

**GMB**

**CONGRESS 2015**

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

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Held in:

**Citywest Hotel, Conference and Event Centre,  
Dublin**

on:

**Sunday, 7<sup>th</sup> June 2015  
Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2015  
Tuesday, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2015  
Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> June 2015  
and  
Thursday, 11<sup>th</sup> June 2015**

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**PROCEEDINGS  
DAY FOUR  
(Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> June 2015)**

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## **FOURTH DAY'S PROCEEDINGS**

**WEDNESDAY, 10<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2015**

### **MORNING SESSION**

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

THE PRESIDENT: Will Congress come to order, please? Good morning, everyone. I hope you all had a good evening. I know somebody in this hall who did! Could I, and Congress, wish a Happy Birthday to Denise Lawrence, Kings Lynn Branch. Happy Birthday, Denise. *(Applause)* Denise, I don't want to see your tattoos again! *(Laughter)* She was showing them off last night to me.

I thank the technicians for an excellent hearing induction loop, so wherever the technicians are I will need it down here. Congress, wishes to thank you for that.

I believe Harry has been at it again! Thank you, Harry. Could I please thank Harry Donaldson and our members of GMB Scotland for supplying the whisky. *(Applause)* Harry, the only thing is with this lot one is not enough. The vodka is in the bag! You think I'm kidding?

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

THE PRESIDENT: I will be calling on the movers and seconders of the motions in two groups. Could the movers and seconders of Motions 150 and 153 please come to the front, that is, Southern Region and Yorkshire Region. Morning, Andy.

### **REGULATION 10 – AGENCY WORKERS REGULATIONS**

#### **MOTION 150**

#### **150. REGULATION 10 – AGENCY WORKERS REGULATIONS**

This Congress notes that the so called "Swedish Derogation" allows employers to frustrate provisions of the Agency Worker Regulations relating to equal pay after 12 weeks.

This Congress notes that UK trade unions, through the TUC, submitted a formal complaint to the EU Commission on this issue in September 2013. The EU Directive is very clear that Member States must ensure measures are taken to stop practices aimed at avoidance of the equal treatment rights under the directive. GMB believes this derogation is being exploited with the very aim of avoidance.

This Congress notes with dismay the role played by trade bodies such as the Association of Labour Providers (ALP) in promoting avoidance, and in lobbying against closure of the loophole.

This Congress resolves to campaign by all available means, legal political and industrial, to close the Swedish Derogation loophole and to gain justice for agency workers.

W15 WILTSHIRE & SWINDON BRANCH  
*Southern Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. A. NEWMAN (Southern): Comrades, we have heard a lot about zero-hours but a number of our members are on seven and eight-hour a week contracts and you might wonder why that came about. The reason it came about was that back in 2011 the Agency Workers Regulations were brought in which established that after a 12-week period – now, of course, we believe it should have been after day one but that law said after 12 weeks – an agency worker had entitlement to equal pay with someone who was doing a substantive post with the same employer. Within the regulations,

Regulation 10 was brought in that said under certain circumstances that obligation for equal pay could be avoided.

The history of this was within the European Union, in Sweden, and this is why the particular loophole in the law is called the Swedish Derogation, they have had a form of employment practice that we never had in the UK. People have a permanent job with an employment agency and then on assignment they get the full whack for the job, but between assignments they are generously paid as well, not the full whack but, say, 50% or 70%. That has never happened in the UK. It was not a UK practice. What happened was that the trade association of the recruitment agencies saw a wheeze here. They created a class of employment never previously known in Britain by giving people permanent contracts, giving them just seven or eight hours a week, and then they said, "Because you are so privileged to have this extraordinary gift of eight hours a week, we are going to pay you minimum wage. This avoids the obligation we had under Regulation 5 of the Agency Workers Regulations to give you the full whack."

This is disgraceful. Under the European Union, member governments have an obligation not to allow avoidance tactics. In September 2013, the TUC put a complaint into the European Union, to the European Commission, saying that what the government had done in Britain was unlawful because it was a deficient implementation of the regulation and what should happen is that the European Commission should rule that this is deficient.

What has actually happened is that the European Commission has not responded. This is some 18 months later and they have not responded. You know why they have not responded, because they do not want to say that a Conservative government that is threatening to leave the EU is deficient in the implementation of regulations which give workers rights. This means that the EU is colluding with the government of this country – it is this country because they have the same nonsense in Ireland – that the EU is colluding against the rule of law to say that members, our members, can be exploited.

The very principle of the British constitution is that the rule of law applies to everyone. We cut off a king's head to prove it. Everybody has to obey the law. I tell you, comrades, that if the EU colludes with the British government on the side of rapacious employers and a government that says we will break the law and have a deficient implementation of the law in order to allow the exploitation of the most vulnerable people in work, then that EU is not worth having.

The EU worth having is one that goes to the British government and says, you do obey the law and you have the same level playing field as countries which have good employment rights, in Germany and Denmark. That is the EU we want, not the EU which colludes with bad employers.

When we wrote this motion and submitted it, we thought that we would have a Labour government and in their manifesto they were going to scrap this Swedish Derogation, but now we have to do it ourselves. I tell you, comrades, this union, the union which brought employers to book and forced the eight-hour day on employers, is also the union that will take on employers and get rid of the eight-hour week. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Andrew. Secunder?

SIS. M. RODRIGUES (Southern): Congress, I am seconding Motion 150 as I strongly feel that the Swedish Derogation was introduced to benefit agency workers. It no longer serves this purpose as it has now been exploited by employers to deprive agency workers pay and working conditions similar to those of permanent workers. This is morally wrong as both agency and permanent workers do the

same job but are subject to different employment rules. The work undertaken by GMB Swindon reflects that its members employed by Marks & Spencer and B&Q are now living in poverty due to the Swedish Derogation. It is therefore essential to put an end to the loopholes within this Swedish Derogation so people can have better quality of life. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Congress, while the movers of Motion 153 are coming to the stand, I also now ask the movers and seconders of Motion 155 and 157 to come down, please.

## **CHANGES TO THE LAW ON EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES MOTION 153**

### **153. CHANGES TO THE LAW ON EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES**

This Congress appeals for a campaign to change the existing law on employment businesses and agencies.

We all know or should know the reality of the employment businesses (job agencies). Under the disguise of suiting the needs of few wanting flexibility in work the agencies are used to undermine the employment rights gained by working people during the last century. Zero hours contracts should be seen as the other side of the same coin.

Even more than that, considering the fact that high an percentage of their workforce are migrants the agencies are instruments of lawful and unacceptable exploiting and discrimination which deepens the divisions in our society.

#### **The necessary changes in current legislation:**

1. The employment businesses and agencies should be all under the rigour of licensing
2. The controlling powers of Employment Agency Standard Inspectorate (EAS) should be strengthened and their staff significantly increased. Today 17,000 agencies are watched by 12 members of EAS
3. Agency Workers' Regulations 2010 should be made enforceable by adding anti-avoidance provisions, qualifying period should be cancelled or shortened from existing 12 weeks, Swedish derogation contracts (Regulation 10) should be scrapped.

MIGRANT WORKERS' BRANCH  
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

*(Carried)*

BRO. B. KIRKHAM (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): We all know, or should know, the reality of employment agencies. Under the guise of suiting the needs of the few wanting flexibility in work the denial and abuse of workers' employment rights throughout industry is a cause for great concern. The TUC considers that all agency workers are vulnerable in the UK labour market due to their employment status and their lack of tenure or notice rights.

Migrant agency workers can be particularly vulnerable as a limited knowledge of UK employment rights and advice agencies is often compounded by limited understanding of the English language. Workers from ethnic minority groups are more likely to be engaged in agency work in the UK. 19% are from ethnic minorities compared with 13% temporary workers.

Recent research published by the HSE found that few checks were made on migrant workers' skills and qualifications for undertaking the work they were doing. There are cases where workers were performing skilled and potentially dangerous tasks, where there had been no previous experience or even sufficient formal training. Some of the most common abuses reported at TUC involved charging

individuals to find them work, a practice that is illegal in the UK, docking money from workers' wages when paying them by cheque, paying lower hourly rates than initially promised, non-payment for hours worked, and excessive working time with inadequate breaks between shifts. In many cases a complex web in which they, the agency, the hirer, and the umbrella companies, work stands between workers and their legal rights. Household named companies like M&S use such a complex system of interconnected employment agencies and umbrella companies. The bewildering nest of contracts from owners to logistic companies running sites to sourcing workers through recruitment agencies with employment contracts with further companies only inhibits staff from asserting their employment rights while these employers evade their responsibilities unethically and unlawfully.

Charles Simon, MEP, Labour's European Parliament spokesperson on employment, recently said, "Supposed agency workers are having their wages depressed and their rights of dignity abused. Companies such as Marks & Spencer should be ashamed of this use of modern slavery." The GMB have accused Tempay Limited of using the Swedish Derogation in the Agency Workers Regulations as a way to pay a huge amount of staff a lower wage than their permanent colleagues. Tempay Limited employs 2,500 people, has only two administrative staff for payroll, no managers, no HR department, and no internal structure for governance, a paper company that seemingly only exists for legal avoidance.

Swedish Derogation contracts are seemingly in breach of the global sourcing principles which require each of M&S's suppliers of the goods and services to comply with all relevant laws and regulations relating to terms of employment. GMB have brought legal claims on behalf of its members working at an M&S distribution centre. It is clear that the treatment of these workers is a breach of the M&S code of ethics and behaviour.

Challenging the denial and abuse of employment rights and preventing the exploitation of vulnerable workers through dubious employment agencies must be a key priority for the trade unions. Congress appeals for a campaign to change the existing law on employment businesses and agencies. The immediate necessary changes should be that all employment businesses and agencies are under the rigour of licensing. The controlling powers of Employment Agency Standard Inspectorate should be strengthened and their staff significantly increased. Today, 17,000 agencies are watched by 12 members of EAS. Agency Worker Regulations 2010 should be more enforceable by adding anti-avoidance provisions, qualifying periods should be cancelled or shortened from the existing 12 weeks, and Swedish Derogation contracts, Regulation 10, should be scrapped. Congress, please support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done.

BRO. D. KEEGAN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Morning, Congress. First-time at Congress, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Seconding Motion 153, Employment Agencies and Changes to the Law. Congress, President, why do we need zero-hours contracts and agencies. We know that while employers have these zero-hours contracts and agencies they are used to abuse our members and migrant workers in particular. Full-time, part-time, and permanent contracts are better for our members who will know when they are working and how long they are working for, plus they know they have a regular income to be able to support their families without having to worry about how they are going to pay their bills and feed their kids. Zero-hours contracts are used by agencies and have been introduced by dodgy employers, not the workers. Zero-hours contracts have to go and so do the dodgy employers who take away the rights to a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I thought you would be very quiet this morning after last night! Tim, you didn't give him enough whisky. I now ask the mover of Motion 155, Holiday Entitlement of Agency Workers, to come up.

## **HOLIDAY ENTITLEMENT OF AGENCY WORKERS MOTION 155**

### **155. HOLIDAY ENTITLEMENT OF AGENCY WORKERS**

This Congress finds the instances of unequal holiday entitlement for derogated agency workers totally unacceptable.

We call on the CEC to lobby the appropriate bodies to enforce the correct entitlement as per the Agency Workers Regulations where the number of holiday days exceeds the current national minimum.

R35 JCB GENERAL BRANCH  
*Birmingham & West Midlands Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. D. DWYERS (Birmingham & West Midlands): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I am speaking on behalf of Chris Booth, who could not make it to Dublin at the last minute, on Motion 155. The Agency Workers Regulations came out in 2010 and in simple terms attempted to stop exploitation of temporary workers employed doing the same job as someone directly employed by the parent company and not the agency.

Having completed a 12-week qualifying period the agency worker is entitled to the same basic terms and conditions as if they were employed or recruited directly, and included in this are the key elements of pay. Pay includes any money paid to the worker in connection with the workers' employment. Pay includes payment for annual leave. Entitlements above 28 days can be added to the hourly or daily rate and to avoid confusion this should be identified separately on pay slips. This key phrase that can be added does not seem to be happening. Agency derogated workers around the country are being short-changed by this anomaly. Can happen, does not happen, ends up as "does not happen".

Chris is an agency worker working next door to a fellow worker on substantially less hourly rates. While this can make him very angry, at the end of the year the parent company's workers on 33 days holiday a year have Christmas off with pay while Chris, in real terms, having used his 28 days holiday pay is laid off over Christmas with no pay.

The Labour Government's manifesto pledged to help stop the abuse of agency workers. It is now a different scenario. It is unjust, Congress, and I think it is immoral. Just imagine how Chris feels working next to a mate who not only earns £3.50 an hour extra than him but also he has five days less off without pay. So, let's lobby the relevant bodies to stop this. I move. *(Applause)*

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

*Motion 155 was formally seconded.*

THE PRESIDENT: The movers of Motion 157, Birmingham?

## **UMBRELLA COMPANIES MOTION 157**

### **157. UMBRELLA COMPANIES**

This Congress calls to exert pressure on the government to legislate against the spread of exploitative umbrella companies.

This type of company is largely confined to the construction industry at present but they are spreading to other sectors of the economy. The workers may be offered a contract paying £14 per hour but with deductions this drops to the minimum wage with no guaranteed hours of work and frequently a weekly 'admin' charge of between £20 - £30 so this is a variation of the 'zero' hours contracts. This is clearly an exploitation of the workers' pay and conditions as it also has an impact on holiday pay entitlement.

These companies have been brought about because the government introduced new measures in April 2014 which required workers to be paid via PAYE which meant the agency, contractor and Payroll Company are not liable for the increased costs.

I call on the GMB to campaign as a matter of urgency to support any legislation brought in to end this iniquitous practice.

BO1 BIRMINGHAM FORWARD BRANCH  
*Birmingham & West Midlands Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. S. MAYBURY (Birmingham & West Midlands): It was back in the Autumn Statement 2013 that the Government announced they would change the rules from April 2014 that would be designed to counter false self-employment and highlighted the construction industry as having high levels. Now, being self-employed can bring benefits to a worker but the key benefit it brings is to the person engaging the worker in the form of a saving of employers' National Insurance contribution, which is currently 13.8%. As it is left to the agency and payroll companies to decide how this works, it seems to me that this practice is very open to abuse and misinterpretation. It can also take on a pyramid type effect as any company relying on one large staffing agency to coordinate their labour supply also needs to consider those of second tier supplier agencies and payroll companies which supply into them. It has been suggested that disreputable agencies may just carry on regardless in the hope that HMRC do not catch up with them.

The Prime Minister said that this government is on the side of working people, helping them to get on and support them at every stage of life. Oh, yes! This government has also talked much of hardworking families doing the right thing and stamping down on benefit abuse but individual family units, because of these changes and extra payments to stay on the books of the agency because they have to pay £20-£30 a week just to stay on the books, are likely to claim more housing benefit, increased tax credits, which will have a negative impact on the economy and the government is always saying that is a bad thing, isn't it.

There are some people who need to rely on tax credits for periods when they are not offered work to pay their utility bills and buy food, and it has already been stated by some charities, such as the Trussell Trust, that working people in greater numbers now need to apply to food banks. To quote the Prime Minister, this is unacceptable. Unfortunately, with the current government in power I feel this motion can only be regarded as aspirational rather than righting a wrong and help the working man achieve an improvement in life work conditions. I urge Congress to support this in the hope of better times to come. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder?

SIS. J. WADRUP (Birmingham & West Midlands): President, Congress, who do you work for? This is a simple question that for most of us is a simple answer but for lots of us who work for an umbrella company the answer may not be as simple as it sounds. On many building sites jobs can be subbed out to one, two, or even three times over. In companies agencies are now setting up their employment status with all the staff working under an umbrella company and, guess what, each and every one of these companies takes a cut. It is about time these loopholes to make jobs easily dispensable were closed. We call on the CEC to lobby to stop this loophole that reduces our members' pay and decreases their terms and conditions. The cut comes out of workers' pay packets but, even more important, it allows the company under the umbrella company an easy excuse to sack, discipline, and bully agency workers employed by these parent companies under an umbrella. These workers are always treading on eggshells in case they rock the boat and are the next to go. It is impossible to have time off even when our members are very poorly, a classic case of presenteeism. Congress, I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. I call Billy Coates on behalf of the CEC. Billy? Morning.

BRO. B. COATES (Regional Secretary, Northern Region): President, Congress, we are supporting Motion 153 with a qualification. The qualification is twofold. Although the CEC believe that the Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate could be usefully reinstated, any reinforcement of the body would need to address its ability to respond positively to trade union concerns. The JJB Sports case highlighted shortcomings in the provisions. Furthermore, the court has shown the 12-week equal treatment qualifying period is tied to the TUC CBI agreement that underpins the Agency Workers Regulations, therefore any action to change the terms of this agreement would have to come with the agreement of the TUC and its affiliates. Congress, please support Motion 153 with this qualification. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Billy. Does Yorkshire Region accept the qualification? *(Agreed)* Yes. Okay. That was quiet! Thank you. Does Congress? *(Agreed)* Yes. Can I now put Motion 150, 153, 155, and 157 to the vote. All those in favour please show. Anyone against?

*Motion 150 was Carried.*

*Motion 153 was Carried.*

*Motion 155 was Carried.*

*Motion 157 was Carried.*

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I am calling Motion 162. Then I will be calling Motions 164, 165, 168, and 169. Before I do ask the movers to come to the platform, yesterday we heard an appeal from our Congress delegate from London Region on the plight of the Nepalese people. We have all seen it on the television. They have lost their homes and their children are hungry, no clothes; no nothing. GMB is an international union and we try to help wherever we can, no matter how small or how large. It is all so important to those people who are now suffering and will suffer more as they go into their winter. So, the CEC, with your agreement, would like to give a sum of money of £2,500 to help with the fund for the Nepalese people. *(Applause)* Does Congress agree? *(Agreed)* And maybe the regional secretaries may like to add to it across the regions. It would be well received. Thanks. *(Applause)* How many have fainted?

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

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, can the mover of Motion 164, GMB Scotland, please come to the fore?  
Oh, I forgot Motion 162.

### **CASH-IN-TRANSIT ATTACK MOTION 162**

#### **162. CASH IN TRANSIT ATTACK**

Congress, since 2007 the CVIT industry has been working in partnership with a number of key stakeholders to drive down the number of attacks. Stakeholders include the Home Office, the GMB Trade Union, ACPO, the Metropolitan Police Service, SOCA, the Bank of England, the British Bankers Association, the Department of Transport, TfL to name but a few.

The BRC have, since 2008, established their own Cash and Valuables in Transit (CVIT) Working Group which has shown their commitment to working with the industry to reduce vulnerability to crime.

Despite attacks reaching an all-time low in 2013, the Trade body points to interim reports for 2014 suggesting some rapid increase month-on-month, rises in attacks on couriers, injury is still a real threat, says the BSIA, but these are done by teenagers being recruited into crime.

As for courier safety, as most robberies and attacks on couriers happen as they cross the pavement, it is essential to minimise the distance that they have to travel between the CVIT vehicle and the delivery premises – meaning that many vehicles are forced to park illegally to make safe deliveries; particularly in big cities such as London, and also cut in Police officers by the Government.

In order to reduce these attacks we ask GMB to continue a campaign of

- a) removal of parking restrictions in City, town centre areas
- b) safer area and procedures to transfer of cash for banks and retail outlets
- c) fast tracking arrangements in dispensing cash and safer routes for delivery and collections
- d) faster police response.

Money makes the world go round, but safety should not be spin.

GMB LONDON SECURITY BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. C. WHEATLEY (London): President, Congress, the cash-in-transit industry in the UK for transporting is worth around £500bn in cash every year, which is equivalent to £1.4bn every day. The cash-in-transit industry performs an essential public service keeping all cash moving around the UK. However, sheer volumes make cash-in-transit couriers vulnerable to robbery and attack and most attacks happen to cash-in-transit couriers on the pavement, usually between where the CBIT parks and the delivery premises.

Since 2007, the cash-in-transit industry has been working partnership with many stakeholders. These include the Bank of England, British Banks Association, Metropolitan Police, SOCO, ACPO, the Health & Safety Authority, and the GMB, and others, to reduce the number of cash-in-transit attacks. Additionally, in 2007, the British Security Industry Association (BSIA) initiative was set up to reduce further the number of cash-in-transit attacks in association with the police yet the BSIA have stated

since attacks reached an all time low in 2013, from 2014 attacks have steadily increased on a month by month basis. Injury is still a threat, according to the BSI, with the majority of criminal incidents done by teenagers at pavement level. BSIA has also seen a rise of firearms used against cash-in-transit couriers. Our members and employers who work in the cash-in-transit industry realise health and safety is paramount. We can do more.

I call on the GMB to continue a campaign to protect our members and cash-in-transit employees who work in this industry. I call on safer designated areas and procedure to transfer cash for banks and retail outlets, faster police response to incidents when required, removal of parking restrictions in city and town centres for cash-in-transit vehicles, and delivery and collection to have safer routes and faster tracking arrangements for dispensing cash. Congress, please support this motion. Thank you.  
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Chris. Secunder?

BRO. T. CHOLERTON (London): President, Congress, it is a basic principle of ours that anyone who goes to work should be able to return home safe and sound yet due to restrictions that are meant for the majority of us those who carry cash and valuables in transit are put at risk. A good example of this is parking restrictions. Although they are designed to help the flow of traffic, they can put those who carry cash and valuables in danger. The quicker they can deliver and return to the vehicle the safer it is. Commonsense says these people should be able to park as close as they can to the point of delivery. However, this is not what happens in practice. That is why this motion calls on the GMB to carry out a campaign on behalf of those who carry cash and valuables in transit and to help to remove the parking restrictions in town and city centres and to help produce better procedures for the safer transfer of valuables between vehicles and banks or other retail outlets. We also call on it to help with the fast track of arrangements for dispensing cash, for safer routes, and for faster police responses. The safety of our members is paramount. Please support this motion. I second. (Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tony. Well done. I now ask GMB Scotland to move Motion 164.

## **G4S SECURE SERVICES RECOGNITION AGREEMENT MOTION 164**

### **164. G4S SECURE SERVICES RECOGNITION AGREEMENT**

This Congress calls upon GMB to seek to renegotiate the existing recognition Agreement with G4S Secure Services with a view to deleting the “no strike” clause contained therein.

Congress believes that G4S has acted in bad faith by reneging on its agreement with GMB to pay for SIA licences and the time has come for our members to fight to preserve their existing terms and conditions, indeed we should be fighting to improve those terms and conditions, not meekly submitting to worsening them.

Congress believes that no fight with G4S can be won whilst the no strike clause exists.

SCOTTISH SECURITY & AVIATION BRANCH  
GMB Scotland

(Carried)

BRO. C. ROBERTSON (GMB Scotland): Congress, our union quite rightly is seriously concerned with regard to the security industry and in particular G4S. G4S continues to lurch from one crisis to another but still manages to pay its bosses and shareholders mouth-watering profits. Within the UK whilst still reeling from the Olympics debacle, the company found itself facing fraud allegations in

admitting overcharging the taxpayer by £1.5m on its electronic tagging contract. Internationally, the company's reputation was damaged by its involvement in services and equipment to Israeli prisoners, the partite wall, and the Israeli police. All this has come as more bad news for the dedicated and hardworking but demoralised staff suffering pay restraint and post pay awards, job losses, and increased use of the zero-hours contracts, heavier workloads with little job security, and the cessation of no or poor pay awards.

To add insult to injury, in 2014 the company announced it would be charging security staff the cost of their SIA licence. As these licences are the prerequisite for anyone working in the industry, this move was roundly condemned as nothing less than another example of the greedy G4S, especially as these proposals will not take place until late 2015. If I can compare that, it is like a bus company looking to charge its drivers for the cost of the fuel. It is shocking.

Congress, GMB Scotland would ask Congress to renegotiate the existing recognition agreement to delete reference to the no-strike clause, to campaign to end the practice of zero-hours contracts by challenging G4S on their use of involving our members in this activity, to stop the company forcing our members to pay for the loans for their own SIA licences, and to obtain legal advice on these issues to help our members within the industry to defend and improve their terms and conditions. Our aim as a trade union between now and then will be to organise to cause maximum impact and force G4S to the negotiating table. Please support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Charlie. Secunder?

SIS. L. WALKER (GMB Scotland): Congress, as my colleague has mentioned, as from March 2014 G4S announced that they were to cease paying directly for employees' SIA licences and examination fees, the result being our members would have to meet the full cost of renewing licences and all the additional costs for exams on any licences from this date. The reason the company have given was that they needed to make savings and cost cutting across the security section. This was to ensure G4S made profits. Withdrawing licence funding was an efficiency they decided was worthwhile and restructured accordingly.

Congress, our members within G4S are rightly disgusted and angry at the uncaring and despicable manner in which G4S have undertaken these cuts on loyal and hardworking employees, our members. To compound these disgraceful proposals they are offering our members loans and other methods to repay without thought to the economic hardship many of our members are facing. Whilst remembering that these proposals will not come into force until the later months of this year, the financial impact such changes will have on our members in this sector is quite rightly a concern for our union. The company is looking to cut our members' terms and conditions by making them meet the cost of SIA licences at a time when many are subjected to a pay freeze, zero-hours contracts, and below cost of living rises.

Our union does not accept these proposals and will continue to fight G4S attacks on jobs, proposals designed to prop up their profit margins in these tough economic times, proposals that save money for them and their customers, whilst passing all the cost to our hardworking members who make this company a success. GMB must vigorously fight these proposals. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Linda. Would Southern Region like to come into the debate as they withdrew Motion 163 in favour of 162?

SIS. M. RODRIGUES (Southern): We are supporting Motion 162. GMB Swindon approached the leader of the Labour Group, Jim Grant, to seek help in lifting parking restrictions on drivers of cash-in-transit vans as they were often penalised for doing their jobs with parking fines. The leader of the Labour Group approached the Conservative-led council on this issue and through cross-party consensus a decision was made to remove parking restrictions for drivers of cash-in-transit vans: success indeed. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Thank you. Colleagues, before I move to the next group, which will be Motions 165, 168, and 169, I have just had a donation from Liverpool, North West & Irish Region for the Nepalese fund of £2,000. Thank you. (*Applause*) Motion 165, Southern Region?

