necessities to the providers, the E.on or, as I call them, Hee-Haw donkeys, but we the service users keep seeing our bills rising annually while we get our noses rubbed in it. These carpetbaggers are making profits by the millions of pounds. As for the rail fares, my opinion is that by making it expensive for us to use the rail we will all keep using our cars, therefore burning more fuel, but we all know they are also making a killing from the rise in the cost of fuel. So, whichever way you look at it the working people of the UK are being squeezed for the benefit of the few who are always looking for ways to make us pay more for something we created with our taxes, and it is now being used as a cash cow for the City pigs and their friends in the Coalition Government. That is why we welcome Ed Miliband's proposal to freeze energy prices, that is, if the pigs don't raise energy costs to a higher level before they freeze them, just like the way the high street stores put prices up and then cut them down to previous levels and call it sales. We should also campaign for rail fares to be frozen, too, before we start to re-nationalise all of these national assets. Congress, I move. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder. Here we go, the double act. I thought you were tired of coming up?

SIS. N. PETRIE (Southern): This is Nina and Nana reporting! Not really. This Congress believes that this is a sensible policy and it should also be applied to rail fares. I do not know about you, I hardly use the rail because I find it too expensive. I find it cheaper to drive my car. This year the rail fares have gone up by 3.1% yet our meagre wages have only gone up by 1%, that is, if we got a wage rise. Rail passengers' fares have risen by more than inflation for more than 10 years so imagine, we had a three-year pay freeze but it kept going up, so the maths do not add up. How can we survive? How can we use this lovely rail service, and use the energy to boil our kettles, if we do not have enough money to do it? Today rail fares in Britain are now the highest in Europe and we are saying we are better than Europe? I don't think so. Many people can no longer afford to travel by train. Energy and transport, along with food, take up a far higher proportion of working people's income and a freeze of energy prices and rail fares is in the interests of working people and pensioners who are struggling to make ends meet. Therefore, this Congress believes that GMB should campaign for a freeze on rail fares as well as energy prices. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Nana, I regard 1% not a rise but an insult to all public service workers. Anyone wish to come in on the debate? No? Can I put 248 to the vote? All those in favour, please show. Anyone against? That is carried. Thank you.

*Motion 248 was CARRIED.*

## **SOCIAL POLICY: THE ENERGY MARKET**

THE PRESIDENT: I now call the mover of Composite 21, and then 228. Is 228 here? Right, move while I am waiting for Composite 21 movers and seconders to come down.

### **DOMESTIC HEATING OIL REGULATOR MOTION 228**

#### **228. DOMESTIC HEATING OIL REGULATOR**

This Conference deplores the fact there is not a Regulator to stop profiteering by companies who supply domestic heating oil to homes, causing many families a hard choice between eating and heating.

This Conference calls on the CEC to mount a campaign with the TUC and the Labour Party to help create a Regulator for domestic heating oil companies to protect people from profiteering of these oil companies.

GMB MID Lincs BRANCH  
*Midland & East Coast Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. M. JENKINS (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, I need to practise my Cockney accent. You seem to get longer up here. Anyway, there are 1.5 million UK households who rely on heating oil tanks to warm their homes. The majority of these households are social housing. There is a risk of overpaying due to an under-regulated market that gets too little political attention. Some of the ways in dealing with this issue is to compare oil prices online and haggle down the price. This is taking time and making people stressed. Often families in social housing already are facing many stresses and worries. They are worried about clothing and feeding their family. I know myself several times I have had to worry about how I can afford another loaf of bread or a pint of milk because it is cold and I need to heat my home. Industry insiders say to make a profit suppliers

typically add a minimum of 4p a litre on to wholesale prices they pay. There is no easy way to get wholesale prices but the Department of Energy and Climate Change publishes a quarterly report. This is 88 pages long. You need to read through this to work out how you are going to get a good oil price? I don't think so. Ofgem, the energy regulator, does not have any responsibility for heating oil and there are no immediate plans to change that. With no consumer body to protect heating oil users, it is not easy to sort out problems. We wish the Union to ask the Government to consider setting up a government-backed regulator and ombudsman. Thank you for listening to me. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. The blue light next time! Secunder.

BRO. P. SOPER (Midland & East Coast): A regulator could determine what is a fair price for fuel. At the moment, the cost difference between suppliers can be significant, undermining the industry's argument that the global charges are determined by that. A regulator would mean that oil prices were open, transparent, and would be of benefit to both customers and suppliers. Whilst suppliers deny that they are profiteering, such is the vital nature of their own heating oil industry the calls for regulation are growing. If gas, electricity, and water supplies are subject to independent scrutiny, there is no reason whatsoever, on principle, why the oil suppliers could not face the same oversight.

I have a couple of points to help the consumer. The Scottish Government announced last month the Green Homes Cashback Fund is to allow householders to upgrade their old boilers. This also has been welcomed by the industry ORTEC, whereas in England this has excluded properties using heating oil but because gas remains the cheapest form of heating and to put pressure on the oil market, the extension of the gas network would seem more important than a longer-term priority. Also, I could suggest that the gas connections should be considered as eligible measures under Green Deal and that the Government should consider gas network extension projects in any economic stimulus. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks very much, Phil. Are the movers of Composite 21 ready? Get up here! I have been calling you for half an hour. Get up here! I hope you have turned that battery off! You weren't ready. *(Red apple given to President)* That won't get you extra time either! Thank you, honey. Where's the hanky?

## **ENERGY MARKET & COMPANY CONTROLS COMPOSITION MOTION 21**

### **C21. Covering Motions:**

- 226. ENERGY MARKET *(Northern Region)*
- 227. ENERGY COMPANY CONTROLS *(London Region)*

## **ENERGY MARKET & COMPANY CONTROLS**

This Conference calls for a fundamental review into the Energy Market to investigate practices, infrastructure, pricing, energy supply and policy. Since the Autumn of 2012, the cost of living crisis has come to the forefront of policy, but the wider implications on jobs, a balanced energy policy, a safe and secure energy domestic supply, a change to the way the cartel power market operates, the need for public sector finance to support major infrastructure projects, have all come into the complex equation that leads to keeping the lights on and to the UK consumer domestic or business, being able to obtain basic needs.

Conference calls for Lawmakers and Regulators to work with all interested parties so that policy can be urgently developed and that can lead to the re-setting of the UK energy industry to be put on a much more sustainable footing.

This Congress proposes there should be a new totally independent governing body to oversee the energy companies. The current body OFGEM has proved to be toothless allowing scandalous price hikes in recent years.

Before any energy company can increase their prices they should be required to justify them to the new controlling body. This would then help the customer in lots of ways i.e. make the utilities companies invest in better infrastructure and invest in long-term cheaper energy. Not buy it two years earlier from themselves and then sell it on at huge profit at a later date.

### **Northern Region to Move London Region to Second**

*(Carried)*

BRO. B. HUGHES (Northern): I do not need a hanky this year because my speech has been well rehearsed and it is timed to perfection! *(Cheers/Applause)* It is well within the 10 minutes I have been allocated! *(Applause)* Sit back, Malcolm, relax.

Worthy President, Billy Hughes, Northern Region, at last moving Composite 21. I should have been further up the league. This morning we have had some real good speakers on nationalisation and utilities. I take my hat off to them. I thought they had read my speech at first. I am going to put a little bit of a twist on mine just to keep the interest going, you know.

Congress, when the energy companies were privatised 30 years ago, we were promised prices would drop, and the consumer would get a better deal. What a load of rubbish that has turned out to be. Remember when British Gas was first found in the North Sea, we were promised, oh, yes, just a matter of running pipes in the house and we would get it for next to nowt. Another load of rubbish. The cost to the consumer, no, forget about it, you're going to get it for nowt, but that was before the money grabbers got hold of it. As with so many other things from that era it certainly was not going to happen.

Colleagues, the question is now to heat or not to eat. In 2014, in the UK that is not a choice the people should have to make. *(Applause)* The consumer, domestic or business, should be protected. We have a cartel of energy companies and the only thing they are bothered about is fixing the prices to pass it on to the people and sit back and rake in the profits. We have a Labour opposition and a coalition government pussyfooting around whether to knock £100 or £150 a year off your bills. You get better dividends if you start collecting Nectar points! *(Laughter/Applause)* But neither of them seem to be anywhere nearer the problem, that being about energy policy, energy supply, or even energy use. In fact, the energy cartels should be scrapped. Lawmakers should work with us all to get a policy put on a sustainable footing. Usually when it is a word like that I say, "cart and horses".

Congress, this is not just about the price we pay for electricity or gas. It is also about having our own UK supply so that we do not have to rely on countries across the water, and especially in Europe, particularly – I have just started it, it cannot be red already! *(Applause)* Oh dear me. *(Put hanky over red light)* *(Applause)* Just when I was getting into my stride an all!

THE PRESIDENT: You have got your ruddy book there !

BRO. B. HUGHES (Northern): You can go off people, you know. Oh dear me. Right, serious face. Where was I?

THE PRESIDENT: You were just getting down.

BRO. B. HUGHES (Northern): Ah, that's right. We should not have to rely on imported stuff from Europe. Oh dear me, she is a killer this one, I tell you. I don't know how I put up with her.  
(*Laughter*)

Colleagues, back to the business. Ofgem should be scrapped, another toothless tiger. The taxpayers should get a better deal from the subsidies they get, companies who are ripping them off, whether they are in supply or producing energy. Colleagues, many years ago I remember a Tory minister telling our senior citizens, to keep warm just put another coat on or another jumper until you feel the heat. Well, I took his advice. I'm not proud. I'm not proud at all. I took his advice and I put a coat on. I put a jumper on. I put another coat on, and another jumper. The only thing was at the end of the day I looked more like Michelin tyre man! (*Laughter*) I could not move. I nearly starved to death.

Worthy President, you are a lovely lass, you know. (*Laughter*)

THE PRESIDENT: Do you know I was ahead in conference until you got up there.

BRO. B. HUGHES (Northern): Shut up. Shut up. Shut up. (*Laughter/Cheers*) I was just going to say as well, let me finish with these words. There you are! (*Laughter*)

Worthy President, colleagues, let me just finish with these words, loud and clear. It is a little bit of advice to our Shadow Cabinet. I suppose the shadow cabinet will be saying, "Who's this young upstart to give us..." (*Laughter*) They will. They will. "Who's this young upstart to give us advice?" Well, I tell you, that (*indicating card*) gives me the right, that gives me the right, and we should all be carrying them. (*Applause*) That gives me the right to tell them what I think and that is what I will say, whether they like it or not. The truth hurts at times. If the Labour Party wants to show some clear drive and ambition, if they want to show some clear red water between them and the Coalition Government, and if they want credibility, respectability, and responsibility, and if they want to inspire our members, and if they want to show commitment, they will get on board with this motion and give us something to be proud of. Never mind about the price freeze until 2017, what another load of rubbish, freezing the prices for a couple of years. What I say is, scrap it all together. Support this composite. Let's get on with the job. (*Applause/Cheers*)

THE PRESIDENT: Worthy President, you are taking one more liberty too many so I have decided that you should get a long service badge for the time you spent on this ruddy rostrum! (*Applause/Cheers*) And that is not a licence to you lot either! Who wants to follow that? Could the seconder come up, please?

BRO. T. NOKES (London) seconded the motion. He said: Who wants to follow that! President, Congress, although this energy market needs a vast overhaul from top to bottom, there has apparently been a few changes recently which are supposed to benefit us all. There is a tariff comparison rate where consumers can compare tariffs at a glance, personal projection, which can be used on a tariff based on your own usage, and a tariff information label, which allows consumers to understand their tariffs better. It is also the Treat Customers Fairly statement where energy suppliers are supposed to be making vast improvements to their customer database. The energy suppliers have published new guidelines and information for all their customer service departments, which is supposed to make

things easier for us to be able to get through and complain, which will benefit everybody I am assuming. There is also the policy energy market and suppliers project, which includes such things as the fuel poverty, which the Government and the energy companies have agreed to investigate. Energy efficiency where smart meters are the order of the day to be fitted, and the Warm Home discount that the energy suppliers have promised £1.1bn to provide income support for low earners. This is all very good and probably a bit too little too late. Hopefully, with the energy market being revamped it will come out in the end. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Barry. Worthy President, I hope you don't think you're going to get the right to reply. 229?

## **COMBATING FUEL POVERTY MOTION 229**

### **229. COMBATING FUEL POVERTY**

This Congress calls on the Central Executive Council of the GMB to support any and all measures to reduce the number of individuals in fuel poverty in the UK.

GMB UNITE BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. T. CHOLERTON (London): This Congress calls on the Central Executive Council of the GMB to support any and all measures to reduce the number of individuals in fuel poverty in the UK. Fuel poverty in the United Kingdom is completely unacceptable. It is a complete injustice for one of the richest and most powerful countries in the world to allow the poor and elderly to suffer because they cannot afford to warm themselves or cook a meal when all the leading power generators and suppliers are making billions of pounds in profits and increasing charges at will. It is completely unfair for fat cat bosses to receive six-figure bonuses for investors and for investors to take rich dividends while people are cold, cannot cook a decent meal, and in some cases die. There can be no excuses for an economy the size of ours to allow this to happen. Daily life for people living in cold homes can be very distressing. The UK has one of the highest excess winter death rates in Europe. Based on a conservative estimate by the World Health Organisation around 30% of excess winter deaths can be attributed to excessively cold temperatures in the home during winter months. Based on statistics for England and Wales around 9,300 people died because of cold housing in 2012/13. Many more will become ill as a result of living in cold homes and because of fuel poverty. The cost to the NHS of treating illnesses caused by and aggravated by cold homes are estimated to be £1.36bn per year, with additional social care costs likely to increase this even further.

There is a substantial and growing body of evidence on the negative impact of fuel poverty and cold homes on physical and mental health. The physical health impacts most commonly experienced by those living in cold homes are respiratory and circulatory illnesses. There is also strong evidence on the negative mental health of living in fuel poverty in cold homes. Fuel poverty is caused by a convergence of several factors, low income, high fuel prices, poor energy efficiency of the home, and old age. The most vulnerable to fuel poverty and cold homes include older people, lone parents with dependent children, families who are unemployed or on low incomes, children and young people, disabled people, people with existing illness and long-term conditions, and single unemployed people.

A fuel bill for a typical family with children, heating their home to a recommended 21 degrees is £1,400 per year. This is at a time when wholesale fuel prices have dropped by 50%. In April 2011, a

YouGov survey indicated that the number of households in fuel poverty had risen to 6.3 million households representing approximately 24% of all households in the UK. The problem will get worse unless urgent action is taken. I therefore call on Congress to support this motion. I move.  
(*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tony. Secunder.

SIS. L. MANN (London): President, Congress, “If you see Sid tell him,” tell him this, in 2003 the fuel poverty level was £248. By 2013 the level rose to £438. Websites such as Turn to us do a great job of helping individuals in fuel poverty. However, vulnerable people, such as senior citizens, or those who suffer from disabilities, will not always have access to the internet or may not be aware of the websites, if they do. We must impress upon energy suppliers to contact their customers to advise them of the options available. Those who are forced into key meters have little or no contact with their energy providers. However, the same providers are laughing all the way to the bank with tariffs that are much higher than those with monthly or quarterly payments. With over 5.9 million people using prepayment meters in 2013, this figure is set to rise with the increase in energy rates. When private companies took over the supply of energy to homes, we were promised that we would get the best rates possible and that energy companies will be battling for our business. I am in no doubt that there is a cartel operating and unlike companies such as Lidl and Aldi, they are not looking to cut our costs in our weekly outgoings. A failure to invest in infrastructure prior to privatisation is a claim made by energy providers and now they need to build facilities to give us continued power. Well, those companies have had 16 years to build a plan for this. However, they are too busy raking in the profits and redistributing to the boards and shareholders. To reach our target of cleaning up our emissions, £200bn will need to be spent by 2020. Now not only will the Government have to foot a large proportion of the bill, you can be sure that fuel poverty will rise due to the amount that energy companies will be forced to pay. I am sure that Cameron and his friends will not be losing any sleep over this. Energy companies must be pushed to give information about switching providers and must be forced into offering the same rates to those who pay using key meters. I ask the CEC to approach politicians and corporations to get them to change their ways and make these two awful words “fuel poverty” disappear. Make sure you tell Sid. I second this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Lynsey. Don’t just tell him, hang him. Come on, Jan, 230.

## **EQUALISING ENERGY PRICES MOTION 230**

### **230. EQUALISING ENERGY PRICES**

This Congress says that one should not have to pay more for their energy supplies by not paying by Direct Debit. Congress also says to the energy companies that there are many of their customers that do not have the facilities to pay by Direct Debit as a carried resolution at the National RMA Conference in Manchester.

EAST DEREHAM BRANCH  
*London Region*

(*Carried*)

SIS. J. SMITH (London): Congress, you have just heard Lynsey say about the elderly, the disabled, etc., and the prices that they have to pay. Congress, if one is online you can get reduced energy bills, the same as if you pay by direct debit. Congress, this should not be so because if one has the facilities to use a computer or banking to pay by direct debit, the going rate should be for us all, and also be the same rate. It has to be remembered there are many of all ages who do not have computers, or do

not for reasons known to themselves have bank accounts and therefore cannot take advantage of these types of deals for their electricity and gas.

The principles of this resolution you have in front of you was carried at an RMA conference in Manchester and I think from memory it was around 2007. Congress, these types of deals create an equality issue and I say to you there are those who cannot take up these offers and so we should all be treated the same when paying for energy regardless if online or by direct debit. Congress, this morning you have been shown the front page of the *Daily Mirror*, therefore, we, the GMB, and we say we are the GMB@Work, need to put our weight on the big six for price rates for all and that they should reduce the charges when they buy our energy at reduced rates and not holding on to it to give them higher profits. Congress, I ask for your support. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jan. Secunder.

BRO. D. RIGBY (London): Congress, as long as you pay your utilities bills on time why should you have to pay more for not paying by direct debit? In this time of austerity people live from day to day, they cannot afford to pay out money they may not have. Some people do not have the credit ratings. If they go overdrawn in the bank the bank charges them money. Utilities companies are making money off other people's misery. This practice must cease. If people choose to pay by cheque or cash, then they should have the same equalities as someone paying by direct debit. There should be parity. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Doug. 231? When I saw Northern Region I thought Worthy President was getting up again.

## **ENERGY COMPANIES MOTION 231**

### **231. ENERGY COMPANIES**

This Conference notes that the Chief Executive of Centrica gave up his bonus in 2013. This Conference believes that accepting a six or seven figure bonus whilst putting up fuel bills in the cost of living crisis is unreasonable and highly questionable. This Conference therefore calls on the chief executives of the Big 6 Power Companies to make the same commitment to waive their bonuses in 2014 in light of on-going price rises and an unsustainable situation for workers, customers and the taxpayer.

S52 SOUTH SHIELDS 2 BRANCH  
*Northern Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. P. RAMSAY (Northern): It is going to be a hard act to follow! The privatisation of gas and electricity was sold to the British public as a better deal for the consumer. Shares were given to the British public. However, since privatisation terms and conditions for workers in these industries have been cut and eroded yet the energy sector is now run as a cartel. The energy companies do not compete, they collude. The consumer, the taxpayer, and the public, are being ripped off. What we need is for the big six power companies to stop ripping us off. We need the chief executives of these companies to give up their bonuses until they mend their ways. But, Congress, what we really want and need is for gas, electricity, and other utilities to be re-nationalised, then a Labour government would have the means not just to freeze energy bills as promised if elected, but to deliver fair energy bills for all in the future. That would ensure the profit and greed is not put before a decent deal for workers, customers, and the taxpayer. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Paul. Seconder. Thank you. You took his time, did you?

*Motion 231 was formally seconded.*

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, does anyone wish to come in on the debate?

SIS. P. ROSS (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): If any of the rest of you are OAPs like me, you probably look forward to the junk mail dropping through your letter box to brighten up your day, but there is one thing that never fails to really annoy me, it is the one that says, "If you switch to dual fuel you get an extra discount." Why does that annoy me? I live in a village with no mains gas. How can I ever take advantage of this offer? How can any old person in our village take advantage of this offer? I think we are being discriminated against and I think something should be done about that. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Anyone else?

BRO. S. GARELICK (London) speaking on Motion 229: One of the other aspects of these fuel meters that are key driven is the fact that they are higher priced, we have heard that this morning, but what we are not hearing is that the consumer is not ever really given any choice. I believe it should be mandatory that when you go to fill that key you get a list of all the providers and what they are charging you for using that meter. At the moment, it is daylight robbery and it has to stop. We must mandate and get the CEC and the GMB to get the Government to change what is a rule to push down and keep down the lowest common denominator in our view, and those are the people who we really, really do need to care about. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Anyone else?

BRO. P. CURTIS (Southern): There is an alternative to power, it is free and it is simple, there are 12 billion years of it floating around above us. The only reason we are not using that and the only reason we do not have solar panels on near enough all our houses is because the power companies make not a bloody penny out of it. It is free. It is simple. Use it. I will tell you something else. Have a good look at fracking because it ain't gonna do you any good. It won't make anything cheaper for you and it will destroy our environment eventually. I borrow a phrase, a saying, from the CEO of a seeding company, the people who want to seed the sky, put aluminium into the sky, when people question him about the risk to the environment, he tells them, "Don't look at it as if you are risking your environment, or your life, or anything now, look at it as if you are taking a piggyback on that of your grandchildren." I ain't taking a piggyback on the back of my bloody grandchildren, I'm telling you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Anyone else? No? I call Gary Smith.

BRO. G. SMITH (National Secretary, Commercial Services): Supporting Composite 21 and supporting Motion 229 with a minor qualification. Congress, the energy market is broken and everybody knows that. While people struggle to pay their bills, the politicians dither and the toothless regulator does nothing useful. Energy has been known as the life-blood of the nation and a very significant element of every household budget, and the energy sector employs thousands of GMB members.

It is a scandal that the Government has completely failed to get a grip of energy policy and nothing short of a fundamental and comprehensive reform of the energy market is urgently needed, major

reform of the UK energy system, not just tinkering with the broken model which is based on narrow and deluded ideas about creating more so-called competition.

Congress, it is no longer viable for politicians to duck important questions about public ownership and centralised control of energy supply. That is what GMB told the Labour energy team during the recent policy review and we also told them plenty of other home truths about the need for affordable energy to be delivered through a low carbon balanced energy mix, about the importance of gas to the energy mix, how energy and industrial policies must go hand-in-hand, and how vital investment in the energy infrastructure is being neglected because of the foreign venture capitalists who now own most of the UK energy infrastructure.

Congress, we also call for a new regulatory body with a wider remit, a tough independent regulator for consumers in the energy sector, not just there to support energy companies. In other words, not a complacent out of touch quango like Ofgem but a regulator that will control prices and also enforce new statutory obligations which must be placed on energy companies, obligations to support the UK economy with investment in skills and jobs, obligations that would mean companies like National Grid would have to support the UK manufacturing supply chain whilst providing apprenticeships for our young people. These are the fundamental reforms that must be implemented to secure the UK's future energy needs.

Congress, the CEC has one minor qualification on Motion 229, which rightly calls on GMB to support the fight against fuel poverty. Fuel poverty blights the lives of too many in our society, particularly the elderly and the vulnerable. They need our support and assistance in not having constantly to worry about paying their heating bills. The qualification, however, relates to the words "to support any and all measures" because Ofgem, an organisation GMB has done constant battles with over the years, is fond of pretending that attacks on our gas members' pensions are there to help cut energy bills. The fact is this, not a single penny has come off anybody's gas bill as a result of Ofgem's ideological attacks on the gas industry pension scheme. That does not deter Ofgem from claiming that these attacks, like the cuts to the gas mains replacement programme, are necessary to protect consumers. We just cannot trust Ofgem, Congress, to be honest, not to interfere with our members' pensions and terms and conditions supposedly that is done in the name of combating fuel poverty.

The CEC, Congress, needs to qualify its support for the term "any and all measures". We must be able to resist Ofgem when the need arises. Congress, energy is of huge importance to every consumer and to the many thousands of GMB members who work in the energy industries. So let's send a clear message in the 125<sup>th</sup> year in which the Union was founded by a gas worker, Will Thorne. GMB demands positive action on energy to protect consumers and to provide the secure future for energy workers. Please support Composite 21 and Motion 229 with the CEC qualification. Thank you, President. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Gary, would you like to join us up here because you are doing the next report?

THE PRESIDENT: Will Northern and London accept Composite Motion 21 with the Statement? *(Agreed)* Will London accept the qualification on Motion 229? *(Agreed)* With that, I will put them all to the vote: Composite 21, Motions 228, 229, 230 and 231. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? Carried.

*Composite Motion 21 was CARRIED.  
Motion 228 was CARRIED*

*Motion 229 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 230 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 231 was CARRIED.*

## **COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION REPORT**

THE PRESIDENT: I now call on Gary Smith to move his report back from the Commercial Services Section Conference.

BRO. G. SMITH (National Secretary, Commercial Services): Thank you, President and Congress. I am moving the Commercial Services Section Conference Report. Commercial Services is the most diverse section of the Union, and in a few minutes I cannot possibly do justice to all the hard work that our regions, our officers and our activists have done over the past two years since we last met, so I apologise for that in advance.

President, we had well over 200 delegates and visitors at our conference yesterday and the hall was packed for the whole day. We debated a huge amount of motions, from professional drivers, SIA licensing, health and safety, pensions and apprenticeships. President – I know you are passionate about this – we do act upon the motions that are passed. At our last conference we passed motions on zero hours and a Living Wage, which again we debated yesterday. A Living Wage and zero-hours contracts have been at the centre of the campaigning activity and the bargaining agenda for the section over the past two years.

The backdrop to the conference is really healthy growth within commercial services. We have put on nearly 33,000 new members in the past 12 months, and that growth is built on firm foundations. (*Applause*) The activists who attended and participated in the conference yesterday are testimony to those firm foundations. There were 82 contributions at our conference by lay activists yesterday. Our section president is passionate about lay democracy and yesterday it truly was a lay activists' event.

Congress, I want to give you a brief flavour of some of the activities within the section. As to retail, last year, 6,200 new members were recruited by the GMB. That is a magnificent effort by our officers and activists in Asda Retail. (*Applause*) Let me say this. As we emerge from what has been a truly long, dark night in Asda Retail, I do want to pay tribute to those activists who have persevered over the years, who have sustained this Union. We absolutely salute and celebrate the contribution that you have made to this Union for the past 20 or 30 years, and none more so than our dear friend and comrade, Carol Clarkson, from the Midland & East Coast Region. (*Applause*) Carol, it is absolutely lovely to see you here. We all wish you the very best for a speedy and full recovery. Much love from everybody at the conference.

I say to our Asda Retail activists: we got the message yesterday. We had a very good debate. I appeal to everybody by saying that we need to move forward and move forward together, because for tens of thousands of workers in Asda the prize, truly, is great.

The security industry is a really tough area to organise in. You are out there, padding the streets, recruiting security guards in ones and twos in workplaces. I want to pay tribute to our G4S shop stewards. They have done some wonderful work on mapping G4S Guarding. It's been a really best-in-practice exercise in line with GMB@Work. Anybody who has not looked at what they have done, should do so. It is absolutely fantastic.

In Securitas, since we last met, we have gone from a few hundred members to near 2,000. I want to pay particular tribute to Ake Achi from the Southern Region, who has spoken from this rostrum a few times this week. Ake, you have been absolutely fantastic, a model in terms of how we have to recruit and organise in the security sector. I know that you have recruited – I watch the figures every month – hundreds of members on your own.

In terms of the industries that I deal with, we have been debate energy. In British Gas, I reported two years ago, President, that we had a new agreement in Smart Metering. Smart Metering had been hostile to the Union. I am absolutely delighted to tell you, Congress, that we now have over 90% density in British Gas Smart Metering. That's a thousand plus members. On Monday we made the historic announcement about the first-ever pay and conditions deal that has been concluded in Smart Metering. I can say that 92% of our members voted in favour of a 17% increase on base rates on Monday, and three of the shop stewards who delivered that tremendous result are at this Congress as delegates today. I pay tribute to you. You are absolutely fantastic! *(Applause)*

However, it would be wrong of me to pretend that everything is rosy in the garden, because it is not. We know that the world of work is tough. We heard yesterday from our members who work in the TUPS section. Working in a union in politics at one time was looked upon as a plum job. If that was ever the case, it certainly isn't now, because we heard very passionately about the problems our members are having to endure with staff restructuring, draconian cuts to pensions for trade union staff and compulsory redundancies.

We have done some terrific work in the past period with Wilkinson Stores. Again, we heard loud and clear yesterday that there is a lot still to be done, particularly around rates of pay for retail workers and contracted hours in stores. President, I can assure you that we have a strategy to deal with Wilkinsons and, indeed, this morning, our shop stewards are meeting outside the Congress hall to debate what that strategy will look like.

In drawing my remarks to a close, Congress, we have had a very good year in Commercial Services. It has accounted for 42% of all growth in the Union. That has been built by the terrific activists in the Commercial Services section. I emphasise that 33,000 new members have been recruited during the past 12 months, and we have an absolute determination that we are going to beat that in the next 12 months as we look forward to Dublin.

President, it is an honour to serve the Commercial Services Section and this great Union. I would like to thank everybody for all their wonderful support. Thank you.  
*(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gary. Congress, we will now move on to Item 7, which involves Motion 120. London to move and second.

**INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: TAXATION & GENERAL  
TAXATION OF FARMLAND  
MOTION 120**

**120. TAXATION OF FARMLAND**

Congress is requested to campaign and lobby the Labour Party to implement a tax on farmland by way of Council Tax and Inheritance Tax.

This being a practical start to addressing the problem of inequality and tax avoidance.

*(Carried)*

BRO. V. THOMAS (London): Congress, I move Motion 120 – Taxation of Farmland. Congress, this motion originates from our members in Norfolk, where there are some extremely wealthy landowners, in addition to Her Majesty, but it is also where many of our members struggle to get by. It is not that we are bitter and twisted about this, but we are not exceedingly relaxed about the filthy rich, either. We are putting forward this motion because of a sense of injustice and a desire to right a wrong that is the inequality that exists across our country, and not just Norfolk. This is, then, a Norfolk perspective on a nationwide issue that requires a national solution, a solution by way of legislation. Others have raised this issue from other areas of the country and, remarkably, from across the political divide, proposing various forms of land value tax. This has found advocates among Parliamentarians from most mainstream political parties, including Andy Burnham from the Labour Party, Nick Boles from the Tories, Vince Cable from the Liberal Democrats, and Caroline Lucas from the Green Party. Also think tanks including Compass, OECD, the Institute of Fiscal Studies, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the IPPR and even the Bow Group, would you believe, have all made a case for this. The TUC and Occupy have called for it as well.

Why? There is currently no tax on empty land in the UK, making it more lucrative to acquire and hold empty land than it is to develop it for people to live on or work on. Land is visible and fixed, an immovable asset that cannot be hidden or off-shored, which makes a land value tax hard to avoid. Land values change, though, without landowners doing anything to the land. For example, London Underground Jubilee Line's extension, which cost the taxpayer – that's me and thee -- £3.5 billion, resulted in a £10 billion to £13 billion increase in land values along the route. You will not be surprised to learn that we don't have a Tube system in Norfolk. I mentioned it because we are in London Region. As an aside, I did get a phone call from a member in London Region asking for face-to-face advice on pensions. I said, "Fine." He said, "Well, where's the nearest Tube station to Norwich?" It's not quite so funny, actually, because I got to speak to him he said he was working full-time in north London but living in a shed in the bottom of someone's garden. That gets to the very crux of what this motion is about.