## **SIA LICENCE FEE REFUND MOTION 165**

### **165. SIA LICENSE FEE REFUND**

This Congress calls on the GMB to lobby the Security Industry Authority (SIA) to introduce the facility where workers can seek a refund on the unexpired part of the license, should they leave the industry, either by gaining employment elsewhere, retirement, or on the grounds of ill health.

G36 SECURITY BRANCH  
Southern Region

(*Carried*)

BRO. S. HANCOCK (Southern): Madam President, General Secretary, Congress. I have been up here already this week. This is my first Congress, I have thoroughly enjoyed it, and I want to thank everybody involved. (*Applause*)

Congress, many workers in the secure industry are paid low wages and have to work long shifts, often unsociable hours, nights, weekends, and bank holidays. To work in the security industry you have to hold a Security Industry Authority Licence which costs £220. If you need a secondary licence for a CCTV, for example, you require an additional licence at the cost of £110. It is a criminal offence to work in the security industry without a valid licence. Whilst some companies fund the costs of these licences it is in the minority, so the costs fall on low-paid security workers to stump up hundreds of pounds before they even earn a week's wage. This is unfair and a barrier to employment. The last government failed to deliver the reforms that GMB had been lobbying to reduce the costs and have a yearly renewal so the workers are not paying for a three-year licence when they may no longer be working in the industry. Effectively, we are calling on the GMB to lobby further both the SIA and the government for more flexibility, affordable licences, and a refund option for those retiring or leaving the industry. I move. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder?

BRO. P. SONY (Southern): Congress, while many of our members pay for their SIA licence direct as their employers at present do, there are some who have to pay before they are employed, or if they leave their employer they are deducted a certain amount from their final salary by their employer for the months left of their SIA licence. Some do not return to the security industry because they cannot find another security job, ill health, they have retired, or have sadly passed away. Is it fair that the amount left on their licence cannot be refunded by the SIA if the licence is returned instead of the SIA keeping the money? At present, in theory, the SIA are making money from our members who are in low-paid jobs. This Congress calls upon the GMB to lobby the SIA to introduce a facility where if a

licence is returned to them with a covering letter explaining why it has been returned, then the SIA should refund any monies left on it. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Motion 168, Health & Safety, Southern Region to move.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY MOTION 168**

### **168. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

This motion is regarding the reluctance of the police and the highways agency to provide safety cover to the breakdown and recovery industry in dangerous locations on motorways and dual carriageways (commonly known as a fend off).

We ask Congress to support the motion to protect all members in the breakdown and recovery industry whilst they are attending casualty vehicles in dangerous locations on motorways and dual carriageways. With the huge rise in vehicles on UK roads especially motorways and dual carriageways, the effect of the authorities' actions and the danger this is putting our members and the breakdown community in, is of real concern. The volume of towing/wide load and specialist maintenance vehicles travelling the road networks with amber flashing lights has become more widespread, resulting in the effects of amber lights as an effective warning sign diminishing. Our role in rescuing stranded motorists in dangerous locations has and is becoming more precarious on a daily basis. If the police and highways agency cannot supply or do not have the resources to provide protection to the breakdown and recovery community on major road networks. We urge VOSA and the department of transport to consider alternatives in assisting or providing means for our protection. One form for consideration being the use of red lights in dangerous locations, as we feel the use of amber lights in the travelling public's eyes as a form of warning has become nothing more than party lights, creating a false sense of security and is no longer regarded as a warning sign.

We urge congress to support this motion for the protection of all road users.

X99 GMBAA BRANCH  
Southern Region

(*Carried*)

BRO. A. McNALLY (Southern): Good morning, Congress. I was going to start this with a short video of an incident on the M6 in the West Midlands but, unfortunately, that is not possible. What happened on the M6 that day is something that we in the recovery industry live with every day. The patrol pulls behind the casualty vehicle in the fend position. The vehicle is in an emergency refuge at the side of the hard shoulder. The patrol proceeds to carry out the repair on the offside of the vehicle. While doing this an HGV swerves off the carriageway across the hard shoulder and hits the patrol. Miraculously, there was no loss of life during this incident but we believe the current motorway protection systems are inadequate.

We ask Congress to support the motion to protect adequately all breakdown and recovery industry members and the wider general public whilst attending casualty vehicles in dangerous locations on motorways and dual carriageways. Our role in rescuing motorists in dangerous locations is becoming more and more hazardous on a daily basis. The patrol in the video used the required amber flashing warning lights. However, these proved to be woefully inadequate. We believe if the patrol had had blue or red flashing lights currently only allowed for police via ambulance emergencies, the truck driver would have taken additional care and the incident would have been avoided.

The volume of towing wide load and specialist maintenance vehicles travelling the road networks using amber flashing lights has increased resulting in the diminished effect of the amber light as an

effective warning signal. With the huge rise in vehicles on UK roads, especially motorways and dual carriageways, the effects of the authorities' actions and the dangers this is putting our breakdown and recovery members and the general public in is of real concern.

Statistics show on motorways alone the number of fatal or serious injury crashes is far higher than on any other road. On our major motorway network for the period of 1999 to 2010 there were, on average, 10,000-15,000 crashes on each of the top four busiest motorways in the UK, with a higher percentage of fatal or serious injuries occurring on these roads. Reluctance of the police and the highways agencies due to lack of resources to provide safety cover, commonly known as "fend off", to the breakdown and recovery industry in dangerous locations is extremely worrying.

In this era of financial constraints, the easy option appears to be to cut back on Health & Safety measures. Improvements in safety would only be high priority if somebody lost their life or suffered severe injury. We urge the Department of Transport, VOSA, and the emergency services to allow the recovery service to use red flashing lights in emergency situations. We must not wait until somebody loses life or limb before action is taken. This is not and should not be acceptable. Please help us to make working on our motorways safer. We urge Congress to support this motion for the protection of all users. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Secunder?

SIS. D. VENKATASAWMY (Southern): Colleagues, first-time speaker and first-time delegate. *(Applause)* Also, I do not work in the breakdown and recovery industry. Safety at work is an issue which affects us all. We all have the right to work in an environment where we are not in danger of injury, illness, and worse. In my own workplace at a large hospital there are always some problems but we are fortunate to have staff whose job is to ensure the health and safety, and the security, of the workers. This is not the case for workers in breakdown and recovery who work alone in dangerous situations, so it is not unreasonable for GMB to fight for an extra for them. Congress, we need to show workers in this industry, and all industries, we stand up for their right to work in a safe environment. Congress, I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Southern Region, Motion 169, mover and seconder.

## **MARKS & SPENCER – MORE SHARKS THAN ANGELS MOTION 169**

### **169. MARKS & SPENCER – MORE SHARKS THAN ANGELS**

This Congress notes that Marks and Spencer was voted UK's most ethical high street clothing retailer by Ethical Consumer Magazine.

This Congress notes that according to M&S's on website: *"In 1999, [M&S] joined the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) and also developed a set of principles in partnership with our suppliers. These principles set down our requirements for suppliers to comply with all relevant local and national laws, particularly on: working hours and conditions, living wages, health & safety, rates of pay, terms of employment and minimum age of employment."*

This Congress notes that in M&S's own supply chain, the company unethically uses large numbers of agency workers employed under permanent contracts drawn up to exploit Regulation 10 of the Agency Workers Regulations (AWR), that frustrates Regulation 5 of the AWR relating to equal pay.

This Congress notes that at M&S's Swindon distribution centre, before the GMB began organising the workforce, staff employed through the employment agency suffered aggressive and arbitrary management practices and their precarious employment position made them afraid to assert their rights.

This Congress believes that M&S has unethically set up employment and contractual relations that have resulted in staff being exploited at below the living wage and without the dignity of secure employment.

This Congress believes that M&S's membership of the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) is hypocritical, given the treatment of workers in their UK distribution chain.

This Congress notes that Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) is also supported by Global Union Federations that GMB is a member of. BWI – Building and Wood Workers' federation, ITF – International Transport Workers' Federation, PSI – Public Services International and UNI – Global Union.

This Congress resolves that while GMB congratulates employers wherever they seek to act ethically, GMB deplores employers who pay lip service to ethical trading while actually acting unethically.

This Congress resolves that GMB will raise, where applicable, within the Global Union Federations the problem of unethical employers, like Marks & Spencer, purporting to be ethical angels when they are really hypocritical sharks.

W15 WILTSHIRE & SWINDON BRANCH  
*Southern Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. A. NEWMAN (Southern): Comrades, ethical consumer magazine has voted Marks & Spencer the most ethical company in Britain. Let me tell you some stories about what goes on in the distribution centre in Swindon owned by Marks & Spencer, run on their behalf up until the beginning of this year by Wincanton, now run by DHL.

People wait on their phone to see if they get a text message five minutes before they are due to start work saying whether they are to come in or not. If they only get their contracted hours, they get £45 a week. We know of people going in on a Sunday, on an early shift starting at 6 o'clock in the morning, arriving at work to be told as they arrive, "No work for you today. Go home." There is no public transport on a Sunday to the plant, at that time. If you have a car, you are out of pocket. If you have had to get a taxi and you get a taxi home, that has cost you £14 for no work.

Let me tell you another story. Domingus Theos who came up here on Sunday and received the President's Award for organising there, in December him and another work colleague, both of them of Indian origin, were approached by a white supervisor who said, "Oi, come with me, I'm going to teach you Indian bastards a lesson." He took them in a room, then called the managers of the agency to come in to say, "You're not needed on this site any more." They were effectively dismissed because they could no longer work on that site and they would be out of employment.

Now, GMB resolved that. I will tell you how we resolved it. We threatened industrial action. We threatened to protest outside Marks & Spencer stores. *(Applause)* The shop stewards approached me and said, "Would it be all right if we organised a boycott of the Christmas dinner," that Wincanton were putting on that week. I said, "Well, go for it." That meant that Wincanton were left with 400 uneaten Christmas dinners.

Those people were back within three days but I wrote to Marks & Spencer and got a reply a week later from their Head of National Distribution, who said, effectively, "It's taken me a week to respond to

you because I am very busy at this time of year. You've gone about this the wrong way. You should have spoken to Wincanton." I am sorry, if you are an ethical business I think you would want to know about racist abuse of your staff, even if you do not directly employ them. (*Applause*)

I think we have a dilemma here because I salute and applaud employers who do behave ethically and I think it is something we should encourage and where employers do act as an ethical employer and sort out their supply chain in the interests of workers so every one has dignity and a right to have a decent standard of living, then that is we should applaud, but I worry that if Marks & Spencer cannot sort out what goes on in their own supply chain in Swindon, how much diligence and regard do they have for what goes on in Swaziland?

Therefore, I think we have an obligation to say, it is not good enough for a company to put out a piece of paper saying they are ethical. We actually want them to be ethical. I call on Marks & Spencer, maybe you have just taken your eye off the ball but investigate what goes on at the Swindon plant and put it right. That is what I would like to see.

Marks & Spencer get a lot of kudos out of being part of the Ethical Trading Initiative internationally. The Ethical Trading Initiative includes global trade union federations, like the BWI (the Building and Wood Federation) which GMB is part of, and I think the GMB, where we are part of international trade union federations which are part of the Ethical Trading Initiative globally, should have a conversation through those global federations with employers about whether they are really living up to their ethical claims. I do not think that is too much to ask, comrades. (*Applause*) Marks and Spencer claim to be an ethical employer. Why don't they become one? (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder?

SIS. M. RODRIGUES (Southern): My perception of Marks & Spencer was that it was an ethical company providing customers an excellent business. Little did I know that it is a business thriving on exploitation of agency workers. I guess Marks & Spencer works on the principle that as it is a business it should focus on profit-making but, surely, making profit by compromising workplace ethics is wrong. I second this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. I call Jude Brimble on behalf of the CEC. Jude?

SIS. J. BRIMBLE (National Officer, Commercial Services): President, Congress, speaking on behalf of the CEC supporting Motion 164. Motion 164 correctly draws attention to the no-strike clause in one of the G4S agreements. GMB has a range of agreements with G4S and this historical one was signed when G4S was newly formed. It has a binding arbitration clause. Now, some 10 years later and working from a position of strength, it is true that it is time it went and negotiations are under way already with the National Negotiating Committee on this point, and also to secure an improved organisation and recognition agreement that gives us better access.

The clause we expect the company to fight and resist but it is a clause that GMB is committed to negotiating out. However, the motion suggests that GMB members are meekly submitting to having their terms and conditions worsened. The reference to the SIA licence dispute is a little incorrect. It is true to say that the proposals were disgraceful. This was a make or break moment for our GMB members in G4S Secure Solutions, but this dispute has been won and it has been won by members campaigning and by tough negotiations. No terms and conditions for our members in G4S Secure Solutions have actually been worsened and there are no charges for the SIA licence fees now, or going

forward. The company has withdrawn these proposals in their entirety down to the magnificent campaign that members did over an 18-month period.

Congress, the reality is that any agreement is in fact a piece of paper and GMB members win when we campaign, when we organise, and when we negotiate improvements in our terms and conditions. This is a simple qualification but an important one. I have to say, Congress, with clause or no clause around strikes or no strikes, if the company had pressed on those proposals GMB as a fighting campaigning organisation would have balloted our members for strike regardless. So, it is with this simple qualification, but important qualification, Congress, that the CEC is asking you to support Motion 164. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jude. GMB Scotland do you accept the qualification? Yes? *(Agreed)* Thank you. Does Congress? *(Agreed)* Yes. Thank you. I now put Motions 162, 164, 165, 168, and 169, to the vote. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? They are carried.

*Motion 162 was Carried.*

*Motion 164 was Carried.*

*Motion 165 was Carried.*

*Motion 168 was Carried.*

*Motion 169 was Carried.*

## **SOCIAL POLICY: TRANSPORT**

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to Social Policy: Transport and call Motion 359, London Region, Motion 361, North West & Irish Region, Motion 365, London Region, and Motion 366 Southern Region. Will you please come to the front?

### **UNFAIR CHARGES**

#### **MOTION 359**

##### **359. UNFAIR CHARGES**

Congress notes the many unfair charges to both motorists and passengers in the course of everyday activities.

These include drop off fees at airports, charges at station taxi ranks, and parking fees at hospitals, all of which add to the normal cost of necessary journeys.

Congress agrees to seek the support of GMB MPs to challenge these charges wherever possible.

GMB PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. S. RUSH (London): Congress, we from the Professional Drivers have noticed many unfair charges that everyday motorists have to put up with in their daily lives. All of us at some point in our lives have had to collect sick or injured relatives from our local hospitals, that is, if you are lucky enough still to have one open, and you find the cost of parking prohibitive, especially if you are on a low income. The minimum cost to visit the sick is up to £5 for even a short visit. If as a working driver or just collecting a friend or relative who is injured or sick and unable to walk to your parked vehicle, you run the risk of private parking companies fining you while you help that person get from the hospital exit to their transport as parking that close usually means waiting in a non-waiting area. Think about that. Then you get that, an £80 fine. How dare you pick up your sick relative without

making them walk first! This has to be criminal. Working people who pay into a system all their working lives should not be subject to excessive costs in helping out a sick friend or a relative.

Airports such as Luton, Stansted, and Southend, all class themselves as London Airports but only allow local private hire and hackney carriages free from drop-off charges. Us London drivers, be it private hire or hackney, are subjected to local levies of up to £3 dependent on the drop-off airport. How can these airports class themselves as London airports and charge drivers a London drop-off fee? Congress, this needs to stop as they cannot be classed as London airports if they are charging London drivers' fees for dropping off their legitimate punters. They are either London airports, which must include London local drivers, or a local only airport if only allowing their local cab services free from fees. Unfair parking charges need to stop, whatever the circumstances and, Congress, we appeal to you to support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Simon. Secunder?

BRO. M. HUSBANDS (London): President, Congress, we already know the cost of living in the UK has soared through the roof and the Government themselves are forcing extra financial burdens upon a struggling nation. Parking charges have gone sky-high. You cannot park anywhere in London for no less than £2.50 an hour. You now have to pay parking in hospitals when you go and visit your sick friends and relatives. Supermarkets fine if you stay over two hours £70-£80. If you would like to run into a shop to pick up one item, you have to pay at least half an hour to stay for five minutes. I think that is a stealth tax. Congress, I second the motion. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Michael. Thank you. Motion 361.

## **LOCAL AUTHORITIES & ILLEGAL PLYING FOR HIRE MOTION 361**

### **361. LOCAL AUTHORITIES & ILLEGAL PLYING FOR HIRE**

This Congress calls upon the CEC, Professional Drivers Branch and GMB Parliamentary Group to campaign hard to help bring about better legislation that stops irresponsible local authorities from licensing Hackney Carriage vehicles that operate and ply for hire illegally as Private hire vehicles in other local authority districts. We also want to see Enforcement Officers given new powers to inspect and prevent operators from plying for hire and operating illegally outside the areas where they have not been licensed.

We suspect some Local Authorities have turned the licensing of Hackney vehicles into a way of raising additional local finance. We believe the actions of the Authorities involved and operators engaged in this, place the livelihood of honest drivers and operators at risk due to unfair competition. They also place members of the public at risk when they ply for hire in areas where they are not under the control of the authority they are licensed in. Concerns are also raised in respect of the validity of the driver's vehicle/hackney carriage insurance when they operate in this way.

We have a situation in Manchester where Rossendale Hackney vehicles are frequently operating in Manchester as private hire vehicles using Manchester radios. Yet the conditions that Manchester licensed Hackney vehicles have to meet under the City Council regulations are stricter than those licensed in Rossendale. Furthermore, Licensing Officers in Manchester have limited powers to intervene or check the vehicles operating in this way. We know the Law Commission is preparing some changes but these may not be effective enough to meet the current problems that exist, further work and urgent action is required to stop this practice spreading further.

Q22 BRANCH  
*North West & Irish Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. K. FLANAGAN (North West & Irish): President, Congress, my members in the Manchester hackney carriage trade and in other areas of the country are deeply concerned at the impact that illegal plying for hire is having on their livelihoods and on the reputation of the trade. Delegates, you leave an event and hail a black cab and get in. You think you are safe. However, there are circumstances in which you will get into a black cab and you do not know that that vehicle has been licensed in another district. At that point, that vehicle is operating as a private hire vehicle, not as a hackney carriage vehicle. At that point, you are not insured. You are not covered fully because they are not allowed to pick up journeys that are not pre-booked. In other words, if you hail it and it is a taxi from another district operating as private hire, then they are operating illegally.

But it is worse. Some councils are actually making money on this. Rossendale Council in Lancashire has licensed over 2,000 hackney carriage drivers for a population of only 68,700 people but where do those drivers go? They go into cities like Manchester, Bradford, Leeds, and Trafford, in order to take the trade. Technically they should only operate as private hire vehicles at that point but they do not. They turn up at big events in the city centres at night and pick up as if they are normal hackney carriage vehicles. They are not. They are robbing our members of their livelihoods. It is worse still because some of the standards in Rossendale are lower than the standards required by Manchester City Council when they register the vehicles. The criteria used in Rossendale for the vehicle age is older vehicles are used. Also, you have a situation where many drivers do not know where they are going. They have never had to the Manchester Knowledge test. In fact, colleagues, this is a major problem. The benefit for local authorities is that they are cashing in because they are licensing more drivers than they need to for the needs of their area, so where do you think they are going to go? They are profiteering and putting other people at risk, and this has to stop.

It is for that reason, Congress, that we are calling for new legislation to stop this practice. We are calling for enforcement officers to obtain new powers in order to stop this practice. I applaud Manchester because I saw a case recently where finally one of those drivers has been fined over £700 for illegally plying for hire, but you all know enforcement officers are being cut and they are getting away with murder and, sadly, will it take a major tragedy before this is brought to their attention. Congress, this is wrong. I ask you to support this motion. Thank you, President. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder?

BRO. D. FLANAGAN (North West & Irish): Congress, it is deeply concerning that we can have a situation where a hackney carriage vehicle, that is a black cab to you and me, licensed in another local authority can operate in another licensing area yet does not have to meet the same standards or regulations as those black cabs from that district. Surely that is unfair.

My concern is the safety of the public. What is the point of Manchester having a Knowledge test to ensure that drivers know their area and get there by the most direct route when you find that an operator from Rossendale, 30 miles down the road, coming to Manchester yet have no knowledge of its geography? Congress, at this point the vehicle insurance is invalid as it is only valid when the vehicle is operating in accordance with the licence conditions. In other words, the passenger is at risk but they do not know it is a private hire operation. It is black. It has a yellow taxi sign lit up. Would you want your son or daughter getting into an unknown uninsured vehicle? Colleagues, it is a safety issue.

Manchester has a policy that hackney vehicles can only be seven years old yet Rossendale policy only requires you to have an MOT. Rossendale Council has a cash cow but takes no responsibility for the cross-border illegal plying for hire in Leeds, Bradford, Rochdale, and Trafford. The licensing officers

have no powers to police the drivers from another licensing district. This has to change unless we want a spiral to low standards and unsafe vehicles. It is time the legislation was strengthened. It is time that licensing officers get new powers. It is time hackney licensing districts should operate in their district, not cause chaos in town centres as they ignore local regulations and put passengers at risk. Congress, I second this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Motion 365.

## **MEDICAL FOR ALL HGV DRIVERS MOTION 365**

### **365. MEDICAL FOR ALL HGV DRIVERS**

Congress asks that the CEC and the GMB lobby all MPs in regard to HGV (LGV) medicals, all HGV drivers by law require thorough stringent medicals, once someone gets their HGV licence, they have to book a medical.

Medicals at a GPs surgery can vary anything from £70 to £140. Congress therefore asks that we lobby Parliament to get some sort of uniformity in regards to the practice of charging what they feel they want to charge.

We ask that a standard across the board be brought in so drivers know that is what they will be paying for their medical.

We ask Congress to vote in favour of this motion, as it affects thousands of HGV drivers and can, in some cases, be very expensive.

BRAINTREE & BOCKING BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. D. RIGBY (London): Congress, all HGV drivers and coach drivers must by law have a medical if they choose to drive for a living. However, they do not pay the same cost for their medical across the board; it varies from GP to GP and the area you live in. It is anything from £75 to £150 upwards. When you get to 45, like me, you have to have medicals every five years. Quite a lot of HGV and coach drivers have to pay for the medicals themselves and they do not get the fees reimbursed. In light of most recent accidents with HGV drivers we are aware that we must have the medicals. All we are asking is that there is a level playing field and that the GPs charge a standard price across the board. Congress, I ask you and the CEC for your support on this motion. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Doug. Did you have a memory lapse then, Doug?

SIS. D. ANDERSON (London): President, Congress, please support this motion, which is calling for the standardisation of costs of medicals for large vehicle drivers, like myself and Dougie. We have to have these by law. Costs vary from GP to GP and out of our own pockets it is expensive. Please support this motion. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Motion 366, Southern Region.

## **“GREEN” FUEL – SHIPPING MOTION 366**

### **366. 'GREEN' FUEL – SHIPPING**

Congress recognises the serious impact and financial penalty imposed on the shipping companies and ferry industry by the legal imposition and requirement to burn less environmentally damaging fuel.

Congress clearly supports the green agenda and the legal moves requiring cleaner fuel.

Congress, however, also recognises the serious costs of running shipping fleets that provide a 24/7 trade and tourist artery in the economy. When ships can have an economic life of 20/25 years and construction lead in times may be 5 years, change is not always easy and maybe financially very damaging. Even with global fuel prices falling, the premium on green fuel is still very high.

Congress urges the GMB leadership, in partnership with sister unions, to lobby government and the European Commission to seek subsidies to help limit the financial damage of the legal move to , for example, low sulphur marine fuel.

X23 DOVER FERRIES BRANCH  
Southern Region

*(Carried)*

BRO. P. GOODACRE (Southern): Congress, as an island nation with one of the world's most open economies, the UK is dependent on its maritime network of ships and ferries. UK ports are the busiest in the world. This network is the artery of our trade with the world and, particularly, with our largest trading partner, the European Union.

Shipping is an expensive business to be in. It requires large amounts of capital offering returns on the far from spectacular. Typically, to justify construction a ship or ferry must have a working life of 25-30 years. After the significant cost of construction, they require constant and extensive maintenance. One of the largest costs is fuel. With high initial costs and low return, the industry is particularly sensitive to changes in the price of fuel. Following legislation, vessels operating in the English Channel and the North Sea were, from the start of 2015, required to use low sulphur fuel, green fuel as it were. This has imposed a significant cost.

While several routes have already closed the results have not yet been calamitous due to the recent steep fall in the price of oil. Historically volatile, it is unlikely prices of oil will stay low, especially in a world smouldering with geopolitical tensions. A significant rise in the price of oil and/or a further increase to costs through requirements to burn yet cleaner fuel will have a disastrous effect on the industry. More routes will close resulting in job losses to areas where the local port is often the largest employer. This will have an effect on all of us. The UK's ferry network is critical to transporting goods and people cheaply and efficiently. As such, it underpins all our living standards.

Motion 366 does not suggest the industry be allowed to operate without regard to the environment. We all care deeply about the environment. It does call for assistance at a national and EU level in making the transition to greener fuels and in the development and introduction of new technologies, such as "carbon scrubbers". This motion seeks to put the GMB at the forefront of any future campaigns. Motion 366, the motion on the ocean: please support it. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Secunder?

SIS. N. PENN (Southern): I speak in favour of this motion. Recently, our membership of Dover Ferries Branch stressed the word "No". In September 2014, P&O Ferries in the Port of Dover used the cost of green fuel as part of a process to try and cut wages, including mine and Paul's, by a staggering 37%. After a long six-month consultation process and hard negotiations, six months of members saying No, holding a strike ballot that resulted in a 100% turnout, a result that was 98.6% in favour of a strike action, saying No when the company tried to divide and conquer. That word No not only squashed the 37% pay cut but allowed members who stayed strong, remained united, who showed

complete solidarity, to walk away with a 1.6% pay rise. This was a fantastic result but the problem has not gone away. The threat is still there. The threat will always remain. I am proud to stand here and represent the membership for their strength and unity, and for embracing that word “No”. Congress, I stress to you to push this motion through and support this example of how it is done, what they fought for, and what they believe in. Congress, I second this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Well done. Congress, the CEC is supporting these four motions so I will put them to the vote, Motions 359, 361, 365, and 366. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? They are carried. Thank you.

*Motion 359 was Carried.*

*Motion 361 was Carried.*

*Motion 365 was Carried.*

*Motion 366 was Carried.*

THE PRESIDENT: I now call the movers on Social Policy: Transport, of Motions 355, 357, 358, and 364.

**SOCIAL POLICY: TRANSPORT  
PUBLIC TRANSPORT COSTS  
MOTION 355**

**355. PUBLIC TRANSPORT COSTS**

Congress is deeply concerned at the ever rising cost of public transport, that for many years has outstripped the rise in wages and an ever harsher burden for those whose wages have stagnated or fallen.

Transport costs in the UK are far higher than in other European countries, despite our growing use of public transport, both for local and main line journeys.

Congress agrees that as more and more people have to travel further to work, the cost of travel should be emphasised in all wage negotiations and in all comparative claims in respect of the cost of living, as it is usually the lowest paid who rely most heavily on public transport.

HENDON BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. P. COLES (London): Congress is deeply concerned that the ever rising cost of public transport has for many years outstripped the rise in wages, the highest burden falling on those whose wages have stagnated or fallen, or those who remain on the lowest wages. Congress, in January of this year rail ticket prices increased by an average of 2.2% with regulated fares, including season tickets, rising by up to 2.5%. This brings the average increase in rail fares to almost 25% since 2010. A British worker on an average salary is now spending more than 17% of their wages on a monthly season ticket. Workers in Europe making similar journeys spend less of their salary on train fares; 12% in France, 9% in Germany, and 6% in Spain and Italy.

Train fares are only part of the problem in relation to public transport costs as bus prices in parts of the country, including the West Midlands, have increased by 4%-5%. Since the privatisation of rail and bus services we have seen the quality of public transport drop with severe overcrowding and standing room only on the commuter trains and fares skyrocketing year on year. The TUC's report in June 2014 on the effects of privatisation dubs it “the great train robbery”.

Research published by campaign group, We Own It and Corporate Watch suggests the average household would save £250 a year on rail tickets, water bills, and energy bills, if these industries were run publicly. Profiting from essential public travel to and from work is almost as unethical as profiting from the NHS. And the cost of lining the pockets of these public service profiteers falls most harshly on the lowest wage earners who rely on public transport in order to earn a meagre wage to help their families exist.

With the searing cost of rental and property prices in inner cities rising, many workers are being forced to the margins and being forced to travel further to earn a wage that is rising much slower than inflation and transport fares, if it is rising at all. Many of those who depend on public transport to get to work are also earning way below the living wage with many on zero-hours contracts. Congress agrees there is a need to emphasise the cost of travel in all wage negotiations alongside all other claims in respect of the cost of living as it is, as always, the lowest paid who rely most heavily on public transport. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done.

BRO. V. WEST (London): President, Congress, the cost of public transport continues to spiral ever upwards. I pay about £4,500 a year just to get in and out of work and for the benefit of standing in a cattle truck both into work and out of work at night. As the motion says, public transport in the UK is far more expensive than most other European countries. The train companies, the bus companies, and Boris in London, keep hiking our fares above inflation. Meanwhile, our members have been getting below inflation pay rises. These are the people who have to pay the ever increasing costs. They see more and more of their wages going on just getting in and out of work. Public transport is a vital public service and it needs to be properly regulated. Congress, the only way in which you can properly regulate it is to bring back British Rail into public ownership, and the same with the bus services. Congress, I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Vaughan. Motion 357, Wales & South West.

## **PUBLIC TRANSPORT DEFICIT IN RURAL AREAS MOTION 357**

### **357. PUBLIC TRANSPORT DEFICIT IN RURAL AREAS**

This Congress notes how rural communities, such as some of those in Monmouthshire, have become increasingly isolated in recent years and how the elderly, young and unemployed who rely upon public transport have been both forgotten and disadvantaged.

Savage cuts to rural transport services mean that people find it difficult to find and retain jobs, travel to school or college and access health services.

As many Local Authorities reduce funding for supported bus services, operators respond by putting up fares or withdrawing routes altogether.

The consequences of reducing services are social, economic and environmental, so Congress calls upon the Government to ensure that Councils prioritise funding for transport systems that reduce traffic, cut emissions and allow people to access employment and other vital opportunities.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL BRANCH  
*Wales & South West Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. M. McDONALD (GMB Wales & South West): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) President, Congress, two damning statistics highlight the adverse impact that continued councils spending squeezes have had on the number of bus journeys and, as a result, consequences on passengers. A staggering 30 million journeys have been axed in the last four years with massive reduction in passenger miles. The problem is particularly acute in rural areas. The length of bus service mileage lost is equivalent to once around the world. Bus services in England and Wales supported by public money have had their budgets cut by more than £139m compared to 2010, and net government support has fallen from 53 pence per journey to 48 pence per journey in the same period. This may not sound much but the impact is huge.

Congress, the disproportionate impact on vital rural subsidised travel by local authorities is so severe that the current bus service provided is clearly not fit for purpose. The Government, of course, will trot out the same old lame excuse, the decisions about bus services are made locally between local councils and the bus companies who deliver the service but the truth is the cuts are a direct result of spending pressure from Westminster. It is clear that once again the great and the good have left the vulnerable people stranded and isolated. Just as older people depend on other council services like meals on wheels where numbers have also reduced and prices increased, they rely on local buses to stay active and keep their communities alive. Those same rural communities are being increasingly cut off as networks are destroyed by successive and swingeing funding cuts. Free bus services for people in later life should mean they have access to key services to visit friends and family but there is no point in having a free bus travel if there is no bus to get on. Having free bus travel and an available service goes hand-in-hand. There have always been inequalities in the access to a reliable bus service but evidence shows the situation is getting worse. For many older people a bus journey is a social event, a chance to catch up and socialise, a time to chat with friends and neighbours and generally look after their welfare. As one of my retired branch members said, "It might sound a little silly but I miss the company because when I got on the bus we said 'good morning' and 'hello', and they were the people that we as pensioners now once went to school with. Now all that has gone because the buses have stopped. It really is a great shame."

There are other obvious implications too, visiting family, attending hospital appointments, going shopping, or to the cinema. It has all become a lot harder with the ever increasing costs of other transport. I could go on with many examples of the impact of the cuts but the Government really must find a way to help, to find ways to make sure that the policies around community transport are rural proofed and that they are implemented fairly and effectively. Above all, they must make sure that the council funding allows the elderly and wider communities to retain the lifeline that they need to work, socialise, and access key facilities. We do not want a repeat of what happened in the 1960s with the rail routes. Once lost the bus services are gone for ever. It must not happen. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Marie. Thank you. Seconder?

BRO. T. KODOLA (GMB Wales & South West): President, Congress, first-time speaker, first-time delegate. (*Applause*) The impact of government spending cuts has been considerable upon the operation of bus services in rural areas. Although some councils are working closely with operators to minimise the effect of funding cuts, in some areas the situation has reached critical levels. Our position on this matter should be very straightforward, namely, that instead of imposing draconian and short-sighted spending reductions government should be investing it in the bus sector for the longer term. Marie has emphasised the very real fears that elderly and disabled people will continue to be disadvantaged by the loss of rural bus services as the cutbacks leave councils unable to sustain journeys and fund free travel. It is indicative of the regressive policies adopted by the previous

government that funding for the national concessionary fare scheme has reduced by 39% in the lifetime of the previous parliament.

Time and time again we have seen some councils reduce services in response to austerity pressures with almost 100 subsidised bus routes having been scrapped in Wales alone in the past three years. It is a similar story in another part of my region, namely, North Devon, where the transport budget has been heavily cut in response to the need to make budget savings. People in rural communities will always suffer most, especially those who cannot afford a car, youngsters who rely heavily on buses, older people who can no longer drive, those with disabilities, and pregnant women. Furthermore, the loss of bus services inevitably leads to more traffic congestion and the increase in greenhouse gases and other detrimental environmental outcomes.

Congress, there is no real defence for cutting public transport funding. There has to be an adequate central government financial provision for public transport. Loss of independence, social isolation, and rural impoverishment all result from transport deficits. "Save our buses", must be the rallying call. Please support this motion. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tony. I now ask Southern Region to move Motion 358, The Scottish Referendum and Bus Passes in Great Britain.

### **THE SCOTTISH REFERENDUM AND BUS PASSES IN GREAT BRITAIN MOTION 358**

#### **358. THE SCOTTISH REFERENDUM AND BUS PASSES IN GREAT BRITAIN**

This Conference welcomes the result of the No vote in the 2014 Scottish referendum and the decision of Scotland to remain a part of the UK.

To show that we are committed to the United Kingdom, the government should allow Scottish pensioner and disabled bus passes to be used in England and Wales, English bus passes to be used in Wales and Scotland, and Welsh bus passes to be used in England and Scotland. Just as Northern Ireland and Irish Republic bus passes can be used in both countries.

This will encourage more travel between these separate countries and reduce the feeling of isolation in remote parts of the UK.

C60 CROYDON BRANCH  
*Southern Region*

(*Carried*)

SIS. N. JACKSON-AMPAW (Southern): Congress, you may not know this but Scottish Bus passes for pensioners and disabled cannot be used in England and Wales, and English bus passes cannot be used in Scotland. The Scottish people recently had a referendum on independence and we are glad they voted to stay part of the UK. To encourage stronger links between the nations of the UK, GMB should support free bus passes for pensioners and disabled being valid across the whole of the UK. Congress, please support this motion. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder?

BRO. R. PETERS (Southern): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) We are pleased that Scotland voted to remain as part of Gt. Britain. Now we must show unity and equality by allowing UK pensioners and freedom pass-holders to travel freely across borders using their pass in all part of the

UK. The Irish Republic allows Northern Ireland pass-holders to use their passes across the borders, why not the UK? So, parity on bus passes in Scotland. We are better together. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. We now come to Motion 364.

## **ROAD TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE MOTION 364**

### **364. ROAD TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE**

This Congress notes that the road transport infrastructure is not keeping pace with need, either in new build or maintenance.

Faced with ever greater demands for devolved powers, it is high time that political leadership was given to championing massive improvements in regional road networks.

Congress notes that without developments, such infrastructure projects will fail to provide the direct and indirect employment and access that local areas desperately need and connectivity will fail to keep pace with developments.

Congress calls on the Labour Party to commit to a policy that will see the road networks opened up to the rest of the economy by direct public investment.

H40 Northumberland LA BRANCH  
*Northern Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. B.E. TAYLOR (Northern): Congress, I move Motion 364 on Road Transport Infrastructure. We recognise that this motion will be weakened if it fails to mention that resources must also go into supporting public transport as well as maintenance of the infrastructure of the road network. It is a stark fact that the Northern Region's road network is under tremendous pressure. The A1, A66 and A69 are prime examples of poor infrastructure, and anyone who travels on these roads will know exactly how difficult it can be. It is obvious that the road building programme and maintenance has been neglected for far too long in the Northern Region. The last Tory-led Coalition Government massively ignored the Northern Region, and simply failed to give us the priority and resources that we desperately need. This Tory Government is continuing the austerity programme which means that we, in the Northern Region, are affected disproportionately in comparison with the relatively rich south, and we are pushed further away from being the transport hub and powerhouse that this region should be. We need direct investment in key building projects for maintenance and new roads. We also need better public transport. Investment will provide vital expenditure in public sector projects, all of which are essential to the region's success. Employment will stimulate the economy across the Northern Region, and allow families to prosper and communities to become stronger. Congress, we need better policies and more co-operation at the political level backed by Government spending on these matters. We need to stand up for ourselves. We need the political will backed by the resources to deliver. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Bernie. Well done. Secunder?

BRO. R. SPEAKMAN (Northern): Congress, I second Motion 364 on road transport. Areas across the country are in need of investment in public works, and we understand that. From within our region there is a great debate starting to take shape about the future if more services are devolved. We have

this situation in Scotland, which is right on our border. We have the situation across the M62 corridor with city regions. The northern powerhouse says very little about the gap between the M62 and Scotland. So this motion is correct to focus on our road transport infrastructure. Jobs, communities and income are at stake as well as our future. We desperately need better transport so that we can bring in jobs and investment, so communities can thrive and not just be forgotten about.

Looking to the future, we do need better road transport, but we also need better public transport. For us it is not one or the other. It is both. Labour politicians, both local and national, must understand that or we will face more problems as we move forward. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Thank you. I call Paul Wheatley on behalf of the CEC.

BRO. P. WHEATLEY (CEC, Manufacturing): President and Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC, asking you to support Motions 358 and 364 with the following qualifications. First, on bus passes in Great Britain. GMB supports a policy of free, unrestricted travel throughout the UK for its elderly citizens as motions to this effect were carried at Congresses in 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2010. This motion seeks to extend this policy to the disabled as well. However, the qualification is based on the wording in the second paragraph. The motion discriminates against bus pass holders in Northern Ireland in that there is no proposal for these bus passes to be allowed to be used in Wales, England and Scotland.

Turning to Motion 364 on the road transport infrastructure, we appreciate and support the fact that in huge swathes of the country the road network is in a state of disrepair. Local councils are unable to meet the financial needs of maintenance as their budgets are cut. We support the need for increased maintenance of the network and expansion where needed, but the qualification is that we also call for greater investment in integrated public transport networks to get people out of their cars where we can. This will also create jobs while preserving the environment. Please support Motions 358 and 364 with these qualifications.

THE PRESIDENT: Does Southern Region accept the qualification on Motion 358? (*Agreed*) You do. Thank you. Does Northern Region accept the qualification on Motion 364? (*Agreed*) Does Congress accept that? (*Agreed*) I now put Motions 355, 357, 358 and 364 to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? They are carried.

*Motion 355 was Carried.*

*Motion 357 was Carried.*

*Motion 358 was Carried.*

*Motion 364 was Carried.*

THE PRESIDENT: We now come to agenda item 5. I call the movers of Motions 171, 172, 174 and 175.

## INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: MANUFACTURING

### SHIPBUILDING

#### MOTION 171

##### 171. SHIP BUILDING

This Congress notes that Britain has had a proud history of ship building for many centuries and calls upon the Central Executive Council to campaign the UK Government to place orders to British ship building dockyards across the UK, not only for new builds but also for maintenance and repair work.

DEVONPORT BRANCH  
*Wales & South West Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. N. WARN (GMB Wales and South West): Congress, I move Motion 171 on shipbuilding. President and delegates, for more than a century Britain's shipyard workers have been amongst the most skilled and dedicated in the world but, despite the efforts of the GMB and other trade unions, shipbuilding in this country continues to be neglected by the Westminster Government. The case for shipbuilding must be seen in the wider context of the areas in which it takes place, such as the supply chains and the industrial future of the local economies which depend on it. Sadly, it seems to be central Government's policy to build ships abroad. Since 2005, the Defence White Paper reversed the policy of only building warships at home.

Congress, the social and industrial importance of shipbuilding cannot be overstated, and any responsible government should ensure that our shipyards have a positive future and that shipbuilders are guaranteed secure and rewarding work.

Building ships abroad and closing British shipyards has resulted in the loss of jobs in Scotland to the tune of 20,000 between 1979 and 2012, and a loss of the skill base within the industry. Naval shipbuilding, design, repair and maintenance skills can only be retained by ensuring a stable workload. It is, surely, very much in the national interest and the most cost-effective use of public funds to maintain both the physical capability and the mental capability to build ships in British shipyards. Such is the level of the disinvestment of a once great industry that there are now only two yards capable of building large merchant ships. The Belfast skyline is still dominated today by the famous twin cranes that symbolised Harland & Wolff's contribution to our industry. It remains the case today that ships should only be ordered from British shipyards quite simply because they are the best places to build the required vessels. The building of the aircraft carriers HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince Charles shows that we have the best skill base and the consequent construction of the biggest warships ever to be built in the UK. I am talking about places like the Clyde and all other dockyards, including Devonport in my own region. There must be no further betrayal of a once proud and vibrant industry that is shipbuilding.

For many years, the late Billy Hughes repeatedly came to Congress to plead for the future of the shipbuilding industry. Some of us will recall how delighted he was — he told us this many years ago in Blackpool — at a Blackpool Congress when shipbuilding returned to his native north east. Congress, we owe it to Billy and many more like him who have had such faith in the industry, and both the current and future skill base, not to lose our shipbuilding heritage. Let us campaign vigorously and support the investment in this sector and ensure that the flame of a once mighty past continues to burn. The industry having de-camped to Asia and France has caused great disadvantage to our industry and those who work within it. The irony is that while we are falling behind, we are entering a golden age of shipping but missing out on the boom of the cruise-ship industry and beyond. Let's revise the

decline by doing what the GMB does best, which is supporting our members and their families.  
Congress I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Nigel. Well done. Billy would have been proud of you.

BRO. A. DE BANKS (GMB Wales and South West): Madam President, Congress, I build ships. It is what I have done for the majority of my adult life. It is what I have learnt to do, it is what I have trained to do and it is what I practise every day. The skills that I have learnt in my yard are replicated in yards across our country, and here in Ireland as well, although pride does tell me that mine are better than yours. But nationally we are losing these skills as employers take on fewer and fewer apprentices every year. Due to the uncertainty within our industry, contracts just do not go to British yards. Then the old hands retire and they are not replaced.

At home in Appledore, which is where I work, we are doing all right, or at least we are until Christmas. After that, well..., but we are used to it. That is part and parcel of what we do. But me and my members are calling on Congress to help us retain these skills in Britain, to help us retain the learning base, the teaching base, of these old hands so that they can get more people practising.

We spoke to the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers earlier this week. We had a guy here, from Canada, speaking to us all. Where do you think our platers and our welders come from? They come from our shipbuilding industry. Yes, a small number come from elsewhere, but that is where the heart of those contactors come from. So I call on you, Congress, to help us retain these skills and to lobby Government on our behalf. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Aaron.

## **WOMEN IN MANUFACTURING MOTION 172**

### **172. WOMEN IN MANUFACTURING**

This Congress notes that the UK manufacturing industry faces a serious skills gap.

This gap is partly due to the underrepresentation of women in this sector, and it is clear from research that manufacturing is not attracting its fair share of talented women.

Congress calls upon the Central Executive Council to consider how best practices might be introduced so that manufacturing employers can attract, retain and advance female ability and talent.

HENGOED ENGINEERING BRANCH  
*Wales & South West Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. S. HARRISON (GMB Wales & South West): Congress, I move Motion 172 — Women in Manufacturing. The last recession hit women harder than any previous downturn. Women have suffered more than men for three reasons. Jobs in the recession have been lost across the economy rather than concentrated in male-dominated sectors, such as manufacturing. More women work today than in previous recessions. More households depend solely or primarily on a woman's wage today. With so many households absolutely dependent on women's wages, the Government must ensure that women benefit in full from development programmes within sectors such as manufacturing, with salary levels higher than in predominantly male-dominated industries.

A study carried out by the Works Foundation showed that between 1993 and 2011 the share of 16 to 24-year-old females in employment doing low-paid work has increased from 7% to 21%. Just one in a hundred women work in skilled trades in 2011, and four times more younger women work in personal service occupations, like hairdressing, leisure and the travel industry. It is clear that, despite being better qualified than their male peers, young women are still following employment routes that offer low-wage returns because of the few good jobs in the economy, and because young women are still being channelled down traditional routes. Unless we create better training in manufacturing and engineering for young women, bearing in mind government cuts, the situation will not improve. We need to invest in new industries to create job and develop and encourage young women into sectors that will provide decent jobs and better early career support.

Intermediates have an important role to play in cutting across the gender divide by encouraging young women to consider a wider range of non-traditional occupations and apprenticeships.

An organisation called Women in Manufacturing is a not-for-profit organisation set up by British Glass and The Worshipful Company of Glass Sellers of London. The object of this organisation is to attract, support and retain women in the UK manufacturing sector by forging links and promoting the activities of industry partners with schools and education organisations across the UK. They are striving to attain substantial growth and increase a breadth of fresh skills and knowledge into the manufacturing talent pool by actively encouraging diversity. My site manager, Selena Sage, is a proud ambassador of this organisation and gave a comprehensive presentation to our regional equality forum, explaining that promoting manufacturing to young women in education is vital in increasing and developing women's skills in the future of the manufacturing and engineering sector.

Congress, please support this motion and consider how best practices might be introduced so that manufacturing employers can attract, retain and advance female ability and talent. Thank you.  
(*Applause*)

SIS. J. BRADY (GMB Wales and South West): President and Congress, I second Motion 172. The manufacturing field is full of opportunities on the cutting edge of technology and innovation. It is clear British manufacturing has declined within the last decade. However, manufacturing research and design centres have remained within the UK because of the current high-skilled workers. However, as my colleague stated, they are predominantly male roles. Manufacturing offers good compensation in salary and benefits with the average manufacturing worker in the UK earning an average of £15,000 more to those who are equally qualified but in other industries. Manufacturing is an extremely diverse field offering careers within every economy level and dealing with practically every product that you can imagine. So why aren't more women attracted to careers within the manufacturing sector?

The industry has been calling out for more properly trained workers. Some of these potentially skilled workers could be hiding within the massive population of women who are avoiding careers in manufacturing. There should be a focus and effort to train women in the necessary skills to recruit them into the manufacturing sector, which would not only benefit women in the UK but would also benefit the manufacturing industry. Congress, for this we need to build the foundations and educate our young women in schools and further education to follow a route which is not only high paid but would break through the domination of male industries and ensure that diversity and gender balance is created in our future and UK manufacturing industry. I second. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. I wouldn't have missed that for the world.

## **A FAIR WAGE FOR SKILLED WORKERS IN THE WOOD INDUSTRY MOTION 174**

### **174. A FAIR WAGE FOR SKILLED WORKERS IN THE WOOD INDUSTRY**

This Congress calls upon the CEC to campaign for a fair wage for skilled workers in the wood industry. For too long now, the wages of skilled men and women has been kept down by poor employers. The British Furniture Manufacturers need to establish a proper minimum wage in this industry that workers can live on.

LONG EATON CFTA BRANCH  
Midland & East Coast Region

*(Referred)*

BRO. N. DIXON (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I move Motion 174 — A Fair Wage For Skilled Workers In The Wood Industry. I am a first-time speaker and a first-time delegate. *(Applause)*

Congress, we call upon you to support this motion as for far too long skilled men and women have been paid a pittance for their highly-skilled work in the furniture factories. This situation has gone on for far too long. British furniture manufacturers need to establish a proper minimum wage for skilled workers. A substantial amount of companies continue to pay wages that are less than those paid to unskilled workers. The industry has allowed poor employers to dictate the rates for far too long, and a lack of membership in the BFM Association does not help. We need to recruit members ourselves. We need to push up the pay rates and to do an incredible profile of this industry. I move..

BRO. A. LE-BLANC (Midland & East Coast): President and Congress, I second Motion 174 — A Fair Wage For Skilled Workers In The Wood Industry. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)*

As a worker within the wood industry, I have seen at first hand the wages that are paid to skilled wood-cutting machinists. In the trade, first, an apprenticeship of a minimum of five years is required. We have seen the skills devalued by the industry itself to as little as two years and less. May I add that thanks to the GMB in the particular firm that I work, we have in place six apprentices. The standards have been deliberately allowed to be reduced down, in my opinion. As a consequence, the pay has gone down and stayed static for some years. It may need a joint effort from the union and the BFMA to move this forward. I second. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 175.

## **TATA SALE OF LONG PRODUCTS TO KLESCH MOTION 175**

### **175. TATA SALE OF LONG PRODUCTS TO KLESCH**

This Congress is concerned by the sale of the Long Products Division of Tata Steels to the Switzerland based Klesch. Whilst remaining open-minded about its motives, Congress is worried by Klesch's reputation for asset stripping, leaving the 6,500 people employed in Long Products facing an uncertain future. It also calls into question Tata's plans for their remaining UK plants. We could be looking at the death of the British steel industry. The consequences of the loss of the steel industry are incalculable. If steel is no longer made, then nothing else is manufactured.

Congress calls on the government to defend the British steel industry. As a matter of urgency, Congress calls on both Klesch and Tata to make a statement giving unequivocal support of the British steel industry and for the government to take punitive action should they fail to adhere.

*(Carried)*

BRO. I. KEMP (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I move Motion 175. President and Congress, last October Tata Steels announced that it would be looking to sell its Long Products Division to the Klesch Group, affecting six-and-a-half thousand workers and their families at a number of works up and down the country. I am talking about places like Scunthorpe, south Wales and Scotland. This also affects suppliers, local shops and businesses. At a conservative estimate, that is about 100,000 people. Given the reputation of Klesch for asset stripping, it flows doubts on the jobs of those in the affected plants. Tata compounded the uncertainty by making long products a separate business within the company, making it easier to change employees' terms and conditions. It calls into question Tata's plans for its other sites in the UK. We need to know what is happening to the British steel industry. We need the Government to stand up for the British steel industry, like we want the Government to stand up for manufacturing full-stop.

The rationale given by Tata for its proposed sale is that they want to concentrate on the speciality side of the business, but why not sell to a company that is committed to the industry? Why not sell to someone who can make use of the skills and talents of those six-and-a-half thousand people? Because of the different types of steel they produce and the different markets, they are not going to be in competition with specialities, so it is not as if they are going to give it to somebody who is going to take their trade away. I would like to give Klesch the benefit of the doubt, but given that they are based in 17 countries, they only employ 2,500 people themselves. How is it going to cope with it takes on six-and-a-half thousand people? It is either the most efficient company in the world with very high productivity or.... I'll leave you to guess what the "or" is.