This motion is not proposing a new tax on home owners but on landowners. Given that two-thirds of all of the UK's 60 million acres of land are owned by just 0.36% of the population, this tax is one that our members can live on. Given the widespread support that a land value tax has, you'd be forgiven for wondering why on earth it does not already exist. I would suggest that it is indicative of just how powerful that 0.36% of the population really are. It is also evidence of a bottleneck preventing us from achieving greater equality across the UK. That is exactly what this motion seeks to address. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Vaughan. Secunder?

SIS. C. HOLLAND (London): Comrades, I am not going to keep you too long on this motion because Vaughan has done a spectacular job. I am seconding Motion 120 – Taxation of Farmland. I am asking for the CEC to lobby the Government to look at the taxation system that allows farmland to be exempt from tax in some cases, as Vaughan has already explained. I know it is difficult for farmers to manage in some cases, but exempting them from tax is unfair on the rest of us taxpayers. I urge this matter to be looked at as a matter urgency. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Cathy. Does anyone wish to come in on this debate?

BRO. A. DE-BANKS (GMB Wales & South West): Congress, I seriously wonder if the mover, the seconder and many others who be supporting this motion are actually thinking of its effects on the small farmers, because that is what we have to worry about – the small famers, not the big landlords. *(Applause)* Ultimately, the big landowners will be able to dodge these taxes. They do it now and they will be able to do it for years to come because there is no political will to force people to pay their taxes. Gary Barlow is a clear sign of this. I have members in my branch whose families are farmers. They are small-scale, family farms of around a couple of hundred acres. It sounds like a lot but it is not. That's 300 head of sheep. One man looks after 300 head of sheep. Farmers struggle. We all struggle, but that's not the point. The point is do we want to be important ever more greater quantities of food from abroad to support our population? Do we want to force more of these small-scale farmers to sell their land to these large landowners? That is my concern. Otherwise, I do support the motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Aaron, you don't want me to take a separate vote on this? *(No audible response)* Okay. Does anyone else wish to come in?

BRO. P. DUFFY (GMB Scotland): Comrades, as you can guess, I come from Scotland. The land should belong to the people, not to anyone else. It should be nationalised the same as every other thing. What gives anybody the right to own the land? The land is there to produce for the good of the people, not for the private pockets for anybody. I know you are talking about taxation, small farmers and all the rest of it. I am talking about the land in Scotland. Right now they are talking about changing how much land people can own. The only people who should own the land is us. Thanks.

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Pat. Anyone else? *(No response)* Vaughan, do you wish to reply to our Young Member from South Western?

BRO. V. THOMAS (London): Congress, in exercising my right of reply, let me say that this motion is not focused on people who are struggling. This is focused on landowners. I know that it is an archetypal vision, but it is focused on big landowners. You cannot avoid a land value tax. There's no Gary Barlow, no ducking and diving with regard to that. It's a huge injustice. 0.36% of the population owns 60% of the land. This motion is not directed at small landowners or small farmers. It is certainly not directed at people with allotments. No. It is big landowners. That is the essence of what this motion is about. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I now put this motion to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Those against? Carried.

*Motion 120 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to Social Policy General, which includes Motions 196 and 197. These motions will be moved by London and Midland.

**SOCIAL POLICY: GENERAL**  
**WATER CANNONS**  
**MOTION 196**

**196. WATER CANNONS**

Congress is deeply concerned at the proposal by the Mayor of London and some Senior Police Officers and Commissioners to introduce water cannons at great cost into the realm of policing.

This would be a massive escalation into civil policing something that is hard to justify especially when viewed against the known violations by the police in many just demonstrations especially when the police accept they would have been useless in the recent riots and similar events.

The concern is they would be brought into play in industrial disputes and other civil events like the student demos against the University fees.

It is an accepted fact that they can and do cause serious injury not only to the targeted group but also to innocent bystanders.

As a consequence Congress would urge the CEC to press the Labour leadership to oppose their introduction and to ban them when in Government.

WHITTINGTON SERVICES BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. H. MEHMET (London): Congress, I am moving Motion 196 – Water Cannons. The Mayor of London has announced that he has agreed to support the Metropolitan Police to purchase water cannons to help enhance their response to riots or other serious and exceptional public disorder. The final decisions on whether to licence the water cannons on the UK mainland now rests with the Home Secretary. Not only is this a disgrace, but it is also going too far. This is a massive elevation into civil policing.

Many police officers have said that water cannons would have been useless in the recent riots and events. If this unelected Government had not made such cuts in policy, then maybe there would have been enough police officers on the ground to diffuse the riot situation in the first place. Many protests in London are well attended and are carried out without any incidents. The problems that arise are from people who join the rallies and marches only to start trouble, and are not there to fight for the cause peacefully as other people are. But by introducing these water cannons, such an introduction will not deter those people who just want to cause trouble. It will cause injury to innocent people who are caught up in the disturbance. We have seen the injury caused by an innocent bystander by the police with batons and hoses, and they are unable to pick out the people who are causing the trouble from the innocent. We have woken up to the fact that the police are very heavy-handed when dealing with public marches. Given the fact that the demonstrates more often than not have no intention of causing harm, the introduction of the water cannons will lead to many serious injuries and could even cause death. Congress urges the CEC to press the Labour Party leadership to oppose the introduction of the water cannons by the Government. Thank you. I look forward to your support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Hasan. Maybe we should turn it on Boris first. Let him try it out.

BRO. M. JAMES (London): Congress, I am seconding Motion 196 – Water Cannons. I am seconding this motion as it is yet another threat to the peaceful demonstrator who takes to the streets to protest. The way I look at the introduction of water cannons is to frighten and silence the peaceful protester off the streets and, further, to take from us the freedom of speech. We should be able to demonstrate peacefully without fear of being washed away with 18 litres of water being aimed at us per second because we don't agree with the Government.

As we all know, dear old Boris is divorced from reality and thinks that this is a good deterrent against trouble erupting during marches and rallies. What Boris refuses to accept is that most of the trouble on marches and demos normally kicks off from the mismanagement and bullying tactics of the police

and other authorities. (*Applause*) I do accept that on odd occasions there may be an element of seasonal troublemakers, but why should the majority be, possibly, injured because of a few fools. Would the use of water cannons stop there? Would the use of them be sanctions for normal police work, for example, crowd control at sporting events? It's a lot safer for the police to sit in the back of a truck rather than be on horseback.

We must lobby the Labour leadership and the TUC to agree that these evil machines are never seen on the streets of modern-day Britain. We must also, as a Union, educate the people of London and all the *Sun* readers in the UK that Boris is not a laugh. Boris is not funny and Boris is not a clown. Boris is a scheming dictator who does not care about the poor, the homeless and especially the working classes. (*Applause*) Boris the buffoon will stop at nothing to get his right-wing policies across. He only has one agenda, and that is control. Comrades, we must all stick together to get this message across. I urge Congress to pass this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I call Motion 197 – Midland Region to move.

### **CAMPAIGN TO KEEP THE LOCAL HIGH STREET SHOP AND SHOP WORKERS' JOBS MOTION 197**

#### **197. CAMPAIGN TO KEEP THE LOCAL HIGH STREET SHOP AND SHOP WORKERS' JOBS**

This Conference notes the decline of the high street shops, partly through the increase in online shopping sites such as Amazon and E-Bay.

This Conference calls on the CEC to run a campaign in partnership with the Labour Party to promote the benefits of local high street shops and their staff in serving the local communities.

GMB MID Lincs BRANCH  
*Midland & East Coast Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. D. JOBSON (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I move Motion 197 – Campaign to keep the local High Street shop and Shop Workers' Jobs.

President and colleagues, the current Government have said that the economy is recovering, but we don't buy their lies. Let's face it. There's not much that we can afford to buy these days, certainly not after we have paid for the bare essentials and necessities, which are increasingly becoming a struggle to pay for. So it is not at all surprising that people are looking at making as many savings as they can in all areas of household spending, and they really can't be blamed for this approach. High Street shops have noticed a drop in footfall, even at the times of year when they have traditionally experienced an increase. In the run-up to last Christmas, the weather was blamed for a drop in footfall. Over Easter and bank holiday weekends this year, so far, also less High Street trade had been noticed. The purchasing power of the public has still not recovered, and the Con-Dem's draconian austerity measures certainly are not helping vast areas of the country and its economy.

Inflation has made spending on some items so difficult that, perhaps, the definition of what is a luxury item needs redefining. Decent wages for all would help bring back consumer confidence. Surely, the capitalists ought to understand this. If they would all reduce the amount of profits they make and deposit in off-shore accounts, they would find that people would be far more willing and able to spend more money thereby driving the economy forward, but it is important that we look after our local economies just as much as we look after the national economy. This is something that Amazon has very little interest in helping with, certainly from what we have seen and heard, anyway.

Before I digress too far, as you can see, there is a whole range of other campaigns and resolutions, both existing policy and newly-accepted motions, from the GMB which tie into this motion.

Congress, we call on the CEC, in partnership with the Labour Party, to promote the benefits and the necessity of high street shops in serving and maintaining our communities, providing local jobs for our friends, our families and our communities. Please support. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, David. Well done. Seconder?

BRO. P. EYRE (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I second Motion 197. It is easy to sit on a settee and do your shopping without any hassle of going anywhere. For some people it is their only way to fit everything into a week or a means of having a bit more time to relax, or maybe they have physical difficulties in getting to the shops. Have you thought what it is doing to local jobs and communities by doing most of your shopping online? If we stop using our high street shops, we run the risk of putting more people out of work, which will weaken our local economy and put further stress on families and communities. Please support. Thank you. (*Applause*)

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

BRO. M. SAYWELL (London): Congress, I am speaking in favour of Motion 196 – Water Cannons. Congress might be interested to know that today Boris Johnson’s office has confirmed that they are considering doing a deal to buy three water cannons for London. The justification that the police are using to persuade the Home Office to purchase these water cannons is due to anticipated street protests against austerity measures. Basically, they are saying that they want to put people off protesting against the cuts that we are seeing every day, people protesting, fighting back and standing up to the Tories. They want to put us off that fight back. We must oppose the introduction of water cannons in London and elsewhere in the UK.

BRO. D. HAMBLIN (GMB Wales and South West): Congress, I am speaking in support of Motion 196 – Water Cannons. We heard earlier in the Congress about the commitment of this Union to fighting fascism in all its forms. If my experience of working with the anti-fascist Movement has taught me anything, it is that the police show a greater degree of alacrity in targeting peaceful protesters than fascist aggressors. Water cannons will be used at these events, and I am almost certain that they will not be used against the likes of the EDL or Britain First. They will be used on anti-fascists. They will be used on trade unionists and they will be used on socialists who are doing nothing more than trying to fight for the right for people to live in harmony with each other. Therefore, I would strongly urge you to support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David. Is there anyone else wanting to speak?

BRO. J. OSBORNE (London): Congress, I was going to say what the first speaker said, but it is quite obvious why Boris has bought these three water cannons, even though the Government have not passed the legislation yet. It is because on 10<sup>th</sup> July we are marching for our fair rights and fair pay.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jamie. Congress, let me put Motions 196 and 197 to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? Carried.

*Motion 196 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 197 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I now move to item 9 to Rights at Work, Motions 80, 81 and 83.

**EMPLOYMENT POLICY: RIGHTS AT WORK  
A FAIR DAY'S PAY FOR A FAIR DAY'S WORK  
MOTION 80**

**80. A FAIR DAY'S PAY FOR A FAIR DAY'S WORK**

This Conference agrees that workers should be paid for all the time that they work. It is common practice in call centres to require staff to be in for at least 15 minutes prior to their actual start time so that they are "ready" to take calls at the allotted time. We say this is an outrage and that these people – who are generally on minimum wage, quite possibly agency workers – are paid for all the time they are actually working whether that's preparing for, taking the calls and including the time they spend after the end of their shift closing their final call.

SOUTH WALES POLICE BRANCH  
*Wales & South West Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. G. BRINKWORTH (GMB Wales and South West): Congress, I move Motion 80 – A Fair Day's Pay for a Fair Day's Work. President and delegates, it is common practice for call centres to require staff to be in for at least 15 minutes prior to their actual shift start time so that they are 'ready' to take calls at the allotted time. These workers, who are generally on the minimum wage and often temporary contracts, are routinely disciplined for failing to arrive early for the start of their shift. Of course, we all know that repeated disciplinaries quickly lead to dismissal, and all for not giving up at least 15 minutes of each working day for free. For call-centre workers, this free work could also be closing calls at the end of their shift, which could be another 15 minutes unpaid work. So over the average week, the company gets up to 150 minutes for free. Over the year, that can amount to a staggering 120 hours or a saving of £780 from each worker, assuming that they are on the minimum wage. We say that this is an outrage.

People should be paid for all the time they are actually working, whether it is preparing for, taking the calls or the time they spend at the end of their shift closing their final call. But, colleagues, it is not just call centres which are exploiting their staff in this way.

Let's look at the care industry as another example. This is an industry where zero-hour contracts are the norm. These so-called self-employed workers, who don't get paid public holidays, annual leave, let alone sick leave, are expected to give up their own time to complete training – their own time! – because their employers claim it is required for them to be able to do their job better, whereas the real reason is that without having enough staff with certain qualifications this affects the registration of their workplace. When it is a private company, that means the profit margin. It was not so long ago that having training, whatever the training, meant that your employer paid for it and gave you the time to do it. It is also common practice in this sector not to pay for the time spent when travelling between the homes of the people they provide care for. Again, we are talking about people working on the minimum wage, not a living wage, on temporary or zero-hour contracts, who are reluctant to speak up or rock the boat because they work on a basis of 'take it or leave it'. They can't speak out and say "Enough is enough", but we can. So let's lobby the next Labour government to ensure that all workers get paid a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. I support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder.

BRO. P. HUGHES (GMB Wales & South West): Congress, I second Motion 80 – A Fair’s Day’s Pay for a Fair Day’s Work. President, this motion highlights the vast increase in exploitation of employees who are continually working for absolutely nothing. Call centre employees are expected to be at their work stations ready to start taking calls as soon as their shift begins. This requires them to get to work sometimes up to 15 to 20 minutes early to sign or check in, and then get to their locations of work, wherever they may be within these vast call-centre buildings. They then have to prepare their equipment before the first calls come through.

Some of these employees were interviewed on a review undertaken, and the outcome found that each call centre employee worked on average up to 30 or 40 minutes unrecorded and uncompensated work each week. Employees should monitor their workplaces and employees’ working hours to ensure that employees do not engage in pre or post-shift work, or other work outside of regular scheduled shift times, unless, of course, the employee wants to pay them for this timed work. If these employees continue to work during non-shift working hours, the employer should still be required to pay. Congress, employers should pay for all time actually worked by hourly-paid workers. For salaried employees this is not such an issue as such workers are paid a set rate regardless of their working hours each week.

Congress, temporary and agency workers continue to be targeted and exploited in the workplace. This is not, by any means, an isolated issue to call centres. Many companies are taking advantage of their employees, but some starter time is expected before an employee can begin work. Care homes, manufacturing sites, distribution and home delivery drivers are affected, and the list could go on.

If anyone works before and after their contracted paid hours they should be compensated from the time they arrive into the building. Please support Motion 80. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: We now come to Motion 81, to be moved by GMB Wales & South West.

## **A LIVING WAGE CAMPAIGN MOTION 81**

### **81. A LIVING WAGE CAMPAIGN**

This Conference is aware the GMB has campaigned for many years for the introduction of a national minimum wage that would assist with the elevation of poverty and to remove the exploitation of employees by their employers. Those on the right of the Conservative Party argue that the introduction of the national minimum wage would lead to many company closures and mass unemployment, the GMB is proud to say that those doom and gloom merchants did not prevail and that hundreds and thousands of low paid part time workers mainly women, have benefited as a result of the introduction of the national minimum wage, however, it has become clear that the level set for the NMW is too low with many people in work still having to rely upon benefits to keep their heads above water. We therefore call upon the next Labour Government to implement the Living Wage to stop poverty pay and to stop the subsidising by the tax payer of low pay paid by unscrupulous employers.

MOTIL PLASTICS BRANCH

(*Carried*)

BRO. M. CAMERON (GMB Wales and South West): Congress, I move Motion 81 on A Living Wage Campaign. President and delegates, those who work hard should be able to provide for their families and enjoy a decent standard of living, without the fear of being on the breadline. Suppressing wage levels below that baseline impacts beyond the suffering of the family unit, but also affects the wider community as anti-social behaviour and crime rates abound when people are

struggling to make ends meet. The consequence of this is that pressure is placed upon service areas, such as policing, which could be avoided by paying a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. The gulf between the rich and the poor in Britain is far too vast, and child poverty is experienced on an ever-increasing scale.

As far back as only 1997, some jobs were advertised for as little as one pound an hour. The introduction of the National Minimum Wage has served to improve the living standards of some low-paid workers, whilst having no negative effect upon employment levels. However, low pay remains a serious problem. The Tory counsel of despair has been firmly cast away by the evidence of more than a decade of minimum wage application, but the fight for fair pay has yet to be won. A living wage has to be introduced to supplement the National Minimum Wage of £6.31 an hour currently. It goes hand in glove with any sense of justice, and a belief in the dignity of work. Not only does the payment of a living wage also serve these purposes, but it also makes good business too. It improves staff loyalty, boosts morale and increases productivity and enhances spending power which, in turn, injects more money into the local economy with all of the obvious multiplier benefits that this brings.

Several Labour councils have led the way on a living wage, with it being introduced in towns and cities such as Lewisham, Glasgow, Cardiff, Oxford, Lambeth and Preston, to name but a few. Others, regrettably, have failed to seize the opportunity, although this continues to be a key GMB campaigning objective for our negotiators. All of us need to throw our weight behind this campaign, and we need to broaden the group of public sector beneficiaries and insist upon a procurement process that supports living wage employers bidding for public contracts.

This motion justifiably calls upon any future Labour Government to implement a living wage. After all, Labour brought in the minimum wage, and the logical next step would be for it to make provision for a higher rate which would help some of the poorest wage earners in society to do better.

The roots of the Labour Party were firmly linked to the movement for change. Taking on grassroots campaigns like the living wage one are crucial to the realisation of this objective.

In the meantime, we must not overlook the importance of policing and enforcing the minimum wage, making sure that it keeps its value in real terms, but also identifying bad business practice too.

At the heart of any campaign must be an ethical argument for preventing in-work poverty. The fact that some 60% of children in poverty grow up in a working household is nothing short of a national scandal. Citizens UK argue that, over the past 10 years, 45,000 families have been lifted out of working poverty as a direct result of receiving the living wage, with over £210 million of increased wages being put into the pockets of low-paid workers. Conference, the present day floor in Britain is too low, and is in clear need of reform. The minimum wage has been of value, but failed to meet its objectives of alleviating poverty and reducing unemployment. The amount owed to banks has trebled in the past 10 years, highlighting the need for a living wage as the difference between disposable income and household essentials becomes a bigger barrier as time moves on.

Congress, even that great socialist, David Cameron, said in 2010: "The time for the Living Wage has come", but this rag, tag and bobtail Government have done absolutely nothing. Thank you.

**BRO. D. HAMBLIN (GMB Wales and South West):** Congress, I second Motion 81 – a Living Wage Campaign. A Living Wage campaign undercuts one of the greatest travesties that we have seen in the last few years for young people in this country – the shocking differentials in the National Minimum Wage. Trade unionists are strong believers in the right wage for the job, and it should be a

living wage. We have Government-mandated minimum wages which directly penalise young workers. A flat living wage which cuts across all of these differentials would address that entirely.

Currently, we have the shocking situation where young workers are doing the same jobs as others, who may be six months older than them, but are paid 20% an hour less. This is a disgrace and a scandal. A living wage ensures that they are able to work with dignity, because the food in young workers' mouths and the roofs over their heads are no cheaper because they are young workers. That is something about which we must stand loud and proud and say that here. Please support a living wage campaign. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I now move to Motion 83, and it is for Yorkshire to move.

## **LIVING WAGE MOTION 83**

### **83. LIVING WAGE**

This Conference, when union representatives negotiate with their companies on pay and conditions for their members, it should be union policy that the living wage is part of every claim.

YORK GENERAL BRANCH  
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

*(Carried)*

BRO. J. RUSSELL (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Congress and delegates, I move Motion 83. Whilst it is good to hear that there are some employers that have already signed up to paying the living wage, there are many more out *there* who still believe that the minimum wage is enough. Well, quite frankly, we know it is not!

Let's be honest. There are thousands of good, hardworking, underpaid men and women in the workforce who, under this Government, have been made to feel, whatever the wage, lucky to have a job. The fear of losing that job is like some kind of gagging order. It keeps people quiet. This prevents people from asking for more. That's why we, the GMB, need to be out *there*, up front, speaking out for our members. When employers at the negotiating table tell us that their offer is the least they can get away with, we need to be there to tell them that the least we will accept is a living wage. I did not write much else. I didn't know what else to write.

I remember the times when – this applies and applied to a lot of people – they hid behind the sofa or not answered the door because you knew that whoever was knocking on that door wanted some money, or a letter ended up on your doorstep telling you that the bailiffs are coming in a few days to take away everything that you have worked for. In this day and age, living in one of the richest economies in the world, it is not good enough that people still live like that. *(Applause)* We, the GMB, must continue and strive to be a voice for our members and make sure that people get a living wage. Thank you. *(Applause and cheers)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder.

BRO. M. HURST (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I second Motion 83, the Living Wage. When union reps negotiate with companies on pay it should be Union policy that the living wage is part of every claim. I totally agree with that, but what is the living wage? It was said the other day, "Never mind £7.55, never mind £8.55, but what's wrong with £10 an hour?" There's nothing wrong with that. That's absolutely brilliant if we could get it. When the Labour Party is returned to power

next year, the GMB should be pushing to have the living wage replacing the National Minimum Wage. We ask the GMB to push the Labour Party to make it illegal for companies to pay less than the living wage. Please support. Thank you.

*(Applause)*

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

SIS. S. NICHOLLS (North West & Irish): Congress, I am supporting Motion 83 – Living Wage – because I am living in poverty at the moment. I earn £6.49 an hour for 12 hours a week. I have approximately £85 for the week. I have to pay electricity, rent, council tax, water, food and essentials. Thank God I haven't got gas as well. I am struggling, and I work for a family company that earn a hell of a lot of money but don't care about the staff at all. I want to support the living wage so that I can live a proper and happy life. Thank you. *(Applause)*

BRO. J. WHISTLECRAFT (London): Congress, I am one of these call centre workers who have been referred to. I have to be in 15 minutes before my time to be able to log on to be ready to start receiving a call. However, at the end of the day or week, I don't get that back. Why should we have to be in before our time just to be ready to start on our time? I think this is wrong. I am not one of these temporary or contracted workers. I work full time, but it still affects me in the same way. I may get a slightly different wage to them, but the effects of working this free time for them and not getting it back is, I think, unfair. I support.

SIS. C. SIBLEY (GMB Wales & South West): Congress, I was not going to come to the rostrum again, but I just want to make this point on that note. What would the employer's insurance company say if a member of staff had an accident because they were in early, outside of their contracted hours? Would they be covered? Contact their insurance companies. See how they feel about it and get them to respond to the company. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Anyone else? *(No response)* Congress, I put Motions 80, 81 and 83 to the vote. Those in favour, please show? Anyone against? Carried.

*Motion 80 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 81 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 83 was CARRIED.*

## **PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION REPORT**

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to item 10 – Public Services Section Report. I call on Brian Scrutton to report back from yesterday's Public Services Section Conference. Brian.

BRO. B. STRUTTON (National Secretary, Public Services): Congress, I am reporting back from yesterday's Public Services Conference to today's Congress. We had a busy and successful day yesterday. We had 300 people with us for the day. Our Conference was Chaired by Mary. We are so lucky to have Mary leading our Public Services Section. Our thanks go to Lorraine Parker for stepping in once or twice when Mary took a break.

We debated 43 motions yesterday; 42 were carried and one was lost. The motion that was lost was a call for a strike levy, which we sought referral on. The region would not refer and the motion was lost. Of those that were carried, we covered some important themes in public services. We talked about ending austerity cuts, we talked about bringing public services back into public ownership, we

spoke about lifting the public services pay freeze, we spoke about defending the NHS, we spoke about proper funding for the care sector, a proper public-housing policy, returning to the School Support Staff negotiating body and allowing the public sector to re-negotiate damaging PFI contracts. We also looked at some slightly more specialised as well. We learnt about the intricacies of bus driver hours regulations. We heard about something called the Bellwin Scheme. I am not sure that even now I understand what that is. We were also told about the problems that polyester work wear can cause for our women members.

We had reports from officers on the NHS, schools, the care sector, contractors, the justice sector, further and higher education and local government. We had a word from the General Secretary and he reminded us that we have a big dispute in local government ahead of us, and that it is everybody's duty to get out *there* and make sure that we turn a big "Yes" vote out when the ballot papers hit the doorsteps at the end of this week.

We had four external speakers who attended our Conference. We had Sue Noyes, who runs the East Midlands Ambulance Service. She came and spoke to us about partnership working with the GMB. Being from the East Midlands Ambulance Service, I think she was rather surprised when, in the Q&A session, she was asked why it takes ambulances so long to get around the Lake District, but nevertheless she coped pretty well.

We heard from Roger Edwards, the managing director of BIFFA, who came and spoke to us about recycling and waste policy. I think he was a bit surprised at the level of expertise that we had in the audience, who came up and told him about waste and recycling policy.

We had Emma Reynolds, the Labour Shadow Housing Minister, who came and spoke, not surprisingly, about housing. I was really pleased that when asked about this, she said she was happy to talk about council housing, not social housing, not affordable housing but council housing. (*Applause*) Good for her.

We also heard from Sadiq Khan, the Shadow Secretary for Justice, who set out the Labour vision for a fair society. He got into a little trouble during the Q&A session where he was nearly physically assaulted for overlooking a particular question in his answers. We just managed to hold the audience back at that stage. In all honesty, it was quite good.

One negative I do have to report back to everybody is that our day was too busy. Even though we finished our conference late, we had to rush half-a-dozen motions through, and I apologise to the people for whom those motions were very important and to the rest of our delegates as well. Unfortunately, we had to miss out a key session altogether. That session was our draft manifesto for public services. That is quite an important topic for us. We had to park that as a work-in-progress document. Public services are not just for the Public Services Section. They are everybody's public services. Therefore, you will find our draft Public Services Manifesto at page 226 in your Final Agenda. It is for everybody to look at and everybody can send in their comments to me about it.

On the positive side of our day, and this really was a strong positive, we had, I think, the best contributions from delegates that I have ever known, and it was those delegates and their contributions that made it such a successful day.

Congress, despite all the Tory attacks on our members and our Union – we have now had nearly 700,000 job losses in the public sector under this terrible Government – we have managed to maintain the level of GMB Public Services membership at over 320,000. That is a fantastic retention

job that everybody is doing out *there*. We are still recruiting 3,000 new members a month into Public Services. I repeat, we have 3,000 new members a month coming into the GMB, looking for protection. Again, that is fantastic recruitment activity going on out *there* as well.

We fought on those members' behalves tooth and nail against every cut and every job loss. We have fantastic representational services as well. We have shown that, despite the attempts to finish us off, we are still alive and kicking. When our members vote to strike on 10<sup>th</sup> July, let's hope we give this Government the biggest bloody kicking that they have ever had. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Brian, I want to ask delegates if they have any questions?

BRO. D. GILLIGAN (London): Congress, I want to qualify a statement that was made yesterday regarding 45 dismissals in Ealing. There have not been 45 dismissals in Ealing. I spent the evening working with the Labour group down there. I spoke to the Leader of the Council in Ealing, a portfolio holder and the Director of Education. A statement has come out from the school that they want to consult with us regarding redundancies of our TAs. That seems to be an attack, as we had it in the conference yesterday, on all our TAs. Just to qualify, there have not been any dismissals. I am proud to welcome the Labour Group there because 97% of the authority are GMB members within the Labour Group, and we will not have these redundancies. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dean. Is there anyone else? (*No response*) Congress, I understand that we have a guest here who is doing a fringe this afternoon. His name is Ian Smith. Ian is the chairman of Four Seasons Healthcare. He is in the hall with us. Ian, where are you? I'm sure you are out there somewhere. He will be speaking at the fringe at lunch time. You will recall that we had our differences with Four Seasons which did not recognise unions before Ian became chairman. Now we have full recognition. (*Applause*) That he is here today tells you all you need to know. I welcome Ian Smith to Congress. Welcome. (*Applause*)

*The Public Services Section Report was CARRIED*

THE PRESIDENT: Now I want to go to item 11 – Social Policy: The National Health Service. I will be calling Motions 210, to be moved by Yorkshire; Motion 212, to be moved by Midland; Motion 213, London; Motion 214, Scotland; Motion 215, Midland; and Motion 217, Midland.

## **SOCIAL POLICY: NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE**

### **NHS CARE PROVISION**

#### **MOTION 210**

##### **210. NHS CARE PROVISION**

This Conference calls upon the GMB to applaud, publicise and adopt as policy the Labour Party policy in relation to the NHS.

Labour Party policy aims to keep the NHS as a public service and from “cradle to grave” as always. However, they also intend to provide health care in all settings, not just traditional settings. This will ensure that care for the elderly, disabled and all sorts of citizens will be provided for this at home, in a local authority run provision or anywhere else that the care needs to be provided under the remit “free at the point of delivery from the cradle to the grave.”

BARNSELEY HEALTH BRANCH  
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(*Carried*)

BRO. J. KITCHING (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I'm a first and last-time speaker. *(Applause)* My mate Jacko volunteered me to talk on this motion, because my mate, Jacko, is a bit of a joker, because he knows I don't do politics. I'm sorry about this, Paul. I don't do politics because I'm one of them people in life that thinks politics and trade unionism don't mix. That is something that me and Ed Miliband's got in common, because he thinks the same. *(Laughter and Applause)*

I'm going to ask you a question. When do you know a politician is lying?

THE PRESIDENT: This resolution is titled: "NHS Care Provision".

BRO. KITCHING: I've got to it now, Mary. I just thought I would do a bit of political bashing first. They do it from London. We do it from Yorkshire. I worked 11 years as a miner in the national coal industry before the Tories rampaged through the industry, shutting pit after pit after pit. But I'm not bitter about that. I'm going to tell you what I'm bitter about. After 13 years of Blair's New Labour, they did diddly-squat to stop that trend. That's what I'm bitter about, I can tell you. I've worked in the NHS for the last 26 years and in that time I've seen services out-sourced, PFI introduced and directors and serial managers giving themselves massive wage rises year after year after year. So when Labour gets in next year – I do believe that – let's hope that history doesn't repeat itself.

As a GMB member, I believe that we should use every tool at our disposal to save the NHS, even if it means using politics and whatever else it takes to stop the privatisation of our NHS.

Congress, let me leave you with a famous quote from a famous man – Nye Bevin: "The NHS will last as long as there is folk who are prepared to fight for it." Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder.

SIS. S. YOUNG (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I am a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I am seconding Motion 210 – NHS Care Provision.

Colleagues, I am proud to have worked in the NHS for 21 years and I am proud that our NHS is the envy of the world. Nye Bevan built something strong and special which has worked for 66 years, but what is the future for the NHS? If the Con-Dems get their way and win another election, our NHS will die, leaving us with private healthcare where private-sector health companies are waiting to cream as much profit as they can to line their own pockets from all who need and rely on our NHS. What's changed there? Nye Bevan said: "In order to broker a deal, they will stuff their mouths with gold." Already, in the care of the elderly, our parents and grandparents are paying for their own care, forcing them to sell their own homes and use their life savings to pay for care which is often insufficient due to poor working conditions that staff have to endure.

Let's not forget that our parents and grandparents paid contributions all of their working lives. As a result of Gideon's austerity measures, the Con-Dems are already considering ways for us all to pay to see our GP or to stay in hospital. This will prevent people from seeking help, leaving them vulnerable, without care, and may lead to unnecessary deaths. We all want healthcare free at the point of need, as Nye Bevan intended. This means care for the young, elderly, disabled and you. No one should pay for their care. No one should be vulnerable or worried about where their money will come from. When Nye Bevan established the NHS, as my colleague said, the NHS will last for as long as there are folk with the faith to fight for it. Come on, colleagues. Only we can save its life. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I call Motion 212.