To be fair to the previous government, Vince Cable showed some concern, but concern is not enough. The steel industry is too strategically important to be allowed to disappear without a trace. We want concrete action. Our steel industry needs to be robustly defended. The motion says that both Tata and Klesch should give an assurance about supporting the steel industry and for Government action if they fail. But, comrades, what action should the Government take? I suggest nationalisation without compensation. That will send a clear message out that the British steel industry is valued, that the Government will do all they can to protect it. They will send out the message that the Government will not tolerate British manufacturing being used as a plaything by foreign owners.

I urge you, comrades, to keep the British steel industry, the industry that allows other manufacturing to exist. Support Motion 175, defend Tata workers and defend the British steel industry. I move.

*(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder?

BRO. K. GILBERTHORPE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I second Motion 175. President, Congress and visitors, last year Tata Steels announced its intention to sell its Long Products Division to Klesch. This has led to many questions that both Tata and Klesch need to answer. Why does Tata wish to sell? Is it to concentrate on speciality steels or is it to pay for debt re-financing? If the sale should fall through, has Tata got a plan B? What of Klesch? Why does an organisation known for asset stripping want to buy Long Products? More importantly, where does this leave the thousands of workers who actually work in Long Products and where does it leave the rest of Tata Steels.

Steel is an important industry, essential for our economy and country. Without steel no other manufacturing can be done. We need both Tata and Klesch to come clean over their intentions. They need to tell us what their future plans are for the steel industry. But there is a third party that needs to tell us where they stand, and that is the Government. We need them to stand up to Klesch and Tata. We need the Government to stand up for the steel industry and the steel workers. I ask Congress to support Motion 175. We need to send a message of what we expect, and that is for the British Government to support British industry. It is time that British industry, being at the mercy of foreign owners, protected British workers. Foreign owners do not care about the damage they inflict on the British communities. The GMB supports British steel workers. It is time that the Government supported the British steel industry. Congress I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. I call Jerry Nelson to speak on behalf of the CEC, seeking reference back of Motion 174.

BRO. J. NELSON (Acting National Secretary, Manufacturing): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC and seeking reference back of Motion 174. In seeking reference back of Motion 174 to the National Sectional Committee, it is done so on the basis that many of the current employers in the furniture sector do not actually follow the British Furniture Manufacturers' Agreement. Those that don't, I have to say, are the ones that are the subject of the motion that are paying well below the National Minimum Wage and paying the skilled workers within the sector very, very poor wages. So we understand the motives behind the motion. I can assure the movers, the seconder and the region that it hails from — Midland & East Coast — that the section committee will endeavour to put every effort into making sure that every manufacturer within the furniture section follows the BFM's national terms and conditions. In fact, most of those that do, pay well above the national agreement set by the British Furniture Manufacturers. We are undertaking a body of work already, and Sharon Wilde, who has joined the section recently, has been undertaking some work already in relation to these issues, to regenerate activity and re-engagement of our activists within the industry so that we can have a better co-ordinated and sustained attack in terms of improving conditions for all our workers in the furniture section. So we are asking that the region accepts the reference back and that Congress accepts the reference back to the national committee so that more work can be undertaken for us to try and achieve the better and more advanced conditions that we enjoy in much of the section. We will give that commitment that Chris, his activists in the region and everyone else within the Furniture Sector will be engaged and will be rejuvenated in terms of an attack on the bad employers within the section — there are a few — so we will try and eradicate that. That is our guarantee to you. So we are seeking a reference back and hope that the region and Congress will accept that. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Does Midland & East Coast accept reference back? *(Agreed)* Does Congress accept reference back? *(Agreed)* I now put Motions 171, 172, 174 with reference, and 175 to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That's carried.

*Motion 171 was Carried.*

*Motion 172 was Carried.*

*Motion 174 was Referred.*

*Motion 175 was Carried.*

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, before I take the next item, which is Save the British Steel Pension Scheme, I have a couple of things to do. The woman who went to the Taskforce and gave her address to Kathleen at the fringe yesterday, come and see her at the side of the stage when we close. Thank you.

I would like to draw out a winning name from those who attended the Women's Taskforce Fringe Meeting. Whoever is the winner, will they go to the stand to collect their prize. The winner is Barbara Plant. (*Applause*)

## **SAVE THE BRITISH STEEL PENSION SCHEME EMERGENCY MOTION 1**

### **EM1. SAVE THE BRITISH STEEL PENSION SCHEME**

Congress, on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2015, Tata Steels announced that, from April 2016, the existing British Steel Pension Scheme would be closed to further accrual and, to replace the final salary scheme with a Defined Contribution scheme. The present Scheme is probably the best final salary scheme in the private sector. Instead of working with the trade unions at Tata, the management refused to consider any attempt to compromise, preferring to give the ultimatum of accept a rise in the pension age to 65, less income, with up to a 50% cut for those taking early retirement.

Historically, the British steel industry has generally looked after its employees. Since being founded in India, Tata has also always looked after its employees. The management of Tata Steel have besmirched the memory of Tata founder, Jamsetji Tata and are treating the hardworking, loyal workers with contempt. Relations have now deteriorated that for the first time in over 30 years, industrial action is being contemplated.

Congress condemns Tata's proposals and their failure to engage with the trade unions. Further, it calls on the GMB to give full support to our members at Tata and to do all it can to protect their hard won pension. It calls for GMB, to provide a united front with our colleagues in Community, Unite and UCATT and, to work with them to save the British Steel Pension Scheme.

PARKGATE BRANCH  
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(*Carried*)

BRO. I. KEMP (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I move Emergency Motion 1. How to work at Tata Steels and ashamed of the higher management! In 2007, when Tata bought what was then Corus, there was, naturally, apprehension as to what would happen. However, follow the ideals of Tata founder, Jamestji Tata, they seem to look after their workers, similar to the traditional ethos of most of the British steel industry. However, in 2010 Tata tried to close the British Steel pension scheme, our final-salary pension scheme. We saved it but at a cost of increasing the pension age from 55 to 60 and closing the scheme to new entrants until it reached 104% of funding. This March they claimed a deficit of £2 billion. Their intention is to close the pension scheme for further accrual and replace it with a defined contribution scheme. There will be retirement at 65 and punitive punishments for finishing earlier. Tata says that they are listening to us, yet they have made a mockery of the so-called consultation. They have ignored employee concerns and failed to engage with unions. The fact is that they are actually blaming the unions for not seeking a fair and practical solution.

Forget what you have seen on *The Full Monty*, the reality for steelworkers is different. We certainly can't move like Robert Carlisle. Comrades, despite all the computers and machinery, despite all the personal protective equipment that we wear and despite all the risk assessments and safe working procedures, the steel industry is still hot, sweaty, backbreaking and muscle-straining hard work. As for all the gases, chemical and toxins we keep on site, I keep expecting a US-led invasion because we are one big might weapon of mass destruction.

With life expectancy of less than the national average, early retirement on a final salary pension is our chance to have a decent life after work. If we are forced to work until 65, there will be increased sickness, more accidents, more injuries and, I fear, deaths. I urge Karl-Ulrich Köhler, the CEO of Tata Steels Europe, to show the same compassion and the same humanity as the founder, otherwise you will be responsible for the decline in the health of your workforce and you will be responsible for their early deaths.

I will be honest with you, colleagues. I don't want to go on strike. I don't want to take any form of industrial action but the failure of Tata Steels higher management to have discussions in good faith is leading to that situation. If we lose this fight, our other terms and conditions are at risk. If we lose this fight, all of your pensions are at risk. I am asking you to help us fight not the Indians who own us, but the cowboys in higher management.

My favourite western is *Shane*, and although it might be stretching it a bit to compare Paul Kenny with Alan Ladd, the ballot results of the GMB and other unions have sent the message out loud and clear to Tata management. We are putting on our white hats, buckling up our gun belts, mounting our steeds and getting read to run Mr Köhler and his gang of bandits out of town. Congress, support this motion, support our fight, support the Tata steelworkers and support our day of action on June 22<sup>nd</sup>. Save the British Steel pension scheme. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ian. Secunder?

BRO. B. GOLDING (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I second Emergency Motion 1. Vice President and Congress, the loyalty and hard work of Tata Steels' employees is being repaid by the company in wanting to get rid of their final salary pension scheme, the pension that they have paid for. The last national steel strike was back in 1980, and before that it was 1926. So if steel workers are thinking about striking, you know there is a big problem. In their hour of need, Congress, we should give them all the help and support that we can.

At present Tata workers can take early retirement on full pension at 60 whilst in reasonable health. At the same time, younger workers can move up, yet Tata does not seem to be able to grasp this fact. Older workers will be forced to work longer, younger workers will not progress, moral will fall with potential impact on quality and profit. By working longer, there is a danger of increased absence through illness, both physical and mental, and the aches and strains that come with working in heavy industry. The attitude seems to be that bodies can break down as long as the machines don't.

Despite all the changes to the pension legislation, what has changed since the days of Robert Maxwell? For years we have been encouraged to invest in pension schemes, yet what happened? All too often companies changed the scheme that their employees are enrolled in and the employees lose out. Then, the day they need a pension, what happens? It is time to stop this. Congress, let this attempt by Tata Steels to close their final pension scheme be a line in the sand. We say no more. Let's us protect our GMB members in Tata and our colleagues in other unions. Support Emergency Motion 1. Protect the men of steel from the men in the ivory towers. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Brian.

BRO. D. LASCELLES (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I am grateful to be allowed to come in on this debate because it affects our members in the Midland & East Coast Region just as much. Obviously, I am speaking in support of Emergency Motion 1. Congress, just imagine leaving school in the 1970s to go to work at British Steel in Scunthorpe, Sheffield, Rotherham or many more plants, now

closed by the Tories, of course. If, and it is a big “if”, you are still around and expecting a pension that you contributed to of what actually is deferred pay, and you are told within weeks or months of finally reaching that strange date that was 20-something and didn’t start with a 19 — it was unthinkable in the 1970s — your pension, your money, your deferred pay, will be reduced by 25%, what do you do? Congress, you do what our GMB members are doing. They are looking, amongst other things, for your support at this Congress, and support for Dave Hulse, our National Officer, and Regional Officer, Shaune Clarkson, in the Midland & East Coast, and similarly in Yorkshire & North Derbyshire, to get Tata Steels back around the table and to get that pension on course. Please support Emergency Motion 1. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David. Colleagues, the CEC is supporting Emergency Motion 1. All of those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

*Emergency Motion 1 was CARRIED.*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I call the mover of Motion 212.

## **INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: THE ECONOMY**

### **AUSTERITY AND THE IMPACT ON WOMEN MOTION 212**

#### **212. AUSTERITY AND THE IMPACT ON WOMEN**

This Congress values local government’s history as an important part of the gender equality movement by acting as a key employer for women. Within this region women make up nearly 80% of local government and school support staff and many of those women are low-paid and work part-time.

Women generally, are also more likely to use public services than men and use them more intensively to meet their own and their family’s needs. There are many public services that women access more than men because of pregnancy, longer life expectancy and lower wages, or as carers for children and older or disabled relatives.

Congress is outraged that local government’s tradition of supporting women as staff and service users is in reverse. Attacks on workers’ pay and conditions, including cuts to paid leave, unsocial hours payments, overtime and sick pay, have huge impacts on women and the provision of local services.

Congress notes since the 2010 election of the coalition government, women have been disproportionately affected by austerity:

- 1) Nationally more than 250,000 fewer women now work in local government since the coalition came to power in 2010. Within this region that equates to almost 30,000 women
- 2) Less government support to meet the increasing costs of childcare has meant that 24% of mothers have had to quit work. A further 16% have reduced their working hours; within the Yorkshire region the figures are even higher
- 3) Single parents (92% of whom are women) and women pensioners have been even more affected by the cuts. They have lost 15.6% and 12.5% respectively from their incomes because of welfare cuts and cuts to services: again women in this region are disproportionately affected.

Congress believes that the disproportionate impact of austerity on such a crucial part of the local government and school workforce is unacceptable. Fighting against the further impact of cuts on women’s pay and conditions and the services they use should be a priority in the wider campaign against the cuts.

Congress, in light of the new government we urge the following action:

- 1) Work with community groups, other trade unions, faith groups, supportive politicians and elected members, think tanks and equalities groups to campaign against cuts to pay and conditions and services that will have a negative impact on women
- 2) Raise awareness of how redundancies in local government and cuts to services such as children's centres and supported bus services act as barriers to women's employment
- 3) Emphasise the further impact of service cuts on women who also identify with other equalities groups, including black, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT), disabled, older and younger women.

LEEDS WORKS DEPARTMENT BRANCH, *Yorkshire & North  
Derbyshire Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. A. BURTON-KEEBLE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I move Motion 212 — Austerity and the Impact on Women. The Fawcett Society's Report states that the current austerity agenda and the programme of deep spending cuts has left women facing not just a double-whammy but a triple-jeopardy of cuts to jobs, benefits and vital services. The TUC Report, *The Impact on Women of Recession and Austerity*, which was released this year at the TUC Women's Conference, can be used to highlight this triple-jeopardy of cuts.

Example 1 is cuts to jobs. During the past five years the public sector share of employment in the UK has fallen from 19% to 17%. This is the lowest share of employment for four decades. It is forecast that further cuts will mean that by 2019 the public sector will make up just 15% of the workforce, dramatically changing the shape of the UK labour market. This will have a significant impact on women's employment as women make up two-thirds of the public sector workforce. Within local government job cuts have already had a disproportionate impact on women. I can tell you that 21% of men in full-time posts have gone compared with 31% of women. The lowest-paid workers in the public sector earn 8% more than the lowest paid worker in the private sector. This suggests that if low-paid women lose their jobs in the public sector, it is likely that their pay will worsen if they are employed in similar work in the private sector.

Example no. 2 is cuts to benefits. The Emergency Budget announced by the Coalition Government in June 2010 set out a raft of welfare reform measures, which included cuts, caps and freezes to a wide range of benefits. Analysis shows that women would bear the brunt of a whopping 72% of the net cost of changes to taxes, benefits and tax credits in this budget. In just two years' time, annual cuts to key main benefits will reach £30.5 billion. It has been calculated that 75% of the savings from this planned cut in welfare spending will be met by women. The same analysis found that 80% of the estimated savings in tax credits will come from women.

Example no. 3. Cuts to vital services. Cuts to NHS funding and changes to how services are commissioned have led to reduced access to sexual and reproductive health services. A survey of doctors in 2012 found that almost 60% of them reported budget cuts. There are reports of NHS trusts ceasing to provide oral contraceptives to women over the age of 25 because of budget cuts. Some areas also plan to impose savings of around £200,000 each year for the next four years from the sexual health service's budget. Cuts to services in this area have a very real impact on women's health and lead to increased costs in the long term. According to a 2013 report by sexual health charities, cuts to contraception and other sexual health services could lead to a significant increase in unwanted pregnancies and STIs, which will cost the Government £137 million by 2020.

Congress, fighting against the further impact of cuts on women's pay and conditions and the services they use should be a priority in the wider campaign against the cuts. Please support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Whilst the seconder is coming up, please could the movers and seconders of Composite 3 and Motions 92, 94 and 95 come to the front, please.

BRO. K. HENSBY (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, speaking in support of Motion 212. President and Congress, my colleague has given you an excellent report on austerity and the impact on women. Facts: cuts to jobs. Facts: cuts to benefits. Facts: cuts to vital services. Whilst we have this Government in power, it will continue to happen. We are getting nowhere while we have this Government. So we must act. I urge the GMB to act upon that as well.

There has been some success, if I have to be honest. If you look at the Fawcett Report — it is a good report and I urge you to read it — it says that there is a small increase in women obtaining higher positions in society, and that has got to be congratulated. However, in saying that, the same report also says that more and more women now are becoming self-employed in the trades of hairdressers, childminders and care workers. These people, who are, basically, self-employed, are earning less than £10,000 a year. That is an absolutely atrocious situation. There is also an impact as well of people who are working in local government and other areas as well. Some of those people, men and women, working alongside each other, as has been proven from the same report, experience a difference of £7,000, between £16,000 - £23,000. Surely, comrades, that situation cannot be allowed to continue. So I urge and support Motion 212 with a view to austerity and women and the impact on women. Let's fight for their rights. Thank you. *(Applause)*

BRO. B. DUFFIELD (London): Congress and President, this Motion 212 mentions, amongst other things, school support staff. As we all know, the GMB planted the seeds to grow the SSSNB, which is the School Support Staff Negotiating Body. This was also going to be a Labour Party pledge if re-elected in 2015, which was not to be. The Labour Party, I believe, missed a trick in not implementing this legislation while they were in power. This would have given school support staff a fairer playing field, along with equality, with many of the professionals who they work side by side with. Many of our members are now being attacked to save money because of the Tories' cuts on education.

Head teachers are now changing school support staffs' working conditions, cutting pay and reducing their hours. They are not asking for six-figure salaries, like most head teachers get. They have three, four or five deputy heads and senior management members are on £50,000, £60,000 or £70,000 each. Congress, let's support the school support staff. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, the CEC is supporting Motion 212. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

*Motion 212 was CARRIED.*

## **UNION ORGANISATION: EQUALITY & INCLUSION**

### **COMPOSITE 3**

#### **SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT FOR DISABLED WORKERS**

*(Covering Motions 91 and 93)*

91. Supported Employment for Disabled Workers *(Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region)*
93. Disabled Employment *(Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region)*

## **SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT FOR DISABLED WORKERS**

This Congress calls upon the CEC to continue to show its support for the former Remploy workers and vulnerable people in society to have supported employment that this Tory/LibDem government has ripped the heart out of!

This Congress supports the running of these vital economic industries by local councils and not for profit with ring-fenced budgets which can't be cut and would ask that the Co-op model be looked at.

This Congress demands that whoever is in power after the general election places a statutory duty on all local authorities to provide meaningful employment for disabled people that matches the percentage of disabled people in their locality.

This Congress demands that the CEC lobby Labour to make it policy that supported employment be reintroduced into the UK workplace where the Tories chose to remove it from.

This Congress wants no further repeats of what happened to Remploy and there is a place in British industry for supported employment!

**Yorkshire & N. Derbyshire Region**

**to Move**

**Yorkshire & N. Derbyshire Region**

**to Second**

*(Carried)*

BRO. P. STEER (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I move Composite 3. Support the employment of disabled workers and disabled employment. As we all know, Labour Governments of the past brought in disabled employment laws where companies had to make, where possible, access for disabled people under the Equality Act 2010. This was one of the things when Remploy was in existence. Remploy was formed to employ disabled people. Now because of the Tories and Lib-Dems, Remploy has been cut to the bones. The last of the old Remploy has now just been sold off. This means that there will be more job cuts in the long run. This is worrying. It means that skills and trades learnt over the years will be lost and forgotten because there is nobody to take over from them. We ask Congress to support the co-operative model, such as Enabled Works in Yorkshire and to help them to ring-fence budgets and to give them support where possible. They are not asking for handouts. They are just asking for a chance to work and put some meaning back into their lives and pass on skills.

As a disabled worker myself now, this is distressing to me. People who want to work but have disabilities means that companies now don't even have to employ them. We are asking Congress to support vital economic industries which employ people who want to work, not just to make a fast buck. I am lucky because the company I work for actually found me an alternative job when I became disabled. Not a lot of companies do that these days. If I lose my job for whatever reason, I am looking at a very slim chance of getting another job. This is what Remploy people now have to face. The skills and trades that they have built up over the years are going to be lost. We have a duty in British industry not to let them lose these skills and to pass them on for people to use in the future. So, please, support. I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder?

BRO. C. WEAVER (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* It is my privilege to represent GMB members from our region and also to second Composite 3 — Supported Employment for Disabled Workers. We call upon the CEC to support Composite 3 on the grounds that less fortunate members of society need protection, an avenue where they can achieve their goals and something that they can look forward to, to obtain their

aspirations and become a valued member of society. At the moment I don't believe that we have the protection within the public or the private sector. This is because they are seen as a burden through an extra cost to the business with reduced performance rates. Let them feel inclusive and have a sense of belonging. I do not believe that these members of society can achieve their aspirations without supported employment.

My concerns are backed up with proof at the moment. As a GMB shop steward, I am dealing with five disabled members in four different workplaces who are having difficulties with their employment rights. For example, a profoundly deaf member has been disciplined for reporting his sickness through a text message and not the normal way by speaking to his manager. Another member, a 21-year old female with a disability and learning difficulties has been dismissed due to absence linked to her disability. She was dismissed without a disciplinary procedure being followed, but was reinstated and since she has been medically suspended but not worked in 2015. I can assure you that from the GMB point of view they will be supported all the way through. I would hope that the GMB lobby on behalf of this group of vulnerable people, some of whom need our help. I believe it is our duty to stand up on their behalf and do not let them be mistreated in this way. Thank you. Please support Composite 3.  
*(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. I call North West & Irish Region to move Motion 92.

## **RE-OPENING OF WORKPLACES FOR DISABLED PEOPLE MOTION 92**

### **92. RE-OPENING OF WORKPLACES FOR DISABLED PEOPLE**

This Congress calls on the present Government to provide funding to re-open workplaces for disabled people.

I believe this is the way forward better design workplaces, both Government and trade unions working together to make disabled workplaces more viable and profitable and all profits returned back into the business to improve the workplace and employ more disabled people.

RO1 BRANCH  
*North West & Irish Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. J. SMITH (North West & Irish): Congress, I move Motion 92. Congress, we have to maintain the pressure on this Government to come up with funds to enable these projects to take place and go ahead. This is not about disabled workplaces, where we have to find salaries of over half-a-million quid for the likes of six employees, a CEO, a financial director, an HR director, a production manager and a sales and marketing manager. This is about opening disabled workplaces, such as small co-operatives and social enterprises where each employer, from manager down to the shop floor, works for the living wage, reaps a benefit and seeking the pleasures that disabled people get out of coming to work.

Funding from this Government would provide a great asset to helping to run these small workplaces. At the same time, it would see disabled people working within their own environment, treating their workplace like a small community and vastly improving their daily lifestyles.

The word "Remploy" might be in the archives of the GMB, but I am sure it will never be put to bed completely. I am honoured to be speaking at this rostrum to say that we fought very hard, a strong fight, right from our General Secretary, Paul Kenny, the past and present National Secretaries, Phil Davies and Jerry Nelson, and all our regional secretaries right across the country, to save Remploy. Believe me, my feelings might be slightly different. We didn't lose. We lost the name Remploy. Just

have a look at *this* logo of Enabled Works Ltd. Does the colour of this programme tell you that it's gone? Does it bloody hell. The word "Remploy" has gone, not the fact that these disabled workplaces have gone.

I am involved as a volunteer providing help whenever time permits at the York Disabled Co-operative Workers, and it gives me a great pleasure seeing these disabled people come to work. I must thank my regional secretary for the help and assistance he gives for making it easy for me to volunteer to get over to York. As I say, it is not only York. Enable Works is in Leeds. Thanks to the business skills of Tina Brown, an ex-Remploy factory manager, and her partner in Yorkshire & North Derbyshire, Tony Ledhill, an active member, shop steward and branch secretary, and not forgetting the ex-Remploy staff from the Leeds factory, who put funds in to form this workers' co-operative. They put in the funds from their redundancies to get this organisation up and running. Enabled Works also provides courses for when disabled people become independent, and the canteen has been designed to assist people to do their own domestic chores, like washing and cooking.

This is why I ask Congress to support this motion. It is not just York Disabled Co-operative Workers or Enabled Works in Leeds, but for many, many more co-operatives and social enterprises across the country it's a big struggle on a daily basis to keep these businesses going. Modern Module, which is involved with Enabled Works and at York, are very busy. Work is coming in and they are very busy. But the job they do is cleaning and recycles reels. The company gives them 25 pence a reel. To work this out, all it brings in is the minimum wage and nothing else, and it does struggle. Because it is a workers' co-operative, their determination to keep disabled sheltered workplaces going is one big struggle. If anyone has ever been to any of the works in December, January and February, you would have seen those poor buggers with no heating on, working with body warmers on, jumpers on and coats on, continuing with their smiles and doing a job because they cannot afford to put the central heating on. This is why we are asking for support from the Government. It is needed. What you do see from visiting there are smiles and no complaints because it is their co-operative. They funded it. They have carried on keeping the sheltered workplace going. That is the greatest pleasure of it. My ambition before I retire is to extend that module and bring it over the Pennines to the north west of England, because I am sure that my region will support it 100 per cent.

THE PRESIDENT: You time is up, Joe.

BRO. J. SMITH: Our prisons also do this model, but you never see the people who commit wearing body warmers or jumpers. They get fed, watered, a bed, central heating and the Government fund prisons. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Joe. Seconder?

SIS. L. WINSON (North West & Irish): Congress, I support Motion 92. President and Congress, the Tories have successfully pushed our disabled members down the social ladder. Remploy was axed by them even though some of them were running at a profit. The Tory manifesto has just boasted that last year 140,000 disabled people found work. It was not specified what sort of work this was, but they say that the jobless rate for disabled is still too high. There are now proposed cuts of £12 billion in welfare. It is certain that they will bar under-25s from claiming Incapacity or Housing Benefit. It is certain that they will make it harder for sick and disabled people to claim state aid when out of work by stricter fit-for-work tests. Consider these cuts. Now consider them again from the perspective of the person with a disability and no prospects of meaningful, manageable work. Let's pressure this Government, let's open debate with them and let's attempt to secure funding for workplaces for disabled people. I second. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I call Motion 94.

**DISABLED MEMBERS  
MOTION 94**

**94. DISABLED MEMBERS**

GMB has been proud to support various recent national demonstrations, including the 999 Call for the NHS and the Local Government strike day. We have had excellent attendance from GMB members at these events.

The success of these marches depends on a high level of attendance from all sections of the Trade Union movement and society. However, where group attendance has been organised for those demonstrations, we have sometimes seen that meeting places or forms of transport are organised which may not be accessible for disabled members. This means that many would not be able to attend the event as part of their Branch or Regional delegation, and could discourage them from attending at all.

Congress calls on all Branches and Regions and the TUC, when organising groups of members to attend major demonstrations, to make careful plans for accessibility and do everything possible to enable all members to attend and participate.

C23 CARSHALTON BRANCH  
*Southern Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. C. BARKER (Southern): Congress, I am a second-time speaker but first-time mover, moving Motion 94 — Disabled Members. This motion is about members who support us in national demonstrations and local demonstrations. We have sometimes excellent attendance, and we engage all of our members and expect them to come out and support us. The success of our marches and demonstrations depend very much on the support of disabled members and the high level of attendance.

We anticipate to draw that attendance from all sections of our union Movement. However, when we organise some of these demonstrations, it is all too easy to actually overlook disabled members, people with mobility issues, and sometimes with mass demonstrations we make arrangements to meet up with them in a public place, usually away from the main demonstrations so that we can march down together and meet at the designated meeting point. A recent one was a demonstration that we had in London where, certainly for our region, we had the assembly point at one of the local Underground station. Unfortunately, that Underground station was not disabled friendly, and so for at least one or two of our members they chose not to go to the demonstration because they felt it would mean for them having to go to another Tube station and the potential of a long walk to get back to the group, or indeed take a taxi to the main assembly point. They felt that that was not really supporting them and, therefore, chose not to come along. We had another example even as we arrived at Dublin Airport when at least two of the members of our group were left stranded waiting for a coach to come and pick them up because the coaches could not park anywhere near to where the airport was. Maybe that was not a fault of the organisers themselves, but when that coach actually turned up those members found that it had steps up to get into it and it was not disability friendly.

What I am asking for people organising these sort of events to do, and this really should be something as we do as a matter of course throughout the GMB, is what we expect of employers. We ask them to make reasonable adjustments, and I don't see why we, as a union, should not make reasonable adjustments when looking at how we organise these events. When you choose the assembly point, make sure that it is user friendly. When you are looking at transport to get people there, and you are

thinking about big coaches, think about the people who have to climb up those steps and find it extremely difficult to do so. I move. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder?

BRO. K. GREEN (Southern): Congress, I second Motion 94 — Disabled Members. A fundamental aspect of Motion 94 is equality. We must, as a trade union, ensure that not only are we visibly representative of all of our membership as possible, but that all and every GMB member has an equal opportunity to both campaign and organise in the name of the GMB. Let's make sure that the mechanisms are in place for all members to do so. I second motion 94. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 95.

## **VIOLENCE TO DISABLED PEOPLE MOTION 95**

### **95. VIOLENCE TO DISABLED PEOPLE**

This Congress is deeply concerned in respect of the reported increase of violence towards the disabled and their property.

Attacks both domestic and in general have increased to a level unacceptable in a civilised society where one attack should be viewed as one too many.

As well as the personal attacks on the disabled, their cars displaying disabled badges are also being targeted, bringing shame on a so-called civilised nation.

Congress calls for much greater public awareness of the vulnerable position of the disabled by all public bodies, especially the police and social services and for those found guilty of these offences to be given community sentences that will aid the disabled, bringing them face to face with the people they have abused.

HENDON BRANCH,  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. B. BENHAM (London): Congress, I move Motion 95. Britain is supposed to be a civilised country, so why is it that violence to the disabled is on the increase? Disabled people, the most vulnerable in our society, are regularly subjected to ridicule, abuse and violence just because they appear to be different. Some of these attacks, such as the well-publicised attack on Alan Barnes in Gateshead may not be a disability-hate crime. This is because they are committed by low-life criminals who see an easy target who cannot fight back, but the majority of attacks on the disabled are hate crimes, hate crimes committed by equally low-life scum. In the words of the former Director of the CPS, Lord Ken Macdonald: "These attacks are a stain on the conscience of the criminal justice system".

In 2012/2013 there were 1,841 reports of disability-hate crime. Astonishingly, these reports only succeeded in getting 349 convictions, and even more astonishingly, colleagues, only seven received an increased sentence with disability being an aggravated factor. Research indicates that there have been more than 62,000 incidents of disability-hate crime, so the vast majority are not reported. Congress, the words of Lord Macdonald were correct.

As I mentioned, abuse of the disabled takes many forms. There is sustained low-level ridicule causing anxiety and stress and, worse, to full-blown violent attacks. Even low-level ridicule can sometimes result in disastrous consequences. Fiona Pilkington took her own life and that of her mentally impaired daughter in a car fire following years of ridicule and abuse from local youths. Amazingly, she made 21 calls to police in a bid to stop this torment. The torment never stopped, and on the day she took their lives she made a phone call the police and the police told her to ignore the tormentors.

There are also cases of premeditated murder of the disabled. Keith Potts in Gateshead, who had learning difficulties, was gagged, bound and beaten to death, and then he was disembowelled just because he was different.

Congress, in the light of all that, can we really call ourselves a civilised country? To be fair, it is not only misguided individuals and groups who commit hate crimes against the disabled. It is not the closure of Remploy factories by governments, Labour included, an equally evil disability-hate crime. Of course it is. But GMB can be proud that it stood up for our disabled members in Remploy, and we can be proud that we are bringing this motion to Congress. It is time for this matter to be tackled head on. The police must react more positively and the Government must act more positively. There have to be more prosecutions for disability-hate crimes, and there have to be increased sentences, deterrent sentences. Colleagues, the defenders must do real time, but they should also be given community orders to work with the disabled, bringing them face-to-face with the people they abuse and make them aware. After all, nobody asked to be born or to become disabled.

Congress, disability is not a crime. Discrimination against the disabled is a crime and it should be punished accordingly. Congress I move. *(Applause)*

BRO. E. STEWART (London): Congress, I second Motion 95. President, Congress, the mover has given some very startling reports of hate crimes against the disabled. Believe me, colleagues, there are many, many more, but what is it, Congress, that causes these attacks? We know that the BNP and the English Defence League are a racist bunch of thugs who take every opportunity to attack, both verbally and physically, ethnic minorities. It is not right, but that is their belief and, perhaps, a reason for their actions. But why are attacks on the disabled becoming more prevalent?

Let me give you some examples of attacks and my reasons why they are happening. In a supermarket a mother was told her wheelchair-bound daughter should not be cluttering up the store. Another was told that her disabled daughter should be killed because she would never be any good to society. Bring on Stephen Hawkins to disprove that theory! Finally, colleagues, a woman on crutches was pushed into a supermarket display and verbally abused as a scrounger. Congress, that may well be the catalyst; a scrounger! The last Government attacks on the welfare state branded all benefit recipients as scroungers. It can only get worse under this new Government, and, colleagues, that branding was promoted at every opportunity by the right-wing rag as the Hillsborough-denying *Sun* newspaper and the *Daily Mail*. The false impression that they are scroungers may well be for the reason for the increase in hate crimes against the disabled. The truth is that the disabled have suffered more than anyone from the cuts to the welfare state. The press should be honest and publicise that fact. The disabled should be the subject of compassion and understanding, not the purveyors and paranoia of ignorance. I second. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Euton.

BRO. P. DUFFY (GMB Scotland): President and comrades, I think that society is disabled. It is not the people. *(Applause)* Scroungers! If you read the press, the capitalist media, the television and the

BBC, you would think that disabled people do not work. I worked from 15 to 62. I was one of the fortunate ones. The unemployment rate among blind and visually-impaired people is nearly 80%. We are right at the very bottom of the heap. They shut down Remploy but then they said they wanted to get disabled into mainstream work. It does not work. I can assure you that it does not work because disabled people are regarded with jealousy not just by their managers but by their fellow workers, if they get any adjustments made. Believe it or not, somebody sitting next to you is jealous. It is unbelievable. They are like kids. They just need to grow up. It is absolutely disgusting the way that disabled people are treated.

I work for North Lanarkshire Council, which is a Labour-controlled council. Even just now they are using capability to get rid of disabled people. What a disgrace for a Labour-controlled council! I worked for them for years and they hated my guts. Do you know what that proved? It proved that I was doing my job as a shop steward. *(Applause)* Because of the so-called austerity — I don't know why they use the word "austerity" — it means that you are a capitalist, taking their money and they leave us with nothing. I say this all the time. The answer to the problem lies with us. We need to use our combined pressure on this Tory Government, even employers, as things have changed over the years since I started work. I have no difficulty in going on strike. When my employer said to me, "You're not getting a rise", I just ran round the machine and said, "Right, everybody out". The funny thing was that everybody just came out. They didn't ask me why. Unfortunately, they days have gone when we had closed shops. Anyway, I ask you to support this motion because we, the so-called "disabled people" as they call us, are at the bottom of the heap, and even more so now. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Pat.

BRO. M. HINCHCLIFFE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Congress, I am speaking in support of Composite 3. I have been advised by my employer not to get involved in the following as "it would not be a good career move", in their words. So can you all put your fingers in your ears while I just read the following statement? "We have two GMB reps sacked in Sheffield for defending their members at Green & Company. Many have learning disabilities and other disabilities. Jim and Gordon showed solidarity with the workforce after they walked out over the bullying of Billy Whittaker, one of the vulnerable adults working at Green & Co. Although legitimate industrial action followed, all the members have now been put on final written warnings and threatened with the sack if they take part in further action. Over the years these workers have been sold on like slaves to the next sub-contractor, who bids the lowest price, which is disgraceful. Sheffield Council, with a Labour majority, is sat bang in the middle with the fence post up its backside, and although they have the power to sort this, they choose not to. I am pleased to say that Jim and Gordon have been invited to the ASLEF by Tosh McDonald, who is the Mary Turner of ASLEF, as guest speakers next week. Congress, as a union, we need to be showing our support for these sacked brothers. Support Composite 3, support Jim and Gordon." It is okay to take your fingers out now. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone else wish to speak in the debate? *(No response)* Congress, as you all know, I have felt very, very strongly over what happened to Remploy. In my personal view, the Government should have been charged with crimes against humanity and jailed for what they did to those people. *(Applause)*

I am now going to move to the vote. We are, as you would imagine, supporting every single motion before Congress. I call vote for Composite 3 and Motions 92, 94 and 95. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? They are carried.

*Composite 3 was Carried.*

*Motion 92 was Carried.*

*Motion 94 was Carried.*

*Motion 95 was Carried.*

THE PRESIDENT: Before I move to the next item on the agenda, let me wish Wendy Reis, Southend branch, a very happy birthday. (*Applause*)

## **CHILDREN IN CROSSFIRE PROJECT**

THE PRESIDENT: It gives me great pleasure to welcome Margaret Gregg from the CEC who spent some time in Ethiopia looking at the health and education programmes that GMB has sponsored. Margaret, please address Congress.

### **ADDRESS BY MARGARET GREGG**

SIS. M. GREGG (CEC, Commercial Services): Congress, I am a CEC member from North West & Irish Region. In April of this year I had the privilege of visiting projects on Ethiopia sponsored by GMB as part of the work carried out by Children in Crossfire. The GMB sponsored the training of nurses to raise the provision of nursing care with the aims of supporting the rural community through the provision of clean water supplies and improving the nutrition of the community, particularly in children under five years of age.

St. Luke's Hospital and College of Nursing and Midwifery provides healthcare for the women and children in the capital of the south-west Shewa zone. There are very few facilities and a high percentage of children suffer from a variety of diseases because of the lack of access to healthcare and clean water. Such diseases have been eradicated from the UK. Over one-and-a-half million people live in this small rural zone. I met with nursing staff who are beneficiaries of the support of the GMB and the training programme of nurses at St. Luke's Hospital. You will see how much it meant to them from the video which will be shown shortly.

I also saw the effect of malnutrition on babies admitted to the hospital, which is one of the major causes of death and illness, as well as malaria, to children under five. We saw how the project is improving the lives and the quality of the children and the community. I saw the students currently training at the college from the initial intake. The cost is £1,500 a year for the nurses' training. The college had to turn down five applicants this year through lack of funding. They are needed in all disciplines of the hospital; for example, general, paediatrics and maternity. The nurses are recruited from the surrounding area as it is important that they have a connection to the patients. The training of midwives has improved the success rate of healthy babies being born and surviving.

The work carried out by the hospital cannot be done without trained nursing staff, and this project has shown that the funding by GMB is saving lives. While the immediate care of the nursing staff is healing the babies, mothers who come into the hospital are shown how the grains, wheat and local produce can be cooked and fed to improve the diet of babies and children. Provision has been made where mothers are taught how to identify the food and prepare and cook it. These are foods that will benefit the babies. Areas have also been provided for the washing of clothes by the mothers who stay at the hospital with their children.

As I went into the wards, I could see the difference to babies who first came into the hospital very ill and under-nourished. By getting medication and treatment, and with better food and care, you can see the improvement to their physical appearance.

Finally, after the mothers have gone through the training of identifying, preparing the food and feeding the babies, checks are made. The babies are weighed and measured, and if they have reached the normal weight, they can be sent home.

St. Luke's does not resemble the hospitals that we have here. They are low concrete buildings and lack many of the facilities we take for granted. It is set in a lovely area and it is bright but, for example, at present, there is no water-storage provision on tap to the paediatric ward. That is another project that the hospital is currently looking at for funding. Government grants are small and not nearly enough to cover these projects, and that is the reason why funding is so important. The student nurses can study in the library, but there are no computers, so access to medical information is limited to the books that the hospital can obtain.

I was taken to the small outpost communities nearby. The nutrition training of the mothers is continued out at local villages near a rural clinic, a clinic which has two rooms, with a healthcare workers, which is open about two or three days a week. The families come from miles around to see the demonstrations by the trained staff, which is carried out in the open under a large tree. The health worker then invites a local woman to carry out the presentation after she has been watching it, so each village will have a local woman to show others, building up the knowledge at ground level and in their own local dialects. The food is then given out to the children and the mothers have coffee, the pride of Ethiopia and one of their best exports.

I also went to another community the next day, and a mother stood up and said that she had no knowledge of this programme until another villager spoke to her. After attending and seeing the demonstration, carrying out the feeding programme, she told us that she now has a healthy child. She had previously lost a child through dysentery and malnourishment. The small outpost clinics help to provide information and examinations, and start an early-warning system for difficult pregnancies. Ill babies and mothers can get treatment quicker may not have to go to the hospital. The hospital provides a small antenatal ward to care for mothers who are at risk when giving birth.

Another benefit of these local village meetings and clinics has been that more female children are being brought along. The culture in the past has been to look after the male babies and not to worry too much about the females. The staff found that more fathers are coming along with their families. Once they see the benefits to their children, they are more supportive of the mother. Child illnesses like measles and meningitis can have disastrous results and spread rapidly, and they are two more of the top causes of death. The hospital also caters for other infectious diseases, including AIDs. The clean-water project is carried out with the agreement and aid of the local communities. Where once the same spring-water post was used by the cattle, the washing of clothes and the drinking of water for the villagers, the site now has a small dam which filters the dirt and garbage in the stream through a process of pipes to a water-storage tank, and then to three areas; one for drinking water with taps, one trough for the animals' drinking and a laundry space, which provides tank-link structures where clothes can be washed.

The result of providing clean water allows for educating the villagers, looking after their needs and the animals' needs in a cleaner and healthier way. Clean water and better hygiene helps to prevent malaria and other diseases, a very simple solution which, once again, depends on funding by donations, and the number of these new water stations being provided is delimited.

The project has given a better standard of living to a country that is one of the most impoverished in Africa. Other projects that the CIC have been involved in are the re-housing of 60 families who lived in a graveyard. That was unbelievable. The new housing has completely altered their lives, the children are now attending a school set up by the CIC. We see happy and healthy five to seven-year olds, smiling children, who get a meal every day, they are being educated to read, to count and to write, an education that their parents had no access to.

As with most CIC projects, they are aimed at enabling communities to be independent and provide opportunities to improve their lives, not just constantly handing over money with no end result.

It has been a great privilege for me to see the results of the sponsorship of GMB and know that we have made a difference to so many children and families. Thank you for listening, and you will now see the video. *(Applause) (Video shown) (16:49:14)*

THE PRESIDENT: Isn't it wonderful to see how our money and support gives life to so many young children, their mothers, brothers and sisters.

### **ADDRESS BY RICHARD MOORE**

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, it gives me great pleasure to introduce Richard Moore, who is the founder and Director of Children in Crossfire. When he was 10 years' old, Richard was blinded by a rubber bullet during the Troubles in Northern Ireland. Remarkably, Richard has since gone on to meet and befriend the British soldier who shot him 43 years ago. *(Applause)* Richard put his own experience of adversity to positive use, dedicating his life to helping children who suffer from poverty and founding an international charity called Children in Crossfire. His charity provides the most basic amenities, such as water, sanitation, housing and healthcare for communities in places like Ethiopia and Tanzania that would otherwise go without. In his own words, Richard says, "I would rather be blind and live in Northern Ireland than to have my eyesight and have to endure the suffering that these children endure everyday of their lives." Richard last spoke to Congress in 2011 and we have asked him back to update us on the project. Richard, we salute you. Please address Congress. *(Applause)*

RICHARD MOORE: Thanks everybody. I am one of many people in Northern Ireland who, unfortunately, were maimed or injured as a result of the conflict, but the important part about my story is the support that I received from all sections of the community throughout Ireland, England and further afield. In fact, I remember just after I lost my eyesight the very first Braille watch that I received was sent to me from an ex-British soldier. It is that type of human compassion and support throughout my life that made me the person I am. Also, it made blindness a positive experience for me. To be truthful, I actually don't mind being blind. Sometimes there are advantages, especially when you come to an event like *this* and I don't have to look at all of you down *there*. *(Laughter and applause)*

I want to thank Margaret Gregg for coming out to Ethiopia. It was very important for me that somebody from the GMB came out and saw how your money was being spent but, more importantly, the difference that you were making in the lives of children who you will, probably, never get the chance to meet. Obviously, I want to thank Mary for all her support that she has given me, and also Paul Kenny for his support. *(Applause)* I think that Paul sees blindness as an advantage, too, because he keeps telling me about the wonderful head of hair that he has and that he has the body of an athlete. *(Laughter)* So I must be hugging the wrong person every time I meet him. *(Applause)*

All joking aside, I am here today to tell you the difference that you have made. You saw the therapeutic feeding centre in the film. You refurbished that centre. It did not exist until you came on board. You resourced that centre and have continued to resource that centre. That therapeutic feeding centre is, basically, for children who are about to die. Before that centre existed, the children who came there suffering from severe malnutrition died. In the last couple of years, almost two-and-a-half thousand children, who would have died, are alive because of the support that you gave us.

Wells have been installed in the south Shewa zone in Ethiopia. There are 10,000 people who now have access to clean water, not only for today, not only for the rest of their lives but for many generations to come they now have access to clean water. Again, many of these children were walking hours to a river to collect water in buckets that animals went to the toilet in and that animals drank from and washed in. These children were dying from drinking that water. Now, because of you, there are 10,000 children who have access to clean water.

You saw the health education workers in the film. There are 150 of them. Margaret met some of them when she was there. Those health education workers go out into an area populated by about 500,000 people, and they educate the mothers on how to prepare proper food and how to spot malnutrition at a very early stage. As a result of that, the amount of children who died last year from malnutrition has come down by almost 50%. *(Applause)* As well as that, there are countless tens of thousands of children who are not suffering from malnutrition any more. We have figures that show the amount of referrals to the hospital are going down continually. Why? Because of the education programme through these health education workers that you, and you only, have funded.

So I am here today to ask you to continue to support this programme, to continue to support the many more vulnerable children in that area, that Margaret has witnessed and that Children in Crossfire are trying to work with. What was important to me about Margaret's visit was that you embraced this programme.

Finally, I want to thank you, the GMB family, for reaching out to a country at the other end of the world where vulnerable children deserve the right to an education, deserve the right to a home life and deserve the right to grow and blossom the way that your children and the way that I have grown. The only way they are going to do that is to improve their health first and then provide education. Please continue to help me and Children in Crossfire to do that. Thank you. *(Cheers amidst a standing ovation)*

THE PRESIDENT: Richard, it is a delight to hear you speak. Your humour is great, but your dedication is even greater. Congress, when you see those children and they survived, isn't that a wonderful feeling because of what you have done as human beings caring about other people. The more children we save and the more families we save, the better for the world all around. So when you see the appeal coming out in your regions, remember you witnessed the great work that is being done by your donations, Richard's dedication and his staff. Richard, I didn't bring you a medal but I brought you some holy water. You said you didn't mind not being able to see, well, you won't know whether it is holy water or what until you open it.

RICHARD MOORE: I'll tell you in an hour's time. *(Laughter)*

THE PRESIDENT: As you said last time, you came in blind but you're going out blind drunk. *(Presentation made amidst applause)* Can we thank Margaret for the time she spent out there. *(Applause)*

## FINAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

**THE PRESIDENT:** Let me refer to *Your Future in our Hands*. Our Young Members' Network in the GMB is organising a Young Members' Campaign for a £10-hourly wage and to become a young activist. They have a fringe meeting in the Brittas Suite at 12.45. Ben Cooke, the Chair of the GMB Young Members, hopes that you will all come along and join him.

Congress, I now move to something that is also very dear to the GMB. Before we move on, I want to let you know that I have been joined in the hall by an old friend of the GMB, Dave Smith. Dave is the Chair of the Blacklist Support Group, and since 2009 has led the campaign for justice for the 3,200 construction workers, like himself, who were secretly blacklisted. Dave has just written a book telling the history of blacklisting, and he is here today signing copies at the Bookmark's stall. Dave, you are extremely welcome to the GMB Congress. Dave, we would be very happy for you to address Congress.

### ADDRESS BY DAVE SMITH

**DAVE SMITH** (Chair, Blacklist Support Group): Thank you very much, Mary. First of all, I would like to bring solidarity greetings from the Blacklist Support Group to GMB Congress, and also a big thank you — not just solidarity greetings — for the tremendous work that the GMB has done in supporting blacklisted workers over the last six years in this campaign. (*Applause and cheers*)

I don't normally name people when I am speaking to groups, but there are some people in the GMB who have gone beyond the call of duty. Justin Bowden has raised this matter in Parliament. Maria Ludkin, in the Legal Department, has taken this matter to the High Court. Steve Pryle and Andrew Craven, in the Research Department and the Press Department, have got this matter in the media when we have not been able to get it in the media. Paul Kenny was the first General Secretary to turn up and speak at a Blacklist Support Group AGM. So we are absolutely genuinely proud and thankful for the work that you have done. It is not just them, but there have been thousands of activists from the GMB across the country who have supported our campaign.

When I first got here, Pat Duffy was making a speech at the podium, and he said that if you are a shop steward and doing your job right then, very often, management hate your guts. It is a feeling I know well, because if we stand up for our rights, if we stand up for workers actually getting paid on time, if we stand up for equality, for people not being discriminated and for people not being sacked/unfairly dismissed, very often the management hate us. We think it is just standing up for our rights, standing up for decency and standing up for decent respect, but very often, because the management are just obsessed with profit, just obsessed with making money, they treat us like pariahs. The GMB stewards in Green Co. who have been dismissed will not be the only ones this year who get attacked by management, because the fight is on against austerity at the moment, and the fight against austerity is not going to be waged in Parliament, but the fight against austerity will be waged by trade unionists, and it is people like the Barking & Dagenham workers who have been on strike who are leading the fight against austerity.

Mary was right in what she said. There are 3,200 workers in the building industry who know what it is like to be hated by management. We know what it is like, because the construction companies — we are not talking about small outfits but the big multi-nations — the Sir Robert McAlpine's Limited, the Balfour Beatty's, the Skanska's, the Costain's, kept secret files on trade union members in the building industry. We know this because a Government department did a raid and seized the files. They kept these secret files because we raised concerns about asbestos, because we raised concerns about unpaid

wages and, in some cases, we were elected as a safety rep, and that was enough to get you blacklisted in the building industry. One of my colleagues, who is on this blacklist, whose name is George Fuller and a bricklayer, because he organised a petition against homelessness on the building site. That was enough to get you blacklisted by the big multi-national companies in the building industry. They kept secret files, and the directors of these multi-national companies used to have secret meetings once every three months and they used to discuss the people who were on this list, and every time that anyone applied for a job on a building site they used to check to see if your name was on the list, and if you were on the list you would be sacked or refused work. We were not just sacked once, but we were sacked repeatedly, time and time again, and people suffered years of unemployment even during the middle of construction booms that were going on in this country. People lost their jobs. Very often people lost their houses and, because this kind of thing has an effect on your family life as well, sometimes we lost our marriages because of it.

We have been fighting this for six years and the GMB has been standing next to us for six years. We have gone to the High Court, we have raised it through a Select Committee in Parliament and we have organised direct action outside the directors' houses and outside where they work.

When I was last at a GMB Congress, we talked about this as a big industrial-relations scandal. What we have discovered in the last couple of years is that it is not just the construction companies that didn't like us, but it is also the police. Research has shown that in the last couple of years that undercover police officers were involved in providing information to this blacklist as well. People will probably remember the stuff that's been in the newspapers recently about undercover police officers who were spying on the family of Stephen Lawrence. The very same police officer has admitted that he was also spying on trade union activists as well. It has also come out that another undercover police officer has been named, when I knew him back in 1999, as Mark Cassidy. He claimed to be a carpenter. He joined the union, I went to union meetings with him and he even chaired some of the meetings I went to. I was on picket lines with him. His real name was Mark Jenner. He was an undercover police officer for an organisation called the Special Demonstration Squad, which is an undercover section of Special Branch. He was there to spy on trade unions. For three years he lived a secret life, and we know for a fact that these people have been spying on trade unions. This is no longer an industrial relations issue, but this is a human rights scandal, and we are not going to give it up until we get justice for that human rights scandal. (*Applause*)

I have just written a book. I am contractually obliged to mention the fact that I have written a book, at least every now and again. (*Laughter*) It is available very cheaply at the Bookmarks' stall, and I will sign it for anyone who comes to get one. The reason for writing the book was not just to flog a couple, but it was to expose these wretches. I am talking about these people who put out glossy press release and brochures which talked about corporate responsibility, yet all they are interested in is making money. Human life goes by the wayside. They are not interested in the lives they have ruined. They are not interested in the young kids who couldn't go on school trips because of lack of money. We want to expose these people. That is why we are going to the High Court. That is why Teresa May has announced an inquiry into undercover policing. They have even named the judge who is going to do it. His name is Lord Justice Pitchford. We want to make sure that the spying on the Stephen Lawrence family is in it, but we also want to make sure that the spying on the trade unions is in it as well. That's the kind of thing we should be exposing in the Pitchford Inquiry. (*Applause*)

We are also at the High Court. I can tell you that 580 construction workers have joined the High Court case against nearly 40 of the biggest construction companies. The date of the inquiry has been named. It is going to take place in May 2016. They have set aside 10 weeks at the High Court for this trial. The companies are absolutely scared — I must mind my words — stiff of what is going to be exposed.