## **PATIENTS DENIED KEY TREATMENTS DUE TO NHS COST CUTTING MOTION 212**

### **212. PATIENTS DENIED KEY TREATMENTS DUE TO NHS COST CUTTING**

This Conference calls for an end to growing numbers of patients being wrongly denied treatment because of costs and cuts.

Rationing of operations and denial of expensive drugs is forcing patients to endure pain, injury, disability, or even death because NHS Primary Care Trusts are ignoring evidence about effectiveness of certain treatments simply to balance their books.

LINCOLN TEC GENERAL & APEX BRANCH  
*Midland & East Coast Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. E. TAYLOR (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I move Motion 212: Patients Denied Key Treatments Due to NHS Cost Cutting. This Conference calls for an end to growing numbers of patients being wrongly denied treatment because of costs and cuts. Rationing of operations and denial of expensive drugs by PCTs is forcing patients to endure pain, injury, disability, or even premature death because primary care trusts are ignoring evidence about effective of certain treatments simply to balance their books.

Why should some trusts allow certain treatments, while others not? The decision to give life-saving or life-prolonging treatments should never be discarded purely because of costs. If there is a benefit to be gained, never mind the cost, it should be given and politics disregarded.

My father is currently facing a second battle with cancer, which is why this motion is important. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder.

SIS. N. OKURE (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I am seconding Motion 212: Patients Denied Key Treatments Due to NHS Cost Cutting. President and delegates, it is now certain that the next Government will need to find more funding for the NHS or accept significant cuts to services. Patients must not pay for the NHS's financial crisis. Funds should be spent intelligently by delivering care close to home and keeping patients with long-term conditions well and out of hospital. In the long term, this is the only way that the NHS can adapt to the needs of an ageing population. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I call Motion 213.

## **WAITING TIMES FOR NHS SERVICES AND THE LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT MOTION 213**

### **213. WAITING TIMES FOR NHS SERVICES AND THE LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT**

This Congress is asking the GMB to campaign for more streamlined services from our wonderful NHS to ensure our members are not losing their jobs due to the unacceptable amount of time it takes waiting for appointments right through from GP to Consultant to scans etc.

HAVINGING BRANCH

*(Carried)*

SIS. W. WHITTINGTON (London): Congress, I move Motion 213: Waiting Times for NHS Services and the Loss of Employment.

Congress and delegates, when our branch submitted this motion we were asked to clarify the content of it, and this set me thinking: What is it we are really asking for? What are we trying to say? First, please let me assure you that we are, in no way, denigrating our wonderful NHS. We are as proud of our NHS as ever. Unfortunately, things are going seriously wrong somewhere. What we are really concerned about is employees, especially our members, who are losing their jobs because of extensive and unacceptable waiting times for what should be routine or specialist appointments. Understandably, employers will not/cannot keep jobs open indefinitely.

We all appreciate the incredible pressures that the NHS is under. The occupancy rate at my local hospital is running at 98%. You may have heard of it: Queen's Hospital, Romford. Surely, it makes sense to try and get people back into the workplace as soon as possible having had tests, results and treatment, if necessary, completed in a reasonable length of time. I'm not talking about people with serious or degenerative illnesses here. In fact, we know that the NHS has an amazing track record in that area. This could be, in the end, a routine operation, treatment or medication needed. For example, one of our reps was just trying to get back to work but was told to get a certificate from his GP to confirm his fitness to work. The first available appointment was more than three-and-a-half weeks away, which, incidentally, the practice manager found completely acceptable.

Beyond this, apart from trying to get a GP's appointment, which is the first hurdle, this then leads to a consultant's appointment, scans, blood tests, x-rays and then back to the consultant. You may well be then met with: "Oh, no, dear. You need a different department." So you are referred back to your GP, which is another three-week wait, a referral to a different consultant, wait for an appointment and start the process all over again. This process can take months. Meanwhile, your employer is getting impatient. If you are lucky enough to have a sick-pay scheme, you might now be on half pay. The sick reviews are rolling by and you are well on the way to being out of work through lack of competency to fulfil your role. Eventually, a diagnosis is made and whatever treatment or operation is completed, you are on your way to recovery, but, maybe, without a job and a sick record that will look extremely poor to any prospective employer.

Again, another example comes from one of our members with knee problems. After nine months of to-ing and fro-ing to various consultants, she eventually got a basic MRI scan and a routine knee op followed. She then returned to work all in the space of 10 weeks. She was on the verge of losing her job. The result is that she is now on 18 months sick monitoring, and if she goes over the five days in that period, she will be back on a stage 3 review and could still lose her job. This could have been avoided if appointments were available and more streamlined. As I said before, this situation may be peculiar to the area in which I live due to the dense population, but I very much doubt it. Please, I ask you to support this motion, asking that the GMB campaigns for more streamlined appointments and services for the NHS to help keep members staying in employment, off benefits and also to ensure that employers understand the problems that their staff are encountering. Thank you.

*(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder.

SIS. D. PETERSON (London): Congress, I second Motion 213. The mover outlined the problems of our members being penalised due to the long waiting times to get through to see specialists and then to get treatment. The cutbacks are deeper and the volumes of people seeking treatment continue to grow. On top of this, employers are cutting the amount of days that an employee has off sick before triggering sickness reviews. One of the employers who I deal a lot with has got a six-day triggering point for the first sickness review. Every way they turn, they have hurdles to get over. These circles are vicious and something must be done. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I call Motion 214.

## **G.P. WAITING TIMES MOTION 214**

### **214. G.P. WAITING TIMES**

This Conference to look at why we have to wait seven to fifteen days to see a G.P. or a nurse at the doctors surgery.

Why is this going on?

If there is a need for more doctors and nurses then appoint them.

GLASGOW NURSES BRANCH  
*GMB Scotland*

*(Carried)*

SIS. A. DEAN (GMB Scotland): Congress, I am moving Motion 214 – GP Waiting Times. For some 25 years GP surgeries have been expanding their roles as the frontline of the NHS. GPs, as we all know, are the gatekeepers of specialist and emergency medical services, community nursing, health visiting and allied health profession services, first aid, assessment and prevention services for everything from infected toenails to strokes, maternity provision and palliative care. This list is far from comprehensive, but the issue here is that for many years GPs have been agreeing to do virtually anything for a price. They are, of course, expensive but highly valued external contractors to the NHS. In order to support their businesses, they need to agree to whatever their local health board asks of them, otherwise they will be seen as dinosaurs, their contracts stopped and staff made redundant.

Throughout the last 25 years, the needs of local community services have radically changed. People are now kept at home with conditions which would, previously, have been fatal or considered too difficult to be managed anywhere but in a hospital. Our communities are more diverse with services struggling to cope with transient families from around the world, all bringing various problems to be sorted out by the GP in the surgery in sometimes less than 10 minutes. This is a very tall order, indeed. There are many more people surviving into late old age with all the complex issues that come with negotiating family care, social work and private-care services. People commonly travel around the world for working and pleasure reasons. This, again, takes its toll on the GPs' workloads, with advice, testing and treatments all taking up their time. Escalations in numbers of people suffering mental health problems, many of whom would have lived previously within the confines of mental health hospitals, all take up lengthy consultation times. Of course, practice nurses have been taking up many of these challenges on behalf of GPs, but they also have targets to achieve bearing in mind the very rigid appointment times. They also provide triaging services and development, ensuring that only those who need a GP see a GP.

So what has happened to the system that was once one of the main flagship benefits of the NHS Act of 1946? Why is it that in many areas people cannot get an appointment with a GP or a practice nurse for over a week, or sometimes two? This always causes further complications for people who require changes to their prescriptions and further tests to prevent deterioration or need someone to save their life.

As my father's carer, I find it more and more difficult to meet the demands made on me when my father needed a GP appointment. I work full time. It became too difficult to be out of my workplace ad hoc to take him down to the surgery, so usually he would have to wait so long for the appointment that I would, invariably, have to contact the out-of-hours service before the due appointment date as his condition deteriorated so quickly. Due to his mental health problems, it was impossible for him to manage to get to the surgery in a taxi on his own, and he would not have been able to remember why he was there or, indeed, what happened when he got into the GP's room. So my father was seen at night by on-call doctors or ambulance staff, who were unable to access all of his medical history. It was ironic that, despite my history in the NHS, working as a specialist nurse with older people for the past 32 years, my father's health was left to chance on many occasions due to organisational failings.

The stress involved in having to repeat his details over and over was incredible at times. I can understand that people need to know what they are doing but, at times, I really felt that they were having a laugh at my expense. The bottom line is that we have too few GPs and nurses to do the jobs that we now need them to do in our communities. There needs to be a re-think of how primary care systems are set up and how the money invested is used to benefit more people, to reduce the stress which is seen as a barrier to improving services for the healthcare professions and for their families.

GP walk-in services are a definite step in the right direction but these would be very challenging to manage in rural areas. Services need to be designed around the needs of local populations and geographic locations. Family health services are the backbone of the NHS family and, in many areas, the system is broken. We deserve better. Thank you. (*Applause*)

BRO. P. BRESLIN (GMB Scotland): Congress, I am supporting Motion 214 – GP Waiting Times. GP waiting times are a disgrace. As we know, trying to see a doctor for yourself or, God forbid, your kids or family is a total waste of time. We don't call for a chat. We call because we have a problem with ourselves or with our family. We all know just how hardworking and diligent our GPs and their staff are, but we still need to be seen.

My wee granny 'phoned up for an appointment and was told "A week next Wednesday". She phoned back three days later to cancel the appointment. When asked why should she be cancelling it, she said, "It's okay. My foot turned black and fell off." (*Laughter*) When a doctor cannot see you or yours right away when you are actually ill, there is a knock-on effect. You go to your nearest A & E and wait for five hours to be told "Go back to your GP". Try telling them that your kids need help now. You are treated like you've got the dreaded lurgy. In fact, it might be better if you had it because at least you would get some attention.

The Government must look at the cause and address it, yet we know what the cause is and how to address it. More bloody GPs, more bloody nurses and more bloody staff! Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Pat. I call Motion 215 – Breast Screening – Age of Screening to be Lowered.

## **BREAST SCREENING – AGE OF SCREENING TO BE LOWERED MOTION 215**

### **215. BREAST SCREENING – AGE OF SCREENING TO BE LOWERED**

This Conference believes that the age of screening needs to be lowered. The age of people being diagnosed with breast cancer is on the increase. This can be prevented if we push to have the age for screening lowered.

Breast cancer rates in England have increased by 90% since records began in 1971. One in eight women in the UK will be diagnosed with breast cancer at some point in their lives. In 2009 more than 48,400 women were diagnosed with breast cancer in the UK – around 133 women a day. Around 370 men were diagnosed with breast cancer.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women in the UK – 31% of cancers diagnosed in women are breast cancer.

The NHS Breast Screening Programme screens around 1.6 million women a year. Women aged 50 to 70 who are registered with a GP are automatically invited for screening every three years. You will first be invited for screening between your 50<sup>th</sup> and 53<sup>rd</sup> birthday.

*(Carried)*

SIS. K. HUMPHREYS (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I move Motion 215, which calls for the age of breast cancer screening to be lowered. President and Congress, breast cancer is something that I am very aware of. Four of my family members have survived this killer disease. This means that I am considered at high risk of getting this cancer due to my family history. This means that I get access to services normally only available to women over 50, such as regular check ups at the breast clinic and screening by way of mammograms and genetic testing. It is brilliant. But why should these services only be available to me? I have been lucky in that I have had access to these services since turning 35. These services could save my life. So why reserve them for me because I may never contract this disease? Touch wood. Yet many other women of my age don't have access to these services. Why? Because we discriminate on the basis of age, because they are not old enough, they are too young and they are not in a high-risk bracket. Well, I think we all know that cancer doesn't knock on the victims' doors when they reach a certain age. It can happen at any time.

Screening for this disease should be available to all women and not just those of a certain age or with a certain history. We should have access to this service regardless. This is a campaign that we, the GMB Union, can lead the way on, working with our NHS and taking these recommendations to this and the next Government. We all know that cancer won't discriminate and neither should we.

I was going to finish my statement there, but I had to go to the clinic this week and I have since discovered that I am no longer eligible for genetic testing. This provision has now been taken away. Why? Because the NHS is now using a tool called the Manchester Screening System. This, basically, means that I will be awarded points relating to all family members who have had breast cancer. The younger they are, the higher I score. In order to qualify for genetic testing, I need to score 15. I score 14 with no option to overturn or appeal this decision. This scoring system is nothing more than a tool used to prevent high-risk women access to vital services due to the cuts forced on the NHS by Cameron and his sidekick Hunt. Yes, I did say "Hunt", Mum, not what you think I was saying. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder.

SIS. N. OKURE (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I am seconding Motion 215: Breast Screening – age of screening to be lowered. President and Congress, breast cancer is not common in young women. Because of this, being diagnosed at a young age can sometimes be a very isolating experience. For instance, you will be less likely to meet other women in a similar situation when attending clinic appointments. It can also mean making choices about your future far sooner than you may have expected. Together with breast cancer specialists and young women, breast cancer care has developed standards of care for younger women with breast cancer. They include the care and support that all young women with breast cancer should receive and the important topics that they may want to discuss with their treatment team. Young women can and do get breast cancer. While breast cancer in young people accounts for a small percentage of all breast cancer cases, the impact of the disease is significant. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Natalie. I call Motion 217.

### **1<sup>st</sup> HOUR FREE PARKING AT ALL NHS HOSPITALS MOTION 217**

#### **217. 1<sup>ST</sup> HOUR FREE PARKING AT ALL NHS HOSPITALS**

This Conference believes that all NHS hospital car parks should be free of charge for the first hour of parking.

We therefore instruct the CEC to lobby the relevant bodies and the Labour Party to bring this change into effect.

GMB MID LINCS BRANCH  
*Midland & East Coast Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. A. KLIMOWICZ (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause and Cheers)* Congress, I move Motion 217: 1<sup>st</sup> hour free parking at all NHS hospitals. President and delegates, we believe that it will make life easier for the patients and visitors. Even small help is always help. To have someone visit you after an operation is very important and visitors don't want to be restricted by time. For that reason, hospital parking could be friendlier for visitors. Why should patients have to think about money when they are going back home? It is supposed to be the Government's responsibility to give them the opportunity to go home without any obstructions. It is not enough that we are already paying for the NHS through our taxes. Free parking is available in GP surgeries, so why not in hospitals? Do we think that a few pounds are, like, nothing? Sometimes even three pounds can be very helpful for people on a low income, with terminal illness and on benefits or retirement when they have to attend hospital appointments. A free hour isn't going to damage a hospital's budget but it may change somebody else's life. It is the hospitals' role to help people. Please support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder.

BRO. J. SHORT (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I second Motion 217: 1<sup>st</sup> Hour Free Parking at all NHS Hospitals. Why do we have to say that? One hour's free parking! It should be free parking, shouldn't it? *(Cheers and applause)* Why do I have to say that? I wonder who comes up with these schemes. Do they sleep at night or what? Anyhow, I'll get on with it.

President and delegates, currently there is no free parking at hospitals. It can be very expensive if you are ill and need to go to hospital to have a lengthy wait until you are seen and had treatment.

Worrying about your health is enough without having to worry about the costs of parking. I paid £5.70 at Grimsby Hospital, and it was an emergency as well. Free car parking should be reinstated now. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I totally agree. Does anyone wish to come in on the debate?

BRO. I. BOUNDS (GMB Wales and South West): Congress, I am speaking in support of Motion 217. Just to pick up on what Miles has just said, actually, we do have free parking. We have free NHS parking in most of Wales. There are four remaining hospitals in Wales that still have existing contracts, but every other hospital is free. The Welsh Assembly passed that in 2008. We should have it in the UK. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Anyone else?

BRO. DOUGIE SLATER (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress and President, trying to get a doctor in Yorkshire is a pain in the arse. When you ring up, you have a right job in getting through, and the problem is that they only open five days a week. The other two days they are closed. If you have managed to get an appointment, you are talking about three weeks. They have a walk-in system where you can actually go in if you are in agony between appointments, but sometimes the appointments don't turn up but you still have to wait. I waited for two-and-a-half hours last time I went. Finally, I was referred to hospital and I went into an A&E department. What an experience that was. It is like going into a MASH unit. There was a doctor and nurses. I don't know how they deal with what they see. It's horrible. I got covered in blood at the finish. A lady opposite me had Alzheimer's who pulled something out of her arm and there was blood everywhere. In fact, when I got home that night I had to burn my shirt because it was saturated with blood. The thing that annoys me – if I had loads of money, but I'm an old-age pensioner, I would be in BUPA – is that I would have been there in a day and treated in a waiting room where we wouldn't have to stand up. It is absolutely ridiculous. It is the poor people again who are getting penalised. It is those with cash who get better looked after.

THE PRESIDENT: Dougie, you went in with one complaint but you ended up with two: a pain in the arse. Right? (*Laughter*) Thanks, Doug. Anyone else? Come on, or for ever hold your peace.

BRO. P. DUFFY (GMB Scotland): Congress and President, I would like to speak regarding the breast-screening process. I lost my mother to this cancer and I have two sisters, one younger and one older. They are in the right age bracket to get the screening. But what about the younger ones? Cancer doesn't recognise any age, as has already been stated. But if we had the younger ones being screened at an early age, it could be caught and prevented. Surely, prevention is better than cure at an early stage. If it is prevented, they don't have to have the treatment. It should be cheaper for the NHS. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Is there anyone else? Come along, Dougie.

BRO. D. HENRY (North West & Irish): Congress, I am an ex-serviceman and have 37 years in the Health Service. It is interesting listening to what has been said. I am very fortunate. I can go and see my doctor any morning of the week. If I need an appointment because I am working, I have to make an appointment, but I can go between 9 o'clock and 11 o'clock and there are three GPs available, and it is a very large area. Yet down the road you have to ring up, like people have said this morning, to get an appointment a week later. So the situation does move around in different areas.

On the breast cancer one, we have recently had a 19 year old girl who lived across in the Wirral, and the matter – that it should be free at the point of need, not age – was raised in the House of Commons recently. Unfortunately, the girl died but it has been knocked back.

I am old enough to remember my mother having to save money for me to go to the doctor because it was half-a-crown in 1946, which was before the Health Service, and everything else was “Go to Boots” or “Go to Timothy Whites”. You didn’t go to the doctor because you couldn’t afford to do it. It is amazing what is going on, but it is not all going to change when Mr. Miliband comes back tomorrow. It just can’t do it.

Car parking. Once the health authorities were dissolved in 1991 and trusts were set up to compete for patients for funding, that’s when these people came in and they make a lot of money. The hospital that I go to is £4, and I am registered disabled. There is no discrimination. You still have to pay. It depends on the country.

The other thing that concerns me a lot now are the drop-in centres and the PCTs. They are closing the PCTs and they did take a lot of pressure off the hospitals. My local hospital opened it had 840 beds in 1979. It finished up with 1,240. They are now building a new one. Do you know how many beds there are going to be? Six hundred! It just sounds like Maggie Thatcher because she closed five hospitals in Liverpool, the reason being the population was falling, which was a load of tosh. I see the red light. Thank you, Mary. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dougie. Anyone else?

BRO. N. HOLMAN (GMB Wales and South West): Congress, Motion 217 does not go far enough. In Wales we have a Labour Government, and that Labour Government have insisted that all parking in hospitals has got to be free. My colleague mentioned earlier that we only have a few hospitals left that still charge. Unfortunately, they are in contract, but as soon as those contracts finish, parking will be free.

David Cameron, these hospitals belong to us. We attend them when we need to. Why should we have to pay? Hospital parking should be free for everybody who needs it. We shouldn’t only have to have one hour free. It should be totally free. *(Applause)*

Can I ask our employee, Ed Miliband, if we vote you back in we want free parking in our hospitals as soon as possible. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Let me thank all colleagues.

BRO. S. GARELICK (London): Congress, I just want to address free parking and breast cancer very quickly. Parking in hospitals in London when private-hire drivers are sent to do collections, in some cases, like the Royal Free, it is five minutes. In that time, the driver has got to leave his car, go and find the patient and then leave or face a £60 to £100 fine. That is not only offensive but it is ridiculous in this day and age. For a driver to lose his entire income so that a hospital can make money off the back of that is foul.

Turning to breast cancer, last year I lost my sister-in-law to breast cancer at a very young age, and it could have been caught. What made it worse was that NICE would not give the medication that she needed to keep going. That is a travesty in this day and age where there is no medicine and no drugs to give to people the right to life that they deserve in this country. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Colleagues, I made you aware at the start of Congress that I would let you know if and when we are bringing forward some motions. I know that London and Midland regions are aware that this afternoon we will be bringing forward Motions 249 to 254. So I will not be in the Chair because I am going to visit a member of this Union who is sick – a regional president – but Malcolm will be in the Chair and he will be starting dead on time. So London and Midland regions are aware. Thank you.

I know we have given him a welcome earlier, but I am afraid to say that Ian Smith was not in the Hall. Ian, welcome to our Congress and thank you for working with the GMB. (*Applause*)

I now call Martin Jackson on Motions 210, 212, 213 and 214.

BRO. M. JACKSON (CEC, Public Services): President and Congress, I would like to thank delegates for providing a fascinating and in-depth debate about the NHS both yesterday and today. I would like to thank Rehana for her concerted work in the NHS at national level, negotiating with our lovely sister unions, to try and get the best deals that we can.

The CEC is supporting Motions 210, 212, 213 and 214 with the following qualifications. Motion 210 is right to set out Labour's position in the NHS. In a series of consultations, the Shadow Health Secretary has publicly said that he would scrap the Health & Social Care Act of 2012. Ed Miliband has supported this view. The qualification is that the Labour manifesto has not yet been set. We still need to campaign and lobby the Labour Party to make sure that this becomes a reality. The idea of full person care is one that we can support as the motion outlines. What we also have to do is remember – my mate, John Kitching, spoke on this motion, and he doesn't believe that unions and politics should mix – is that we have one choice in this country at the next election, and I think Labour has got to remember that at the last election the Health Service, the NHS, hardly got a mention, except from Cameron saying that the Tories would not re-jig the NHS. Well, they went against that, didn't they? But Labour never promoted the brilliant things that they did in the NHS in that 13 years. We got *Agenda for Change*, we got massive improvements in the provision of care, and Labour this time, Mary, has got to push that the NHS must be at the forefront of this campaign, because if Labour don't get in after the next election you can wave bye-bye to your NHS.

On Motion 212 the qualification is that clinical commissioning groups have taken the place of primary care trusts. The thrust of the motion is to halt a post-code lottery in health care, and this should be supported.

On Motion 213, the CEC agrees that an early diagnosis and treatment is the best for patient care and outcomes. The CEC agrees that delays in securing appointments are partly due to job losses and cuts. However, so-called efficiency savings and streamlining have been used as a cover for such cutbacks, making delays worse. The GMB will continue to campaign for better time responses from diagnosis to treatment. The qualification is that we cannot campaign for more streamlined services as this will exacerbate the delays that many people are facing, and "streamlining" is not a word that we like in the NHS because it usually means cuts.

On Motion 214 the GMB has consistently campaigned for more resources for the NHS and, in particular, for a fair funding settlement. Just remember, colleagues, that the last brave Labour Government gave us 1% extra on our National Insurance contributions directly to the NHS. The qualification is that the waiting-time period described in the motion will not necessarily apply to every GP surgery.

In summary Congress, the CEC is asking you to support Motions 210, 212, 213 and 214 with the qualifications that I have set out. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Martin. Does Yorkshire Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Does Midland Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Does London Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Does GMB Scotland accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) With that, Congress, I will put Motions 210, 212, 213, 214, 215 and 217 to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Any against? Carried.

*Motion 210 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 212 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 213 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 214 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 215 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 216 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Congress. I now hand the Chair over to the Vice President.

### **CEC STATEMENT ON THE NHS**

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, we will quickly move on to item 12, which is the CEC Statement on the NHS. I call upon Rehana Azam, our National Officer in charge of the NHS, to move the CEC Statement and update us. Rehana.

SIS. R. AZAM (National Officer): President and Congress, I move the CEC Statement on the NHS on behalf of the CEC. We are here in the fabulous City of Nottingham, yet just down the road front-line staff at Kingsmill Hospital recently told Care Quality Commission inspectors how concerned they were that low numbers of nurses and NHS staff was, potentially, harming patient safety. Just to quote one NHS staff member, who said: "We cannot go on. It's terrible. Nurses are crying because it's so bad here." I have visited Kingsmill Hospital and met many NHS workers, GMB members, who are trying their hardest to care for patients against a backdrop of cuts. The experience of Kingsmill NHS staff is, sadly, not an isolated incident. It is happening north, south, east and west of Nottingham. The same story can be heard from front-line workers right across England. So the Tory deal for the NHS has seen half of ambulance stations earmarked for closure, a quarter of NHS trusts in deficit and the Kings Fund recently said: "It's not a case of if but when the money will run out in the NHS." Ten per cent of patients have to wait almost five months for treatment, with some waiting even longer. Cancer treatment has been breached for the first time. The target is that 85% of patients should start their treatment within two months. You heard earlier about delays in getting GP appointments. We have heard about A&E closures and downgrades. It is essential to say that £12.5 billion worth of NHS services have been put out to the market. All this has been done by the Coalition Government in only two years since they passed their healthcare legislation. The Tory deal for the front-line NHS staff is an insult to every NHS workers and an insult to every patient. NHS staff morale is at rock bottom, and Health Secretary, Mr. Hunt, purposely is now on a collision course with NHS workers as he attacks our pay and conditions.

Seven thousand front-line clinical staff have been axed. More for less and worse. The Tories have used any negative NHS story they can find to paint it as the norm so that they can make their case to sell off the NHS.

President and Congress, the Tories' mantra when they came into office was: "No decision about you without you. Clinicians will be in control." Well, clinicians are under control and under greater pressure than ever.

As for patients, it is just a con! Simply put, it's a lie and an insult to every person who needs and uses the NHS and an insult to every NHS staff member. Congress, the sleight of hand doesn't stop there. The Tories have purposely starved the NHS of funds. They are purposely running it down and blaming the NHS front-line staff so that they can sell the NHS off. This con trick has been set up to serve the interests of the Tories alone, an NHS deal for themselves and their fat-cat donors. £1.5 billion of NHS contracts have been handed to Circle and Care UK. Do you know what? They just happen to be Tory Party donors. Jeremy Hunt spent £1.4 billion on NHS redundancies and then spent £3.9 billion filling the gaps with temporary agency staff in the NHS, tripling costs in three years. If that is not enough, purposely understaffed wards have to turn to private firms to supply agency staff. These firms have pocketed millions in profit during the past year, charging sometimes up to a thousand pounds a shift! One of the biggest winners is the private equity firm – we've all heard about it – Blackstone, which saw revenue across their medical companies hit by £226 million last year. Head-hunter firm, Odgers Berndtson, has been heavily involved in vetting key personnel into the drastically restructured NHS, including the replacement of the current chief, David Nicholson. Do you know what, the Chair just happens to be – you will remember her – Baroness Virginia Bottomly, who just so happens to be the cousin of Health Secretary, Jeremy Hunt, and who just happened to be a past Health Secretary herself, and she continues to fund the Conservative Party.

This is a party of the rich for the rich, who are using every opportunity they can to get richer, and who loses? Us, our families, friends and communities. All of us, patients and taxpayers. Congress, what we are witnessing is nothing short of an attempt to totally dismantle the NHS, and they want to complete it before the next General Election, before voters get a chance to stop it.

When Nye Bevan founded the NHS, he based it on three core principles: that it would be free at the point of delivery with access to all. Bevan said: "No society can legitimately call itself civilised if a sick person is denied medical aid because of a lack of means." Congress, these principles are what is at stake. These are what we have to save and we are doing whatever we can to save our NHS, but we need everybody to help. The very principles on which the NHS were founded are being eroded at an alarming rate. Cameron and Clegg have said that the NHS is not being privatised, but we know that that is not true. They will argue that it is necessary to make cutbacks at a time of austerity, but what they won't tell you is that the NHS was in a very good shape before the reforms started. The fact is that the NHS was one of the most cost-effective health services in the world and saves more lives per pound spent than any other country.

For goodness sake, let's not forget that the NHS was formed at the bleakest of economic times and on Labour principles. The NHS epitomises the saying: "I am my brother's keeper." Well, we need those keepers now in their thousands if we are to save our NHS. We know in the GMB that if we are to fulfil our core objective as a union to care for our members and their families, we need a fully funded NHS, hence the Statement today. Health can't be a commodity that is bought and sold. In the GMB NHS sector we are organising and consolidating NHS membership so we have the strength to fight back in the NHS, but we need your help. We can all do our bit. So, please, join your local *Save the NHS Campaign*. Join the People's March that is taking place this summer, that the GMB is proudly supporting. I know people have said this before today. Bevan said: "The NHS will last as long as there are folk left with the faith to fight for it." If he were here today, he would tell us that it is up to us, and it is up to us. On that, I move the CEC Statement on the NHS. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I call Dave Clements to second.

BRO. D. CLEMENTS (CEC, Commercial Services): President and Congress, NHS users. I am seconding the CEC Statement on the National Health Service. The Statement underlines the GMB's commitment to defending the NHS, to defending the interests and aspirations of NHS workers and defending the patients and Service users. In short, we are defending our NHS. This is a difficult time for NHS workers. The NHS pay system is under attack, the NHS services are losing funding, the NHS is being opened up to private-sector competition and NHS services are closing altogether. NHS jobs are being cut and many are at risk.

The GMB is dedicated to organising in the NHS and to consolidating our membership during the period of unprecedented upheaval. An essential part of a truly National Health Service is a national process for determining pay and conditions that is applied to all workers delivering NHS services. But Jeremy Hunt has rejected the recommendation of the Pay Review Body for a consolidated pay award and he is deliberately blurring the distinction between pay progression and a cost-of-living pay award. As a result, 600,000 staff are going without even a 1% pay award, not that 1% would have been enough, but the Government have led people to expect at least that. NHS staff at the top of their pay band are getting 1%, but it is not consolidated. This is another mean trick by a Tory-led Government that can't be trusted with the NHS. They are planning to take the same approach next year.

The GMB has opposed the Government pay policy, which has seen year after year of real-term cuts from the very beginning. We have organised protests about this and about the havoc that the Government are causing in the National Health Service. We are taking this campaign out into the community. On 16<sup>th</sup> August, GMB will be supporting a march that will set off from the north-east. The People's March for the NHS is being organised by NHS campaigners and local mums who are outraged at how the Government are treating the NHS. The marchers will follow the basic route of the 1936 Jarrow Crusade all the way through to Westminster. Their aim is simple. It's to galvanise support for the NHS and forge links with local NHS campaign groups. A number of feeder marches are also planned coming to a town near you. You can join in some of the march or come out just to show your support. Please ask your region how you can get involved in this and other local NHS campaigns.

Please support this Statement which I am now seconding. We want a publicly-run NHS, free at the point of use, fair pay for the NHS workers and a change of Government in 2015. We can all play our part. It is our NHS and it is our fight. So let's get on with it. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David. We will now move to the vote for the CEC Statement. All those in favour, please show? Any against? That is carried.

*The CEC Statement on the National Health Service was CARRIED.*

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, could all delegates complete the delegate questionnaire which was in your wallet. If you need another copy, they are available from the information desk. These need to be handed in at the tea and coffee area by the end of this afternoon's session to be eligible for the free prize draw. This year we thank the People's Operate (stand 15) for kindly donating the prizes, which are a Galaxy Note Tablet and a Pay As You Go SIM card loaded with £100 credit.