In the last session in the court one of the QCs for the trade union side read out a document that said that all of the construction companies were directed to destroy all the evidence of what they were doing. This is a complete scandal. If we did that, that would be perverting the course of justice, but big multi-national companies are doing it and they are getting away with it. We have asked them to disclose documents, but they have refused to disclose documents. Even when they have disclosed them sometimes, they have refused to give us the names of the managers and directors who are involved, and in a written document they gave to the court they said that the reason why they refused to give the names was because, if they gave the names out, the Blacklist Support Group and the GMB might turn up outside of their offices, protest with direct action and it is very upsetting for the people who we are taking the direct action against. I will tell you this. It is because of that that we are going to carry on the direct action against them. *(Applause)* We have been told many times during this matter that this is a big human rights scandal, and what we should do as the victims of the human rights' scandal is to adopt a dignified silence and leave it to the lawyers and the politicians. First of all, I am not a victim. I am a trade unionists and I think we can change things. I refuse to be called a victim. *(Applause)* Secondly, I refuse to be dignified and I damn well ain't going to be silent on this. We are going to come back again, again and again until we get justice. Until we get justice, no peace! Thank you very much GMB for allowing me to speak. Thank you. It's a pleasure. *(Cheers, whistles and table banging amidst an extended standing ovation)*

THE PRESIDENT: Dave, let me say a million thanks. I hope everyone buys your book. What he didn't tell you is that not only the effect it had on Dave and the rest of those who were blacklisted, but their brothers, sisters, mums and dads and, as they had children, their children were also blacklisted from ever getting work. They had dossiers on every single one of them. That we know is true, so it was an on-going campaign against these individuals and their families. It is an absolute disgrace. You didn't say the word, but there should be shit poured all over them and buried in the sump.

Colleagues, I thank you for waiting. I think Richard and Dave for speaking to you. I will give you a little bit longer for lunch. We will return at 2.15.

*Adjourned for lunch.*

## **AFTERNOON SESSION**

*(Congress reassembled at 2.00 p.m.)*

THE PRESIDENT: Will Congress please come to order. Congress, please take your seats. Colleagues, before we move to Congress business could I call on Helen Johnson to move SOC Report No.6. Helen.

## **STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO.6**

SIS. H. JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): President, Congress, withdrawn motions. The SOC has been advised that the following motion has been withdrawn, that is, Motion 70, Training of Workplace Reps, standing in the name of London Region. President, Congress, I move SOC Report No.6.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Helen. Does Congress agree the report? *(Agreed)* All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried. Thank you, Helen. Thank you, Barry.

*Standing Orders Committee Report No.6 was Carried.*

THE PRESIDENT: Before we begin the finance debate, could I please welcome Phil Clarke from our external auditors. Welcome, Phil, wherever you are. There are copies of the 2014 Annual Report available on the Information Desk. I will take the next two items together. We will hear from the movers and seconders of Motion 65 and the CEC Rule Amendments. I will then call on Maria Ludkin to respond to Motion 65 and give an update on UNIONLINE. We will then vote on the motion and CEC Rule Amendments.

## **UNION ORGANISATION: UNION BENEFITS & SERVICES**

THE PRESIDENT: Could I have the mover of Motion 65, UNIONLINE, Wales & South West Region. Will the mover and seconder please come up?

### **UNIONLINE MOTION 65**

#### **65. UNIONLINE**

This Congress welcomes the introduction of the new legal services for the GMB, however, the direct approach between the member and the solicitor by-passes the Branch Secretary who, unless contacted by the member or the solicitor, does not know a claim has been submitted.

This can have many implications, not just in the pursuance of the claim but also in the relationship between members, Workplace Organisers and the Branch Secretary.

We ask Congress to ensure that procedures are introduced to ensure that Branch Secretaries are informed when claims are submitted, and are regularly updated on the progress those claims are making and the settlements that members receive.

DEVONPORT BRANCH,  
*Wales & South West Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. N. WARN (GMB Wales & South West): President, Congress, can I say first and foremost that our union's incentive in setting up its own law firm has the full support of both my branch and region. Since UNIONLINE was launched on 29<sup>th</sup> May last year it has provided a means by which the GMB has been able to exercise control over provisions and costs of legal services to members in a way that was not possible previously. The continued evolving legal market since the Jackson reforms were introduced enabled the decision to establish UNIONLINE. Whilst mergers and takeovers abound and some law firms struggle to survive, our new enterprise goes from strength to strength. Not only are we still able to offer high quality cost competitive legal assistance on personal injuries and employment rights, we are also looking to expand the type of range of services available to members.

Congress, UNIONLINE is already a success story in both service and financial terms and we have every confidence that it will get better. The one downside, however, which arises out of the facility for members to contact UNIONLINE directly is the loss of initial and ongoing contact between the members and the branch secretaries. Under the old system, of course, the member would fill out a TU56 form for personal injury which the branch secretary would be required to sign off. The process allowed for the role of the secretary in facilitating the member's claim to be highlighted and helping to emphasise the importance of his or her function in assisting branch members. Many branch secretaries

will also act as advisers and comforters guiding the member through what sometimes could be a traumatic journey on making a claim against an employer for negligence.

We feel that the new system as it is seems to cause the relationship to become a little divided and the secretary now has no cause to be aware of the submission of a membership claim or knowledge on how it might progress and, of course, how it might be concluded. A statement comes out reported to the regional council and it is very difficult to gain any real understanding as to the success being achieved for our members.

Congress, UNIONLINE is something that we are all rightly proud of, an example of the GMB treading where other unions fear to do so. It is just a case, really, of finding a way to keep the branch secretaries informed of claims of members and allowing the publicity of positive outcomes to be made within the branch membership. I am sure there is a solution that would not impinge upon or detract from the excellent legal services being offered to the members and their families. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder?

BRO. A. DE BANKS (GMB Wales & South West): President, Congress, colleagues – *(Applause)* – You're not going to get me to bow! As my follicle-challenged colleague has already said, UNIONLINE is a growing success and it is going from strength to strength, but we have a few observations and I am aware that many branch secretaries share them with us.

The chief among these observations is the fact that we are not kept abreast of the goings on of our members in terms of their claims, even just the momentum or any roadblocks that have arisen that our members expect us to know about, expect us to know the details of their case because we always normally have done. All we ask is for Congress to institute a protocol for the basics of our members' cases to be shared with our branch secretaries, with the permission of those members involved, so that we can fulfil our roles and better assist those members. I second. *(Applause)*

## **CEC RULE AMENDMENTS**

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Congress, we will take the CEC response after the CEC Rule Amendments. The CEC Rule Amendments can be found on page 117 in the Final Agenda and Congress Guide and the CEC is supporting all of these. I will call Paul Kenny to move and it will be formally seconded. CECRA4 Rule 26, CECRA5 Rule 26, Legal Assistance. Paul.

## **CECRA4 RULE 26, CECRA5 RULE 26, LEGAL ASSISTANCE**

### **Rule 26 Legal assistance**

- 1 The Central Executive Council will have the power to authorise any regional secretary of the union, in line with any terms and conditions it sets, to provide legal assistance for any financial member. This can be to deal with any matter connected with the member's employment, as long as the regional secretary is satisfied that the member should take legal action.**
- 2 Any member who wants legal assistance from us must tell the branch secretary or regional organiser as soon as possible.**
- 3 The regional secretary will have the right to decide whether to**

**nominate a solicitor or other representative to represent a member under this rule. 33**

**4 If we agree to provide legal assistance for any member, the member must keep at all times to any terms and conditions we set, and in particular must do the following.**

- **Continue to be a member of the union and pay contributions as set out in by these rules. However, if the member changes employment or is unemployed while we provide legal assistance, the regional secretary may decide to limit the period for which the member needs to pay full contributions.**
- **Accept and follow the advice of the solicitor or representative.**
- **Co-operate with the solicitor or representative, and in particular:**
  - **reply to correspondence;**
  - **keep to arranged appointments;**
  - **give them as much relevant information as possible; and**
  - **tell them if they change their address or name.**

**5 As long as the member receiving legal assistance keeps to the conditions set out in paragraph 4 above, they will not have to pay any legal costs that arise from their claim. However, if the member fails to keep to any of the conditions, or deliberately gives false information to the solicitor or representative, or any doctor, engineer or other expert involved in the claim, we may withdraw the legal assistance. If this happens, the member will not be entitled to any indemnity for the legal costs run up during their claim. We will be entitled to recover from the member any costs we have already run up.**

**6 If a regional secretary requests, the Central Executive Council may approve a scheme for providing legal assistance in any class of matter in the region concerned. If the Central Executive Council approves a scheme under this clause, it may amend the scheme or attach any conditions it feels are necessary. If the Central Executive Council approves a scheme under this clause, it may at any time withdraw its approval or change any conditions it has attached, as long as doing so would not affect the assistance we agreed to provide before the date the approval is withdrawn.**

**7 Despite anything in these rules (and in particular rule 6), the regional secretary will make the final decision about whether we provide legal assistance.**

**8 We will not provide legal assistance for a claim against the union or any of our officials or employees, in their capacity as such.**

#### **CECRA4 Legal Assistance**

##### **Clause 1**

Line 3 after "assistance", insert "through UNIONLINE"

Line 3 delete "be to deal with", insert "include"

##### **Clause 2**

Line 1 delete "tell"

Line 1 after "must", insert "contact UNIONLINE,"

### Clause 3

Line 1 delete “whether to nominate a ”.

After “decide”, insert “which UNIONLINE nominated solicitor should”

Line 2 delete “or other representative”

Line 3, after “rule.” Insert “Alternatively the regional secretary can nominate a GMB officer or member to provide representation.”

### Clause 4

Line 2 delete “we set”, insert “set by UNIONLINE or the UNIONLINE nominated solicitor”

### Clause 5

Line 2 after “out” insert “by UNIONLINE or the UNIONLINE nominated solicitor”

### Clause 6

Line 2, after assistance, insert “through UNIONLINE”

### New Clause 7

In these rules UNIONLINE refers to Trade Union Legal LLP trading as Unionline.

Renumber subsequent clauses

Rule to read

### Rule 26 Legal assistance

1 The Central Executive Council will have the power to authorise any regional secretary of the union, in line with any terms and conditions it sets, to provide legal assistance through UNIONLINE for any financial member. This can include any matter connected with the member’s employment, as long as the regional secretary is satisfied that the member should take legal action.

2 Any member who wants legal assistance from us must contact UNIONLINE, the branch secretary or regional organiser as soon as possible.

3 The regional secretary will have the right to decide which UNIONLINE nominated solicitor should represent a member under this rule. Alternatively the regional secretary can nominate a GMB officer or member to provide representation.

4 If we agree to provide legal assistance for any member, the member must keep at all times to any terms and conditions set by UNIONLINE or the UNIONLINE nominated solicitor, and in particular must do the following.

- Continue to be a member of the union and pay contributions as set out in by these rules. However, if the member changes employment or is unemployed while we provide legal assistance, the regional secretary may decide to limit the period for which the member needs to pay full contributions.
- Accept and follow the advice of the solicitor or representative.
- Co-operate with the solicitor or representative, and in particular:
  - reply to correspondence;
  - keep to arranged appointments;
  - give them as much relevant information as possible; and
  - tell them if they change their address or name.

5 As long as the member receiving legal assistance keeps to the conditions set out by UNIONLINE or the UNIONLINE nominated solicitor in paragraph 4 above, they will not have to pay any legal costs that arise from their claim. However, if the member fails to keep to any of the conditions, or deliberately gives false information to the

solicitor or representative, or any doctor, engineer or other expert involved in the claim, we may withdraw the legal assistance. If this happens, the member will not be entitled to any indemnity for the legal costs run up during their claim. We will be entitled to recover from the member any costs we have already run up.

6 If a regional secretary requests, the Central Executive Council may approve a scheme for providing legal assistance through UNIONLINE in any class of matter in the region concerned. If the Central Executive Council approves a scheme under this clause, it may amend the scheme or attach any conditions it feels are necessary. If the Central Executive Council approves a scheme under this clause, it may at any time withdraw its approval or change any conditions it has attached, as long as doing so would not affect the assistance we agreed to provide before the date the approval is withdrawn.

7 In these rules UNIONLINE refers to Trade Union Legal LLP trading as Unionline.

8 Despite anything in these rules (and in particular rule 6), the regional secretary will make the final decision about whether we provide legal assistance.

9 We will not provide legal assistance for a claim against the union or any of our officials or employees, in their capacity as such.

*(Carried)*

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you. President, colleagues, I am not going to be responding to Motion 65, that is going to be done by Maria Ludkin. I am just moving CECRA4 and CECRA5. It is all about Rule 26. In terms of the CECRA4, it is all about ensuring that UNIONLINE is enshrined in the Union's Rule Book. Maria will explain why that will be a pretty sensible commercial thing to do when she does her report. It is a very valuable service. It is part of our union's legal service. It is a valuable service to the members and I have to tell you, and Maria will tell you more, it is an incredibly valuable commercial contract as well. That was not how we set it up but that is how it has turned out. It must be right to protect it by enshrining it in the union's Rule Book, which means, frankly, if people want to tinker around with it they have to come back to Congress. That seems to be a very sensible stopgap or brake to make sure that if people want to change it or people want to manoeuvre it, or maybe even if someone wants to sell it, they would have to have the authority of Congress to do that.

On CECRA5 I am going to be slightly vague because, obviously, it is a long complicated issue. It is a slight change in the wording of legal assistance to deal with a recent legal decision, and detailed explanations are available from each regional secretary, your own regional secretary. Frankly, that is probably the best way to communicate it on a one-to-one basis. I move those two, please.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Formally seconded.

*CECRA 4 and CECRA 5 were formally seconded.*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Thank you, Malcolm. Does anyone wish to come in on the debate on CECRA4 or CECRA5? No? Andrew, you spoilt it!

BRO. A. NEWMAN (Southern): I just want to say in response to some of the things that have been said about branch secretaries, I am a branch secretary of a branch with 4,500 members. My experience of dealing with UNIONLINE is that it has been a pleasure. There have been wrinkles but what I have found is that we can phone up and resolve them. One of the things our members are all able to say now, every one of our members can say, "I am a co-owner of a law firm," and because it is our law firm when we do have a wrinkle we can phone up. I have a case going on. We have been talking about the dispute with Marks & Spencer, and the Tempay people. We have 240 of them putting legal claims

forward against DHL, Wincanton, 24/7, and Tempay at the moment. That has gone through UNIONLINE. It has been a pleasure to deal with it. When we had such a big case going forward, to be honest, we did not know how to deal with it but the region rang up Richard Asano, and said, "Well, how do we deal with it?" In two or three days UNIONLINE had sorted out a protocol for dealing with a very, very complex massive case with four respondents and 240 claimants. It has been a pleasure and not just as a branch secretary. I know from someone on the Regional Committee that you get the same message from everyone else, and Southern Region Branch Secretaries. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Anyone else? No? I call Maria Ludkin to respond to Motion 65 on behalf of the CEC.

SIS. M. LUDKIN (National Officer, Corporate & Legal Affairs): President, Congress, National Officer for Legal and Corporate Affairs. A year has now passed since I last stood before you to announce the launch of our national legal service UNIONLINE. Since then we have rolled out across the whole country, including Northern Ireland, a one-stop legal shop for all our members with additional services for their families. The GMB in a successful partnership with the Communication Workers Union were the first trade unions to understand that we could provide a better legal service to our members consistent across the country if we managed the service ourselves rather than sending out work to different law firms, working under different conditions across the country.

Now, 12 months on, I want to report to you that we have taken over 88,000 enquiries, opened 38,000 new cases, assessed 10,000 personal injury claims, 6,000 wills have been drafted, and 1,000 compromise agreements, and we have also taken an additional 19,000 helpline calls from members with enquiries about everything from landlord problems to worries about tax credits and benefits. Most importantly, we have advised on more than 4,000 employment claims, helping members with advice, support, and representation at a time when employment rights are under direct attack from this Government.

We now employ almost 50 staff based in Sheffield all committed to working for trade union members and working with the particular issues the GMB faces in all the workplaces where we are organised. Because our staff do not work for a profit-focused law firm they have plenty of time to talk, to advise, and most importantly to listen when members call in worried about changes that are happening at work, or Health & Safety issues, or an accident because the council can no longer afford to mend the roads properly. UNIONLINE staff are building stronger relationships with the regions so that they know the relevant officers and can alert them when members need help in the workplace, or they can see an issue emerging which we could build into a GMB campaign.

Recently, we had a member contact us to let us know that Next stores had removed the small additional payment that they gave to staff who worked on Sundays, without any consultation at all. UNIONLINE immediately alerted the National Officers and we have launched a national campaign to advise our members of their rights to bring unlawful deduction and discrimination claims.

Let me tell you about one of our most recent cases involving Daniel, who worked as a refuse collector in Bradford, when in May last year the vehicle he was working with ran him over and left him with life-changing leg injuries. Whilst the legal case is still being fought, UNIONLINE were able to ensure that Daniel went straight from hospital into expert rehabilitation and now just 10 months later he has been fitted with first-class prosthetics, some of which he uses to go running and he has actually returned to work. (*Applause*)

We have had some very good law firms work for us in the past but now with UNIONLINE it is the GMB looking after our own members, making sure everyone gets the help and assistance they need as fast as possible because we are all part of the GMB family. We are continuing to grow and rolling out new services every few weeks. We have just launched a 24/7 criminal law service designed to provide urgent help and assistance to our members working in social care, the NHS, probation centres, and schools, who may face allegations of misconduct at work.

We now have a single call-in number for our motor claims legal service so if you have an accident in your car we can handle every aspect from collecting you, getting you a temporary car, handling the repairs, and your entire insurance claim, and any personal injury claim that goes with it.

We have also been working on building our IT and management systems to get more detailed information out to the regions and this summer we will start sending information directly to branches on a very regular basis so you will know if anyone in your branch has a claim, how we are managing it, and how it is settled. We are constantly looking at new types of enquiries, and looking to find ways to add new services which will add real value to members and their families so that we can provide a better service and help our officers recruit.

Congress, there is something else. When we set up UNIONLINE we wanted to provide a national legal service that we could afford, which would get round the challenges that the government had set for us in continuing to offer a free legal service to members, but there was something that we never thought about which was we were actually building a legal services business and that business would have a commercial value which would make it an extremely valuable asset for the GMB.

Law firms are measured by the amount of work in progress, or the WIP that they have running and I am proud to tell you that your law firm has a WIP value of £25m. (*Applause*) That is £25m worth of work that we were previously just giving away that we now own within the GMB. To give you an idea of what that really means, when a law firm is up for sale, the price is usually set at six times the WIP. In our case, it would mean if someone tried to buy UNIONLINE today they would have to offer us £150m. That is the value of this business. (*Applause*)

It is for that reason that we propose the rule change to you today, which firmly embeds UNIONLINE within the Rule Book. We want to make sure that no major decisions can be taken about this valuable GMB asset without the approval of this Congress. From the very beginning I said to you that UNIONLINE was your law firm, these changes to the rules on legal assistance ensure that the Rule Book reflects how we now run our national legal service and make sure that the ownership and control rests where it should, with the supreme authority of this Congress. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Maria. Anyone wish to speak on the report from Maria? Wales & South West Region, now you have heard Maria's report, do you accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Yes. Thank you. Does Congress? (*Agreed*) All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

*Motion 65 was Carried.*

THE PRESIDENT: Can we now move to the CEC Rule Amendments, A4, Rule 26 Legal Assistance. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

*Rule Amendment CECRA4 was Carried.*

THE PRESIDENT: Rule A5, Legal Assistance, Rule 26, all those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

*Rule Amendment CECRA5 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Thank you, Maria. I have to say for me personally I have used UNIONLINE a few times and I was surprised at some of the knowledge that they gave to me which I would have been arguing for six months with the employer that I was right and they were wrong. I am afraid the result shook me but it just shows you that you do not know everything so it is a learning curve for me. It is a valuable service and next month I will have them in my borough on the bridge in the Civic Centre to explain to our members how they can use UNIONLINE. That is the first time so I am absolutely delighted. Please make use of this service because it is your service. I thank the union for doing it. Oh dear, those legal brains! We will now move to the vote which we have done and the rule amendments which we have done.

## **UNION ORGANISATION: FINANCE & CONTRIBUTIONS**

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to item 3, Union Organisation: Finance & Contributions. I would like to take Items 3, 4 and 5 together. I intend to hear all the movers and seconders of the Finance and Contributions motions when the General Secretary will give the CEC position as part of his speech on the CEC Finance Report. I now move to Motion 49, Tax Allowances for Activists, Midland & East Coast Region, Motion 50, Yorkshire Region, Motion 58, London Region, and Motion 62, Midland Region.

### **TAX ALLOWANCES FOR ACTIVISTS MOTION 49**

#### **49. TAX ALLOWANCES FOR ACTIVISTS**

This Congress is disappointed at the lack of progress in reaching an agreement with HMRC on future tax allowances for Branch Secretaries and activists and calls for some urgency to be applied to improving the current situation.

LEICESTERSHIRE 2000 BRANCH  
*Midland & East Coast Region*

*(Withdrawn)*

SIS. M. JENKINS (Midland & East Coast): Madam President, colleagues, I support members who live within Derbyshire County. This county covers 2,625 km<sup>2</sup>, one of the largest counties in the UK. This involves me travelling quite a lot between meetings and having large mileage claims. I have agreed substances for my branch which help towards some of these expenses but as I am paid by BACS this is then taxed. Not only do I have to pay tax on my petrol, I am taxed again. Our branch secretaries do a tremendous amount of work for our branches and these comrades are also given a subsistence to help acknowledge all the work that they do but once again this is classed as a second income and taxed. We are supposed to be fighting for a fair day's pay for a fair day's work but where is this happening for us? While some taxes, like tax credits, have helped improve living conditions for many of our members, just because we are passionate activists, comrades, we should not be taxed by the HMRC in this way yet again. Therefore, we are disappointed at the lack of progress in reaching agreement with HMRC on future tax allowances for branch secretaries and activists and Congress calls for some urgency to apply to improve the current situation. I move. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder?

SIS. D. MILLS (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, as lay officials we had an agreement with the HMRC on tax allowances called “special dispensation”. This was removed by HMRC and we want it back. The GMB is proud of its negotiating skills in the workplace so let’s put these to good use and get the special dispensations back. I second it. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I now move to Motion 50, Yorkshire Region.

## **TO STOP THE 10P-14P INCREASE IN PETROL PRICES MOTION 50**

### **50. TO STOP THE 10P – 14P INCREASE IN PETROL PRICES**

This Congress calls on our union to put an end to motorway garages and garages in coastal areas putting between 10p and 14p per litre on petrol prices.

In the major cities the prices rise by 1 or 2 pence per litre.

Union people putting in expense claims for driving for our union are having to charge for this unfair practice and pass the cost onto the GMB union.

YORKSHIRE COPPER WORKS BRANCH  
*Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region*

*(Referred)*

BRO. W. HINSLIFFE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Mary, Congress, I found when I got this motion first off it was a bit complex so I thought I better get some advice from somebody who knows all about the petrol industry. I got this advice. He said, “You’re okay, get on with it,” so I will have to thank Andy Burnham when I see him! (*Laughter*) I might do – Yes, No. Yes, No.

Anyhow, moving on, our branch put this to our region and our branch is 100 years old, and when we put it forward we thought it would not be as bad because we thought Labour would be in office so we would have some chance of trying to get some movement from a Labour government, with support from sponsored MPs and things like that, but of course everything went sour. We finished up with these posh gits in now so we have no chance. As regards the petrol industry, they have shares in BP and all kinds of things like that, so there is no way I can actually see us getting ‘owt out of it.

The thing that worries me is that Ed Miliband when he did his manifesto it was chipped in stone, as we know. He talked about fuel problems, about people not being able to afford gas and electric, and he talked about switching and a two-year freeze, and things like that, but on this fuel situation there is no way you are going to switch, they are all the same. If you go from BP to Esso you will not get one from the other. They are just robbing us blind, really. That has taken long enough and I think there should be some approach from our union to try and get some movement.

For example, you get a forecourt situation where a fellow has paid his money and comes out as though he is going to a wedding dressed in a pinstripe suit, £70 on the meter. A young lass comes in behind him with two kids in back, puts five quid in, looks up at meter and that’s it. £70 is half of her road tax for the year. This class distinction is getting worse.

When you talk about driving a car it is a blank cheque for the Treasury because you get into it, you are paying for your road tax, you are paying fines for speeding, parking, licences, MOT, and VAT. It is no ending. It just drains the economy. The poor people are feeling it more than others.

Another situation is in the towns, it goes up one pence or two pence a time. When you go into a motorway situation, it just rockets up £1.20, and things like that. It shows you what a fiddle it is. When the election was coming it went down nine pence to give everybody a feel good factor. As soon as it was decided and finished with, it went back up again, climbed back to where it was before the election.

When we talk about going on to motorways, it is a safe drive onto the motorway for the big tanker driver, but to give a concession now about 5p in the rural areas where they are going round these lanes and that, with my eyesight I cannot see a bleeding 5p, never mind benefit from it. It just shows you it is a total waste of time.

I move this motion and I hope that we can in future get some sense out of it. We have plenty of hard-hitters in our union, people who can talk and debate. We have the council, and people like that, and it is about time we tried to get some movement on this. It is a rat race. They are fleecing all our drivers. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Bill. Bill, you'll have to put a tiger in that tank; that might get you there quicker and cheaper! Secunder?

BRO. S. WOODHOUSE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): President, Congress, I have just a few statistics on this one. I think Bill has done as bit of a job there telling you about it. An RAC study showed that the majority of drivers knew the fuel prices, unlike some people, and agreed that service stations and motorways were well overpriced. Many motorists are risking running out of fuel on motorways because they do not want to fill up. Over 15,000 drivers ran out of fuel on British motorways in a 12-month period. This is to avoid having to pay 15 pence a litre more. It is like £8 for a tank of fuel. Companies run fleet cars. The union runs cars they have to pay for so inevitably it always comes back to us.

In 2013, the ministers announced that there would be a system of motorway signs showing fuel prices on all service stations on that stretch of road so you could make the decision. Where is that? As usual, this government have moved no further forward with this. Fuel prices also affect haulage companies who predominantly have to use motorways. The poorest households in this country spend a quarter of their income running a car so families are getting ripped off enough without having it at the pumps as well. Please support. I second. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Thank you, Simon. The mover of Motion 58, London Region.

## **GMB MEMBERSHIP – REVIEW OF SUBSCRIPTION RATES MOTION 58**

### **58. GMB MEMBERSHIP – REVIEW OF SUBSCRIPTION LEVELS FOR LOWEST PAID**

This Congress recognises the difficulties in recruiting and retaining new members in the current economic climate. Some of the lowest paid workers and those employed only part-time or on zero-hours contracts often feel unable to pay the level of subscriptions presently being asked of them.

Congress agrees to set up a Working Party to look into the various rates of membership and to examine the potential for making changes that could make joining and remaining with GMB more affordable for the lowest paid and part-time workers.

CITY OF LONDON BRANCH

*(Withdrawn)*

BRO. D. BYRNE (London): President, Congress, I have been attending Congress on and off now for around 20 years and I do not ever recall any debates about the overall concept of how we set our subscription rates. We add five pence a week some years or 10 pence a week other years to the grade 1 and grade 2 categories of membership. Currently, full-time employees will pay £12.14 a month or £2.80 a week and Grade 2 membership costs £7.15 a month or £1.65 a week for people working 20 hours a week or less.

The problem we have is whether or not this approach alone is still relevant to the changing dynamics of the workforce. There are thousands and thousands of workers, mostly women, who work 24 hours a week because to work more would disqualify them from claiming in-work benefits which they rely upon due to being paid minimum wage hourly rates. How is it fair that they be expected to pay the same subscriptions as full-time workers earning three or four times their salary.

Then we have zero-hours contracts workers to consider. How can it be fair that workers who get work some weeks and not others be expected to pay the same rate as those with regular full-time employment.

I do not claim to have the answer to everything and this is a very difficult issue. I have deliberately left out suggesting alternative solutions from the motion as it is not my intention that the union should lose income by implementing changes and extensive research should be carried out before any proposals are ready to be properly considered. It may be that a third level of subscriptions set somewhere between the current rates for Grades 1 and 2 could be a way forward for both the categories of workers that I have referred to.

This motion only asks for a working party to be set up to look into the matter and to come back with some suggestions. We need to be able to recruit, retain, and organise the groups of workers that I have identified and a fairer subscription arrangement would surely help us to be able to do this. I know the CEC are going to ask you to oppose this but we will not resolve the issue by burying our heads in the sand. We need to look at this issue sensibly and seriously and consider what can be done moving forward. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Danny. Secunder?

BRO. M. AKBAR (London): President, Congress, there are almost 630,000 members of GMB and it is growing as well, over 15% increase in the last five years, and may I see it continue. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate everybody that has worked so hard in the last few years. This is a strong reflection of the value of GMB. Our members feel protected, empowered to deal with the issues, obstacles, they face in their place of work but the workplace is continuously changing and evolving. Most recently there has been an increase in the number of people on part-time contracts and there are those on zero-hours contracts. Often there are people that need us to support most but a lot of them feel unable to afford membership of the trade union on the current rates.

I know we are committed to provide a service to all those who need it. I call on the GMB to reach out for those people who need us most. We would like to set up a working party that would review the rates of the membership to ensure that the joining up and remaining a member to the GMB is accessible to all. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mo. The mover of Motion 62?

**REDUCTION IN ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP OF GMB UNION BY ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION IN ADVANCE  
MOTION 62**

**62. REDUCTION IN ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP OF GMB UNION BY ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION IN ADVANCE**

This Congress instructs the CEC to investigate the possibility of cost savings to members, by paying GMB membership by subscription in advance.

This is the practice of many membership based organisations in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and would be attractive to many members and prospective members in the future.

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

*(Referred)*

BRO. D. LASCELLES (Midland & East Coast): Ironically, before I begin this afternoon, President, I must say that although the CEC did not approve particularly of the previous motion it almost dovetails in with that one in the sense which I will explain.

This Congress instructs the CEC to investigate the possibility of costs savings to members by paying GMB membership by subscription in advance. This is the practice of many membership-based organisations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and would be attractive to members and prospective members in the future. Congress, this is the question that I was asked by a new member when I signed them up. It flummoxed me for a moment, I can tell you.

It is not just a reasonable question to pose, it is a reasonable expectancy when in these difficult times of managing finances our members are constantly having to seek costs savings. Be, therefore, in no doubt as to where this motion originated from and it has to be set at an attractive level to be of benefit to them.

The CEC is supporting the remitting of the motion for the precise purpose contained therein and the Midland & East Coast Region are delighted to do so. In a moment we will in seconding this motion be telling you of the benefits to our union itself. Colleagues, before Mary-Louise comes up, please support Motion 62. Thanks very much. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David. Secunder?

SIS. M-L HARRISON (Midland & East Coast): Thank you for that introduction, David. President, General Secretary, Congress, membership of trade unions is falling. GMB has bucked this trend but for how long. Why are trade unions struggling to recruit: because of the continual attack on us by the Tories, their fat-cat donors, and the right-wing press. The changing political and economic base of our country, the erosion of our employment rights and the disillusionment of our workers means the problem is not going away. People's working lives are getting harder. In Leicester, where I live, we have the lowest level of disposable income in the UK. People need to feel that what they are spending their hard-earned money on works for them. We need to modernise and engage with workers in a way that they feel meets their needs. Show them that we offer value for money and the flexibility they need to help them manage their busy lives and their budgets. This is not a new practice. Many have gone before us and already implemented this method of payment. It will enable us to automatically renew their membership and offer unrestricted access to our services but they in turn will have the flexibility

to join and access our services at a time that suits them. You could argue that it potentially offers us all a win-win situation. Please support Motion 62. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mary. Congress, does anyone else wish to come in on the debate? It is the finance.

SIS. B. WINTON (London): I am speaking in support of Motion 58, the review of subscription rates and speaking on this from the position of how important it is to make sure we review this from the position of being a young worker. As my comrades said in their speeches, the lowest paid workers by definition those who need unions the most and they are disproportionately also the workers that unions need the most. Young workers are some of the lowest paid workers in this country. It is now legal for apprentices to work below the minimum wage. We are more likely to be on zero-hours contracts, more likely to be on temporary contracts than full-time ones.

The day after the General Election I was one of a lot of people who got on social media and started trying to talk to people about what they could do to stop the Tory cuts, to protect themselves at work, and one of the things we were all suggesting was that they joined a trade union. I spoke to so many people who were willing to consider trade union membership, people my age and younger, who then, when I told them what the membership rates were, were gutted because they just could not afford it. It is absolutely vital that union structures change to welcome young members into the union. If we do not do that, we will die; and membership rates have to be part of that review. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Becky. Do you wish to come up?

BRO. B. GOLDING (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I am speaking against Motion 62. We have just talked about people not being able to earn enough money to pay the subscription as they are, so why should the people who have got lots of money get a cheaper rate than working-class people. I do not agree with that. (*Applause*)

BRO. P. DUFFY (GMB Scotland): President, comrades, as the speaker before me said, and we were talking earlier about low-paid people and trying to reduce the amount they pay, it definitely discriminates against the low paid to have somebody who can afford to pay upfront get it cheaper. No. I oppose. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Pat. Anyone else? You get to reply after the CEC position. Okay? I call Paul Kenny.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Hopefully, you have all read that particular book. I will also be responding to Motions 49, 50, 58, and 62, and then put the CEC's finance proposals to Congress. Colleagues, you should have as I said those accounts in your bag. Hopefully, you have looked at them. This year, as we promised last year, we ran a special fringe meeting on Sunday so that delegates who were not quite sure what the accounts were all about could have a chance of a deeper and more informal discussion about the union's finances. Frankly, we think that was pretty successful. A lot of people asked some interesting questions.

What we are proposing is that we keep that process, that people have the opportunity to ask questions about the accounts at a fringe meeting on the Sunday. Of course, that in itself, hopefully, will demystify some of the documents. It does not take away the right of people to submit questions on the

financial accounts but, hopefully, it will help people to understand. We did not receive any questions by the deadline set.

I turn to the motions now, please. Motion 49, quite rightly, people are disappointed about the lack of progress in reaching agreement with the HMRC on future tax allowances for branch activists. This was of course a negotiated flat rate allowance for both branch secretaries and effectively for shop stewards, and HMRC unilaterally took that away.

I can tell you absolutely there has been no lack of urgency on our side. We have done a massive amount of work over two years dealing with the HMRC and their investigation into not just our union but almost all unions, and apart from some small tidying up they found our systems to be sound. I am sure they would have liked to have found a lot of other problems, as maybe they did elsewhere.

Everyone knows that the HMRC staffing has been cut and cut pretty dramatically, which is one reason why serious tax evaders have such an easy time, but the GMB continues to press weekly to negotiate a fresh dispensation for branches and everybody else who was previously covered. In the meantime, we ask the mover to withdraw with a clear assurance that we are on the case and doing our best to get HMRC to cooperate.

While the mover was moving Motion 49, I thought what was said was that the travel was being taxed, people were putting in travel receipts and they were being taxed, and also subsistence was being taxed. If that is happening, that should not be happening. That is not right. I am very happy to ask someone from the NAU to come and see you or to meet with the region to make sure that you are not paying tax on issues that are not taxable.

On the basis that we are pushing the issue, and it is in our interest to push the issue, I would like you to withdraw it.

On Motion 50, that identifies difference in petrol pricing on the coast, of course, but the most scandalous example I think you come across is on the motorways. It is incredible. Truly. The answer we get, because we have raised this before, is that it costs extra. I would have thought taking petrol down the motorway to a garage that is available seems to me to be the most pretty efficient way of getting it there. They probably have to go down that same motorway off a junction, down a few lanes, in order to get to another garage that is, by the way, 20p a litre cheaper. We do think it is a scandal.

We feel we should have a real go at this. There is excessive profiteering here. What we would like to do is to refer this so we can take up with the petrol companies and start to do a media campaign, a political campaign, so that we can actually highlight it. I am sure like us there are absolutely tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of people who every time they are forced to use a motorway garage, and of course you have to, don't you, every time they use it they say, "Blimey, who fixes these prices?" Now, that is why we seek reference. We think there is actually a big public concern about this.

I now turn to Motion 58. That asks us to examine the potential for new lower contribution rates. I love you, Danny. We have done many things together and I have missed you the years you have not been here but it has been the years you have not been here that we had the reviews you said we did not have. (*Laughter*) Sorry, mate. I love you. We did go through this. The Northern Region did a massive amount of work some years ago and we looked at the issue about whether we could have sliding contributions, percentage contributions. Then we had another look at it a few years ago.

The truth of the matter is that it just does not work; we never find the right solution, which is why we said, let's have the flexibility to have appropriate rates on campaigns. I do not actually think and I would argue if you went to Swindon where they managed to recruit the workforce who were on six hours a week and agency workers and got proper recognition and proper pay rates, that it is a drawback. In fact, I do not think the union subscription is a problem when people want something done. I do not recognise the descriptions that the union is dying. Sorry, I will illustrate that again in a minute. That is not the case. It is not about recruitment. We recruit an awful lot of people every year, 75,000 to 90,000 people a year into the union. The problem is organising them, which is much more difficult.

You are right, I do ask you to withdraw but I do not want to ask you to withdraw without some sort of option and the option is this, Danny. It exists. There is within the facility of the financial rules and the subscription rules of the union the ability to set certain rates for tackling certain groups or targeting certain industries. I am very happy to support the London Region having a special rate set so that you can go out, and I hope you are right and I am wrong, and that we come back in a year's time and you have 5,000 members on zero hours and you are charging them 25 pence a week. If you can do that, then I think you have a case. We have had two reviews already and each one ended up saying there is not a system. So, rather than just have some sliding scale, even within zero hours, how do you determine what people do? The reality of life is there is flexibility within the finance structures already, the contribution structures, to have promotional rates, and regions have done it in the past.

That is my offer, if you like. I ask you to withdraw but I am very happy to support the London Region having a promotional rate for targeting zero hours workers, or workers on very low pay, because in the long run maybe it works. Frankly, in situations like that I will be the happiest person to be proved wrong but rather than set up a working group, let's just cut through the ice; the facility exists to do it, you try it, and if you can make it work you bring it back and you say, "Look, this is a model that we can follow across the union." On that basis, I would ask you to consider withdrawing.

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Paul.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Yes, I loaded it back to you, Mary. You noticed that, did you?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I did!

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Motion 62, the reason I think it is worth looking at is that it is very complicated and quite difficult in many ways. The points I wrote down in my notes were, you are paying 12 months in advance, it will just not be possible for many, particularly those on low incomes, and also there is the question, because you can afford to pay the union subscription should you get a cheaper rate, and a couple of colleagues have made that point.

I would ask colleagues not to oppose the resolution, allow it to be referred, let's look at it, let's come back and have a sensible discussion as we do on the Finance Committee and other parts of the Executive, and then of course it will be reported back in the Congress papers next year. Just saying No on that basis, there may be other areas that we can look at that may be useful in dealing with maybe cutting down costs on administration and stuff like that.

Those are the responses, Mary. I do not know if you want to take that part and I will sit down?

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Yes, yes. (*Applause*) He thinks I've got a crystal ball up here. Colleagues, does anyone wish to have the right of reply? Yes, Danny?

BRO. D. BYRNE (London): Yes, I wish to exercise the right to reply. I appreciate the offer Mr. Kenny has made and I am quite happy to take that up and it is a challenge now for London Region to see what we can do with recruiting people on zero-hours contracts and Mr. Hayes is waving at me because he will obviously be assisting with this. *(Laughter/Applause)* Before I leave the rostrum there was one important aspect of it that we have not addressed and I would like there to be some kind of permission to have promotional rates for these cleaners and workers that I represent in catering who work 24 hours a week. There are thousands and thousands of them and it is not fair that we should be asking them to pay £12 a month. So, hopefully, we can look into some sort of promotional rate for them as well.

THE PRESIDENT: Danny, don't push your luck. You have to consult with the region as to what they wish to do. It belongs to the region. Yes, David. Don't you start!

BRO. D. LASCELLES (Midland & East Coast): I am coming back on Motion 62. Under no circumstances would I ever come all the way to Dublin to discriminate against anybody. I would not do it at home and I certainly will not do it here and I do not want anybody to think, as the General Secretary has probably covered quite well anyway, it was meant to discriminate against anybody. The fact of the matter is that people who pay the Grade 1 £12.14 are still hard up themselves and it was they who were asking the questions. So that is why the motion came to this Congress and why I believe the CEC want at least to be able to look at it. Thanks to Paul for his intervention on this and I hope that you will support the motion. Thank you all. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Anyone else? Hi, Bill.

BRO. B. HELEY (Midland & East Coast): I am responding on Motion 49. Paul, the region is more than happy to withdraw this motion but before doing so I would like to point out and say the region has no problem with paying these. There is no issue whatsoever in the region. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, Bill.

BRO. B. HELEY (Midland & East Coast): Thanks, Mary.

THE PRESIDENT: That is quite all right, Bill. I will give you this chair in a minute! *(Laughter)* Okay, Danny have you done your consulting? Can I go ahead? *(Agreed)* Right. Motion 49, the CEC is asking for withdrawal. Is Midland & East Coast Region prepared to withdraw? *(Agreed)* I was just checking that Bill was not working on his own. Does Congress agree? *(Agreed)* That is fine. Thank you. Motion 50, does Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region agree to refer? *(Agreed)* That was a little one! Does Congress agree? *(Agreed)*

Here we go! Motion 58, London Region, in light of the General Secretary's Report, are you prepared to withdraw while, Danny, you take up the coals? Where is he? You do? *(Agreed)* Okay. Does Congress agree? *(Agreed)* You wait till all the notes come in, "Can we do that?" *(Call from the floor)* No, we asked would you withdraw in favour of the proposal that Paul put to Congress. Yes? *(Agreed)* Thank you. You can set the rate. I think the 5p is going to be abolished, isn't it?

Motion 62, Midland & East Coast Region, are you prepared to refer? David? *(Agreed)* Thank you very much. Does Congress agree? *(Agreed)*

In light of that, I am now going to put Motion 50 and Motion 62 to the vote. Yes, 50 and 62. Yes, Mary, you've got it right. The confusion is over. All those in favour please show. Thank you. All those in favour of the others – you have all agreed for regions that you stand by the withdrawal of

Motion 49, I am just getting this very clear, and the withdrawal by London Region of Motion 58. Agree? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Okay, General Secretary, you can now give me another crystal ball.

*Motion 49 was Withdrawn.*

*Motion 50 was Referred.*

*Motion 58 was Withdrawn.*

*Motion 62 was Referred.*

## **ANNUAL ACCOUNTS & AUDITORS' REPORT and CEC FINANCE REPORT ON CONTRIBUTIONS AND EXPENSES**

### **Central Executive Council Finance Report**

#### **ANNUAL CONGRESS 2015**

### **Central Executive Council**

#### **Financial Proposals to Congress**

At Congress this week, delegates will be hearing about and sharing numerous examples of GMB successes and innovations, as our union continues to grow and thrive. These advances are rooted in our political and industrial strategies, the commitment of employees and postholders and the organisational strength of GMB@Work. But another essential component of what GMB has built over the last decade is the insistence by Congress that the financial health of the union is maintained. This means that expenditure cannot be allowed to outstrip income, that we take steps to avoid future financial risks and ensure the union is covered against future costs. Many delegates will not be aware that GMB was not always in the present position of relative financial security, and achieving this has not been easy. But delegates with longer memories will know that any return to the precarious financial state of a few years ago, and to the weaker union, vulnerable to predators, of those days must at all events be avoided.

The accounts for 2014 show that a steady operating surplus has again been achieved, but as income has grown, there have also been essential cost increases. We will always find resources to back members' aspirations and there were extra costs in 2014 surrounding the local authority dispute and in supporting the historic court action on blacklisting, which continues into this year and next. Your new legal firm, UnionLine, has outstripped our expectations and built up a fantastic reputation for service across the union and beyond. The business plan for UnionLine shows significant returns in Year 3, as cases come to maturity, so for this year and next there is some pressure on legal costs as the old system unwinds. After a lengthy and sometimes arduous engagement with the Pensions Regulator over our employees' pension fund, the Pension Trustees and the union agreed last year to a settlement involving an amended benefits structure and additional contributions from the union, which aims to accelerate paying off the pension fund deficit.

The union's budget for 2015 aims for another modest surplus, and results for the year to date show that we are on track. Going into 2016, we know what costs we need to meet, but the new and unwelcome political environment is already presenting threats to our members and their union which will cost money to

combat. When the new CEC is elected at the end of this year, they will need the financial tools to rise to their task.

For most of the last decade, Congress has agreed to a contribution increase below the rate of inflation, contrary, as it happens, to the longstanding policy that contributions should always keep up with inflation. Careful cost control and membership growth has made this affordable and allowed the union to invest for the future. But it has made it harder to return an operating surplus, certainly in the context of the cost pressures we now have to deal with. Inflation currently is very low, but it is expected to increase later this year, when any contribution increase would come into effect.

In order to sustain the growth and future strength of the union, the CEC is recommending an increase in the weekly contribution rate for Grade 1 of 10p, and an increase in the Grade 2 and promotional rates of 5p per week. The CEC conducted a survey of other union's rates, and, even after the recommended increase, our rates remain lower than most, often significantly so.

There are two areas where the CEC seeks the agreement of Congress either to increase costs or reduce income. In recent years, Congress has taken the opportunity to enhance the value of funeral benefit, either by increasing the amount, or easing the qualifying criteria. The CEC recommends that this year funeral benefit is increased by £50.

Congress last year increased the cost of becoming a retired life member by 60%. This was because the amount had been frozen for a dozen years since life membership was introduced. The increase had no major impact in the number of members opting for life membership, which was steady at about 3000 per year. However, at Congress last year there were some thoughtful and emotional comments made from the rostrum which caused the CEC to consider the matter again when it came to reviewing the union's financial needs for this Congress.

The CEC recommends that a portion of the funds raised from the contribution increase should go towards eliminating the lump sum fee charged to retired life members. If Congress accepts this report, members retiring in future, after at least five years' membership will be entitled to free life membership.

These are the Rule Amendments required to give effect to the proposals:

#### **CECRA6.**

##### **Rule 45 Clause 1,**

**Line 3: Delete “£2.80”, insert “£2.90”**

**Line 8: Delete “£1.65”, insert “£1.70”**

##### **Clause will now read:**

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

Members will pay £2.90 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 £1.70 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

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

**CECRA7.**

**Rule 45, Clause 2,**

**Line 3: Delete “£2.80”, insert “£2.90”**

**Line 4: Delete “£1.65”, insert “£1.70”**

**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 £2.90 and £10 for grade-1 members and between £1.70 and £5.50 for grade-2 members, except in particular circumstances when we may increase the amount with the approval of the regional committee.

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

**CECRA8**

**Rule 47a**

**Clause 1, Line 3: Delete “will pay a lump sum and”, Insert “may apply in writing to”**

**Line 4: Delete “they pay the lump sum”, Insert “their application for retired life membership has been accepted”**

**Clause 2a, Line 1: Delete “August 2014, they can pay £40” Insert “July 2015, they can apply for free retired life membership”**

**Clause 2b, Line 1: Delete “they pay the lump sum”, Insert “their application is accepted”**

**Clause 4, Line 6: Delete “a fully paid-up”, Insert “registered by the union as a retired”**

**Clause 5, Line 3: Delete “they paid the lump sum”, Insert “their application for retired life membership was accepted”**

**Clause 6, Line 3: Delete “when”, Insert “if”. Insert after “member”, “before July 1, 2015”.**

**Rule with now read:**

1 When retiring permanently from paid work, people who have been members for at least five years and who want to stop paying contributions under rules 45 and 46 may apply in writing to become retired life members of the union. Until their application for retired life membership has been accepted, members will continue to pay their contributions in line with rules 45 and 46.

2a If a member retires on or after 1 July 2015, they can apply for free retired life membership within three months of no longer paying contributions in line with rules 45 or 46.

2b If the member owes contributions on the date their application is accepted, they will need to pay them. If they fail to do this, the member’s name will be taken off the books and they will lose all the contributions they have made

3 A retired life member will be a financial member within rule 45.4, and may be a full financial member.

4 A retired life member will not be eligible for any benefits we provide, except the following.  
a Legal assistance under rule 26, as long as they:

- are 60 or over;
- have been a member for 10 years; and
- are registered by the union as a retired life member.

If they meet these conditions, they will not need to pay any contributions while we are dealing with a legal claim on their behalf.

b Funeral benefit under Rule 53.

5 Where this applies, the contributions a retired life member pays under rule 18.2 will depend on their grade on the day immediately before the date their application for retired life membership was accepted under this rule.

6 If a retired life member returns to paid work, they will no longer be a retired life member and will start to pay contributions in line with rule 45. We will refund the lump sum they paid if they became a retired life member before July 1, 2015.

#### CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

#### **CECRA9**

#### **Rule 53, Clause 1**

**Line 4: Delete “£300”, Insert “£350”**

#### **Clause will now read**

1 If a full financial member, who has been a continuous member for 5 years dies, the regional secretary will, having been given a copy of the death certificate, pay the widow, widower, member of the family or nominated person a funeral grant of £350. (This person will need to show that they are responsible for paying funeral expenses.)

#### CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: President, thank you. Congress 2014 was another year of growth for the union, growth in membership, up over 8,500 over the year. That is a fantastic record whichever way round you crunch it compared with almost every other union, and it is a tribute to you and your application of GMB@Work. Growth in our finances built on rock-solid principle of never ever going back to being a bankrupt organisation, never spending more than we earn. We said a decade ago that we would save this union from years of deficit, and that is exactly what you did. It means sticking to that principle and that can be quite difficult, and making an operating surplus every single year.

I am just going to show you some slides and for those who have been here before, you will recognise the sequence, and for new delegates, and obviously there is a few of you, it will give you a little bit of background explanation.

GMB membership, so you know where we have been. Over the last 10 years, difficult as it has been, some of them under Tory government, and you can see we are sticking to our organising strategy, or organising proposals, the union actually grew. It grew every single year. The 2015 figure is where we

are at so far. We went up from 571,000 to 638,000, and we are still climbing. That is a pretty amazing feat. (*Applause*)

That is why when people say, “Oh, the union’s going to die,” I do not accept that. I have never accepted that. People who have been around know that I say we do not do that. We just do not do that. That is not the GMB. We do not do that. You roll your sleeves up, you take responsibility for the problems in front of you, and we end up doing it ourselves. No one is coming along with a white horse or a shiny knight on a white charger, or steed, to help us out. We do it ourselves and that was the message that we delivered. That is the message agreed by the SMT: we do it ourselves. Great if we have governments that support us but the chances are we are not going to have that. The fact that we have to do it ourselves and there will be more that we will have to do ourselves is not to be feared. In fact, in some cases, it is to be welcomed, that we do not have to rely on people that we sometimes should not rely on. That is a pretty good record. I am very proud of it.