There is also a message from the RMA stall regarding the Bear competition. The boy's name is called William and the girl's name is called Kathleen.

Will the Young Delegates who spoke to the General Secretary last night at the Birmingham & West Midlands' function about the Three Peaks Challenge please come to him at the front of the hall.

Congress, we resume at 2 o'clock prompt. Thank you very much for your kind attention.

*Congress adjourned for lunch.*

## **AFTERNOON SESSION**

*Congress reassembled at 2.00 p.m.*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you. It is 2 o'clock. We will start. I have announcements first. The RMA prize draw closes at 3.00 p.m. today. Prizes are ready for collection from 4.00 p.m. today and 11.00 p.m. on Thursday morning.

## **SOCIAL POLICY: GENERAL**

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I will start with Item 1, Social Policy, and the first motion is 178, North West & Irish and 179, Midland Region. Can the movers and seconders please come down? Can we have order, please, for the speaker?

### **FAIR PRICED HOLIDAY MOTION 178**

#### **178. FAIR PRICED HOLIDAY**

We call upon this Conference to support regulation of holiday firm pricing.

Families are hammered at every school holiday. When trying to book a holiday they can often find the price has doubled from the pre-holiday period.

GMB must work to stop this blatant ripping off of hard working families.

C51 BRANCH  
*North West & Irish Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. J. McCARTNEY (North West & Irish): This motion calls upon Congress to support regulation of holiday firms' pricing. Families are hammered every school holiday. When trying to book a holiday families often find the prices have doubled from pre-holiday prices. We hear it all the time, rip-off Britain, but nothing ever seems to get done about regulating against such unfairness. We all know the present Government's answer is that they cannot interfere. They believe in "let the market set its own price" and roughly translated that reads "rip off".

Someone has to stand up against this attitude and there is only one organisation that will say no to this Government and that is the trade unions, and in this case, namely, the GMB. Why do you think the right-wing press attack us with such venom? It is because we are here and we will fight. How can it be fair that every school holiday the price rises by more than 50% of the pre-holiday price? How can it be fair to have members who say, "We take the kids out of school, we don't like doing it but even after paying the fine we can still save £1,000 on the price of a family for four."

The problem does not just affect people with children; it also affects the many education workers, including those who are on low rates of pay. In many cases they cannot afford a holiday because they do not earn enough and if they can afford a holiday they have no alternative but to stump up the vastly inflated prices. The GMB says enough is enough. Stop this blatant exploitation of school holiday customers. Millions cannot even afford a holiday but many more are being forced into being excluded from such a privilege. We need justice. We need to stop this blatant ripping off of hard working families, who, by the way, are the people we represent, not the cheeky hard-faced Tories. Support the motion, let's regulate the pricing and be fair to the working people we represent. I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you colleague. Secunder. Formally? Thank you.

*Motion 178 was formally seconded.*

## **END TERM TIME FINES FOR PARENTS MOTION 179**

### **179. END TERM TIME FINES FOR PARENTS**

This Conference calls on this government and our Labour MPs to repeal the current stance of fining parents for taking their children out of school during term time for an annual family holiday. Congress feels that this is yet another tax of families by this Condem Government.

MANSFIELD CENTRAL BRANCH  
*Midland & East Coast Region*

*(Referred)*

SIS. C. HARWOOD (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, this motion asks Congress to move that this ConDem Government stops the endless attack on working families by repelling the recent legislation that fines parents for taking their children on holidays in term time. As we all know, quality family time is at a premium, especially in these tough economic times because I am sure not seeing it getting any better yet. Families work and save hard all year to be able to go on an annual holiday yet this Government has added an extra pressure to them, either pay the extortionate prices travel companies charge during the school holidays, often with a price difference of over £500, or face extortionate fines.

Many families now work in the high-demand industries which operate seven days a week. These companies often dictate when annual leave can be taken and even restrict leave during their peak periods, such as school holidays. The Government's response, force your children's school to change when their term times and school holidays are. What about the blended families, families whose children attend different schools and in different counties, and those who would love to be able to take both partners' children away for a family holiday? This now leaves many families facing not being to spend this valued important quality time together. They say, and I wholeheartedly agree, that education is important, that is totally right, but family time away from everyday life allowing children and adults alike to relax is also important. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Secunder.

SIS. Z. WARREN (Midland & East Coast): I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaking, at least in front of all of you. *(Applause)* Vice President, Congress, for a lot of families a holiday is a luxury, a luxury that has taken them a year, or even more, to save for. If they go on the school

holidays they get penalised by the extortionately high prices that travel agents charge. If they take their children out of school in order to go on holiday at a cheaper price, they end up being fined for doing so. If you or your partner has your holidays dictated by the employer, my husband does, and you cannot get time off during the school holiday, you have no choice if you want a family holiday but to take your children out of school. This makes you a bad parent, apparently. I was told that. I understand the need for a good education and that it has to be a priority for our children but, Congress, family time together and time away together as a family is also important. Congress, I second. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Zillah. Anyone want to speak in the debate?

SIS. K. HUMPHREYS (Midland & East Coast): I am speaking in support of 178. I just want to highlight further the other discrimination that the travel industry hold; when they are offering out free children's places for holidays it is not for families like mine. I am a lone parent. Those kind of places are only available for two-parent families and this needs to be got rid of as well. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kerry. I now call on Ken Daniels to speak on 179.

BRO. K. DANIELS (CEC, Public Services): President, Congress, we are asking Congress to refer Motion 179. The motion is calling for an end to fines for parents who take their children out of school for a family holiday. Last September tougher regulations came into force restricting term time absence to exceptional circumstances. Schools are bound to worry that any absence may have an impact on children's attendance. Where parents take their children out of school without permission the school is entitled to have a sanction. However, there have not been enough studies done to ascertain why parents feel it is necessary to risk a fine, nor about the impact that the tighter rules are having on families. The CEC feels that this is an issue that merits further consideration. In addition, at the end of May families wanting to take their children on holiday during term time have mounted a legal challenge based on a legally enshrined right to a family life. The CEC is therefore asking you to refer Motion 179 to enable this exploration to take place and await the result of the legal challenge. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ken. Does the Midland Region agree to refer? (*Agreed*) Thank you. The CEC is supporting both these motions. Can we take 178. All those in favour? Anyone against? That is carried.

*Motion 178 was CARRIED*

*Motion 179 was REFERRED.*

## **EMPLOYMENT POLICY: RIGHTS AT WORK**

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Could I ask the movers of Motions 76, 77, and 78 to come down to the front, please, and while we are getting ready can I just say that the commemoration bottles of Glenmorangie malt whisky that is in front of you was made by the GMB members and obtained by GMB Scotland for delegates as a small memento of Congress in Nottingham. Thank you, Scotland. (*Applause*) Motion 76, Yorkshire Region to move.

## **EMPLOYER WHO IS ALSO THE LANDLORD MOTION 76**

## 76. EMPLOYER WHO IS ALSO THE LANDLORD

This Conference deplores the landlord link between rented accommodation and workers who are made to stay in these 'rented accommodations' at a cost which undermines the National Minimum Wage and workers' rights of freedom to live and work in the UK.

We ask that GMB lobbies government to change this practise and to work to introduce legislation to stop the employer being also the landlord and making it a condition that the workers must stay and pay for the overcrowded rented accommodation as part of their employment.

WEST YORKSHIRE MANUFACTURING BRANCH  
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

*(Carried)*

BRO. P. STEER (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): First time delegate, first time speaker.  
*(Applause)* I am here to move Motion 76, employers who are landlords. This is to say that some agency workers are given the offer of jobs from agencies saying, "Come and work for us and we'll give you somewhere to live." This is a good idea, fair enough, but some of the places are substandard and overcrowded so it means that they are paying inflated rates when they are in these places. You might have a house where the rent is £400 a month, you get six people in there, and the agencies are actually charging them £100 a week for rent, and then times that by six people. My maths does not work out like that, I am sorry. We need to get this stopped because they are paying six or more times the amount of rent they should be. When this happens the employers have the employees over a barrel. They say, "You either live here or you don't work for us." I am asking you to put this down so that we can get it stopped. You live in a property for the right price, for the right job. Cut down the overcrowding of properties from the agency staff and pay a fair price for the accommodation. Thank you. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Philip. Secunder.

BRO. V. PIPER (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): First time at Congress, first time speaking.  
*(Applause)* Congress, the UK government is failing in its duty to protect migrant workers who all too often are victims of horrific hidden abuse. If it is serious about what it calls ending modern-day slavery, the Government should recognise just how vulnerable these workers are and give them protection. Workers who housing is tied to their job are particularly vulnerable to exploitation from employers and landlords. In situations where such workers lose their jobs they can become homeless overnight. The TUC commissioned a survey, published it recently, and they claim migrant workers had reintroduced the tied cottage into the British labour market, with employers providing accommodation at a cost and using it to increase their power over the migrant workers. The survey found that 31% of interviewees were living in accommodation that was found for them or provided by their employers. Over 40% of those working for more than 48 hours a week were in accommodation provided by their employers. Individuals reported they had little control over working excessive hours because their employment was linked to accommodation. More than half of those who described living conditions as poor or very poor were in accommodation provided by their employers. The minimum wage is often ignored and outrageous deductions made from it to pay for overcrowded accommodation and other costs. In this way the bosses use migrant workers to push down wages for all workers in a race to the bottom causing division and antagonism. We need the GMB to lobby government, influence change by Congress 2015. I ask all delegates here today to vote in favour of this motion. I second. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Vincent. 77, London.

## **END MINIMUM WAGE ABUSE MOTION 77**

### **77. END MINIMUM WAGE ABUSE**

Congress agrees that HMRC are dramatically failing to enforce payment of the minimum wage. Only 90 civil servants are employed to that end and last year only 431 investigations were carried out compared to 1,492 in Labour's last year in office.

Congress further agrees that the scope for investigating abuse must be widened with trade unions and Citizens' Advice Bureaux being able to report abuse to local authorities as well as HMRC.

HOME COUNTIES GENERAL BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. P. ROBINSON (London): I want to start off by thanking Scotland for the whisky. Unfortunately, it was not given out before me and my colleague came down here to make our speeches. Fifteen years ago the minimum wage was introduced and it was a victory for commonsense, addressing some level of social and moral responsibility within the workplace forcing business to develop a conscience and helping reduce exploitation: noble aims. However, 15 years later some companies and organisations still continue to flout and ignore the law and seem to operate with impunity.

“Trust” and “accountability” are two words we need to focus on. Since industrialisation began employers have sought to exploit their workers. Labour cost to most business is the single biggest overhead and, as such, will always be a target. Even reasonable employers who recognise the accountability of employment law and the minimum wage will seek other compensatory targets within the labour cost under creative management effectively reducing the impact of the minimum wage on their business: attacking occupational sick pay, creating multi-tiered workplaces, not paying for breaks or travel time, bogus self-employment, the list goes on. You cannot trust business to be ethical or moral, or even totally legally compliant because the nature of business is the bottom line factor, profit. Profit is at the expense of the worker so for those who regularly negotiate with employers industrial relations rely to a large part on employee engagement. Good employee engagement lists productivity and profitability and yet how can an employee feel engaged and productive when even the statutory minimum wage is undermined.

So, if we cannot trust we have to have accountability. With accountability comes monitoring and enforcement. We have the law and we have cultural and political support to enforce compliance. We also have an enforcement body, the HMRC, who were appointed effectively to police the evasion of national minimum wage legislation. Unfortunately, this is where it is problematic. HMRC is not effective enough. The national minimum wage teams are too small and funding for the unit is constrained and inadequate. Admittedly, they are having some impact but nowhere near enough. The unit costs £8m per annum to fund, yet only collects £4m per annum in arrears. It costs twice as much to run as it brings in. One estimate states that the average employer could expect a visit from HMRC every 320 years and prosecution rates are poor.

This motion is about supporting the HMRC to be more effective on our behalf by widening the scope for investigating abuse. A lot of the offending companies tend to be multiple offenders in that they flout other laws and obligations, i.e. trading standards, environmental, or health and safety legislation. Local authorities are looking to and are involved in these issues; it therefore makes sense for them also to be actively involved in the investigation and prosecution of offenders. Unions are

also ideally placed to help promote and support a robust and efficient system by monitoring throughout the UK and highlighting issues in all medium to large businesses and organisations where we have representation and recognition, and would need to do so without falling foul of whistle-blowing policies. We need to support the most vulnerable workers to be paid what is their due, the national minimum wage, by widening the scope for investigating abuse to include trade unions and Citizens Advice Bureaus, and enable them to report directly to local authorities as well as HMRC. Please support the motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Secunder.

SIS. F. FRANKLIN (London): President, Congress, there is no doubt that the introduction of the national minimum wage was one of the greatest achievements of the Labour Government when it came into power in 1997. It was a manifesto promise that was kept within a year of them taking office. Their opponents prophesied gloom and doom with unemployment spiralling out of control. Today, even Dodgy Dave agrees that the national minimum wage was a good thing but, colleagues, employers continue to pay less than the minimum wage. Last year, 708 employers had to pay back pay of over £4m to employees they had cheated. That was only the ones who got caught.

The widespread suspicion is that many more are getting away with it. Some workers are just too afraid to report their employers. Congress, this is a double-edged sword for these poor unfortunates because they cannot afford not to work, they dare not claim benefits they might be entitled to because they would have to involve showing the authorities proof of their wages, and they dare not do that. There are restrictions on who can report minimum wage abuse and that, Congress, protects the abusers. If an abused worker cannot report the underpayment for fear of losing the job, then machinery must be put into place to report the abuse anonymously. There are hotlines for anonymously reporting benefit abuse so why, colleagues, is there not one for the minimum wage abuse. The national minimum wage is law, the law must be upheld, and the penalty for breaking that law should be increased. Congress, I am proud to second this motion. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Frances. 78, Yorkshire.

## **THE SCANDAL OF EMPLOYERS' LOW PAY AND THE BENEFIT TRAP MOTION 78**

### **78. THE SCANDAL OF EMPLOYERS' LOW PAY AND THE BENEFIT TRAP**

This Conference, many employers are costing the country millions of pounds by paying the minimum wage.

The vast majority of benefits for example; Family Tax Credit and Housing Benefit are paid to hard working people.

This is unacceptable when companies like Starbucks and Amazon make millions while paying poverty wages.

The government could in theory surcharge these companies for the balance of the benefits that the state pays their employees, but a simpler idea would be to argue why the living wage must become the minimum wage.

We therefore call on the GMB to campaign at every level for a living wage to replace the current national minimum wage.

ASDA STORES BRANCH  
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

*(Carried)*

SIS. S. WALKER (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Firstly, let me start by talking about benefit cheats. We all know who they are. They are robbing the state of millions of pounds every week and getting away with it. Sorry, I am not talking about the bloke next door who has not worked for years or the woman up the road with six kids; I am talking about employers who do not pay a living wage. It is the biggest scam going and we are all paying for it. How many people do we all know who work and have to claim benefits of some form to top up their low wages? It cannot be right that working people have to rely on benefits to be able to survive. The Government is subsidising employers who pay low wages to a tune of millions. This is totally unacceptable. While certain companies make millions, their employees are claiming housing benefit, child tax credit, and some even have to use food banks. We need to replace the minimum wage with a decent living wage, a realistic amount so that working people do not need to rely on benefits. I started by calling this a scandal but it is more than that, it is an absolute outrage. We need to complain at every level to get a decent living wage to get working people out of the benefit trap, give them back some dignity, and give them back the wages they need and deserve. Congress, I move.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Susan. Secunder.

SIS. M. TAYLOR (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): As you have just heard, working people should not need to claim benefits. If all employers had to pay a living wage it would take millions of people out of the poverty trap and save the country millions in benefit payouts. Many employers would argue the extra cost to their company would take them under but they said that about the minimum wage and they were proved wrong. It is time companies were made to cough up and stop relying on the state to subsidise them. We need this Government to implement a living wage as a matter of urgency. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Maureen. Colleagues, the CEC is supporting all three motions so I now put it to the vote. Motions 76, 77, and 78, all those in favour? Any against? They are carried.

*Motion 76 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 77 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 78 was CARRIED.*

## **EMPLOYMENT POLICY: RIGHTS AT WORK**

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Could I now have Motions 97, 98, and 99 down to the front, please, and the seconders

### **BULLYING MOTION 97**

#### **97. BULLYING**

This Conference is aware that there is evidence that workplace bullying is on the increase. It has far-reaching and extremely damaging effects on productivity, staff morale and an individual's health and well-being. The law currently offers limited opportunity for an individual to take action against employers, some of who simply do not take this issue seriously and sometimes even explain it away as "robust management".

The GMB should conduct research on the nature and extent of bullying in work, and campaign for greater legal protection for those being bullied.

SOUTH WALES POLICE BRANCH  
*Wales & South West Region*

*(Referred)*

BRO. P. ROGERS (Wales & South West): President, Congress, thousands, perhaps millions, of people wake up dreading to go to work each day because they know that they will face bullying. It is a serious workplace issue for all but undoubtedly the main cost is to the victim. Stress and ill health can become part of their daily life. Families can be torn apart and other relationships damaged as in some situations it can lead to extraordinary pressure on an individual and increase the likelihood of abusive and aggressive behaviour at home. Unless you have experienced or witnessed it, you cannot imagine the enormous burden the victim carries on their shoulders. A number of studies indicate that witnesses or third parties are also affected by their experience, in some cases this will lead to increased absenteeism, presenteeism, reduced productivity, and increased staff turnover. Academic research undertaken by several British universities estimated that UK organisations lost 33.5m days due to bullying related absenteeism in just one year. Taking into account staff turnover, lower productivity, the estimate of financial cost to organisations was in the region of £13.75bn. These figures make it astonishing that so many employers do not take the issue seriously when in reality they have much to gain in stamping out bullying. The overwhelming majority of employers seem unable or unwilling to stop bullies in their tracks; instead many ignore it, deny its existence, or indeed encourage it to such a degree that it becomes institutional bullying often disguising it as robust management. Sadly, it is getting worse.

A TUC Safety Reps survey published in 2006 showed that one in three safety reps said bullying was a problem in their workplace with 15% viewing it as a major concern, a figure that rose to 18% in the public sector. By 2012 it had become an even more widespread concern and was cited as one of the top five concerns by 41% of Safety Reps. The topic is often raised in Parliament and the idea of a Dignity at Work Act was first introduced by a private members bill in 1996. The bill sought to ensure that employees would have the right to dignity at work, free from bullying, harassment, and unnecessary alarm or distress. Despite subsequent attempts to get this bill passed it never reached our statute books. Employment law has come a long way since 1996 and many acts of parliament protect employees but there is still much to be addressed and we still have no specific legislation with workplace bullying; in fact, today we still have no legal definition on this behaviour. Many consider it a very difficult subject to legislate about, which may well be true but it is not impossible. France and Sweden have specific laws tackling workplace bullying so why can't we? This Congress agrees to be at the forefront of analysing existing research and, if necessary, conduct new research into its nature and spread. Following such research we should ask the question, whether the impact on our workplaces and society as a whole can be effectively reduced by the introduction of further legislation. So, the GMB should lead a campaign to ensure that we get the law we need because bullying damages us all. Please support. I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Philip. Secunder.

SIS. S. MACARIAN (Wales & South West): First time delegate, first time speaker. *(Applause)* President, Congress, at a one-to-one level, especially between bosses and workers, abuse and workplace bullying is on the increase. Bullying is a rising epidemic that threatens employee health, cuts short careers, and poisons the work environment. Some employers do not care about bullying and many actually promote it. Sadly, bullying in the workplace is not illegal unless it is because of some protective characteristics, such as sex or race. The fact is that many workers report that they have been bullied but their employers failed to do anything about it. Essentially, employers should treat bullying like it is illegal, operate a clear policy, train workers, investigate complaints, and deal with proven cases of bullying by taking disciplinary action against the offenders. Congress, many of us have seen what bullying does to an individual, it destroys self-confidence, causes depression, and

other forms of illness. The impact that it can have on relationships and family life is not to be ignored. All too often excuses are made for bullying behaviour, with comments such as, "It's just a bit of banter," or "It's only his way," as a defence to what is nothing less than unacceptable conduct at work. The most important component of any workplace prevention plan is management commitment. However, not enough employers show that commitment to their workforce. As far as bullying is concerned, let's campaign for legislation and make sure everyone has access to that justice. I am proud to second. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sandra. Motion 98?

## **CRIMINALISING CORPORATE BULLIES MOTION 98**

### **98. CRIMINALISING CORPORATE BULLIES**

Congress notes the psychological and emotional effects of cyber bullying. It has been estimated that the victims are 2 to 9 times more likely to consider committing suicide and some workplaces today have as much of a problem with bullies as do schools, particularly in the security industry where it can lead to dangerous and sometimes life-threatening situations.

The conviction of the two individuals who bullied a prominent feminist campaigner and a female MP is a success but Congress believes that workplace bullying should be treated equally seriously and calls on GMB to lobby politicians with a view to ensuring that there are legal remedies for workers who are being bullied.

G36 SECURITY BRANCH  
*Southern Region*

(*Carried*)

BRO. A. ACHI (Southern): President, Congress, I used to fight with my former manager all the time. He used to tell me, "Ake, why are you always challenging me?" I always said to him, "Because you don't have a clue about what is going on and because you are a bully." He always said, "Ake, why do you always have a big mouth?" I always said, "Because I organise against you and because you are a bully." He always said, "Ake, why are you always causing trouble?" I always said, "Because you are a liar and you are a bully." He always said, "Ake, you know what, I'm going to sack you." And I said to him, "You know what, you can kiss it." And I am sure all of us here that is what we do, what we do when we have to represent our members, we turn to the manager, "Do you think you can scare us?" We turn to him and that is what we do. (*Kicked toy shark*) That is what we do. In 2013, Mr. Damien Mallon, a father of three kids, two of whom had learning difficulties, so if you have kids that already have learning difficulties you have a lot of pressure already in your mind, he was going to work all the time. He did not want to go to work. He was scared to go to work. His colleagues used to play tricks on him, hide his shoes, put sand in his sandwiches, put in rubbish. One day he called his wife. He said, "I am a coward." Around 7 at night his colleagues were looking for him. They could not find him. They went to the toilet, they could not find him. They went outside and saw him. He had killed himself. How can you go to work to earn a living for your family and be told, "Your husband is dead," "Your wife is dead," or "Your father is dead." We should not be living in these kinds of conditions. The managers are not doing anything. The companies are not doing anything. You go to work to earn a living for your family. You do not go to work to get killed. We heard recently that the court has charged a lot of people because of online bullying. What is the difference between online bullying and workplace bullying? There is no difference. It is the same thing. So why criminalise online bullying and not criminalise workplace bullying? Like I said again, you turn him around and you give a good kick. (*Kicked toy shark into main hall*) Congress, President, I move this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Seconder.

BRO. P. SONY (Southern): Vice President, General Secretary, Congress, workplace bullying comes in all forms and sizes, and media, such as sly comments at work as people go past your desk, to people going onto Twitter and putting abuse on there because of what you do at work, who the person you are. Within the security industry it is bad enough dealing with the abuse you get from the visitors and guests coming to your premises, but to get it from your managers, your supervisor, and senior staff, is unacceptable. We need to tackle this problem head-on. If we do not, it will be never ending. Who will be the next victim in your workplace? We must send a clear message to these people: they will be done in a court of law if they carry on this form of abuse. We must campaign to make corporate bullying a legal offence. Thank you. I second this motion. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Motion 99.

## **BLACKLISTING MOTION 99**

### **99. BLACKLISTING**

This Congress condemns the outrageous practice of blacklisting by employers to prevent union activists from securing employment.

We congratulate the first class work and commitment of those involved in the blacklist support group in the building industry.

However blacklisting is also taking place in other industries with the lives of Union Stewards, Safety Reps and other Activists devastated by the morally indefensible practice of blacklisting.

Congress congratulates those in the GMB who have played a positive role in supporting the campaign against those guilty of blacklisting.

In light of the fact that blacklisting is a much wider problem and is not confined to the building industry, Congress calls on the CEC to ensure that every effort is made to expose and end blacklisting in all industries and professions.

LONDON CENTRAL GENERAL BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. S. FORREST (London): I think the first point to make is that the work done by the GMB, led by our General Secretary, Paul Kenny, and the blacklisting campaign exposing and campaigning against the blacklisting should be applauded by Congress today and, above all, we should applaud those heroes who have been blacklisted, who have forced this issue to the forefront of the political agenda. I think we should take that opportunity today, Congress. To deny someone the right to work because of their beliefs, or membership of a trade union, has no place in our society, no place in a modern workplace in any sector, construction, security, my sector, commercial services, and we should be very proud of ourselves as a trade union on this issue. Only yesterday the GMB was back in the High Court fighting against a derogatory, derisory, compensation offer and will continue that campaign to such a point that only today Vince Cable, Secretary of State, has finally admitted that it is in fact a breach of human rights of sections 8 and 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights and submitting that into the document to the Court of Appeal. Finally, we have a victory there, an admission that it is indeed a breach of human rights and as a union we should be proud that we have brought this campaign that far, comrades, and Congress.

Our branch, my branch, Central London, the Commercial Services Section, has moved this motion as a blacklist does not only operate in the construction industry but across all sectors, all industries, and we must act upon that. I spoke to Phil Reid and John McLean earlier and they confirmed that in their opinion they were 99.9% sure of this. I think that is a pretty good stat from which we can begin our work on this issue. We need to fight to end blacklisting across all workplaces and all sectors. We need to remind ourselves that even in the construction industry the seizure of the list of names of those blacklisted was only 20% of those that had been blacklisted, the tip of the iceberg. Ricky Tomlinson, who spoke such marvellous words to us on Sunday and himself one of the Shrewsbury Pickets, his name is not included with those who have been blacklisted; such is the depth of the problem even in construction. Just a note to Ed Miliband, on your pricing up the agenda of what you are going to give us as a trades union Movement, full disclosure of the Shrewsbury documents and justice for the Shrewsbury Pickets would be a start as well. We must combat blacklisting in all sectors. It is a difficult task, the names are not out there, but we can start by strengthening the legislation, make it illegal, make it more accountable, and make it more transparent. One step would be direct employment and blacklist procedures in all contracts that are signed across all sectors. In conclusion, we should be proud of what we have achieved so far but it is only just a beginning and we must come together to ensure that blacklisting and the filth that operate it is ended across all sectors and all industries, and has no place in the British workplace. I move. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Steven. Secunder. Also, could Audrey Harry come down to the front, please?

BRO. B. DUFFIELD (London): Scotland, thank you for that drink. I needed it before I came up here. Congress, President, a blacklisting could be defined as a list privately exchanged amongst employers containing the names of person to be barred from employment because they are not trustworthy for holding opinions considered undesirable. Many of us in the trades union Movement have suspected that blacklisting has been a common practice in a number of industries for decades. The scandal of blacklisting in the construction industry has now been exposed but justice has still not been achieved. The scandal of blacklisting in other industries has still not been exposed but we all know or suspect that it continues. Our members and those of trade unions we know are blacklisted not because they are terrorists or a security risk but because they raised legitimate health and safety concerns and because they are trade union members, or because they have tried to organise their colleagues, all legal and legitimate activities but activities which employers see as a threat. We must continue to expose and root out the scandals of blacklisting. We must continue to expose practices that can condemn hardworking trade unionists from earning an honest living. Blacklisting in the construction industry is only the tip of the iceberg. The GMB must continue to campaign until the whole iceberg is exposed. I second. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Brendan. Anyone wish to come in on the debate?

BRO. M. PRESHAW (London): 3,200 blacklisted construction workers and an environmentalist was on that list, and the work done by the blacklist support group has been fantastic, but what we have to do is carry on to try and find these worms and maggots and drag them out of the shadows and bring them forward. It is not right that you are blacklisted for sticking up for your own rights and the rights of others. Well done to the GMB, Paul Kenny, and everybody else in this room. Thank you. That is all I want to say. Cheers. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

BRO. P. DUFFY (GMB Scotland): Chair, comrades, it is a cowardly, cowardly act by cowardly people and in the present atmosphere the people who seem to be getting hit most are disabled people; they have been threatened. Even the local councils, as I said earlier on today, are using the Back to Work thing to get people out of the door. It is terrible. If you are disabled and you maybe get help at your work, even the people that work with you then start to pick on you if you are disabled: why should you get that, why should you get this. It is a terrible thing. I have never been bullied in my life in any job I was in and I will tell you something, I had plenty of people who came to me as a steward about their managers bullying them. I went to those managers and had a quiet word with them and I can assure you they were never bullied after it. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I now call on Audrey Harry, on behalf of the CEC, to speak on Motion 97. Audrey.

SIS. A. HARRY (CEC, Manufacturing): The CEC is asking Congress to refer Motion 97. Vice President, Congress, the CEC supports the principle and thrust of the motion. Workplace bullying is on the increase, especially for casualised workers or those who are on temporary contracts. Bullying and harassment in the workplace can be devastating but you do not have to put up with it. GMB has a robust Respect at Work policy which now includes particular aspects to homophobic bullying. On Sunday, Congress carried the Women's Report which featured a zero tolerance statement. The CEC agrees with the motion that further research into bullying at work to include changes in legislation would be useful both in raising the profile and campaigning against this important workplace issue. Congress, please refer Motion 97. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Audrey. Does Wales & South West Region accept reference back? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Congress, the CEC is supporting all the motions then with the reference back, so I put it to the vote, Motions 97, 98, and 99, all those in favour, please show. Any against? They are carried.

*Motion 97 was REFERRED.*

*Motion 98 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 99 was CARRIED.*

## **MANUFACTURING SECTION REPORT**

THE PRESIDENT: I now call on Jerry Nelson to report back from the Manufacturing Section Conference.

BRO. J. NELSON (Acting National Secretary, Manufacturing): Malcolm, Congress, President, I feel a little bit like a first time speaker it has been that long since I had the opportunity to address Congress on anything. (*Applause*) Anyway, just a little introduction: the manufacturing section may be the smallest section inside the GMB and prior to us coming to Congress this year there was a little bit of joking around the office about the small number of motions that we had had submitted to the conference and that we would be finished by dinnertime when we actually did meet. Let me tell you, it was an extremely interesting day and it lasted a lot longer than most people expected. We got out a lot earlier than the Public Services Section did but we were only just in front of the Commercial Services. Nevertheless, even though we may be small, we have a strong and committed little team of people in this section that are going to make the GMB sit up when we come back in two years' time, in 2016, because we are going to be committed to a period of growth within the section.

At the conference, like I said, we had 13 motions, we had 125 delegates, and a whole host of visitors, and none more celebrated than my good friend and colleague down at the front, probably one of the oldest of the Manufacturing Section, Billy Hughes, who is well known. (*Applause*) He is a good and solid friend of mine in a lot of areas that I deal with, particularly retired members.

We had four guest speakers during the day. Our illustrious leader, Paul Kenny, did his usual address with great aplomb and answered a whole host of questions on his address. Kathleen Walker Shaw, our European Officer, again did a fantastic presentation and came back in the afternoon session to answer a question.

We had two other very interesting guests in David Roberts, who I am going to speak about at some length a little later on in my report, and Ian Lavery, MP.

The motions covered Remploy, which dominated most of the morning session of our conference, as you would expect. It is still a massively burning issue within the section. Manufacturing growth, shipbuilding, coal, and cement, and the supply of foods to supermarkets.

There were 32 great contributions from the activists moving and supporting the motions. I can tell you, colleagues, so that you can mark it in your final agendas where you will see the Section Conference agenda at the back, or near the back, from pages 188 onwards.

The first motion on Anti War fell because there was no mover to the motion from the Southern Region, which saved us a contribution from John Dolan, who not many people would have understood had he got up and spoke against it! There you go. John got out of that little bit of responsibility.

Motion 4 on Co-Ops for ex-Remploy Workers was referred, as was Motion 13, which was on Entrepreneurial Outrage.

During the conference my old friend Phil Davies, and predecessor as National Secretary, a great friend of mine, came at my request to present three special awards historical to the FTAC trade union before they became a member of the GMB family. James Stribley from the Yorkshire Region won the Ben Rubner Award. (*Cheers*) Brian Davies from the Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region won the Denny Hurst Award. (*Cheers*) Tony Gledhill, another good Yorkshire Region member, won the Jim Kooyman Award. (*Cheers*)

Also at the end of the day we made presentations to John Dolan, who has retired now from his responsibilities of work and is living the life of luxury and being dragged about all over the Scottish Region functions by a host of women, or female members of the region, dressing him up. I am not sure how that went down but he was a fantastically good servant of the GMB and I am sure he will still be involved at some level, both in the region and the section. (*Applause*)

Allan Black, another long-serving and dedicated officer of the organisation, retires in a month's time, shortly after Congress, at the end of July. He will be sadly missed. He has been a great officer, a fantastic officer. He has represented the members of this organisation for many years with an aplomb and dedication that not many people have had. He does it in such a laid back and comical way. He probably has one of the driest senses of humour that most people would ever come across but a great guy and he will be missed.

I made a comment at the conference yesterday about the current team that we have. There will be six of us when a little issue is sorted out in the next few weeks. What you have to remember is that there was only three, Allan Black, Keith Hazelwood, and Phil Davies. It just goes to show that six are only worth three of the old ones. They must have been twice as good as us because three of them managed the whole section by themselves, basically, for quite a long time. Anyway, now we have six people and I am glad of that. It makes my life a little bit easier as well.

We had the Remploy issues and, as I said, the campaign will go on and I wanted to get up here and make a strong commitment and make sure it is recorded in this Congress's decisions: that the GMB and the section is committed to continue the fight about the disgraceful closures of these factories. Phil made the point yesterday that it was not just the 2,700 people that were employed in the remaining 54 factories, before the closure campaign started, it was all those who went before from 2007 onwards. There were 7,500 people employed in Remploy not that many years ago. That is an absolute disgrace for this country, a civilised country that cannot treat disabled people in a decent fashion and look after them in their lifetime.

I also told them a little story about when I met Esther McVey when she was the minister for the disabled. I am one of the most chilled out laid back people in the world, very rarely get flustered about anything, never panic about anything. I have to say when I met Esther McVey and her advisers one sunny afternoon last year in Portcullis House I have never ever been as angry in my life. It was a gut churning anger where I wanted to jump across the table and throttle them all. They sat there in their fancy suits on their big salaries without any comprehension whatsoever of what their decisions were doing to the disabled people of this country, none whatsoever, not a care in the world, nothing at all, no feelings, no compassion, no understanding. For a government to have that kind of attitude towards disabled people is an absolute disgrace. If we do not do something about it in 2015, then we deserve whatever we get. We have to do something about it. (*Applause*)

One of our other guest speakers was Ian Lavery, MP from Wansbeck up in the North East, elected in 2010. He is obviously on the back bench but what a great speaker. He must have been watching a video link of our conference because he basically said and supported everything that Paul Kenny had said in his address the previous day. He was talking at some length about abolishing zero-hours contracts, making them illegal, fantastic, and about re-nationalisation of industries, which we spoke a little bit about today as well. All I would say is that if he could impart upon the shadow front bench of the party his feelings, his thoughts, and his beliefs, then we would win by a landslide in 2015. (*Applause*)

We had an interesting presentation from the next guest speaker. We spoke about Remploy at some length, as I said, and I had invited a guy called David Roberts, who is the Group Chairman of Arlington Industries, a massive group who had actually bought out the three factories of Remploy in Coventry, Birmingham, and Derby. It had taken him some nearly 12 months to get the Government to allow them to succeed in their bid to take over those factories.

David Roberts rang me up in July of last year and asked if he could come and speak to me at our offices in Euston and, of course, I accepted the call to meet him. Remploy had actually recommended that he came and speak to me first before anybody else. They must see me as a practical and very balanced individual. I am not sure they are right but they came anyway.

Anyway, David Roberts came to my office and he took me through his vision for disabled people and his vision clearly was that he was not just going to buy these factories and try and make a load of money out of it. If you look at page 199 in your final agenda and read his profile then you will

understand how rich this guy is. Anyway, he comes along and tells me that he does not just want to buy the factories; he wants to expand disabled factories across the UK, across Europe, into China, and into America.

He told the conference yesterday that he was going to build a new factory in Birmingham that will employ 500 people making alloy specialised wheels for the motor industry, Jaguar, Land Rover, Bentley, Aston Martin, top range cars, 500 people. Who is he going to come to for recognition in these factories that he is expanding, GMB. We have the relationship and he will be knocking on our door to allow us in and talk about recognition and the agreements attached to those new jobs. That is good news for us and a lot of our delegates were surprised, very surprised, that an employer and a man of his sort of size in industry comes along and makes those kinds of promises to our conference, which is great news for us, great news for the Birmingham & West Midlands Region anyway. They are going to get a fair few new members from Mr. Roberts and Arlington Industries. The Remploy factories in those three towns are now called Rempower, which is a new corporate name. We have just agreed a 2.5% increase in pay for them, which is good news for them because they have been stuck with the 1% government, if you like, limit on them for the last four or five years now as local government have. That is good news for the Remploy factories there and they are over the moon, I have to tell you. Those jobs are going to expand as well. The 230 people working there now are going to increase to about 300.

I will finish now. just wanted to say a big thank you to our assistant in the section, Pat Gannon, she did a fantastic job arranging the conference for us and I would like to thank the National Committee and every steward and activist that works within the section. We have a long way to go but we will when we come back in 2016 have a much more positive report about our membership growth. Thank you, Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Any questions? Yes? Will you come to the rostrum, please? While they are coming to the rostrum, can I say Vic Baines, President of Midland & East Coast Region sends you all his regards, thank you for all the kind messages that he has had. I have been watching the conference while I have been there with him. Malcolm did a great job. Thank you, Malcolm.

BRO. A. CORBETT (Birmingham & West Midlands): Madam President, Congress, I would like to ask a question to the construction officer, what are we doing to combat the effects of the exploitation of migrant labour in the engineering and construction industry? (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Anyone else? Jerry, do we have the officer for construction? Will the officer for construction please come forward, mechanical construction? Run!

BRO. P. WHITEHURST (National Officer, Construction): Actually, I am a first time speaker at Congress as well. (*Applause*) The question was what am I doing about the exploitation? I am doing plenty, I can tell you. Even as far back as Langage in Plymouth where we found out there were migrants being exploited, not getting paid the right wages, seven or eight in a room, all the bad things; they come here and they are exploited, not paying them right.

I worked abroad for years and I always had respect when I went to work in Europe so I can tell exactly in one phrase what I do, I organise them, I don't ostracise them. That is exactly what I do. (*Applause*) If we get the mindset of this country the same way round, and organise the migrant workforce, they won't be exploited any more. To be honest with you, they come into this country and they are being terrified. They are being terrified by employers and I will tell you what the main route is or a common denominator through all the sites I work on, it is agencies, whether they are agencies

of the UK, or agencies abroad. They fetch them in, they treat them badly, they absolutely terrify them, and some do not even get contracts.

We need to do away with these agencies that peddle these not zero-hours contracts in engineering construction because we do not have them but they put them through tax avoidance schemes, and everything, and they make them bogusly self-employed. I know the Labour government has made a commitment to do away with bogus self-employment but there are loopholes in our system that allows them to do this and the employers are picking up on it and agencies are picking up on it, and we are on the track of them.

I can tell you about one recent project, it is on the go now, Ferrybridge Power Station in Yorkshire, Bob McNeill and my shop stewards have found Spanish workers being exploited, Polish workers being exploited, and we even have some documents of falsified wage slips, falsified wage slips and payroll from the company falsifying the wages they are giving the Poles. They would not give us these at first so I said to Hitachi Zosen the owner of the company, the main company that is building the station, "Look, I'll come knocking on your door until 12 o'clock today and after that you will have the police, and then you will have the HMRC after you." By 12 o'clock I got the paperwork. All these workers are working for agencies. We have got to do away with these agencies, get rid of them all together. Have everybody directly employed on proper contracts of work, and let's get back to the basics of everybody getting paid and treated with respect. *(Applause)*

I do not want to go on with this too long but I will tell you what I have been doing. At half past one this morning I was even checking on migrant workers being exploited up in Scotland and I had a phone call this morning about it. I am working relentlessly. What you can do, what Congress can do, and every single trade union member in this room, and in the organisation, is to get the public services to start monitoring where power stations are being built in the planning stages. Let the officers know in the regions and let the officers in the regions then approach the companies and if they don't want to listen, we will hit them at the gates where it counts with every single ounce of resources we have. I hope that is a good enough explanation of what I am doing in construction against exploitation. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Phil. Thank you. There are no more questions so can I thank Jerry for his report, and thank you, Phil.

Okay, I have to do something which I wrongly did on Monday, according to my colleagues and I do not want them to feel dismayed and going back upset. Congress, I apologise for a mistake in the voting process over Motion 220, Tuition Fees, on Monday. During the debate on this motion Pam Ross, Matt Saywell, and Kerry Abel, spoke in opposition and Kerry asked for a separate vote. This was missed. My excuse is that it was a long day but I am sorry. I took the vote for but not against. I intend to rectify that by asking for the vote to be recorded again.

Can Congress agree that you accept my apologies? *(Agreed)* Can I now ask you to vote on Motion 220? The region accepted reference. For clarity, all those in favour of the referral already accepted by the Southern Region, please show. All those in favour, please show. All those against? Referral carried. Thank you. Quite clear. Anyway, thank you. I hope that puts it right for my colleagues. I do apologise. Thank you.

## **SOCIAL POLICY: GENERAL**

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now move to item 5, Social Policy: General, Composite 18 to be moved by London, then I will call the CEC speaker, and then I will go to Composite 3, Retirement Age Legislation, to be moved by Wales & South West Region, seconded by Midland & East Coast, 51, A Living Pension, 52, Pensioners Christmas Bonus, 53, Part-Time Workers' Pensions, 54, Pensions, 55, Pension Black Hole, and 56, Pensions. Would all movers and seconders please come to the fore?

### **FOOD COSTS, REMOVAL OF HYDROGENATED FATS FROM FOOD & THE REGULATION OF THE FOOD INDUSTRY COMPOSITE MOTION 18**

#### **C18. Covering Motions:**

- 187. FOOD COSTS CONTROLS (*London Region*)
- 188. GREATER REGULATION OF THE FOOD INDUSTRY (*London Region*)
- 189. CAMPAIGN FOR THE REMOVAL OF HYDROGENATED FATS FROM FOODSTUFFS (*London Region*)

### **FOOD COSTS, REMOVAL OF HYDROGENATED FATS FROM FOOD THE REGULATION OF FOOD INDUSTRY**

This Congress is asking the GMB to campaign for the complete removal of trans fatty acids (hydrogenated fats) from all food. Many companies have voluntarily reduced its use but the time has come to bring the use of it down to zero. It is of no nutritional value and is reported to cause many illnesses.

Congress says that consumers struggle to purchase their everyday food due to the cost. Congress is requested to campaign and lobby to seek greater regulation of the food industry in order to address the increasing problems of poor diet that manifests itself in health related illnesses i.e. diabetes, heart disease, obesity etc. generating increased demands on the NHS and Congress seeks that specialist food is not exploited in cost to the consumer.

**London Region to Move**  
**London Region to Second**

*(Carried)*

BRO. C. KERR (London): Trans fatty acids, hydrogenated fats, you have probably all heard of these and have probably eaten them in one form or another, but what do you actually know about them. What is hydrogenated fat, some kind of vegetable fat that has been treated somehow for some reason, probably nothing to worry about, right? Totally wrong. It is an artificial fat that is unhealthier than other fats, including butter and meat fats. Hydrogenated fat is widely used in the production of margarine, biscuits, cakes, fish fingers, crisps, sweets, and many dairy products. Let me give you a brief rundown of how these fats are made.

Vegetable oil is mixed thoroughly with fine particles of nickel and copper. It is then heated to about 200 degrees C and held at that heat for about six hours. Meanwhile, hydrogen gas is pumped through the mixture at high pressure and the then excited hydrogen atoms penetrate the vegetable oil molecules and chemically change them into trans fats. These are now new complex substances that are not found in nature except in low levels of some animal fats. The mixture is then cooled down to

form tiny plastic beads, this is hydrogenated oil. The hydrogen makes the fat harder which is why it sticks to your arteries. It is also why it is solid at room temperature and that is the reason why food manufacturers use it as it adds substance and body to the products. I hope I haven't put you off your wine gums yet.

In some countries, such as Denmark and the US, these fats have to be listed on food labels by law but in the UK there is no such requirement. The only way of finding out if a food contains these fats is to look out for hydrogenated vegetable oil, hydrogenated fat or partially hydrogenated oil in a list of ingredients. The higher they sit in the list the more trans fats are likely to be in the product and the more hydrogenated fats in the product the more trans fats it will contain.

Trans fats found in food have no known nutritional benefit and appear to be harmful. They increase blood cholesterol levels and independently increase the risk of heart attack and disease. Some evidence even suggests that they may be worse than saturated fats for health. A Department of Health report has shown that the beginning of heart disease can be found in children as young as seven. Research in the US has shown that recently even three-year old children developed fatty deposits of plaque in their arteries at levels normally found in much older people. Technically, hydrogenated fat is not a saturated fat so it looks okay on the label but it is actually chemically changed vegetable oil that behaves like a saturated fat.

Armed with this information, and plenty more available, I hope that you will all support me in asking the GMB to campaign the next government and those manufacturers that do not already do so to put a limit on or better still abandon the use of hydrogenated fats in our food, or at very least make it law to have clearer details on packaging so that customers can make an informed choice of what they wish to eat. Please support. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Colin. Secunder. Good afternoon, Henley. Now, behave.

BRO. H. SMITH (London): Good afternoon, Sister Mary.

THE PRESIDENT: Mother Mary.

BRO. H. SMITH (London): Hydrogenated fats, the US food industry has trans fats that kill up to 75,000 Americans a year. A new report has shown that Americans are likely to get more fats than the rest of the world in the same foods. A study of two restaurants found wide variations in trans fat contents from country to country, from city to city, within the same nation and from restaurants to restaurants in the same city. The differences were to do with the type of frying oil used and the main culprit appeared to be partially hydrogenated vegetable oil, which has a high trans fat content. Premature death rates kill 30,000 to 75,000 Americans a year. A research led by Dr. Stern Stender, a cardiologist at the Gentofte University Hospital in Hellerup, Denmark, and a former Head of the Danish Nutritional Council, who worked for the research, said: "I was very surprised to see the difference in trans fat acids in the uniform products. It is such an easy risk factor to remove." McDonald's promised in 2002 to cut trans fat in half of their products. KFC, parent of Yummy Bands, said: "An explanation was local taste preference," but nutritionist experts and consumer activists say it is all about money. Pure vegetable oil is added to foods. They are impregnated with hydrogenated gases. There are pure and easily accessible comparisons that could be taken in by the person if you are shopping for oils to add to your food, those are sesame oils and pure and organic virgin olive oils. The message in general is, food is an essential part of our existence and it is your responsibility to make sure that you take the right things to maintain your health and wellbeing for yourself and the future generation. I second this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Henley. Can I ask for the mover of 190, and the seconder?

**DRUG REFORM  
MOTION 190**

**190. DRUG REFORM**

This Conference instructs the CEC to lobby the appropriate bodies to create a responsible reform on the use of recreational drugs.

The misinformation and current policies are out of touch and unworkable.

If we are not careful, prohibition will result in the use of alternatives which could turn out to be more harmful.

R35 ROCESTER JCB BRANCH  
*Birmingham & West Midlands Region*

*(Referred)*

BRO. A. STEVENSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): The current war on drugs has failed miserably and, in my opinion, I do not believe it has been carried out in the correct manner. I know it is contentious but I am afraid it is going on. The use of recreational drugs is incredibly common globally and weekend drug use has increased massively as they have become cheaper and easier to source. Unfortunately, there is amazing stigma attached to their use; not enough knowledge exists on the use of drugs and very often what is spoken is unfounded and baseless. The two schools of thought, liberalisation and the state criminalisation on the sale of drugs, are neither correct nor effective. Liberalisation in Holland and Portugal has not been completely successful. Zero tolerance models in Russia created both an increase in use and a massive increase in the HIV cases caused by using dirty needles. The business, and make no mistake it is a business, is lucrative with cocaine being worth more than its weight in gold, £52,000 a kilo on the street.

Just as the prohibition years in the USA saw an escalation in alcohol consumption in the speak-easies run by the mafia, the same thing happens with drugs. Zero tolerance creates a lucrative and violent criminal market, it diverts police attention, saps their resources, all at a cost, and a crackdown on one state or another just produces a glut somewhere else. Much more importantly stigmatisation just drives everything underground and people who really need help are not convinced to seek it. In Afghanistan opium accounts for 10% of their GDP at approximately 2.5 million. In Iran, in 2010, 600 people were executed for drug use. In England, the cost of drug enforcement is estimated at £2bn to £4bn a year. That is on a losing battle. An even higher cost of £15bn is estimated for the undercover work, imprisonment, and failed enforcement programme.

What this motion is calling for is a responsible, multi-pronged initiative. It needs regulating, taking it out of the hands of the criminals and both guaranteeing the quality and the safe use, controlled environments with doctors, pharmacists, and licensed vendors. It is an industry and as such it should be monitored, controlled, and taxed. Hard drugs should be prescribed and administered at a suitable venue with the amounts used controlled. Licensed retailers can sell cannabis as well as tobacco and alcohol, as in Holland and in some states of the USA. The benefits, it has already been shown there is a vast reduction in secondary drug crime as shown in Switzerland. Obvious health benefits with quality on the control of drugs and users kept medically safe, in effect, health and safety for the drug industry. The dealers do not care. We could go somewhere along the lines of the Swedish alternative; yes, they have one. We could call it the Swedish Derogation model. That would give our youth a socially healthy lifestyle alternative.

I know it is a long process but we need to do something now. Our prisons are full of people who need help and rehabilitation, not incarceration. It is costly all round for the taxpayer. Please support this motion and lobby for the reform. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Andrew. Secunder.

BRO. A. THURSFIELD (Birmingham & West Midlands): I was drunk last night, again. I turned up here this morning and I was fit, I was on time, and I was sober. What would the real difference have been if I had gone out last night and got high, as long as I turned up here fit and sober? Let's not forget some drugs are bad, they ruin lives, but one of the worst of these is alcohol and as my colleague said prohibition in America in the 1920s did nothing; all it did was criminalise ordinary people, and the gangsters and the bootleggers flourished.

The war on drugs is being lost and we cannot give all the answers in six minutes on this stage but we can call for change. Why should people face criminal charges, why should they lose their jobs or be denied jobs because they got high at the weekend, they went to a festival, as nightclub, etc. In short, we are calling not for a free for all on drugs but we can and should push for change in policies and attitudes. We need regulation and education. We do not need millions of young people with criminal records. Congress, please support this motion that I second. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Adam, I want to go to the same party as you. Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? No? Yes?

SIS. J. SMITH (London): Thanks, Mary. Speaking on Composite 18 but referring to resolution 187, which are the last 13 words of that composite. Congress, those 13 words mean more than what it says. That resolution started off with this tiny little piece in the newspaper, "New Gluton Fad Rip-Off". Can I say that Colin, my husband, four years ago was diagnosed with celiac and from that day onwards my shopping bill trebled. Can I say that to come to conference I have done a comparison of what price certain foods would be if I was doing a normal shop: a small fruit loaf £2.50 as opposed to 80p; Ciabatta rolls, which are the only type of roll, £2.00 as opposed to 60p; Warburton Thins for four £2.50, for ordinary, six for £1.20; flour, £1.70 for a kilo bag which you can get ordinary for £1.5, as opposed to 45p; porridge £3 as opposed to £1.20; a small loaf of bread £3 as opposed to 79p; a ginger cake £3.69 as opposed to £1.30. On this little receipt I bought nine items and it cost me £22.60, so I say to the CEC, please, there is more to those 13 words, please look into it, do more than the 13 words because there are thousands of people out there with allergies. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Anyone else?

BRO. V. THOMAS (London): Contributing to Composite 18. This motion is, I think, self-explanatory about greater regulation on the food industry. It addresses an area of the economy that generates a significant demand on the NHS and over which the NHS has little to no influence or control. I am afraid to say that food companies do not seem to give a damn about the increasing instances of ill health due to poor diet. Poor diet is based on the foodstuffs that these companies peddle without regard to the consequences. The Government want to rely on the food industry being self-regulating. Self-regulation does not work. The one time when our nation's children had the healthiest diet they have ever had was, ironically, during the Second World War. This motion is not advocating rationing but the important point is that it was strict regulation. Regulation does work. For regulation to work, though, there needs to be sanctions on the food industry that has no regard to the health consequences on our communities. This can be addressed by legislating to force the industry to cover the NHS costs generated by irresponsible sales and marketing of the products. This

can be done by imposing hypothecated taxes. Only when the Government hit these companies financially will they adhere to any regulation of any description. Congress, I support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Anyone else? Come on, Pat.

BRO. P. DUFFY (GMB Scotland): President, comrades, Motion 190 on drugs, regulation on drugs. I nearly lost my son two years ago to drugs so I am afraid I do not agree with bringing in laws to make them legal, or whatever. There may be some people who can take it, I do not know, but all I know is that anything I have seen of drugs has been detrimental to the human being. I am really against regulating on the drugs footing to make them free. Sorry. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Pat, I am going to put reference to that. I will not make the mistake I made the other day, as you are opposing. Does the mover wish to make comment, the right to reply? It has been opposed.

BRO. L. DAGNALL (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I would also like to add my opposition to Motion 190 on drugs reform. I just think the people who really want drugs to be legalised will be the big business that will make a killing out of it. The big American companies that have made so much money out of tobacco and alcohol will swoop in as soon as possible to make as much money as possible out of drugs. In the system we have there is no way of legalising this stuff responsibly and it will just be exploited. As Pat there movingly said, it will be exploited to the detriment of people, working people, and not for our benefit. I must oppose this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Anyone else? Would the mover like the right to reply?

BRO. A. STEVENSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): As it stands at the moment, there are no alternatives. What this motion is about is actually trying to get something that is properly workable. The costs alone are tremendous. We are talking billions of pounds here trying to sort this out and it is a mess. We have to go somewhere with it. We need to do something. I do not know the answers. I will leave that to better people than myself. Like I said, this motion is about trying to do something; that is all. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Can I call Warinder Juss, CEC, on Motion 190, please? Colleagues, please, there is a lot of noise coming from the back. I do not know if it is outside that door or at the back there. Thank you.

BRO. W. JUSS (CEC, Commercial Services): I am speaking on behalf of the CEC and asking you to refer Motion 190 on Drug Reform. Comrades, I hear what the speakers who spoke in support of the motion have said but you all would have heard what Patrick Duffy had to say as well. The use of recreational drugs is an extremely complex subject and often an emotive one and not just in the areas that might seem obvious. There are a number of issues that we need to consider. Obviously, there are the potential health issues. There are issues about having sufficient resources at regional, national, international levels, in dealing with criminal behaviour. There are political issues. We will have political parties across the political spectrum trying to score points off each other and ultimately it will just inflame and publicise the right-wing media. There are, of course, religious and cultural issues. There are well established respected communities who have historically used drugs, for example, in religious ceremonies and that use has been frowned upon by others, so we have implications to do with equalities and also as regards allegations of discrimination.

On the face of it the motion appears to be quite a straightforward one, either you are in favour of reform or you are not, but the GMB needs to consider its position very, very carefully. What we are asking is for the GMB to be given the opportunity to carry out proper research into the issues raised by this motion and fully evaluate all the implications before reaching a policy decision. Comrades, we are a credible and respected trade union and whatever decision we make, whatever policy position we take as a credible union would have ramifications which go far beyond the apparently straightforward nature of this motion. In order to do this motion proper justice I ask you to refer this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Can I ask Congress on Composite 18, all those in favour, please show. Composite 18. Those against? That is carried.

*Composite Motion 18 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Now I come to 190. Will Birmingham Region refer? Yes? Okay. The region has agreed to refer. Can I put to Congress referral? All those in favour, please show. All those against? That is carried, more or less unanimously. Thank you.

*Motion 190 was REFERRED.*

## **EMPLOYMENT POLICY: PENSIONS & RETIREMENT**

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now move to the next agenda item, and Composite 3, Retirement Age legislation, to be moved by GMB Wales & South West Region, seconded by Midland & East Coast.

### **RETIREMENT AGE LEGISLATION COMPOSITE MOTION 3**

#### **C3. Covering Motions:**

- 49. RETIREMENT CHANGES (*Wales & South West Region*)
- 50. RETIREMENT AGE LEGISLATION (*Midland & East Coast Region*)

#### **RETIREMENT AGE LEGISLATION**

This Conference is concerned that the announcement to increase the retirement age fails to take into account the quality of work available and differing life expectancies between manual, office and professional workers.

It is common knowledge within the pension industry that manual workers in industrial occupations within the UK do not enjoy anything like the same life expectancy as professionals, or other classes of employees. To force someone who has done a lifetime of work in manufacturing, shipbuilding, health service or in factories to work longer than 65 is discriminatory to a large section of our membership and completely unacceptable.

We therefore call for opposition to any increase in the retirement age. This Conference agrees to mount a campaign seeking to repeal the Con-Dem government's retirement age legislation.

**Wales & South West Region to Move  
Midland & East Coast Region to Second**

*(Carried)*

BRO. N. WARN (GMB Wales & South West): President, Congress, once again this Coalition Government show their contempt for working people by the decision to reform state pension ages for men and women. Gone now are the days when everybody understood that they could gracefully and deservedly retire at the right time at the workplace. It is currently 62 years of age for a woman and 65 for a man until Osborne and his henchmen announced that our state pension system was cripplingly expensive because people were retiring at 65 and living for several more decades. We now face the prospect of an equal retirement age for men and women in 2018 and a constant rise for both to 66 in 2020, 67 by 2026, and 68 in the mid 2030s, so much so that some born in Britain this year will probably be at least 70 before they can claim their pension.

Congress, in what I will call the great British pension sham, the level at which the state pension is paid in this country is the lowest in Europe; even the former Eastern Bloc nations, like Slovenia, Hungary, and Slovakia, are able to provide a more generous pension calculated at a proportion of average income.

Older people are facing a daily struggle with rising costs of living, and welfare benefit reductions, cuts to the key services that they need and depend on so much, day centres and other social care establishments, are impacting upon them.

The Government claim that they are building a substantial UK pensions system for the future but the mere pension payment adds nothing to the loneliness and poverty retirement for those who reach the retirement age. However, although the existing payment does not represent an adequate retirement income, at least our members will not have to get up at the crack of dawn to go out in the cold, the rain, or work through the night any longer but instead can look forward to putting their feet up and doing those things that they never had time to do whilst working.

Now, of course, the Government are telling us we are living too long and costing the country too much money. At the same time that we are near the bottom of the league for looking after our senior citizens, the plan has now moved the goalposts even further. They constantly tell us we have to rely less upon the state and take more individual responsibility for our income secured retirement. You can imagine the type of discussion that took place, with the Pimm's and the prawn sandwiches, when Osborne put together plans to betray the future generations, can't you. It would have probably gone something like this: If we make them work for five years longer then think of the more National Insurance contributions we can rake in. Also at the end of the five years before we have to pay them anything, as they work longer they will wear out more quickly and die sooner. Then we won't have to pay the pensions for so long. Let's give ourselves a pat on the back.

Congress, it is not bad for the politicians to sit or sometimes sleep in the House of Commons until 70 but it is completely different for those who have physically demanding and stressful jobs. These measures are not unfair but based on reliable data and really designed to undermine the welfare state and dismantle public services. Colleagues, there must be a decent retirement period after our work is done and we have to campaign for the younger generation who will bear the brunt of the draconian proposals. We need to ensure that these conditions are removed as soon as possible by an incoming Labour government. Please support. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Nigel. Secunder.

SIS. S. ORTEGA (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, the modern state pension was first introduced in 1908 and the age for receipt of the pension was deliberately set high when life expectancy was low and when many workers would not live to receive it. Nowadays life expectancy

is much enhanced but by setting a higher compulsory age to receive state pension echoes the past. Workers in heavy industry, public transport, the fire service, nursing, teaching, etc., are now expected to work more years before receiving their pension. As we age capability can be diminished and despite improved health services age brings with it increasing health problems which can often shorten time to enjoy the retirement years. Should a 60-year old need to seek employment the chances of securing work is slim and working longer also blocks the young gaining employment, which is already a major problem. We must oppose this legislation and work to eradicate the Government's mentality that you will work until you drop. Congress, I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Shona. Motion 51.

## **A LIVING PENSION MOTION 51**

### **51. A LIVING PENSION**

This Conference calls for a Living Pension.

Whilst David Cameron has pledged to retain the 'Triple Lock' on pensions, he has refused to give support for maintaining existing universal pensioner benefits such as the bus pass and winter fuel allowance. With the 'triple lock guarantee' in place, pensions will only increase from £110 to £112.75 per week, some increase! We call upon the GMB to DEMAND that pensioners be given a 'living pension'. Older people have to live too!

We have the minimum wage and are moving towards the 'living wage' but people (and the government) forget that pensioners pay the same for food, drink, mortgages, rent, community charges, etc. as the rest of the population. Yet they are expected to live on £112.75 per week.

We call on the GMB to continue to fight for pensions to be raised in line with pension levels in other European countries. The aim must be to provide pensioners in Britain with the right to live a dignified and peaceful retirement. We believe pensioners should receive £150 per week or more in order to stop the growth of poverty in old age.

Q22 BRANCH  
*North West & Irish Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. K. FLANAGAN (North West & Irish): Congress, as the motion states, pensioners are not a group set apart from the real world. They do not live in a heavily discounted cheap world where the cost of living is lower than the rest of us. No, they face the same costs on heat, light, and power, you name it, paying mortgages, paying rents, so why should they be treated as second-class citizens, a question we need to ask.

Congress, I believe it is time we introduced the concept of a living pension, a bit like the living wage, a pension that more accurately reflects the costs that pensioners have to face, that allows them to live with dignity, without fear of poverty, and insecurity. Why should pensioners have to choose between food or heat? Why allow poverty to grow in old age? It's wrong. It's wrong. It's wrong.

Based on the reforms for 2016 and the new pensions and the projected changes in real state pensions, we come 12<sup>th</sup> in the league; Spain, Germany, France, Brazil, Australia, Denmark, Netherlands, Ireland, and Canada, all beat us. On the whole, the average levels of earnings in those countries are lower than ours, much lower than ours. Their pensions vary from, in Germany £26,000 a year to £10,000 in Ireland. What do we give them? We give them £7,488.

Let's just look at that. The minimum wage at present is £6.31 for a 35-hour week that would equate to £11,484 a year. Congress, we already know that we cannot afford to live on that. We are already opposed to that so why are we accepting a position whereby the pension per week is £76 lower per week than the minimum wage? How can we accept that? There is an inconsistency.

Congress, let's see a real increase, a living state pension. Don't tell us it is not affordable because of austerity. Congress, it is a political choice. How we treat our elderly and pensioners is one of the key measures of a fair and civilised society. Dignity in old age is a primary goal. How come bosses can get away with putting millions into their pension pots privately and walk away with our money? That is the issue.

As a son of Nottingham I think he has a lesson to teach us, hasn't he, that son of Nottingham called Robin. If they are not going to give it one way, then actually we should take it another way. If they are going to walk off with the money and take it privately, then the common good says, let's have a redistribution of wealth. It is a great system, it is a brilliant system, we don't even have to invent it, do you know what it is called, it is called taxation, fair taxation on those who refuse to give, the same people who are dumping the good pension schemes and putting responsibility on the state. Well, the time has come to fight back, take it from the rich and give it to the poor, and let's create a living pension. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kevin. Secunder.

SIS. A. SARGENT (North West & Irish): I am pleased to support the motion calling for a living pension. Increasingly, it has been recognised in this country that a living wage is probably one of the ways forward in terms of trying to ensure that people have adequate income to support their families and to live a reasonable life within the community. The living wage is above the minimum wage and reflects what people need based on the true cost of living.

However, colleagues, what happens when someone retires? As people move into old age and into retirement they will face the same financial pressures that everybody else faces with a low level of pension available to them. The crisis in the private pensions market over the last few years has robbed ordinary working men and women of their hard-earned future security, making them more dependent upon a state pension to survive. It is appalling to think that many will go from a reasonable income to a poor income as the real value of state pensions continues to decline.

Congress, pensioners face the same costs as everybody else and therefore is it not time that we started looking at the decency threshold for a proper pension, in other words, a living pension. We are seeing more and more older people facing fuel poverty, pensioners having to choose between food, paying their heating bills, and even their care bills. As a result of the changes that have happened over the last few years and a failure to keep the state pension in line with the real cost of living that ordinary people face, if we do not do something positive then poverty in old age will grow.

In this regard, we ask the Union to campaign vigorously to try and ensure that state pensions are raised in line with the best that are available in other European countries. We ask the GMB to campaign for a living pension that would enable people to live in reasonable security and with dignity in their retirement age. Congress, I ask you to support this motion and to vote for a living wage for our pensioners. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Motion 52.

**PENSIONERS' CHRISTMAS BONUS  
MOTION 52**

**52. PENSIONERS CHRISTMAS BONUS**

This Conference is asked to look at the Christmas Bonus for pensioners which was introduced by the Government in 1972.

The bonus paid to pensioners in 1972 was £10, at the time the weekly basic pension was £6.75. Four decades on, the same weekly basic pension is £110.15 and the Christmas bonus is £10.

We feel that a long overdue increase in the Christmas bonus would help all pensioners at this most expensive time of the year.

T36 TIPTON NO.2 BRANCH  
*Birmingham & West Midlands Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. G. HARVEY (Birmingham & West Midlands): Mary, could I congratulate National Office on the fact of getting Phil Taylor to take the pictures for our UnionLine advertising. I thought that was brilliant of you.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I thought you were congratulating me! That is very kind of you. I will pass it on.

BRO. G. HARVEY (Birmingham & West Midlands): President, Congress, the Christmas Bonus for Pensioners was introduced by the Government in 1972 at the rate of £10 when the weekly pension stood at £6.75. The bonus has declined in real terms ever since the introduction, apart from two years in the mid-70s when we did not get any at all. In today's money the bonus is a slap in the face for today's pensioners. What was once a valuable additional benefit is now nothing but a joke.

When the bonus was introduced, a pensioner could very likely have paid for their full Christmas dinner and still have money left over. Today, it would not even buy a good Christmas pudding. When the Government have been asked about an increase in the bonus, they argue that other benefits have been brought in since the bonus was introduced, like the winter fuel allowance, cold weather payments, and free bus passes to help pensioners. In my opinion, it is only because the pensioners in this country do not receive a basic pension which they can live on. A bonus is money on top of the living wage. This bonus is certainly not in that category.

To close, I would like to say: "Christmas is coming, the goose is getting fat, pension is inadequate, and this bonus is ten times worse than that." Please support the motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder. Formally? Thank you.

*Motion 52 was formally seconded.*

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 53, Part-Time Workers' Pensions.

## **PART-TIME WORKERS' PENSIONS MOTION 53**

### **53. PART-TIME WORKERS' PENSIONS**

Part-time workers are sometimes only paid minimum wage and can be out of work more than in work.

Under proposed rule changes, retiring workers have to prove 35 years of National Insurance contributions, which means part-time workers would struggle to get even the basic State pension. This rule change must be changed to take into account these problems.

ANWICK & MID LINGS COMMUNITY BRANCH  
*Midland & East Coast Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. J. GROCOCK (Midland & East Coast): Congress, in April 2016, the present government plans the introduction of a single tier state pension of £144 a week. While this is a lot better than the current system, it also brings in a five-year contribution increase of National Insurance. The amount of National Insurance contributions you need to get a full pension: as a full-time worker this change really does not affect me but part-time workers, in particular, will be in for a shock when they come to realise that some of them will not be able to claim the full state pension as many of them cannot afford to cover the living costs at the moment.

If you cannot prove 35 years of contributions, you will receive a pro rata amount, which is based on a percentage of what you have contributed. The current 30 years is very hard for part-time workers to prove as it is. Out of 10 million retired people 28%, or 2.8 million women, receive a state pension of less than £80 a week, while only 0.4 % or 4,704 men do so as they have not been able to achieve the current 30 years National Insurance contributions.

If you take into consideration that at the moment three in ten workers of the British workforce are in part-time jobs, that is almost eight million people; out of that 1.4 million people are on zero-hours contracts which offer little security and the figures will only increase and more people will be worse off in retirement.

I would like to end by thanking Rachel Reeves, who announced recently a review into pensions should Labour get into power. I can only hope it brings out a fairer system that allows genuine gaps in National Insurance for women so they can receive a full state pension that they deserve. Please, Congress, support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder.

BRO. C. GUNTER (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, you have heard the facts regarding the changes to the National Insurance contributions given by my colleague. This change is due to take place from April 2016 with a detrimental effect for part-time workers being able to claim a full state pension. Part-time workers do not just work for pin money; they play a vital role in the workplace and should be treated with dignity and respect. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Thank you. Motion 54.

## **PENSIONS MOTION 54**

### **54. PENSIONS**

This Conference deplores the actions of the ConDem Government for their pathetic attempt to address the dismal state of the pensions in this country.

Their introduction of the auto enrolment with a minimum of 1% paid into the employee pension, which will only increase marginally over time, falls well short of the type of provision our members will require to be comfortable in retirement.

We call on our union to work with our sister TUC affiliated unions in keeping up the pressure on the ConDem Government and future Government to increase the employer contribution into Auto Enrolment.

G36 SECURITY BRANCH  
Southern Region

*(Carried)*

SIS. L. ADAMS (Southern): Good afternoon, President. Good afternoon, sisters and brothers. First time speaker, first time delegate. *(Applause)* What this Government has done to pensions is in the opinion of our branch members just a way of rolling back the years to the Victorian era where we all work until we drop. Clearly, the state pension is not working and many working class citizens' survival is made up of top-ups. Perhaps this explains the Government's drive for auto enrolment.

At this time, around eight million will have paid into this scheme but the Office of Fair Trading is trying to determine if the employers' pension schemes are good value. In that case, why is the Government rolling out a scheme to workers that may or may not be of any value? For decades many schemes have been rolled out with lots of fanfare only down the road to find out they do not deliver on their promises. Then at the end only the money men of the City have gained because of the extortionate charges, and these same money men still have not been brought into line, even after scandals of the last decade of the endowments and the PPIs, and the almost virtual collapse of our banking systems, which we are still paying for. Is auto enrolment another scandal waiting to happen? Thinking our members are going to have a better retirement on the back of this scheme is pure pie in the sky.

How about the rumblings of Mr. Webb, the Pensions Minister, who made a comment that we will all be able to blow our pensions on a Lamborghini; not with the employers' paying a minimum of 1%, which will only increase to 3% by 2018. You do not have to be Albert Einstein to realise that my pension pot will not buy me a £100,000-plus motor car. What planet is he on?

This is the same Steve Webb who betrayed women on the rights to a pension. Why should we believe in all this spin from the man who has been rather disingenuous in the past? The pension industry has delayed the pension price cut for 12 months; that is after successfully lobbying the Government. Hopefully, a new Labour minister in a new Labour government will bring in an approved system that is fair for all. We should continue to use our political connections with the Labour Party to ensure this will happen.

Of course, the scheme does not guarantee how much they get back at the maturity of their pensions. The only people who will benefit from the extra growth in the pensions savings is, yes, you have guessed it, the money men of the pension savings market, and self-regulation will always take second place to self-interest. This is no more obvious than in the financial markets with the record of the

greed and dishonesty over many decades being documented and publicised. What makes us think that this will change? All the schemes have been hailed as a breakthrough in fairness with lots of spin on how wonderful they are and how we will all benefit when we eventually get to retirement. We will have to wait and see but I for one will not be holding my breath.

The Union supports the principles of auto enrolment on the basis it requires employers to contribute into the employees' pensions but the contributions need to be higher than the pathetic 1% to 3% currently on offer. Therefore, in conclusion, the GMB calls on the TUC affiliated unions to keep up the pressure on the Government, and future governments, to increase the employers' contribution to auto enrolment to provide our members in retirement with a decent living. I call on you to support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Louise. Secunder. I dreamt you were sitting down there all night and you weren't going to get up here and bother me!

BRO. A. ACHI (Southern): Good afternoon, President. Congress, it's going to be a short one. Work till you drop. A quick question, are pensioners dead walking people? I don't think so, so why should they be treated as such. Britain's pension crisis reveals a fifth of those retiring this year will be below the poverty line, and 14% have no pension at all. A pension pot of £220,000 is needed to get a minimum wage of £12,000 a year. I repeat my question, are pensioners dead walking people? I don't think so, so why should they be treated as such. I think employers really need to do their part and they need to increase their contributions, otherwise pensioners are not going to have the dignity they deserve. Congress, President, I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ake. Where's that poor shark you did damage to this afternoon? Motion 55.

## **PENSION BLACK HOLE MOTION 55**

### **55. PENSION BLACK HOLE**

Congress is both dismayed and disgusted by the recent u-turn of the Pensions Minister, Steve Webb, when he announced that he is delaying his proposed cap of 0.75% to 1% on all pension charges, until at least April 2015. This is after claiming in October 2013 that he would consider a "full frontal attack" on the pensions industry, due to the fact that somebody saving £100 per month for their pension throughout their working life could end up paying between £170,000 to £230,000 in administrative charges. Even the Government's own figures show that a pension saver with a 0.75% annual charge on their pension pot could eventually end up £100,000 better off than if they had been charged a rate of 1.5%.

This demonstrates yet again that unregulated markets, particularly in the financial sector, do not work.

Congress agrees we must continue to challenge both the Coalition Government and the pension industry in what is yet another example of "rip-off Britain".

ISLINGTON APEX BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. V. WEST (London): The Government promised a full frontal attack on the pensions industry that is ripping off pensions savers with excessive administration charges, charges that over the lifetime of building up a pension pot could cost an individual pensioner tens of thousands of pounds

in what they are going to get when they retire. It could be the difference between a decent pension and one that might not even allow you to live in dignity in old age.

Despite this grand sounding promise and fine words of capping such charges to between ¾ of 1% and 1%, the Liberal Democrat Pensions Minister, Steve Webb, has now announced that he is delaying the proposed cap until at least 2015. What he really means is, “I’m kicking it into the long grass.” We all know how this has happened. Friends of the Tories in the pensions industry have lobbied their mates and then the spineless Liberal Democrats have been told to drop the measures, and as the Liberal Democrats always do they break their promises.

Congress, we all know that unregulated financial markets do not work. You only have to go back to 2007 and the bank crash to know that that is true. It is no different in other parts of the financial industry, no different in the pensions sector from in the banks, unregulated markets do not work. The industry is ripping off you and me as we save for our pensions and they are ripping us off when we retire because of the administration charges. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Vaughan. Secunder.

BRO. S. FORREST (London): I think the main point to make is that yet again the Coalition Government have chosen to put profits, and in this case the profits of the pensions companies, before that of the workers saving towards a dignified pension in retirement. This is a massive problem. There are 186,000 pensions companies, according to the Office of Fair Trading, who charge 1% or more, so this is a massive problem for the pensions industries with the hidden charges that Vaughan spoke about in moving the motion. After just minor lobbying with the pensions industry, the Government announced a delay to at least April 2015. The reality is after the next election never, never.

We do need to put pressure on the Coalition Government to deliver their commitment to reduce these charges in line with the motion, but really what we need to do is ensure that the next Labour government actually brings an end to these costs charges and brings them in line with the motion. We must ensure that a Labour government of Ed Miliband brings in this motion and we can put pressure on that Labour government to deliver on this and provide a dignified pension. I second this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Steven. Motion 56, Pensions, Midland.

## **PENSIONS MOTION 56**

### **56. PENSIONS**

This Conference calls on the Government to clarify the compulsory retirement law, after the decision of five Supreme Court Judges, led by Lady Hale, that compulsory retirement at 65 can still be lawful.

The Supreme Court’s ruling was criticized by the Confederation of British Industry.

NOTTINGHAM TEC BRANCH  
*Midland & East Coast Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. P. SOPER (Midland & East Coast): If I could just spend a minute, if everybody agrees with this motion when I have finished it, could you save the applause for my seconder, Carol Clarkson,

who is recovering from a stroke; she is not only brave enough to come here but she is seconding this motion. Thank you, Congress. (*Applause*)

Back to Motion 56. The law on default retirement age formerly 65 has been phased out and if an employee chooses to work longer they cannot be discriminated against, so they say. However, a landmark ruling by the Supreme Court said employers can continue to set a retirement age if they can justify it. If you are shop steward, a safety officer, anything like that, forget it. The five Supreme Court judges unanimously dismissed an appeal by solicitor, Leslie Seldon, who was told by his law firm he had to retire at 65. One of the reasons for Mr. Seldon's compulsory retirement was, i.e. planning for the future. As you can understand, this has put the law for employers and employees on retirement age into chaos. This ruling will mean an explosion in age discrimination claims at tribunals. The Government cannot continue to pass the buck. Employers need to know how to handle the sensitive issue of retirement with adequate protection for the employees. An earlier report suggests that people will not be able to retire until they are 77. Well, thanks, after the deliberate destruction of our pensions schemes. Which is it? When do we finish? If that is the case, what do we expect to live on for the next 12 years? When does this Government intend to stop paying dole? It will be more useful to have one simple policy like we used to. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

SIS. C. CLARKSON (Midland & East Coast): After this court ruling all businesses will now have to give careful consideration to what, if any, mandatory retirement rules can be justified in their particular business. The judgment said, although the Supreme Court judges have said it was lawful for the Kent firm to have set a retirement age, it will fall to an employment tribunal to decide whether 65 was the right one. The ability to do the job is paramount. If a company retires someone who can still do the job, they can expect to lose at a tribunal case. The employee was questioned and told the Supreme Court that he felt up to working and said his motivation in the case was financial. With life expectancy increasing and with the generosity of pensions falling, this is the way it is. I second. (*Standing ovation*)

THE PRESIDENT: Carol, with courage like yours, and commitment to your Union, I'm telling you, you will be running up those stairs next year in Ireland. (*Applause*) Colleagues, does anyone wish to come in on the debate?

BRO. W. HINSLIFFE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): It is horrible when people get your name wrong. Sorry. Tina, Congress – (*Laughter*) – I have three daughters who were all in the GMB and one of them went onto another profession. She is 54 years old and she rang the retirement department asking about when she was retiring and the forecasts were given. They said if she was going to retire at 60 she would get a normal pension. She rang four years later and they have told her now she has to work till she is 68. She has to pay £30 a month more out of her monthly salary and she is going to finish up with less money than what she would have had originally. Her profession is teaching so she is going to be a 68-year old looking after 35 kids in a class. How the hell can she do that? There are going to be people older than her looking after youngsters in classes who are going to be in their 80s. It is unbelievable. This Michael Gove is a bit of an idiot, I think. (*Applause*) I think he should spend a night in Whipsnade Zoo in the lions' den. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Fred! Anyone else? Come on, where's doggie?

BRO. P. DUFFY (GMB Scotland): President, comrades, working until you are 67 or 70, the life expectancy in the East End of Glasgow is 57 so they have no chance of getting a pension. I am

supporting Composite 3. Can you imagine a bin man running about pulling two bins at the back of him at the age of 67? No. I support this motion and I hope the next Labour government reverses this thing. You should not even be working till you are 65. I worked 50 years. It is ridiculous. And the pension, what do you get: nothing. Brilliant. Support the motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Pat. No one else? Can I call Gordon Richardson on Composite 3, Motions 52, 53, and 56?

BRO. G. RICHARDSON (CEC, Manufacturing): The CEC would like to support Composite 3, covering Motions 49 and 50, and Motions 52, 53, and 56 with the following qualifications.

Composite 3 on retirement age legislation is in line with GMB's current position. Increases to the state pension age should be resisted while people see huge variations in life expectancy by their job, their income, and their location. The CEC wants to develop this position by campaigning for a greater flexibility of pension age. This will take into account longevity of workers in different occupations, and areas of the UK, how long someone has paid in and the ability to stay in some jobs at older ages. No one should have to work till they drop. This position is important as it becomes clear that there is no longer a one size fits all approach to retirement in the UK.

In Motion 52 the case is well made for an increase to the Pensioners' Christmas Bonus and the CEC supports this, and indeed it was once a LibDem policy before they became part of the government. The CEC wants to be clear that a Christmas bonus should be secondary in a campaign compared to achieving a more valuable aim of a year round living pension as covered so well in Motion 51.

Motion 53 deals with the important issue of ensuring part-time workers qualify for pension benefits, which we support. There is a growing campaign from within the labour movement to allow people to combine earnings across different jobs for National Insurance purposes. For people who might carry out more than one part-time role this would help to ensure that they meet the £5,800 a year needed to qualify for a state pension. The qualification is that providing the combination earnings like this is on a voluntary basis and the CEC thinks this is a worthwhile campaign.

Finally, Motion 56, which covers the issue of whether employers can dismiss someone because of their age, the motion is correct in that but it has not yet been covered in a legal way and cases have not yet provided great levels of certainty. However, the CEC is concerned that by asking the current Government to clarify an employment right could very well lead them to weakening or abolishing it. After all, they have past form with the recent clarification on the TUPE rights of pensioners resulting in a cut. We feel that it is pertinent to bide our time on this matter and continue to work through the courts and the tribunal system.

Congress, we ask for these four qualifications to be accepted and the motions supported accordingly. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gordon. Does Wales & South West Region accept qualification on Composite 3? (*Agreed*) Does Birmingham Region accept the qualification on Motion 52? Yes? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Does Midland Region accept the qualification on Composite 3 and Motions 53 and 56? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Can I now put Composite 3, and Motions 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, and 56 to the vote? All those in favour, please show. Anyone against? They are carried. Thank you, Congress.

*Composition Motion 3 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 51 was CARRIED.*  
*Motion 52 was CARRIED.*  
*Motion 53 was CARRIED.*  
*Motion 54 was CARRIED.*  
*Motion 55 was CARRIED.*  
*Motion 56 was CARRIED.*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Congress, we now come to agenda item 7, which involves Motions 180 and 181.

**SOCIAL POLICY – GENERAL**  
**QUALITY CARE FOR THE ELDERLY**  
**MOTION 180**

**180. QUALITY CARE FOR THE ELDERLY**

This Conference calls for quality care for the elderly to ensure everyone has an equal right to dignity in retirement.

In homecare especially we are concerned that due to budget cuts and other pressures the amount of time home carers have to spend with elderly clients is being cut.

Congress congratulates elected representatives like Labour MSP Neil Findlay who is campaigning to expose and find solutions for the crisis in care for the elderly and calls on the union to coordinate communications between GMB members who provide these vital services across the country.

GLASGOW 1 BRANCH  
GMB Scotland

*(Carried)*

SIS. A. DEAN (GMB Scotland): Congress, I move Motion 180 – Quality Care for the Elderly. President and Congress, as everyone in this hall believes, a society judges itself on the merits of how it looks after its most vulnerable. If you don't believe that, then you have no place in this hall. Recently, *BBC Panorama* reported on the despicable failings of the private-sector care home industry, and also there have been very well publicised failings of the NHS in the past couple of years. It will only be a matter of time before we get similar Government reports on the failing standards in the care-at-home services. Those dedicated and selfless people look after the elderly and most vulnerable within our own communities.

Home carers are expected to undertake what I consider to be highly-skilled care for people living with various long term and sometimes very frightening conditions. As we have been hearing all week, growing numbers of carers are being employed on zero-hours contracts on less than minimum wages by large-scale multinational companies and left to struggle on, facing grinding workloads within 15 minute time slots for a whole list of tasks for one person, spending hours on end without breaks, no travel expenses, to run from district to district and with no supervision other than a telephone contact. That's if and when somebody in the office has time to answer the calls.

Often the office staff have little or no idea as to what the issues are, anyway, or how to resolve them. Many carers are employed straight from school, having had no previous life experience or, in fact, any idea other than the most abstract of what it is that they would be expected to do. I would consider the magnitudes and implications of these jobs to be too complex for school leavers and puts both the cared for and the carer at risk. I have not even started on the personal care issues or the complexities of medication administration.

In all honesty, when staff are given less pay and training than that quite rightly given to people working in zoos, it should be no surprise to anyone that care standards are unmet. There never was any slack built into the system to buffer staff absences. There should have been a compulsory and comprehensive training course and workplace support system long before now to ensure that home carers are able to meet the remit of their job. It is outrageous that more consideration is given to the recruitment of airline staff, who I absolutely agree should be well considered prior to their employment when you see the job spec, but I am unsure as to whether private home-care companies even check if those they employ have literacy and numeracy skills. All are basic requirements when having to work through care plans kept in patients' homes and understand, sometimes, fairly complex medication instructions with accuracy. I still haven't got to the personal care stuff.

We need to get back to basics in terms of how to manage in a crisis. Someone needs to get a grip nationally and start again. There is no room for profiteering on the back of people's quality of life. The most important resource we can give our older and vulnerable people is time. To give anything less is insulting, dangerous and short-sighted, and time is what they do not get. We are a bit better off in Scotland. We have free personal care and we also have a greater number, proportionally, of very old people than those in other UK regions, so we are now in a position of struggling to cope with how to maintain the "free" bit. It is really important to all politicians to ensure that those who are in need get what they need.

Scottish Labour Shadow Health Ministers currently are undertaking a consultation process to design a care solution for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, one that will allow us to work as a single system to ensure that we are providing a caring safety net for all, one that is cost effective and fair for all. We need to give the home carers a structured communication system, and we also need to cut back on the outsourcing of these contracts to private care homes. Meanwhile, please keep taking the tablets. Thank you.  
*(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I call the seconder, please.

BRO. A. LOGAN (GMB Scotland): Congress, I support Motion 180 – Quality Care for the Elderly. President and delegates, with budget pressures on both the private and public sectors, quality time and quality care are eminently needed and deserved and are even more at a premium. All too often there is not enough time to provide the quality care that the service user requires. This is not due to the carer being lazy or inept, but it is due to budget cuts. These cuts have a devastating effect on those vulnerable. For some of them, the only contact they will have when their carers come in to see them. These older people have paid through their taxes for the services during their working years. The meagreness of the resource that they are now having to accept is reducing them to something you might find on the sole of your shoe. More funding must be made available to enable and provide a compassionate service for the elderly, which they deserve. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Alexander. I call Motion 181.

## **COMMUNITY ALARMS MOTION 181**

### **181. COMMUNITY ALARMS**

Congress wishes the CEC to campaign on behalf of elderly residents deemed as vulnerable. There are too many elderly residents in all of our communities feeling unsafe, alone and vulnerable. There is a simple solution, the Government must support the installation of community alarms and absorb the cost.

Remove the cost from Local Authorities which will immediately make the service accessible to all.

*(Carried)*

BRO. G. HARRIS (London): Congress, I move Motion 181 – Community Alarms. President and delegates, I am sure, like me, that you recognise the fact that people are living longer in today's society, which is a good thing. I am sure you also recognise that with the current economy, the way it is, owing to cuts to public services from the Tory-led Coalition, more and more elderly people are worried of being alone and vulnerable in later years and in need of far more support than ever before. With increasing fuel bills, we are finding that elderly residents simply can't afford to pay them, and they will be at considerable risk of ill health as they simply will turn off the heating to save money. In addition, owing to the financial impact on families, more and more elderly people are having to fend for themselves without the support of their neighbours and families, who have either had to move away due to unaffordable rents, lack of council houses or issues like the bedroom tax. We all know of sons and daughters who are working all hours to try and support their relatives and pay their own bills at the same time.

Congress, who can we trust to help the elderly or vulnerable when they are in need? Cameron and Osborne? Don't make me laugh. Trust them? I wouldn't trust them to run my bath. *(Applause)* Since the privatisation of Meals on Wheels in our communities, where a council employee would call on the elderly resident on a daily basis, have a chat and give them a hot meal, now all they get is a delivery of frozen foods, once a month, thereby losing that vital day-to-day human contact.

This Tory-led Government say that they recognise the increasing problems in the care sector, especially home care, but continue to allow Government Ministers, like Eric Pickles MP, to significantly make deeper cuts to local councils and care services. Let's be clear. This Tory-led Government doesn't care. They don't have to. They can afford private care. Some local councils have already developed their own community alarm services, using electronic devices like wrist bands, lanyards and mobile wardens for a few years now with good results. However, owing to budget cuts, elderly residents are having to pay for this equipment and services themselves, so there is very little take up. The community alarms equipment allows everybody to be able to communicate at the touch of a button or speak to a trained warden through their intercom 24/7, where these wardens, some of whom are GMB members, can come out, give assistance and, occasionally, save lives. The cost to the NHS is far higher than if local councils run a community-alarm service, not to mention freeing up essential time of the emergency services, especially when, on some occasions, a resident has been left for days unattended.

We know that the real issue here is cost to local councils and the individuals as they have to pay for the equipment, installation and support service. To maintain dignity, safety and security, the Government need to issue all vulnerable residents with community-alarm equipment and services free of charge. The Government should subsidise the services currently provided by local councils. This will also create jobs and give more security to the elderly and remove the strains on families, the NHS and local emergency services. This is the only way we can be sure that the elderly residents get the care and support that they need, and why not?

Congress, we will all grow old and then we will know what it is like to be alone, with no help and worrying about who to call. Let's make sure that we can give some help, dignity and security to the elderly in our communities by pressurising this Government and give community alarms and services free of charge, thereby giving equality back to the elderly. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Secunder.

BRO. J. WHISTLECRAFT (London): Congress, I second Motion 181 – Community Alarms. A good few years I worked alongside a community alarm team in Enfield Council's Borough Control, where I used to work. I saw first-hand how their calls were dealt with, with compassion and empathy. Where I now live in Enfield in north London, there is a sheltered accommodation place next door to me. Obviously, my wife and I have become friends with a few of them and a few of them we have become very close to. When we met them, they explained to us about this community alarm system and how it was a Godsend. However, the cost of this service is not cheap. As we all know, nothing is. Why cannot the Government and the Coalition not take up the cost of this service. It works out at £3.50 per week, which is £14 a month or £168 a year, this with two key holders. So when the person who has the alarm presses the button, one of the key holders will respond and deal with whatever is needed. Or they pay £5.50 per week, which is £22 a month or £264 a year, which gives them a mobile warden, who will respond and call emergency services if needed.

These figures for this service sound good until you go into it. When you work out what the cost is yearly the cost is deceiving, as I have just stated. However, if you are on a pension with only benefits as an income, this is a big chunk of the money they have. Let's give them some dignity back, some well-earned cash and, for once, let the Government fund it. I would like to ask the Government to try and do this. We know it is like getting blood from a stone, but come on, let's give it a go. Thank you. *(Applause)*

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

BRO. J. STEVENSON (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): President and Congress, this motion calls for solutions to our care crisis. We must support it, of course, but this must go hand-in-hand with our calls for quality matched by resources in care. We want to hear no more excuses from politicians and providers who tell us that the two issues are separate. Quality care – yes. Quality in our terms and conditions in care – yes. That must include the living wage, and, yes, that should also extend to Four Seasons, which have spoken at Liverpool at a fringe meeting. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Is there anyone else?

BRO. M. HINCHLIFFE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, dignity and respect for people in old age! Is that too much to ask in this day and age? It should be a basic human right. Thank you.

BRO. H. SMITH (London): Congress, I think the word "quality" should be eliminated. We are a people of a social nature. We are human beings. We should have more respect, and the words that should be used are "loving care". We should cherish our elderly folks. We should not have to rely on governments to make decisions. Those are decisions that we should take within our own selves as human beings. We want respect, dignity, love and cherish for our elderly folks. I make that reference. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Henley. Anyone else? *(No response)* We are supporting Motions 180 and 181. All those in favour, please show? Those against? Carried.

*Motion 180 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 181 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to section 8: Social Policy, which involves Motions 191 and 192, to be moved by London and Southern.

**SOCIAL POLICY – GENERAL  
OUTRAGEOUS CALL CHARGES  
MOTION 191**

**191. OUTRAGEOUS CALL CHARGES**

Congress regards the call charges for 0845 and similar numbers to be exorbitant especially as they are mostly for important business contacts such as Banks, Railway bookings and the Environment Agency.

Moreover very often the first point of contact is an automated machine with extensive waiting for transfer from one contact point to another.

Conference therefore believes that both private and public call charges should follow the recently outlined policy proposals by Government that their department charges should be in line with normal call charges.

HENDON BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. E. STEWART (London): Congress, I move Motion 191 – Outrageous Call Charges. President and Congress, there used to be a time when customer service was paramount to most businesses. There used to be a time when complaints were taken seriously and dealt with promptly. There used to be a time when it was cheap to complain. However, colleagues, it is not cheap to complain. The introduction of 0844 and 0845 numbers, at over 40 pence per minute, make the cost of making complaints prohibitive. In fact, recent research has shown that customers are putting off complaining because of the cost. Who are these numbers: the banks, the energy companies and the insurance companies, the very companies that the general public had most cause to complain about? They offer poor service, making millions over the price of supplying energy and now they are making more money from charge 40 pence a minute per call. It may not be so bad if calls were answered quickly and dealt with efficiently, but they are most certainly not. You know how it goes: “All of our advisers are busy. Please hold on” or “Your call is important to us and we will answer it as soon as possible.” Whilst you are listening to some dreadful music, your bill has gone up by £4 before you even get a real person on line. We could download good music for a lot less than £4 and a lot faster.

Then there is the automated response giving you several options, and when one is selected there is usually a sub menu causing further delay and further cost. Even Government departments are now using them, although some providing key services have now stopped in light of the Ofcom consultation of 2013. This consultation is an 18 month implementation plan to rectify this situation by June 2015. To be fair, it is having some effect. Insurance companies agreed to review their use of premium rates during the recent floods. Addison Lee, the minicab company, and no friend of the GMB, has just reverted to geographical landline numbers. Colleagues, if they can do so, so can all the rest. Let us send 0845 members to history now and not in 2015. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Euton. Secunder.

BRO. P. COLES (London): President and Congress, I second Motion 191 – Outrageous Call Charges. This Congress believes that call charges for 0845 and similar numbers are extortionate, especially those connected to business contracts; for example, banks, railway books, the Environment Agency and the digital media. These calls cost up to 11 pence a minute for landlines and often

include a set-up fee of up to 14 pence. Calls from a mobile cost considerably more; in fact, up to four times as much. These calls are also excluded from inclusive minutes, which we have already paid far too much for. This rip off is made worse by the usual experience of being answered by a machine, which gives you an endless list of options, with your choice always at the end. This is, surely, a ruse to ensure that you pay even more. Having selected the most relevant option, you eventually get through and make your query, only to be put on hold and then added to a queue, to then speak to someone else who tells you that they cannot help you. Conference therefore believes that both private and public call charges should follow the recently outlined policy proposals by Government that their department charges should be in line with normal call charges. Thank you. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on this motion? *(No response)*  
I call the mover of Motion 192.

## **PHONE AND BROADBAND AND BT OPENREACH PERFORMANCE MOTION 192**

### **192. PHONE AND BROADBAND AND BT OPEN REACH PERFORMANCE**

This Congress believes that the Regulator should demand an improved performance from BT Open Reach and also insist that they publish a Free 0800 phone number for phone and internet users to call them directly when there is a problem with their phone and internet connections caused by the BT Open Reach system.

C60 CROYDON BRANCH  
Southern Region

*(Carried)*

SIS. N. JACKSON-AMPAW (Southern): Congress and President, I move Motion 192 – Phone and Broadband and BT OpenReach Performance. In today’s modern world, phone and Broadband connections are important, and when they fail this can cause many difficulties for people and businesses. Without the internet or a phone connection, it is not possible to communicate with the outside world. When phone and internet connections fail, many working people cannot work or communicate with friends and relatives, or even make emergency calls. Also, many businesses have to close down because they can’t communicate with their customers. Today there are many different phone and internet providers. However, nearly all of these use the national BT phone network, managed by BT Open Reach. Faults on the BT Open Reach network often take weeks to repair. Consumers are not able to report faults directly to Open Reach. Only a BT provider can do this, even when it is clearly a BT Open Reach problem as there is no public phone number for BT Open Reach. That is why I call on Congress to support this motion, calling for an improved performance from BT Open Reach through the office of the regulator. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder.

SIS. N. PETRIE (Southern): Congress, I am supporting this motion. Many of us today, like me, have many phones that we use as our lifeline to communicate. I will demonstrate that. I have an iPad, a Blackberry, which I use for the GMB, a business phone because I run my own business and I have a personal phone. Many times when you are on the phone you are speaking to someone, you look and it says, “Call failed”. You can’t get hold of that person. Another scenario is that you are ringing somebody and there is no dial tone or you may get someone saying to you, “I was calling you all day yesterday but I couldn’t get through to you. You were on your phone.” I said, “No, my phone never rang”, so all those silent times your phone is not ringing. I use my iPad to look at my emails, and many times it tells me that there is no network.

As we know, BT has the monopoly and it is time that that situation was changed. We need to pressure the regulators. We should demand that they improve the performance from BT Open Reach, and also insist that they publish an 0800 number or, if not, a normal number that we all know, whichever area we live in, because 0845 and all those other numbers mean that you still get charged for them. There should be a free phone number that we can call BT directly, not our service provider, because they sometimes are just as useless as BT. It is true that they keep you hanging on as well. When they put you through, you are often told, "I can't help you, so I will put you through to another department." So we are asking for a free phone number so that we can call them directly when there is a problem or an internet connection -----

THE PRESIDENT: Nine, this is your friendly operator talking. Your time's up. (*Applause*)

SIS. PETRIE: I support. I have finished. Today there was another raffle to win another cuddly toy. I love cuddly toys, but on this one I tried to guess the name. Can anyone guess what the name was? It was Ed Miliband. Obviously, I would never have guessed it, so I put in a bid for it and my bid was accepted. I would like to donate this cuddly toy to a children's hospital here in Nottingham. (*Applause*) Richard Taylor is going to accept it and to deliver it to a children's hospital here in Nottingham. I think we should call him "Sharkey".

THE PRESIDENT: I think we should call him "George Osborne". (*Applause*)

BRO. S. FORREST (London): Congress, I am speaking in support of that motion. I think the point we have to make is that we had some resolutions this morning for motions to Congress, one of which I spoke on, which was bringing into public ownership the electricity companies. BT seems to be the one that we never speak about, but it is a public utility. Last year it made £2.5 billion worth of profit. I think the only way to secure BT services for its consumers, its workers and its future is to bring it back into public ownership, to secure the demands of that motion and use the profit for the public sector going forward under the next Labour Government. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Steven. Is there anyone else?

BRO. J. WHISTLECRAFT (London): Congress, some of these Broadband packages give you a basic download rate that you can get and you pay to get the next rate up. Other companies give them free. Why can't they all do it the same way, so that you pay one rate and you get the new download, and if it gets upgraded, you get that with it? Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Let me call Viv Smart to speak on Motion 192.

SIS. V. SMART (CEC, Public Services): President and Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC. The CEC is supporting Motion 192 on the performance of the BT Open Reach programme with the following qualification. Open Reach is the company responsible for installing and maintaining BT's national UK phone and Broadband network. Generally, it does not communicate directly with end users. As a result, most people who suffer with a fault are forced to go through their internet service provider instead. We welcome the motion's suggestion of a free phone number and we are waiting for the result of Ofcom's review of Open Reach's performance targets. We were pleased to hear that on 20<sup>th</sup> May Ofcom issued rules that require Open Reach to repair faults within two working days and any customers having to wait for a new line to be installed must receive an appointment within 12 working days. This comes at the same time as BT is recruiting 1,600 new engineers to improve customer service. The CEC qualification is that we will work with the main union in this sector, CWU, on this matter, as these rules will be introduced over the next three years

and are subject to scrutiny by the European Commission. Please support Motion 192 with this minor qualification. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Viv. Does Southern Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) I now put Motions 191 and 192 to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? They are carried.

*Motion 191 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 192 was CARRIED.*

## **SOCIAL POLICY: TRANSPORT**

THE PRESIDENT: We now move to Social Policy: Transport. I call Motions 249, 250, 251, 252, 253 and 254.

### **TRANSPORT MOTION 249**

#### **249. TRANSPORT**

Congress calls on the Labour Party to develop an integrated transport policy, that includes:

- Retaining East Coast mainline in public ownership and re-nationalising all other rail franchises at the point their current franchise ends.
- Retention of the Freedom Pass, without further restrictions, in Greater London and a roll out of similar schemes across the country.
- Strengthening the Regulation of the Transport Industry so that hard working families are not constantly hit by above inflation fare rises on trains, London Transport and buses. The industry watchdog needs more powers, so that the realistic capping of fares is enforced on operators.
- Developing a comprehensive rural transport policy that stops the closure of rural bus services that are a lifeline for many people who live in remote towns and villages.
- Opposition to the closure of ticket offices on London Transport and elsewhere. These not only lead to job losses but also unsafe journeys for all who use public transport.

Congress calls on the CEC to campaign on all these issues together with our colleagues in Transport Unions.

ISLINGTON APEX BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. V. WEST (London): Congress, I move Motion 249 on Transport. Public transport in this country, Congress, is in a mess; from a fragmented national rail service which overcharges commuters and leisure travellers alike, to large parts of rural Britain receiving poor or no service at all. Let's not forget Boris and London Transport, raising fares above inflation every year, whilst at the same time making staff redundant so that he can run staffless stations, endangering passenger safety. We need a campaign with the transport and other unions to defend jobs, a campaign to protect passenger safety and a campaign to provide an affordable public transport system. That campaign must demand, as our General Secretary, Paul Kenny, said yesterday, the re-privatisation of the national rail network as contracts expire and run down. We must demand a comprehensive public transport system in rural areas, a lifeline for many. We must demand a comprehensive integrated transport policy from an incoming Labour Government. De-regulation – a privatised public transport

system – is failing, failing staff, failing passengers and failing business in this country. Thank you.  
(*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I call the seconder.

BRO. J. OSBORNE (London): Congress, I second Motion 249 – Transport. In the last year I have had to move out of London after 20 years because I cannot afford to live there any more, so I have become a daily commuter to work at the cost of nearly £4,000 a year and rising. At a time when my pay has been effectively frozen for the past five years, I now face the prospect of having to pay rail fares rising by levels higher than inflation every year. Public transport is facing a crisis, a crisis that affects every working person, every person in this room and every person in the country. Congress must vote for an integrated, planned, funded and afforded transport system. Vote for Motion 249. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jamie. I call Motion 250.

## **LONDON UNDERGROUND TICKET OFFICES MOTION 250**

### **250. LONDON UNDERGROUND TICKET OFFICES**

Congress deplores the Mayor of London's proposals to close ticket offices at London Underground stations and greatly reduce the safety-focused supervisory grades which would have a devastating effect on the system with increased crime and vandalism a certainty and a far worse overall service particularly for those older users, those disabled and those not familiar with the system.

Congress calls on the GMB not to support any Labour Mayoral candidate unless they pledge either not to implement these draconian cuts or reverse them.

NORTH WEST LONDON BRANCH  
*London Region*

(*Carried*)

SIS. K. ABLE (London): Congress, I want to completely agree with the previous motion on Transport. I am speaking to move Motion 250 to keep London Underground ticket offices open. Millions of people use the London Underground to commute, as tourists, to see their family and friends and for many other reasons. These people rely on staff in ticket offices to keep them safe. Remember 2005 and the 7/7 bombings. Staff acted quickly to evacuate passengers and to facilitate the emergency services. Older passengers and disabled passengers rely on staff. They need to speak to them face-to-face in an ordered way and not just to gather round some staff who are shouting at a scrum. My mum talks about using the Tube in the '70s when it was creepy and difficult after dark. Staff are there to look out for people, and I don't want to go back to those times where the Tube was a no-go area for women at night. We need to protect ticket offices and make sure that the Tube is safe for all travellers.

You might think that this is just about London. I don't think it is. If the Government can get away with this in London, then safe transport everywhere and the opportunity to ask simple questions about your journey will be attacked across the country. Politicians should keep their promises when they are trying to get elected. I call on you to support this motion. (*Applause*)

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

BRO. S. FORREST (London): Congress, I am seconding Motion 250. Boris says that this is not about safety. Again, that's a lie. I will give you one example Supervisors who look after safety on the London Underground will receive a cut as part of the station closure policy of 45%. They will have to look after multiple stations, meaning that in an emergency, even in an overground part of the Underground, they may be between stations, on a train, when an emergency is taking place. So that's a lie. The second lie. When Boris came to power, his first manifesto in 2008 he pledged that he would halt ticket office closures and ensure that there was always a manned ticket office in every station. He even joined a campaign day and he even signed a petition against closures. Boris has revealed himself to be what we all know in London is a liar, a stooge and a key pivotal part of the austerity agenda of the Cameron Government. We hope that we can kick him out in London in 2016. We hope and we trust that we can elect a Labour candidate who will deliver for working people and trade union members and ensure that ticket office closures are stopped, the cuts in the London Underground are reversed, that London goes back to Labour and we put this spiv in the dustbin. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I call Motion 251.

### **KEEP TRAIN GUARDS ON TRAINS MOTION 251**

#### **251. KEEP TRAIN GUARDS ON TRAINS**

This Conference believes that train guards/ticket inspectors provide an essential role on trains, in terms of passenger security and information.

We therefore instruct the CEC to mount a campaign to work with other Trade Unions to keep guards on trains for public safety.

GMB MID Lincs BRANCH  
*Midland & East Coast Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. R. MORGAN (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I move Motion 251 – Keep Train Guards on Trains. President, I am very confident that Congress welcomes the work of train guards in the UK. Their role is helping to ensure the safe operation of trains and also providing passenger assistance and reassurance to those who are unfamiliar with the transport system. Somebody like me, in fact. We recognise that guards play a vital role in protecting the train and acting in emergencies, such as driver incapacity, failure of train safety systems and derailments. Guards are vital for disabled and older people to make them feel more secure when using trains and providing assistance with access on to and off and also when on board trains. This is especially important late at night when there are few fellow passengers to call for assistance.

There is very broad support for retaining staff on trains from the TUC, the Women's Institute, the National Pensioners Convention and disability groups in particular. The general public also show concern about the possible removal of guards. I was very concerned that London Overground Rail Operations Limited, which operates London overground rail services on behalf of Transport for London has announced that it intends to sack all of its guards and run the trains as driver-only operations. Motion 250 highlights other problems about the ticket office closures.

I am also concerned that, as London Overground Rail is a 50-50 joint venture company between Deutschebahn AG and the MTR Corporation, the safety and comfort of London train passengers is being compromised to support the profits and these profits are going to Germany and Hong Kong, to

their state railways, and not to the UK Exchequer. I have had the opportunity to leaflet and protest alongside other unions during their campaigns by the Derby Area Trades Council. It would be very nice to have the known support, endorsement and assistance for our leafleting campaign from the GMB, rather than just going as an individual. We are aware that if London Overground gets rid of its guards, then the rest of the UK will surely follow and abandon all the safety roles that we have at the moment, all in the name of shareholder profits. We, therefore, demand that Congress calls on Boris to intervene to ensure that guards are retained on London Overground services and further call upon the CEC to mount a campaign alongside the many other trade unions that are active in this issue. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder.

BRO. J. GOLDING (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I second Motion 251 – Keep Train Guards on Trains. President and Congress, during Congress we have already heard the moves across numerous industries where technology and surveillance are used to replace the personal touch. Our train services are no different, but there is a basic need for passenger safety and confidence. The guard provides that reassurance, supervision, assistance and advice. Technology may have its place but, surely, society and our members deserve to see a friendly face during often lonely and confusing journeys. Please support. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I call Motion 252, to be moved by Midland.

## **UNFAIR AVIATION TAX MOTION 252**

### **252. UNFAIR AVIATION TAX**

This Congress calls upon the CEC and GMB to campaign against excessive aviation tax for those flying to destinations such as the Caribbean. We ask for a fair deal for those of ethnic decent who wish to travel back home to the Caribbean.

We call upon the GMB to lobby the UK Government to scrap the unrealistic bands used for assessing Air Passenger Duty Tax. This is a “destructive juggernaut” of a tax that is crippling the Caribbean and UK tourism industry. The UK has the heaviest tax burden in global aviation.

This tax bears the heaviest burden on those who wish to travel to the Caribbean. This is because the Tax is heaviest on Caribbean flights. However, there is no tax charged at all for 22 EU countries.

In 2011 British Airways (BA) cut the capacity of its flights to the Caribbean because of the UK’s sky high Air Passenger Duty Tax, BA switched its flight capacity to destinations such as Florida which currently has a 20% lower tax burden than that of the Caribbean Islands.

PLAISTOW BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. M. HUSBANDS (London): Congress, I move Motion 252 – Unfair Aviation Tax or APD (Air Passenger Duty) as it is known. Before I move this motion, I have an announcement to make, Madam President. Anyone wishing to relinquish their Scotch, see Dean Gilligan in London Region, and he will put it in his food bank, please. *(Laughter and Applause)*

I am honoured to stand here and move this motion. After the war Britain came to the Caribbean to recruit labour for the transport and nursing sectors. Today we have those first generation immigrants who gave their lives to service and who are now retiring or have retired, having raised second and third generations, yet still maintaining links to their families back in the Caribbean and other Commonwealth countries. In 1994 Kenneth Clarke, the then Chancellor, introduced this tax. In 1997 he doubled it. Gordon Brown in 2001 halved it but then increased it again in 2007. Alastair Darling raised it again in 2009. George Osborne – phew! – raised it twice. This tax is unfair to us who still want to visit our friends and relatives living back in the Caribbean and other Commonwealth countries. Although we welcomed the Chancellor’s cut in the APD announcement in his last Budget speech, we believe that it does not go far enough in adjusting this anomaly to our community. APD has been described as a “punitive” tax which is hurting the aviation industry and our community. A recent study by PricewaterhouseCoopers concluded that scrapping the APD tax would more than pay for itself, it would boost the economic prosperity and result in an increase of 60,000 jobs. The Government have acknowledged for the first time that APD is a revenue-raising cash cow.

On 19<sup>th</sup> March 2014 the Government announced new rates on bands for the APD. Instead of the A band that exists now, from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015, this would reduce the price of a family of four travelling to the Caribbean by £56.

THE PRESIDENT: Michael, it’s drink-up time. Put your glass down.

BRO. HUSBANDS: I am coming to the close, President. Many people are wondering how the Treasury will make up the shortfall of £215 million in years 2015 and 2016. But repealing this tax, according to PricewaterhouseCoopers will put 60,000 people back in work, resulting in their paying taxes, National Insurance contributions and spending money in local communities. The Caribbean region is heavily dependent on tourism. This tax prevents the community from supporting ----

THE PRESIDENT: Come on, Michael!

BRO. HUSBANDS: ---- their extended families. Congress ----

THE PRESIDENT: Michael, please leave the rostrum.

BRO. HUSBANDS: Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

BRO. H. SMITH (London): I think my comrade has said the majority of the things that I am going to carry on with. In general, we are calling on the CEC and the GMB to vigorously campaign on this outrageous juggernaut tax that has been levied and implemented on Caribbean travellers and travellers further afield. We believe that this is a gross disadvantage to our leisure and diminished opportunities to travel to the countries of our parents or birth. I ask you to give consideration, and even to yourselves as well, because the Caribbean is a very beautiful place to visit. Refer this motion for consideration. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Motion 253.

## **20 MPH SPEED LIMITS**

### **MOTION 253**

#### **253. 20MPH SPEED LIMITS**

This Congress notes more than half of road deaths and serious injury occur on roads with 30mph speed limits. British parents consistently cite traffic speed as the main reason why their children are not allowed to cycle or walk to school.

Healthy roads have slow speed limits. Roads and pavements make up most of the public realm. Wide 20mph limits affordably and effectively tackle fear, injury risks, children protection, obesity and health inequalities whilst raising fitness through active travel.

Lowering urban and residential speed limits to 20mph has been found to decrease child pedestrian accidents by up to 70% (Transport Research Laboratory). In Portsmouth the 20mph limit on all residential roads has reduced casualties by 22% and in Hull child pedestrian casualties dropped by 74%.

We call on the GMB to actively support campaigns for the introduction of 20mph speed limits on all residential and urban streets.

HOLBORN BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. M. SAYWELL (London): Congress, I move Motion 253 – 20 mile an hour speed limits. Reducing traffic speeds on our streets is the single biggest measure that will make them safer, more vibrant and social places. If you are hit by a car travelling at 35 mph, your chance of survival is 50%. At 20 mph your chance of survival jumps to 97%. Too often our highways departments just look at accident data before making decisions about speed limits. However, we all know that parents will not let their children cycle, for example, if they do not feel that they are safe. The perception of safety is strongly linked to the speed at which the traffic is travelling. If people started cycling more in middle age they would have a fitness level that will make them, effectively, 10 years younger. Imagine what it would do for a lot of people in this room. Just imagine! What puts most people off is the speed of traffic on our streets, not just outside schools and hospitals but in other areas, too. We need to look at speed limits across the board. This is not just about 20 mile-an-hour limits in towns and cities on a network of roads, but it is about reducing speed across the board and assessing our priorities. Who do we prioritise? Are we prioritising vulnerable road users like our children, the elderly, pedestrians and cyclists, or are we prioritising the motorist and speed?

It does not take a great deal of money to reduce speed limits, but the issue is not just reducing the limit but enforcing it as well. The police have given up enforcing 20 mph speed limits, and we see all too often that drivers responsible for death and serious injury just walk away with points or a fine. We need to ensure that 20 mph is introduced and enforced wherever people live, work, shop or play. Today that could be anywhere. I know that the CEC is going to suggest that this motion will be support with a qualification that it is difficult to enforce 20 mph on things like ring roads and on industrial estates, but if you look, for instance, out on the streets of Nottingham, the cars on the ring roads that we have to travel on are flying along at an incredible pace. We are risking ourselves every time we walk to Congress to cross that road out *there* with its four lanes of traffic. When the CEC does make that qualification, I would ask them to take them to take these sorts of things into consideration. Thank you.

BRO. J. COLES (London): Congress, I am seconding Motion 253. Matt has outlined with statistics why you should support this motion. Congress notes that more than half of road deaths and serious injuries occur on roads with 30mph speed limits. But it is not all due to speeding. I can quote you two examples of deaths due to cars travelling within their speed limits. A girl in my ward who stepped in front of a car travelling at less than 30 mph was instantly killed. A political colleague son of mine

when visiting his Czech girlfriend stepped into the road and was killed by a car travelling well below the speed limit. He just could not stop in time. Even worse, in that accident his girlfriend found that she was pregnant on the day of the funeral.

As you can see from the statistics and the two examples I have quoted, there is a strong case for bringing in this 20 mph zone, so please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I call Motion 254.

## **AUTOMATIC ENTRY ONTO NATIONAL DATABASE OF MOTOR ACCIDENTS MOTION 254**

### **254. AUTOMATIC ENTRY ONTO NATIONAL DATABASE OF MOTOR ACCIDENTS**

This Conference asks that automatic entry onto the national database of motor accidents following car insurance claims be stopped.

Congress is appalled that ambulance chasing firms are being empowered by this database, and allowing our members to face months of harassment by these unscrupulous firms.

MANSFIELD CENTRAL BRANCH  
*Midland & East Coast Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. C. HARWOOD (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I move Motion 254. President and Congress, in May of last year I accidentally reversed my car into a post at 5 mph, damaging my rear light. It was deemed that my car was undriveable. I contacted my insurer and my car was fixed. Fantastic. Right? Two weeks later the onslaught of phone calls began from ambulance-chasing insurance firms, offering me compensation for my extensive injuries. Each time I explained that I was not injured and I was in no need of compensation, but they then sold or passed my information on to the next company. I asked them, "How can I stop these calls?", to be told, "You can't. You should have asked them not to add you to the database when you reported the incident." I was never told of the database. I was just added to it. I have had days when I have received as many as 15 calls a day from these firms, which all refuse to take no for an answer or use different numbers each time. Some have even lied to me and told me that the other driver who was involved in my single car accident at 5 mph had recently claimed compensation. They have even given me random names.

I ask that we push for this vile practice of automatic entry to the National Database of Motor Accidents to cease immediately. Why should we enable these firms to harass and bother us following an accident? We are intelligent people who can choose to seek compensation if we so wish, besides being told to do so by every bloody advert on the telly. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Colleen. Secunder?

BRO. S. ALLINSON (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I am speaking in support of Motion 254 – Automatic Entry on to the National Database of Motor Accidents.

President, Congress and Visitors, did you know that if you have a car accident and inform your relevant insurance company, your details are automatically entered on to the Claims and Underwriting Exchange or CUE. This database was set up so that insurance companies could keep a track on fraudulent claims and react to criminals who were trying to buck the system and, obviously, drive up our premiums. This database is open to over 60 companies. They have access to all of your

information, and some of them use it as a tool to drum up their business. These ambulance chasers, as we affectionately call them, then make it their mission to get your signature on an accident claim.

In May 2013 I was involved in a minor car accident with no injuries and the details were exchanged. Both drivers were on their way within 15 minutes. I duly informed my insurance company and that's when it started – 12 months of hell. My details were in the loop. My phone numbers and address were being used by these vile ambulance-chasing companies to try and get my okay to go ahead with my whiplash. What bloody whiplash? This is how these companies get your details. No time of the day is sacred. They will contact you at all ours of the day and all days. If you explain that you want your name taken off their file, they will say, “No chance”, and that should be the end of it. But no way. Oh, no. All this does is put you back on the list for the next unscrupulous accident chaser to contact you and get the money you are owed because the other party has claimed against them. All lies and falsehoods. These companies have no morals and no thought about the stress they are causing to millions and millions of people in this country. Our members need protecting from these hyenas and we call for automatic entry to the CUE database to be stopped. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks very much, Shane. Does anyone else wish to come in? Just one.

BRO. C. WATTS (Southern): Congress, I am speaking in support of Motion 249 – Transport. I live in Swindon, and between Swindon and Paddington we have 70 miles of track. It costs £125 for a walk-on ticket and, if you want a season ticket it is now £8,300. We hauled First Great Western into the council to ask them why the prices were so high and tried to explain the effect that it was having on the socio-economics of the town. They suggested to us that, because we are on the main line, our station is well served and, therefore, we should pay more than others. They also suggested that, because there was standing room only on the train, it was a price that people were prepared to pay. Congress, we've got no choice. It's a monopoly and we need to re-nationalise the railways. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to speak in opposition? Time is getting on and we need to move on to the Finance Report. *(No response)* We have had a good debate.

I call Paul Wheatley to speak on Motions 249, 252, 253 and 254.

BRO. P. WHEATLEY (CEC, Manufacturing): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC. The CEC is supporting Motions 249, 252, 253 and 254 with the following qualifications. Motion 249 sets out many ingredients for an integrated transport policy, but these are focused on public transport. The CEC qualification is that any transport policy needs to be comprehensive and should cover expansion of the rail network, the provision of city tramlines and more cycleways, as well as a policy on aviation, cross-channel services, passenger ferries, freight shipping and road transport.

Motion 252 concerns aviation tax. The CEC is sympathetic to the objections to paying an Air Passenger Duty, but our qualification is that we would not be seeking to lobby the Government against this tax as our policy is for this revenue to be put into R&D and used to boost the UK aviation sector. Also the 2014 Budget has simplified the bands to the advantage of long-haul flights. An addition to the motion is incorrect as there are aviation taxes in a variety of different forms in Europe, ranging from charges because of environmental concerns and charges for airports and departures.

On Motion 253, the 20 mph speed limits, this motion concerns, especially, children's deaths and injuries. GMB would welcome speed restrictions around schools as carried in Motion 186 at Congress 2008 and around hospitals. Local knowledge is a key factor. In recent surveys done by the

AA and other motoring campaign groups, it has been said that councils should consult and listen to residents before they introduce 20 mph speed limit zones. Therefore, the CEC qualification is that a blanket ban may be impractical, but a tailored one based on local knowledge may be easier to enforce.

Finally, on Motion 254, the Claims and Underwriting Exchange was set up as a national database of motor accidents and for those suffering personal injury and illnesses reported to insurance companies, which may or may not give rise to a claim. This is managed by a non-for profit company on behalf of its member organisations, which includes all major insurers and many self-insuring organisations. The database was established to help keep down premiums for honest policyholders by preventing multiple claims, fraud and misinterpretations of claims histories. There are currently over 32 million claim records available to subscribers. The CEC qualification is that while we understand the concern expressed in this motion, the database is an essential way to prevent fraud and multiple claims. In addition, we are against information on the database being sold for profit. Therefore, Congress, please support Motions 249, 252, 253 and 254 with these qualifications.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Does London Region accept the qualifications on Motions 249, 252 and 253? (*Agreed*) Does Midland Region accept the qualification on Motion 254? (*Agreed*) I now put them all to the vote: 249, 250, 251, 252, 253 and 254. All those in favour, please show? Any against? They are carried.

*Motion 249 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 250 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 251 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 252 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 253 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 254 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: I ask for the movers of Motions 19 and 25 to come to the front. While they are coming to the front of the hall, can I welcome, in the Finance Debate, Alex MacMillan from the NAU. Welcome, Alex. I hope you have enjoyed the backseat in the hall. Before we begin, I also welcome Phil Clarke from our external auditors. There are copies of the 2013 Annual Report available on the Information Desk. I intend to take the next items together. We will hear from the movers and seconders of Motions 19 and 25. The General Secretary will give the CEC position as part of his speech on the CEC Finance Report.

**UNION ORGANISATION: FINANCE & CONTRIBUTIONS  
BRANCH ACCOUNTS FIT FOR PURPOSE  
MOTION 19**

**19. BRANCH ACCOUNTS FIT FOR PURPOSE**

This Conference requests that Branch accounts are made fit for purpose.

The current system was piloted by a number of Branches who then passed back their observations.

When the new system went live, there were still all sorts of issues with it, and a number of observations still had not been put right.

The NAU needs to listen to Branches and make the system fit for Lay members to use with ease; the Branch officers are not trained Accountants.

The spreadsheet used is not visible in one view. All the sections need to be printed off individually. This is both time consuming and a waste of paper, ink, time and effort.

We were assured that there would be less paperwork, but it would appear we now have more paperwork and a more cumbersome system than when we asked for it to be simplified and an electronic version to be produced.

MIDLAND HEALTHCARE BRANCH  
*Midland & East Coast Region*

*(Withdrawn)*

BRO. B. HELEY (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I move Motion 19 – Branch Accounts Fit For Purpose.

In 2011 I moved Motion 32 – Branch Accounting – which Congress supported. It may have been supported by Congress but, apparently, not by the NAU. Without repeating the motion, it asked that a taskforce be set up to consult with regions and branches to give us a simple, robust and transparent system with less paperwork, and by that we meant the branches, not the NAU, or so I thought. The NAU will probably tell you that they did consult. They asked for branches to volunteer to trial a system that they had produced without any consultation with the branches. I volunteered to try and that system and they reported my findings to the NAU via my regional finance officer, David Castledine. Congress, I may as well have saved my breath for all the notice that appears to have been taken by the NAU. The system went live as of the beginning of quarter 4 2013. Guess what? All the bugs and problems were still there. That is despite them being reported previously. Like a good boy, I struggled, and I do mean struggled, to complete the whole of the quarter, with constant referrals and assistance from my region. I was ready for submitting my results, but the fund balance was difference from all of my totals. So I had no alternative but to refer back to the old system and start from scratch.

This Conference requests that Branch accounts are made fit for purpose. The NAU needs to listen to branches and make the system fit for the lay members to use with ease. The branch officers are not and never have been trained accountants. The new system may look pretty, but what's the point of it looking pretty if it won't do what we want? I have been using an electronic version of the Table Top with no problems whatsoever since 2011. I could do multiple entries on one line for one cheque without popping in and out like a yo-yo. I did not have to keep putting the same information in repeatedly and the same cheque number for every line that I wanted on one cheque. Everything was visible in one viewing. I only needed to print one sheet off, not four. The current system uses exactly the same spreadsheet but it is not visible in one view. You have to pop in and out for all the sections printing them as you go. I can't see the point. This is both time consuming and a waste of paper, ink, time and effort.

At Birmingham the General Secretary assured us that there would be less paperwork. It would appear that we now have more paperwork and a more cumbersome system than when he asked for it to be simplified and an electronic version to be produced. Even with this new system, we still have to post copies of bank statements to the NAU. We pride ourselves on being a member-led union, leading from the bottom up, not like some of them which dictate from the top down. You are a branch accountant and what consultation have lay members had? Little or none. Congress, we are in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. What we are asking for is not rocket science. It is so simple. Please support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I call the seconder.

BRO. S. DIMMOCK (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I support Motion 19. President, Congress has read the motion and you have heard Bill's impassioned plea that the current situation not only affects this region but the whole of the GMB and every branch secretary who has to struggle rather than be consulted about the future of branch accounting. Common sense tells us, Congress, that this issue affects every GMB member as we are all allocated GMB branches as members. This motion is not about overturning the advice of the CEC but establishing common sense in going forward to a workable and more simple branch accounting process, which can be understood by branch secretaries, auditors and members alike. Branch accounting should have been sorted out for computer use, with a user-friendly format, long before it was introduced, not after. I am proud to second and I encourage you all to support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I call Motion 25.

**UNION ORGANISATION: UNION BENEFITS & SERVICES**  
**REVIEW OF MEMBER BENEFITS**  
**MOTION 25**

**25. REVIEW OF MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS**

Congress notes that there has been considerable evolution over the years of membership benefits. In Will Thorne's day, the Gasworkers' union paid no benefit except strike pay, but by the 1970s, the GMWU had an extensive series of social benefits. The appropriate types of membership benefit change with time and context.

Congress believes that membership benefits currently in the rulebook may not all best reflect the priorities of our members' current requirements.

Congress believes that it is right to be cautious about any changes to membership benefits, and asks the CEC to investigate which benefits are valued by our members, and which could be changed or withdrawn. Congress asks the CEC to consider whether current benefits are cost-effectively delivered.

Congress asks that once the CEC has investigated, that it brings any proposed suggestions for changes in membership benefits to a future Congress for decision.

W15 WILTSHIRE & SWINDON BRANCH  
*Southern Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. C. WATTS (Southern): President, I just want to make a plea to the editor. If we can take this bit: "Nationalise the railways now". If you can just cut that bit out and put it into the end of my last speech, where I said "privatise" I would be grateful.

*(Laughter)* I think you all knew what I meant.

Congress, I am speaking to Motion 25 – Review of Membership Benefits. This is a very simple motion. We are asking the CEC to review the current benefits and services that are on offer. We are specifically asking that the CEC can take consideration of historic benefits, such as funeral benefits and are these still relevant to today's membership? The feedback I get from members who join our branch is this. I normally ask them why have they joined, and very seldom do they say, "We've joined because of this benefit or that benefit." They join us because of our reputation. They join us because they know we are a union that is going to stick up for them.

One thing I think we should look into is the third-party benefits, the third-party companies that are supplying benefits as well. We want to ensure that those third-party benefits and services are up to scratch. Essentially, if a third party is supplying a benefit that is trading on the GMB name, we have got to be certain that we are happy that it is not dragging our name down at the same time. There is one particular service that has come through which I have already used twice. It is particular good and I am really pleased with it, and that is the Unionline. I would like to do a little plug for that. I think that the only way we can plug this is by, maybe, just doing *that*. (*Laughter*) I recommend people use that. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: I call the seconder.

BRO. P. CURTIS (Southern): Congress, I am seconding. I can only echo what my comrade said. People don't join our Union for the benefits that we give them. You are the benefits that they get. They join because of you. You are inspirational, you inspire them and you help them to achieve their goals. Talking of inspiration, what Nana did was really generous, so I would like to donate something to a children's hospital. Unfortunately, it's against the law, so instead this evening I will drink a toast to my colleagues in Scotland who has kindly given *this* to us. Thank you very much. (*Applause*) If you send some more down, I'll drink them to you individually and by name and I will be very happy to do so. (*Applause and cheers*)

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to speak against Motions 19 and 25?

BRO. J. SULLIVAN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I am a first-time speaker and a first-time delegate. (*Applause*) President and Congress, our region knows all too well how tough things are for our members as the cost-of-living crisis deepens as the north/south divide widens. So any proposal to increase the GMB contribution rate is a difficult task. We also know that whilst the cost of GMB membership is important to our members, what is even more important is that our members receive a first-class service, and this comes at a cost. Our motto is that it doesn't really matter if you pay only two pence a week if the service you receive is rubbish and non-existent. Look how well we have done in schools. We are the biggest union amongst school support staff, and yet, depending on the hours you work, we are not always the cheapest. We are the biggest because we are the best. That is replicated right across the UK as we continue to grow as a union year after year. But we need to ensure that we balance the books so that the outstanding service we provide continues and we continue to grow as people who want to be part of a fighting and campaigning union.

We recognise that five pence on all of our rates is not going to be easy for some, but we cannot return to the days of no increase this year and a huge increase to make up for it the year after. Yorkshire & North Derbyshire, therefore, supports this proposal. Just a mention for the retired life members, the rate is proposed to increase from £25 to £40. This is a one-off payment which has not increased for many a year.

THE PRESIDENT: Colleague, do you know something that we don't know before the General Secretary moves it? (*Laughter*)

BRO. SULLIVAN: I support. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, we are now taking items 12 and 13 together.

**ANNUAL ACCOUNTS & AUDITORS REPORT  
CEC FINANCE REPORT:  
CEC FINANCIAL PROPOSALS TO CONGRESS 2014**

**Financial Proposals for Congress 2014**

The Financial results for GMB for 2013 show that the CEC has once again been successful in achieving an operating surplus for the year. This is the tenth year in a row in which the union has been in surplus, in marked contrast to the losses made in earlier years, which nearly brought the Union down. The Union's assets and investments have increased, the annual income has increased, and costs have been kept tightly under control. And what makes this growth possible is the continual intense focus on organising as the way to keep our Union strong.

Membership has carried on growing into 2014, and the CEC is predicting another operating surplus for this year - if the Union continues to build membership in the areas we have identified as targets and opportunities. But there are a number of major changes and challenges which will require the CEC to be vigilant in its financial management.

The Union's pension fund, in common with most defined benefit schemes, is in deficit. Following a lengthy series of investigations between the pension Trustees and the Union, and fully involving our employees, we are now close to a solution which will enable us to pay off the deficit in ten years. This is not only good news for scheme members, but it lifts a hefty debt from the Union and restores to the GMB the flexibility to design and provide the best pension cover to our employees. To maintain a final salary scheme in this current environment is an achievement – and very different from many employers who have let theirs slide. Changes to benefit levels have had to be made, with employee agreement. There will also need to be additional funds from the Union as employer, and while the CEC can meet the requirement, it will eat into the forecast surplus for 2014 and future years.

The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 introduced what are commonly known as the Jackson proposals which severely threatened our trade union legal service. GMB's response has been robust, and in setting up UnionLine, our own legal firm, the CEC believes we have a solution which will improve our existing high-quality legal service to members and at the same time strengthen the Union financially. There will, however be a transitional period of about two years while larger cases currently in litigation work themselves through under the old system, and this will require careful financial management.

The long-expected challenge from the Tories to trade union education has now taken effect, and colleges which formerly provided trainers are no longer able to do so without charge. Again, GMB is reviewing our options, but it is clear that the maintenance of good quality organisational training is going to be a further call on resources.

The Senior Management Team continues to develop rigorous procurement programmes to ensure GMB benefits from the best deals available in the market for energy, telecoms, photocopiers and all other types of supply. Despite this, like all other organisations, we are vulnerable to general upward pressure on all our running costs.

The longstanding policy of this Congress is to maintain members' contributions in line with RPI inflation. Because of the CEC's consistent record of returning operating surpluses, and in spite of the challenges laid out above, the CEC is once again able to propose a contribution increase significantly less than inflation. The proposal is for an increase of 5p per week on all grades (with the exception of apprentices and full-time students whose rates were regularised last year at £2 and £1 a month respectively, and, it is proposed, will remain the

same). As in previous years, we propose that none of the increased income will go into the Political Fund: it will be used in the general membership activities of the Union.

GMB introduced retired life membership twelve years ago so that retired members could continue to enjoy a limited range of benefits and could continue to stay in touch with the Union and participate in GMB events. The one-off contribution for this was set at £25, after which membership is free for life. Over the years, the value of this contribution has been eroded by inflation, and the CEC proposes that the one-off lifetime payment should be increased to £40.

We reported last year that HMRC were taking a very aggressive approach to investigating GMB's expenses policies and practices, in particular in their interest in branch finances. We are also aware that HMRC is pursuing other unions in a coordinated campaign. Even though a further year has passed, HMRC have not issued final conclusions on their investigation of GMB. In due course, the Union and HMRC will have to sit down and negotiate a new set of rules for our expenses, and there are indications that HMRC will try to attack the modest level of subsistence paid to lay members when they are doing Union work. The CEC has considered alternative methods of paying subsistence, but our proposal to Congress is that the GMB subsistence scale should not be reduced.

GMB finances have shown strong, steady and consistent progress in recent years. The proposals before you allow the Union to stick to that path. Congress is asked to pass the following Rule Changes to bring them about.

#### **Rule 45 Clause 1,**

**Line 3: Delete “£2.75”, insert “£2.80”**

**Line 8: Delete “£1.60”, insert “£1.65”**

#### **Clause will now read:**

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

Members will pay £2.80 a week and be classed as grade-1 members, **unless** they are:

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

in which case, they will pay £1.65 a week and be classed as grade-2 members. However, grade-2 members can choose to pay the contribution rate for, and be classed as, a grade-1 member.

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

#### **Rule 45, Clause 2,**

**Line 4: Delete “£2.75”, insert “£2.80”**

**Line 5: Delete “£1.60”, insert “£1.65”**

#### **Clause will now read:**

2 Branch committees will have the power to fix the amount lapsed members (members who joined but later stopped paying contributions) need to pay to rejoin. This amount will be between £2.80 and £10 for grade-

1 members and between £1.65 and £5.50 for grade-2 members, except in particular circumstances when we may increase the amount with the approval of the regional committee.

#### **Rule 47a Clause 2a**

**Line 1: Delete “1, January 2002, they can pay £25”, insert “1 August 2014, they can pay £40”**

**Clause will now read:**

2a If a member retires on or after 1 August 2014, they can pay £40 within three months of no longer paying contributions in line with rules 45 or 46.

THE PRESIDENT: I call Paul Kenny the General Secretary and Treasurer to move the Annual Accounts & Auditors Report, to move the CEC Finance Report and to respond to Motion 19.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Colleagues, I've got lots of gadgets here because I'm going to use PowerPoint slides while I speak.

THE PRESIDENT: It's new technology.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Yes; I'm embracing it. Congress, I am replying to Motion 19, moving the Finance Report, the Annual Accounts and explaining the recommendations on contributions. I will also be asking Congress to support the rule changes in the Financial Report.

I will start by making a point and asking Congress to honour Alex MacMillan, who has recently retired from the GMB after 30 years, who helped and was instrumental, as a finance officer in Scotland, in helping the Union set up the National Admin Unit some years ago. Alex, thank you very much for all the work that you have done throughout the years. (*Applause*)

Just so that I can put *these* out of the way. *These* are the two documents that I will, mostly, be talking about: the Financial Accounts and the Congress Report on Finance. First, let me deal with Motion 19. Let me give a bit of background to Motion 19 for the new delegates. Motion 19 is concerned about an online branch accounting system which Congress asked for in 2010. The new system was designed, and it was consulted on, Bill, quite extensively. It was trialled and then it was adapted. Branches started using it exactly as Bill said, really, in about November of last year. The first accounts were not produced until February of this year. So the motion must have been written almost six months ago, so it has hardly given the system a chance to deal with or bed in when judgments were being made so far back. We did actually consult widely about the system. In fact, getting people to be involved and engaged in designing the system was much more difficult. The motion and Congress decisions were easy to pass, but then fulfilling what people wanted was much more difficult because the core was not there. However, we did actually consult, and 58 branches across all the regions helped to test it when all those comments were put together. There were only three responses which actually came back negative from the tests. Some really good ideas came back out of those tests, and the system was adapted. We are continuing to listen to changes in the finance system, as obviously an organisation would, and improvements will be made, as there are bound to be when we are making a shift of this nature.

Let me give you a flavour, Bill, of some of the feedback we got, which might help a bit. “Easy access”; “Good and easy to use”; “Good and easy to navigate.” That was from the Hull Paint and Engineering Branch, Bill, one of the branches from your own region. “It seemed pretty

straightforward and we would hope that the majority of branches which adopt this will find it the same.” That was from the GMB North Lincs Branch, Bill, which is another branch from your region. “This looks really good and very easy to navigate. I’ve gone through the different screens and modules and find these to be clear and easy to use. This is great and, hopefully, it can consolidate all the branch accounting for the future.” Actually, Bill, that was from your own region’s finance officer. (*Calls of “Ooooooh”*) Well, if people are going to come up *here* and have a go about the system and the people who work for the system, it is important that all of the facts come out. So the truth of the matter is that there were lots of people who were getting good out of the system. That doesn’t mean that the system works for everybody or that we have fulfilled all the circumstances of making sure that everybody understood it, but the system is not compulsory. There are only about 150 branches already using it. But those branches are saving time, they are saving paper and they are saving postage.

Training is provided by regions and more sessions are planned for this in the summer. We will keep going until as many as branches as possible that want to get on to the system are comfortable and are using the system. We know that not everybody has taken to the new system, and that problems do come up but they are dealt with sympathetically. If anyone here, at all, has got any queries, regional finance colleagues are available at the stall in the Exhibition Area. They will help demonstrate the system and try and help you out.

I know that there is one branch secretary who, clearly, understands the system because everything for that first quarter was filled out perfectly online – perfectly. In fact, it is still sitting on the system. Then, unfortunately, they didn’t press the right button to submit those details to the system and then that branch secretary, who was obviously frustrated, went back, filled in all the paperwork by hand in the old way and sent it on the spreadsheet and mailed it in instead. I know who that was and Bill, as the mover of that motion, you know who it was as well, because it was you. (*Laughter*) I have known Bill for many years. He is very passionate about a whole range of things, but when we get a problem in the Union, and we do – of course we do – the way you deal with it is you go to the people who know about it. You heard those quotes that I illustrated came from colleagues in your own regions and the finance officer. Those are the people to go to and seek help from, rather than just try and seize on the idea that what is a problem for you, must be a problem for everybody else. The seconder said, “Well, of course, it affects everybody in the Union.” Actually, it is not compulsory, so it doesn’t. If people wanting to go on using the old system, they can do so because nobody is making them use the new system. This was the response from a specific resolution to Congress to bring it in.

The CEC is going to ask for the motion to be withdrawn – I doubt that that will be the case – so we will ask you to oppose it because it is simply not accurate.

Let me now move to presenting the Accounts. One strange thing about the Accounts is that delegates are told – it’s been time immemorial, though I am not quite sure why – that if colleagues want to ask questions about the Accounts, then you are asked to fill in a written note by a certain time – it used to be Monday morning, actually, and then we moved it to Tuesday – but there were no questions on the Accounts this year.

I have had discussions with Alan Wiley and I will be recommending to the CEC and, hopefully, to Standing Orders that actually we change that system, so that in future years there will be a session either on the Sunday lunchtime or the Monday lunchtime where the whole of the Accounts can be presented, delegates can come along and visitors can come along, the Accounts can be explained and any questions that people want to raise can be dealt with in, perhaps, less of a formal arena. That will not stop colleagues and delegates raising any question here at Congress, but what it will do is,

hopefully, make the accounts themselves more understandable and more transparent. That is what we would like to do. It will not restrict delegates but, hopefully, it will empower them. I would like now, if I can, because there are a lot of new delegates, to move to “the slide show”. If I can start it. The GMB, as you can see from *that* chart (*GMB Membership 2004 – 2013*) has grown in membership terms every single year since, effectively, the Union adopted a completely new approach, which was *GMB@Work*. There has been a steady increase in membership. Part of that growth was, clearly, about changing our attitudes to a whole range of things that we did in the Union. The truth of the matter is that without membership growth, we would have to be coming back doing a number of things. We would either have had to come back to Congress and ask for sizeable increases in contributions, which we didn’t want to do, or it would be cutting services or having to stand here and tell you, when you say you want a campaign for that or a campaign for this, that we could not provide it because we don’t have the money. So we have, perhaps, given people a lot of ear ache each and every year about the need to grow the Union and to recruit, but that is it.

The next slide (*GMB Financial Operating Surplus by Results*) illustrates – this is for new delegates particularly – the fact that for many years the Union, effectively, ran an operating deficit. An operating deficit or surplus means that, basically, we start off around September or October of each year and say: “This is how much we are going to spend. Work out the different budgets.” Year after year, you can see the red lines, the Union, effectively, spent buckets that it didn’t have and Constantly, therefore, had to deplete its assets each year just to stand still. Since we took on the role and responsibility of ensuring that those deficits did not occur again and that we did not have to keep coming back to Congress for exorbitant contribution increases, since we made those changes and we have made big regime changes, you can see by *those* figures that we have ensured, even in very, very difficult years that we kept within the tight fiscal budgets that we set. In fact, we have made surpluses, and those were because the membership grew. Last year, that operating surplus was £2.621 million.

I will go to the next slide: (*GMB Financial Results: ‘Net Surplus’*) These ones are called “Net Surplus”. All that means is that the operating surplus, the budgets that we make and have kept to have meant that, because we have kept to them and grown the Union, we have not had to use income that the Union gets from other sources, like shares or selling a property. That has come back into the Union. So that’s what the net surplus is. Again, you can see, prior to those very important regime changes in 2003 and 2004, from that time on, the Union has maintained a positive position, and that positive position was maintained again last year.

People often say to me, “Well, what do you do with all this money?” If you could see the chart before *that*, you would see the chart reversed. (*GMB Net Assets, Excluding FRS 17*) There was a time when the Union had a great deal of assets, built up over many years on the backs of members and their contributions. Because the Union was in deficit denial in terms of its management of the organisation, those assets were used in order, in effect, to plug the gap. Anyone will be able to tell you that eventually you run out of assets, so the regime changes and the management changes were just about required. We probably would have run out of steam if we had carried like that for another two years. Whether we would have been an independent union beyond that is very doubtful. So one of the jobs is not just rebuilding the organisation, rebuilding our internal network and campaigning, but rebuilding the assets of the organisation so that we have got a process where we can invest in the future with some degree of security. You can see from *that* figure that we continued to do that last year; not selling off the family silver but, where possible, buying a few pieces and storing them. That is the information, mostly for new delegates. Some of you may never have seen *that* before. Other colleagues know that it has always been part of my presentation to Congress on the Finance Report.

So we have had membership growth, we are debt free and income is up, but let me make this point, and it is a point that the SMT makes to each other at every single meeting when we are discussing expenditure. Yes, we've done well – we have done well – but we must never, ever get complacent and we must never, ever go back to those processes that you saw before of, effectively, spending money and being in denial about how you were going to pay for it.

A year ago I said people that the Pensions Regulation was taking a keen interest in the Union's pension fund, the pension fund that is supplied to employees. We now know, with some degree of accuracy, that we were actually singled out for special attention by the Pensions Regulator. I appreciate the special attention from the Regulator and I always appreciate special attention from the Government, but in this particular instance it was pretty clear that their intention was to put us on the rack. It soon became very clear me and to colleagues – our trustee colleagues and employees – that the Regulator was challenging almost the very existence of our pension fund. So during the winter months we were pretty busy, and the initial figures, I have to say, from the fund's actuaries showed a deficit which, frankly, could not be sustained, and which the Union could not afford to pay off. Meanwhile, the Regulator demanded two separate in-depth reports on the Union's finances, which we provided with glee, because we could show that the Union was absolutely solid, sound, growing and actually had a strategy. We worked very hard as a Union, as the employer, with the pension trustees.

I want to make a point about the pension trustees, if I may. The Regulator was, first of all, very critical and suggested that the pension trustees' investment strategy was not right. That was a complete and utter slur on what the pension trustees had done. They had actually worked incredibly hard and their performance for the members of the fund and for the Union had actually produced better returns than the proposals that the Regulator would have had them follow. Now, rather late in the day, I think the Regulator accepts that position. So the pension trustees did everything and they did it right. We were able to work with the pension trustees to agree a more manageable deficit figure, which we have done, and we were able to convince the Regulator fairly robustly that both the Union and the trustees were actually in the right place and that the trustees' investments strategies were sound. We have worked with our staff reps who are members of the fund to develop a plan for changes to benefits, and that is now under consultation with Union employees, whose choice about keeping the scheme or not will be honoured.

After all that, we've been to the CEC to seek the CEC's agreement, on your behalf, for an additional annual contribution to the pension fund of more than a million pounds. Let me make this point. I think that we should have the best possible funded scheme for the employees who work for the Union – I really do – and I am happy to justify that to anybody. (*Applause*) So we have made a strong commitment, as a Union, and the CEC has supported that in your name, and I hope you are going to agree with that today. It is important that we do the very best we can for the people who work for the organisation within the boundaries of what, effectively, we can afford.

I also told you last year about our visit from HMRC. For those of you who are not quite sure what HMRC is, it's the taxman. It is now clear, actually, that we've really been given some special treatment. The point is that it is now clear that it was part of a campaign of inspections by the HMRC across all the unions. I can report, but I'm keeping my fingers well crossed, that thanks, especially, to the reforms in branch accounting – those colleagues who have attended a few meetings on branch accounting will remember that we had to reform the accounting system in the Union – because of a breach of trust. We had to do that, effectively, from 2010 onwards, which did account for lots more paperwork at the time because, effectively, things that we did on trust before, people

had abused and we had to have a system that you could say, “Why didn’t you do something about this when you uncovered it?” We did that, and that has brought us in good stead with the inspections.

It now seems, fingers crossed again, that we will come through what has been a very, very aggressive examination with some credit. The CEC and the SMT absolutely are at one. They do not believe that the lay members’ expenses and the subsistence paid to members doing GMB business is in any way excessive. The HMRC say that we pay more than their approved scales, but the CEC is committed to maintaining the current levels through negotiations with HMRC and, maybe, that will ultimately cost us more money. But I think that we are all clear that the job that people do for the members up and down the country, including the job that you do here this week, is worthy of people being able to buy a meal or get a cup of tea without having to supply a receipt for 50 pence, because you are getting a cup of tea when you are seeing a member. If that is the way that we are going, then we will pay the price in a different way, but we are absolutely crystal clear that we are not going to cut those expenses because the HMRC don’t like it. (*Applause*)

The third great financial challenge since we met last year has been the legal service and you have heard a lot this week about Unionline. I said to people the year before last that impact of the Jackson Report in the form of legislation was coming. We did not have a choice about doing nothing. Doing nothing, ultimately, would have led us into a £5 million deficit on our legal services. So the Unionline was born. It involved a huge amount of work. I cannot tell you how much work that was, how many meetings it involved, with people arguing different points and trying to come out with the best. I will be blunt when I say that we owe the SMT a pretty big vote of thanks for having the vision and foresight to look forward and beyond. There were lots of other easy choices, but two or three years down the line you would have been making many more difficult choices about how you were going to pay to fund the Union’s legal service. So we opened the new legal firm, Unionline, on May 29<sup>th</sup>, and we are in the early months and years of the impact that the changes to the legal service will require. It will require careful financial management, but we believe that, within a few short years, we will have created something that will not only deliver a much improved service to all of our members and their families, but it will also make a positive contribution to the Union’s financial strength.

Congress, we ask you today to take the next step in that really difficult but important job of building the Union’s future. GMB policy is to increase contributions every year by RPI, and that is what Congress passed many years ago. I have come to you regularly, year after year, and said, “Would you, please, not stick to that?”, not to ask you for more money in contributions but to ask you for less, and I do the same again this year. Of course, there are unavoidable rises, but we are asking this year to keep the increase to 5 pence per week on all grades, except, of course, those for apprentices and students, which we dealt with and set last year.

We also looked at the Retired Life Members’ Rate. Remember, this does not have any impact on those who are already retired life members, but of those, no doubt, who will come in the future. It was 12 years ago when we introduced that process and retired members could pay a £25 one-off payment to retain membership for the rest of their lives. Within the last 12 years things have gone up a bit and so we are asking you to increase the £25 to a one-off payment of £40. It is not the CEC’s intention to come back for another increase in the retired-life rate in the foreseeable future, so it is designed to bring it to where we are and to carry it on for the next few years. I will echo the point, because I did have somebody grab hold of me last night and say, “I’ve already paid £25 and now you want another £40, Kenny.” I don’t. Your £25 is banked and it is solid.

Colleagues, I am really proud to come again to Congress and report a really solid financial position. It did not come about by us sitting and whistling Dixie. It really did not. It came about because, bit by bit, people buckled down to a challenge, and the challenge that they were facing was the survival of this organisation. It really was as simple as that, and *those* figures tell you that.

For new delegates, we have an expended Congress, an annual Congress, activities, proposals like an annual women's conference and more engagement with members, but these were pipedreams. You could pass resolutions but you couldn't do anything because the money wasn't even covering the basic costs of renting the buildings and paying the wages and the telephone bills. In fact, we got ourselves into a position once, and colleagues will remember it, where there was a suggestion about whether the wages for the staff were going to be paid. Never again. Absolutely never again. So I am proud that we have got a solid financial record and a solid financial achievement. The CEC and the SMT both have always pledged never, ever to allow the Union to drift back into that position that we all inherited. You put your faith in people to deliver for you, and I hope that we have done that. I ask you to support us again.

Please accept the Report and Accounts and support the Financial Report and the rule changes. There are two small points. The contribution increases will not take effect until October, and all of the contribution increase will go into the General Fund and not into the Political Fund. A strong financial base allows us to remain an independent union, to implement and carry out policy demands from Congress. It allows us to campaign, it allows us to fight, it allows us to organise and it allows us and gives us the impetus to win. President, I move the Report, the rule amendments, the Accounts, and I ask Congress to support Motion 25 and oppose Motion 19, if not withdrawn, which I very much doubt it will be. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I formally second.

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I now invite those regions that wish to speak on the Finance Report, please, to come forward. I am not pressurising you. Linda.

SIS. L. MOORE (GMB Wales and South West): Congress, I am speaking to the Finance Report. President and comrades, the remarkable turnaround in the financial position of our Union continued in 2013 as we achieved an operating surplus for the 10<sup>th</sup> consecutive year. Responsible fiscal management shows through, clearly, in both the ways in which we apply our investment strategy and income generation methods. We have gone from being close to financial meltdown to steady but unspectacular growth year on year, which is due to astute financial governance. At the heart of our success is, of course, the commitment given to organising through *GMB@Work*, a strong campaigning union able to deliver for working people, obviously, requires a robust funding structure and needs to adjust to on-going pressures upon operating costs. The Report identifies the main sources of cost and income pressures arising out of the pension scheme reform, HMRC intrusion changes in how we provide legal services to our members and, obviously, the spectre of job losses in the public sector. The proposal for contribution increases is a measured and reasonable one which takes account of both the economic circumstances confronting our members and cost competition for Union membership in many areas where we organise. It also falls below the level increase because of the linkage with headline inflation.

My region welcomes the decision to divert the full value of any contribution increase to the General Fund, as it does with the undertaking to preserve the benefit of the subsistence payment scheme. We also applaud the initiative taken to introduce on-line branch account practices.

It would be all too easy to lapse back to the old ways of financial mismanagement, with the consequences of doing so to our great Union being all too obvious. GMB Wales & South West Region fully supports the Report and commends it to Congress. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Linda. Next.

BRO. W. HUGHES (Northern): Congress, I come to this rostrum reluctantly, believe you me. First of all, I apologise for my region because I haven't had time to tell them that I was going to speak. So I am speaking without the support of my region. Ten or 12 years ago, Paul Kenny took up the reins of responsibility of this organisation of ours. He took it by the socks because he inherited an organisation that was in more debt than Russia. He pulled this organisation around and he brought us to where we are today. I will always admire him for that, and I mean it. (*Applause*)

But now comes the cream on the biscuit. Paul, you have got this one wrong. You certainly have, my bonnie lad. I agree with the Finance Report and I agree with the increased contributions because you only get what you pay for, but when it comes to the retired members, we've been talking about unscrupulous landlords, utility companies, Jack the lads, ripping off our people and *this* fellow here, the big lad, comes and he asks our retired members for £40. I was against it when it was £10, never mind £40. I know that Bro. Kenny will come back with his statistics and his reasons why he has done it, because he is good at it, but like all treasurers he is never satisfied with a balance sheet. I have only got two simple words to sway you lot on to my side, and that is "principle" and "loyalty". (*Applause*) Colleagues, I know Mary and I have a bit of banter when the time is right, but this is serious, and I will be as brief as I can, Mary, honestly.

THE PRESIDENT: You've got the red light. Look, have a whisky.

BRO. HUGHES: Colleagues, there is nowhere I could sit *there* and put my hand up and accept the retired members' increase, Paul. It is against my principles. Paul went on about the taxman. If any activist can tell me that he can make a profit out of his expenses, come and let me know, will you? The taxman should be giving us something back. Colleagues, the principle is that we should be treating our retired members for what they are worth. Not everybody has a big salary when they retire, you now. Many people are on low pay. Not so long ago we had the slogan "Recruit and Retain", and even when people lost their jobs they, religiously, those 5 pence to retain their membership of the GMB. I say, colleagues, let us pay them something back for all the good work which they have done for this organisation over the years. Oppose this increase for retired members. Thank you. (*Cheers and applause*)

BRO. R. MORGAN (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I am speaking in support of the CEC's Finance Report. President and colleagues, first of all, I would like to say that it is a privilege and an honour to follow the legend who is Billy Hughes. Thank you, Billy for all you do. (*Applause*)

President and Congress, my region welcomes the continued growth and the work done to safeguard the staff pension scheme. The challenge of the HMRC has been met and the GMB has been found fit for purpose in that case. I am not surprised at that at all. We welcome the pledge to defend the small subsidies and allowances that our reps get. We have guaranteed that.

Moving on to the proposal to increase the subscriptions, it is never going to be popular but I believe it is essential to preserve our core services and to develop new ones. You can see the grey hair. I'm getting on, Billy. I don't enjoy paying extra money. You might think I do, but I don't, but I think it is essential.

The procurement policy is welcomed, and I hope it reflects our living wage approach. I hope it is applied to our suppliers as well. Comrades, please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone else want to speak?

BRO. J. SULLIVAN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, we support Motion 25. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Kenny, do you wish to reply to Mr. Hughes?

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Jesus! He's given a knock-out blow. It's not like a count of three. With him you're down and out. Of course, it's difficult, colleagues. Trust me. The retired members who sit on the Finance Committee were making all sorts of arguments. The process is always a difficult one, but, as you know, we channel funds directly into the RMA and we want to participate in a lot more activities because those retired members have got so much to offer. It is only a small proportion of people who retire stay in the Union. I wish the figure was greater, Billy, I really do. If it's a real struggle, I promise you, we will look at it, Billy. I give you that as my oath in this open context. We will monitor it and look at it. Some branches already find that additional payment for long-serving activists and pay it. The CEC put forward the package, and I don't have the authority just to write a bit out. If you had seen me last night, I might have got my way round to the printer and there might have been a printing error, Billy, but there's no way that I can come to this rostrum and refer part of it. That is the democratic responsibility on me from the CEC. Colleagues will make their own decisions. Of course we value the retired members. We have put a lot of effort into that and we want more people when they leave work to stay on and be active in the Union. That's why we want to promote the Retired Members' Association. Billy, I would expect no more from you and passionate colleagues about the issues of protecting retired members and those who will be retiring. The truth of the matter is, and it is the truth of the matter, that we have to hold people to us. There is a payment for that. It's been £25 for 12 years. If you vote to move it to £40, it will probably be £40 for the next 12 years. So the principle has been established. You talked about principles, Billy, but the principle was established, it was voted on and it was agreed, and that is what people paid. Those who are retired life members will not be asked for anything. This will be people in the future. So when we talk about the principle, the principle was voted on, agreed and no one challenged it. Now the principle is about whether it should be uprated. That is the principle you are arguing about. That is the view of the CEC. Actually, my view is that the Union is good value. If you are paying a one-off payment of £40 for the rest of your life, hopefully it will be a long life, you will be able to call on those Union services, you will be able to get access to Union support and you will be able to participate in the Union's activities.

The point that was made about the subsistence, yes, that is what I am saying. That is our position. We have adopted it. We have said that if the taxman does say that our expense system is more generous than the one they want us to take, if that is the case and we end up not being able to negotiate the maintenance of our existing system, then we accept that we are going to have to pay extra money on that, or pay money to the taxman, in order to maintain the position. So we are not going to come back to you and say that we are cutting it. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Does Midland & East Coast wish to take up the right to reply on Motion 19? (*Declined*) Thank you. Will you withdraw? Did I hear "Yes"? Thank you. Does Congress accept withdrawal of Motion 19? (*Agreed*) Thank you, Midland & East Coast.

*Motion 19 was WITHDRAWN.*

THE PRESIDENT: I now put Motion 25 to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? Carried.

*Motion 25 was CARRIED.*

Colleagues, I now come to item 12, and put the Annual Accounts & Auditors Report to Congress. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? Carried.

*The Annual Accounts & Auditors Report was CARRIED.*

Colleagues, we now come to item 13, which is the CEC Finance Report and the CEC's financial proposals to Congress 2014. All those in favour, please show? All those against? Carried.

*The CEC Finance Report and the CEC financial proposals to Congress 2014 were CARRIED.*

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

THE PRESIDENT: The final announcements are coming. As you leave the Hall will you please give generously to the bucket collection in aid of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Association organised by Midland & East Coast Region.

There will be a luggage storage facility available from tomorrow morning in the Bolero Suite on the third floor for delegates leaving for home straight after Congress.

Could I remind first-time delegates to collect a copy of the GMB history book from the Ethical Threads Stand.

This is a final reminder for you to hand in your delegate questionnaires as the prize draw will take place tomorrow.

Congress, please complete your Equality Monitoring Forms and return them to your Regional Secretary.

Tonight is President's Night, and it will be held at the Crown Plaza Hotel. Details are on the screen. I remind you that you must have your delegate ticket to get your drink and that there will be no food. Let me give a big thank you to the sponsors of this event: British Gas, Pellacraft and Future Plus.  
*(Applause)*

I close Congress now. I will see you later.

*(Congress adjourned at 6.06 pm)*