Why is that important? How do we convert that? For those colleagues who are here for the first time, those red lines do not mean that we ran out of blue ink. They mean that year on year on year this union lost money. Okay, some of you may say, “He sounds like a capitalist.” Well, in this case I am, unashamedly, will tell you why. During those years, the Congresses that were held – in fact they used to scrap annual Congress because they said they could not afford it – passed loads of resolutions, loads of them. In passing them the people in charge of the organisation at that time knew they were worth about as much as the paper they were written on; they could not be delivered. We had no resources and no organisation.

That is why the money is important to the ambition of supporting our members and fighting for social justice. When we made the changes, and I say this all the time and I mean it, the combination of the senior management team in the union was absolutely brilliant. In fact I think some nights that if we actually knew how bad it was – we were just happy-go-lucky, “Of course we can sort this out,” but if we had known really how bad it was – maybe we would have whistled and popped round to see Tony Woodley and asked him for a job. I don’t know. No, we wouldn’t have done that! I am only joking. I wasn’t that desperate.

Anyway, it was difficult some years as you can see but what we said was, we will set budgets on the operating side, that is what we will set and if we do better than the budget, great, then we will have a bigger surplus to invest in the organisation, put back in rebuilding the union but we will not have any more red lines. When we say we are going to spend that, we are going to spend it. The only way of dealing with that is to grow the organisation. So, if you want more officials, you want better services, you want better benefits, fine, grow. That is the process. More members make you more powerful. Anybody who has ever dealt with an employer knows that. Go in and deal with the employer, as Paul Hayes used to say, and if there is 100 people working there and you have 20 of them, you know what the employer says; if you have 100 people working there and you have 90 of them, they get the carpet out and give you tea and biscuits. It is about collective organisation. It is not about individual representation. We are a collective body. So, each year we stuck to it.

The net surplus is actually the amount of money that we had after we took into account the things that you make out of the shares. You have shares. They are in the book. We sell property. We get dividends. You get money on your money. Previously, in the red lines, all that money just went into the debt but because we live within strict budgets, very progressive budgets in many years but strict budgets, control, financial control, it meant that money that comes into the organisation stays in order to grow the organisation and, and we all know there is an “and”, there is going to be a rainy day.

There is maybe even going to be some stormy weeks but the union is in a better position to defend itself.

That shows you the year by year. What do we do with it? That is what we do with it. If that chart went on the other side you would see that originally in terms of assets the union probably had £80m or £90m and all those years you saw of those red lines how do you think they made up the difference, they sold something, they sold property, shares, and people carried on. That was never going to last for ever. That is how close, for the new delegates, we came. We said, "We are not going to do that any more. We'll stick to those principles." It meant each year, each one of those years when we have been able to improve the union's financial position and build the assets, we employed more people, we modernised our buildings, many of which had been falling into disrepair for years, we started new training processes, we modernised our IT, we brought back annual Congress, we did a whole range of things but we did them within the strict guidelines and we were still able to rebuild the organisation's finances.

Personally, if you are a government maybe you should be the cabinet because if you are a government there is not a government in the world that would not like that in their balance of payments. That was built on the basis that we made some very, very simple decisions, this union will grow, not from lectures about go out and recruit but with organising plans. GMB@Work as a title and as a concept actually owes much to Martin Smith, who is probably not in the hall because he had to break into a £10 note last night! (*Laughter*) Yes, we know him, don't we! A brilliant organisational strategy built on the fact that this is our union. We are not giving it to anybody.

We know we have tough decisions but we also know that we are building an organisation that can fight and that is what we did. It is hard, sometimes it is really, really hard and we briefed Congress in the past about difficult, difficult challenges. Our pension fund for our employees still remains in deficit but it was a very, very difficult time, I kid you not. We reached agreement with our own staff last year and the pensions regulator for a plan to pay off the deficit over eight years. It has meant a reduction in future benefits, it has, but the scheme is secured and the extra finance, and I am afraid it was a seven-figure sum, had to be secured from the union as the employer and be absorbed in our existing budgets, which put a lot of strain on the plans that we had. It was not without some pain.

Last year we worked really hard to deal with all the queries of the HMRC and when they have been through, up and down, and sideways, and backwards, apart from a bit of housekeeping which amounted to very, very little indeed, they had to admit with some reluctance that our systems and procedures stand up to the fullest scrutiny; and that was also part of the changes we wanted to make those years ago. Accountability and scrutiny, we should never be frightened of that; why should we be? So, it did not frighten us. Some of you will know five years ago, or whatever, and funnily enough we had a hustings that year as well I remember, I came to Congress and explained to Congress that we were having to make some very, very difficult changes to the auditing processes of money going through the branches.

I made that point at the time that 98% of our branch secretaries and our activists were straight as a dye and they were certainly never in it for what they could get out of it, that is for certain. Unfortunately, because the system we had was so built on trust it made it easy for a few, and it was only a few, to abuse the system but once you knew that people could abuse the system there was really only one option left, you have to change the system. If people then rob the union after that, you quite rightly would say to me, "But you knew about it, what did you do about it?" We rooted it out. Frankly, there were employees involved. We sacked them. We dealt with a whole range of other people who thought that the reason for being in the GMB was to steal money from it, and from its members. If

anybody thought that, then you know as well as I do that actually they were not just in the wrong union, they were on the wrong planet.

We fight for the union from a sense of social justice that comes from here, from the fantastic feeling you get about standing up and putting things right, when you stop an employer bullying people, when you get someone's job back, when you win a decent pay rise for somebody, when you stop abuse, when a worker can come to you in confidence and tell you about discrimination or harassment, and you do something about it. That is what makes you go home at night and that is what makes you feel great. That is why we have to have a solid structure to support that sort of work out in the workplace.

So, we have had costs, we had the ballots for our members on the political fund, and any extra work required to run a very watertight ballot in local authorities. The extra expense shows the need for investment in information technology, IT. We need to improve the quality of our membership information and we are taking some steps to do that. We have been working on a new process, a new structure, and we have a new Head of IT about to start for us the end of July, I think. I think we have done a number of things that will set us in very, very good stead in the years to come.

Talking about IT, we have some fabulous people who have worked for this union in the IT Department, loyally supportive for years. The truth of the matter is, we have not provided them with enough resources, we have not provided them with enough training support and, frankly, we have undervalued them, and that is going to change in the next year as well.

Here in the City of Dublin we purchased and opened a GMB office, the first for many years here, and established a vocational training college. We hope to be accepting the first students in the new term.

We also worked throughout the year with the Executive of Unity, the union – you can cheer if you want – (*Cheers*) – to develop the framework of a merger which Unity members accepted in a fantastic 92% vote in favour. This gives the Fine Manufacturing Section access to a whole new and growing industry. When I met the Executive and I met all the reps, we went through and they put me under a fair degree, I would say, of questioning, and they were right to. They have a long and proud tradition in their union but they also wanted strength. They put me through a real test for a few hours and I answered the questions they gave me. I said to them, “We will keep our word.” I hope that they know and they feel – and this year you are at Congress for the first year – that every promise we made we have kept. I hope that is how you are feeling because that is exactly what the GMB does. It does what it says on the tin. If it says we will honour the commitments to another union, we build our organisation maybe through transfers of undertakings or mergers we will keep. We do not want mergers that either deny the GMB culture or do away with the valued cultures of other organisations that might want to join us. I know when you go outside to have a cup of tea you will say, “He was hinting at something, I know.” We’ll see.

We spoke earlier about UNIONLINE. It is ground-breaking. It is. It is a fantastic thing. We do not even know yet how far it will do and where it will go. Isn't it great when a member does not have to chase the steward or the branch secretary in order to ask them what they can do about their neighbour's dog fouling on their lawn; we get those sorts of questions. Yes, of course there have been hiccups. I do not know of any situation, and I was a regional secretary for many years, where I never had complaints about the solicitors we were using. Of course, it is going to happen and we are bringing into birth a whole new operation. So we adapt. That issue that was raised about branch secretaries, it was a good point and we picked it up a few months ago. That is why we are introducing the technology so branch secretaries can know exactly what is happening for the members in their branch.

We have an opportunity. I do not know where UNIONLINE will go, I did not think of UNIONLINE as a commercial value, I thought of it as a service value. I knew we would not have to pay out huge amounts of money but I had no idea that in the commercial world after a year that could be valued at £150m. I do not know what it is going to be valued at in five years or 10 years. What I am interested in is how it expands to give the members, the activists, and the officers the support they need to do the job they need to do, which is to organise. It is going to go off in all sorts of other service directions.

I have spoken to the Executive and to the SMT and we are trying to think about how we might work it. We talk about attracting more young members to the union. We have lots of people who have maybe their son or their daughter in the world of work where there are no unions, and they come home and say, "This manager did that," or "This manager did that," and our members are shocked because they would not stand for it in their own workplaces. Maybe we need to have a system, we are looking at it, where every member of the union can give a get-out-of-jail card to or use the union's service card for their son or their daughter, or maybe it will be the son and the daughter giving it to their Mum or Dad, I do not know, but there are an awful lot of young people whose parents are in unions.

The knowledge of trade unions from those young people may be miniscule. So, just supposing if your son or your daughter came home and they had a problem at work and you were angry and frustrated, under the current system apart from maybe a bit of support, you may not be able to do much. But if you are able to say, "Fine, you're my son [or you're my daughter] the union will help you." When we help you, not unnaturally afterwards we hope by that practical experience of why you need a union in the workplace you will join a union as well. We do not know quite how we are going to do this yet. There are some words and some information, but it is something that I would like to have taken to my kids when they first went to the world of work. I think there is something in it.

We have to do something different. That has been the hallmark of this union in the last decade, we do something different. We are not frightened to try things, that is why I said to Danny, I know Paul was thinking, "Oh, he's fell for that one," but the truth is I do not mind, Dan, I will help you because if that works then we have found something else. We should never be frightened to try things, we really, really should not. We should not be scared that we have never done something so we cannot do it. The world of work has changed, people's attitudes, and we need to reach out to lots of people. It is not just young people, we need to reach out to a whole generation of people who actually the only thing they know about unions is that there is a bloke called Arthur Scargill somewhere involved in them. You have heard it, haven't you, or seen it?

I am proud to say that Tommy Dawkins, who is the president of Unity, has accepted a role in the Birmingham Region and is going to go out into schools in the Midlands and then in the rest of areas and in workplaces encouraging people and to show what the union can provide in terms of union support, education and training. We are going to have to do more of that. It is the sort of resolutions we have thought about for years, how do we get out into the communities, how do we get out into colleges, and how do we get out into schools; we are going to do it ourselves. No one is going to do it for us. We have to do it ourselves.

So, in the next two years we have some problems because we will have money drying up from the old legal system, we will not be getting the money in from the new cases, settlement cases in UNIONLINE, and we have some big major cases like the blacklisting cases which we are funding because it is the right thing to do. Again, you heard Dave Smith. The GMB has been there from day one. Frankly, there is an awful lot of people who could never have afforded to take legal action against these people; they were banking on it. So without that, without being properly funded, we could not have said we might have to risk 10 million quid on this. If you have to make decisions not

about what is morally right or morally wrong but about whether or not the bank manager is going to loan you the money to do it, you are in trouble if you are a trade union. That is why we said we would never go back there.

We do know also what is coming. The Tories coming back into power poses a whole new level of uncertainty for us. We know it means we will have to fight even harder and we know the government will try to harm this organisation and other unions in any way they can. There will be an election in the autumn for the CEC and they will need the financial strength to do their job. Congress, for a number of years you have agreed to increase contributions by less than inflation, even though the policy was we said we would grow the union, we cut our costs, we do not need to ask for money, we will do it other ways. This means over the last decade the amount of contribution per member is now five percentage points below inflation for the same period; interesting. Statistics do not mean much but we are able by cost control to afford that and that money is through our growth.

This year the CEC recommends an increase to Grade 1 contributions of 10p which is 3.5% increase. That is more than inflation right now but maybe as the year unfolds, like so many other economic promises made before the election, inflation will start to increase. The CEC has looked at our options and we are convinced that this increase is essential to strengthen the union's hand into 2016. We looked at other unions and, frankly, a whole host of them are increasing their contributions by much, much more than that, probably because they are not in our position of growth and good housekeeping. Our proposal is 10p on Grade 1 and 5p on Grade 2, and the promotional rate. We will not be increasing the political levy. All of the increase from the contribution rate will go into the general fund directly towards servicing members and benefits, and we want you to spend that money in specific areas.

We had a practice in recent years of raising the funeral benefit whenever we could by an affordable amount. We know that for many members this is an emotional time and it is a valued benefit. We want to increase it this year by £50, which is actually a 17% increase.

We have had a long hard think about the retired life members and those of you who are first-time delegates maybe we should have played you the tape from Billy Hughes last year. Ever since he got up, even though by the way he was there when we made the original decision, he got up and he made the most fantastic speech, and if you were there you could not be touched by it. It was a real passionate speech about retired members and the contribution rate. So we said, "Okay, look, we are going to put it up to 40 quid but if you are only getting the state pension it will be free. If you have an occupational pension, then it is a £40 one-off hit."

Then we went away, I do not know, my wife said it was the wind hitting my windowpane, the bloke in the garage said he did not know how my wheel nuts had come undone – (*Laughter*) – the bloke in the pub said, "Well, it may taste like that to you," – (*Laughter*) – and I thought, "Ha, ha, something happening here." Anyway, Billy – and I do not believe this Congress is meeting without Billy being here somewhere, sorry, I do not – he did not pull his punches. He made it pretty clear what he thought. I suppose the right decent and honest thing and in Billy's memory and maybe he will let me sleep at night now, we say let's scrap the fee for retired members. (*Applause*) Sorry, Billy, five. Yes? Is that all right? Yes, five, okay. Five years is free. Let's have free life membership for all new pensioners starting from the first of next month.

You passed the document. We have to invest in Health & Safety resources, staff, publications, and training, because we are going to have to do it for ourselves. We cannot pass resolutions asking other people to do it for us because what is going to happen is there is not going to be the money, there is not

going to be the political will, or there is not actually going to be an organisation that exists any more to do it. We do it ourselves. We are not beholden to anybody.

In pensions, we have to put in more personnel. We have lost one person but it is going to be an important issue, and Alan Dudson, who speaks a bit like *that*, said to me, “When are you going to release the purse strings?” I am going to unlock the purse strings. We are going to have more personnel, more training, but we are going to have regional training. We are going to set it up so people can get a real understanding and training about occupational pensions. That has to be an investment.

The reason we are going to do that is because we know there is a need but we really think there is a bigger need coming. Those pension schemes that have not yet been attacked, trust me, they have now got a government that will be encouraging them, which is ironic from a government that tells people, the Tories, put aside for your retirement they say, and then at every opportunity, and we have got every scheme we started, they encourage employers to end final salary entrants. So, we know we are going to have to defend that, not just at Tata Steel but everywhere else.

You can expect more and more bureaucratic proposals and red tape from the Tories when they reorganise the certification officer work, and they are going to; little line in the manifesto, a little line in the Queen’s Speech, that is what they are going to do. The certification officers I will just let them know in case they are listening, also covers employers so they will have to change the rules so they only pick on us. We will watch and see how it develops but you can bet your bottom dollar they are going to start putting more and more bureaucratic and red tape demands upon unions.

I forgot to mention the new IT Director who will be a member, full member, of the Senior Management Team. It is important that voice is heard at the top and that the SMT have that.

The other thing, make no mistake about it, there will be a massive attack or termination of the Union Learning Fund and of training grants. We can do that, shrug our shoulders and turn our toes up, “Ah, what can you do.” We do not do that. So we have the challenge but it is a challenge we are going to accept. We are not going to cry about it. Of course we will row because it is morally wrong, of course we will get employers who say it is stupid, of course we can show fantastic cases where the ULF and the facilities at the GMB has been a part of, has produced fantastic results, but we cannot just say, “That’s it.” We have just got to say to ourselves, because we cannot accept that education opportunities and advancement for GMB members is up for sale. It is not negotiable, if the government will not help, and the employers will not help, then we are going to have to find ways of funding it to do it ourselves. (*Applause*)

I urge you to support these proposals, colleagues. The GMB has been transformed in the last 10 years. Let’s never forget, ever, those sound finances and why we did what we did and why we had to do it. Let’s stay strong in these years to come. Please accept the financial accounts and in doing so I would ask you to support the finance document, *that* one, and within it the Rule Amendments, CECRA6, CECRA7, CECRA8, CECRA9. Mary, I move the Finance Report and I hope if there are any questions arising out of it whatsoever you buy me a pint and I will answer them tonight. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Formally seconded.

*The Annual Accounts & Auditors’ Report and the CEC Finance Report on Contributions and Expenses were formally seconded.*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, can we now take the vote and I mean vote – are there any questions? No. Over to me. Can Congress now accept the Annual Accounts and Auditors’ Report, and the CEC Finance Report? First, can I have a show of hands, and I mean a show of hands, to accept the Annual Accounts & Auditors’ Report. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

*The Annual Accounts & Auditors’ Report was Carried.*

THE PRESIDENT: Now the CEC Finance Report, all those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

*CEC Finance Report on Contributions and Expenses was Carried.*

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

I will just tell Congress what we are going to do now. We will deal with Composite 2 and Motion 69.

## **UNION ORGANISATION: UNION BENEFITS & SERVICES COMPOSITE 2**

### **TCU MONEY**

*(Covering Motions 67 and 68)*

67. TCU Money *(Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region)*

68. TCU Money Ltd *(Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region)*

### **TCU MONEY**

This Congress welcomes the service that TCU Money provides to GMB members and their families in providing ethical financial services. On that basis, Congress recommends that those regions not yet on board, i.e. where no other such service is made available to members in the region, consider doing so soonest.

In order to facilitate further growth, Congress recommends that GMB allow its name to be used so that TCU Money Ltd can be rebranded as ‘GMB Money Ltd’.

<b>Yorkshire &amp; North Derbyshire Region</b>	<b>to Move</b>
<b>Yorkshire &amp; North Derbyshire Region</b>	<b>to Second</b>

*(Referred)*

SIS. S. YOUNG (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I move Composite 2: TCU Money. President and Congress, we live in times where children and the most vulnerable live in poverty and food banks are growing in number. Managing money is hard work, and more often than not there is too much month left at the end of the money. Many folk have to borrow money and are fleeced for the misfortune. That won’t change with another five years of the Tories. They are not the party of the working class. They lie.

To borrow from WONGA, even now, with an interest rate of over 1500%, £400 would cost £544 to be paid back over 45 days, and that is shameful, not to mention the banned TV ad and the 5,853% interest rate, and there is no mention either of what happens when people cannot pay. We hear more about banks being fined. In May several were fined £5.7 billion for fixing the foreign exchange market.

THE PRESIDENT: Sarah, hold on a second. I am sorry to have to stop you. Colleagues, please keep the noise down. It is not fair to the speaker.*(Applause)* Start again.

SIS. S. YOUNG (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I will start again. President and Congress, we live in times where children and the most vulnerable live in poverty and food banks are growing in number. Managing money is hard work and, more often than not, there is too much month left at the end of the money. Many folk have to borrow money and are fleeced for that misfortune. That won't change with another five years of the Tories. They are not the party of the working class. They lie.

To borrow from WONGA even now, and with an interest rate of over 1,500%, £400 would cost £544 to be paid back over 45 days, which is shameful, not to mention the banned TV advert and the 5,853% interest rate. There is no mention either of what happens when people cannot pay. We hear more about banks being fined. In May several were fined £5.7 billion for fixing the foreign exchange market. Then, of course, HSBC was fined £2.6 billion for the Swiss Bank tax dodge and the money laundering. Why I hate Tories and the wankers... Oh, sorry, the bankers (*Applause*)... After a major fine in November 2014, Osborne was quoted in the *Guardian* as saying: "Today we take action to clean up corruption by a few so that we have a financial system that works for everyone. It is a part of a long-term plan that is fixing what went wrong in Britain's banks and our economy." I remind you of his words now. Was he lying or did he just forget, because now he blames Labour for the economic crisis. We watch bankers commit crimes which we would go to jail for. They get away with fines that have gone into the EU and US Treasuries. Our money is being sucked out of the UK while austerity prevails, billions that could have helped to end poverty and pick the NHS up off its knees. I am still waiting for Gorgeous George's long-term plan to show a sign that it is working. Give a man a gun and he will rob a bank. Give a man a bank and he will rob the world. (*Applause*)

Conference, there is another and better way. TCU Money — Thorne Credit Union — was established by the GMB in 1999 to provide fair and honest money services for our GMB family. TCU Money has ethics and democracy at its heart, and could do so much to help those who feel that their only choice is banks, payday lenders or loan sharks adding to money worries. Thorne Credit Union is none of those. It is a respected, non-profit, money co-operative, whose members can borrow from pooled deposits at low interest rates. We need to get the ethics out there and make it famous. You don't need an account to get a loan. You will need to be a GMB member. You will be asked to open a savings account to service the loan and TCU will help you save without criticism or judgment and borrow £100 to £15,000 for up to seven years, depending on the purpose. We can encourage promotion on national and regional websites, and if you phone a friend and they start saving, you get a free tenner. By the way, if you are thinking about joining, if you join after I have finished speaking, you can give my name because I am up for all of these free tenners.

Congress, I ask that you welcome TCU Money, that those regions not on board do so now and that GMB allows its name to be used so that TCU Money can be rebranded as GMB Money. It is growing and its figures show it works. We can do this. Congress I move. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sarah. Secunder?

SIS. J. EARLY (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I second Composite 2, TCU Money. Ireland has one of the largest credit union sectors in the world, with 65% of Irish adults being a member of at least one credit union. In the UK, in spite of the fantastic benefits that credit unions offer, the number of active credit unions has shrunk. The public are at the mercy of incredibly aggressive advertising from the likes of Wonga. Companies spend billions of pounds advertising their brands. Wonga itself spends £20 million a year on advertising and sponsorship. It has got its claws into the Football League and some Premiership clubs. Football clubs accept Wonga's money derived from people's misery, despite, in many cases, a family backlash. Wonga's long-term plan is to create the façade of an acceptable and respectable business whilst continuing its unscrupulous money lending.

No one would suggest that TCU money should squander tens of millions of members' hard-earned cash on advertising, but what is the good of a fantastic benefit like a GMB-run credit union for members if they don't recognise the TCU brand, and are, perhaps, hesitant because they just don't see the link to the GMB?

All around this room you can see the GMB brand. It is instantly recognisable to our 638,759 members. The GMB is promoted in a positive and very visible way, and in loads of different ways. Whenever, for example, back in God's own county, members and their families go to watch Castleford Tigers or the Doncaster Bells they see that they are sponsored by the GMB, or it could be something as low key as a branch providing petrol money for the local kids' football team to travel to football matches. The person in the street recognises brands like Virgin. You can travel on a Virgin train, go on a Virgin holiday and even get blasted into space on Virgin Galactic, if you want. Each new business piggy-backs on the Virgin brand. The GMB stands for something that no amount of money can buy. It has 126 years of trust built by its members, and unlike the bloodsuckers, Wonga, the GMB is democratic and works for social justice. Let's agree to remain TCU Money as GMB Money Limited. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I call the mover of Motion 69.

## **GMB LIVING WAGE CONTRACTS MOTION 69**

### **69. GMB LIVING WAGE CONTRACTS**

This Congress calls on the GMB when awarding contracts to companies supplying goods or services to our union to take account of whether the company pay the living wage.

ROWNTREE AND ASSOCIATED BRANCH  
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

*(Carried)*

*(The Motion was formally moved and formally seconded from the floor)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I now call on Cathy Murphy to speak on behalf of the CEC.

SIS. C. MURPHY (CEC, Commercial Services): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC, seeking reference back for Composite 2. Colleagues, TCU Money, or Thorne Credit Union, as it used to be known, has been serving members in a number of regions for many years. It is the GMB's own credit union that allows members to make deposits and borrow on fair and ethical terms when they need funds. It is one in the eye for Wonga. The composite asks that other regions consider opening up TCUs for their members, and the CEC has no problem with that suggestion, although it remains a regional choice.

The composite also calls for a name change to GMB Money. The CEC can see the benefits of this and, in principle, it has no objection. However, because the credit union is regulated by the banking authorities, we need to check if the name change has any implication for GMB. For that reason, we ask you to refer the composite for consideration by the CEC Finance & General Purposes Committee. Congress, please refer Composite 2.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does the Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region accept reference back? (*Agreed*) Colleagues, the CEC is supporting Composite 2 with a reference back, and Motion 69. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? Carried.

*Composite 2 was Referred.*

*Motion 69 was Carried.*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, as there are a number of education and training motions, I will take these in two groups. Could the movers and seconders of Motions 71, 73 and 74 please come to the front.

**UNION ORGANISATION: EDUCATION & TRAINING  
ADDED SUPPORT FOR THE GLI SUMMER SCHOOL  
MOTION 71**

**71. ADDED SUPPORT FOR THE GLI SUMMER SCHOOL**

This Congress acknowledges the growing reputation of the Global Labour Institute and the success of its Summer Schools aimed at young trade union activists looking to widen their understanding of a complicated world. Congress also notes that GMB young members have benefitted from the schools and that the Union has given GLI financial support. However, if the Summer Schools and GLI's other educational activities are to prosper, they need a more solid platform from which to work.

Congress agrees that the GMB should combine with GLI for them to tailor bespoke courses for the education of our activists and seek to develop methods of joint working for our mutual benefit. In return, GMB should provide financial support for GLI at a level to be decided by both parties commensurate with the level of services provided.

BRITISH GAS BRANCH  
*Wales & South West Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. H. FERGUSON (GMB Wales and South West): Congress, I move Motion 71. President and delegates, in this age of austerity it is not difficult to agree that the reform of this capitalist society is needed. Mention has been made of benefit cuts, the bedroom tax, precarious work, the rise of employed food-bank attendees, zero-hours contracts, and you would be hard pressed finding anyone who agrees with the injustice that capitalism imposes upon us. Inequality is heading back towards Victorian times. In response, we must engage the youth of today. We must strive to stop the unfairness of our society and make a stand by showing solidarity. We must use our strength in numbers and make a positive change for future generations.

Last July a fellow branch representative attended the GLI Summer School held at the Northern College. With little or no expectation of what was to come, he would arrive blind, but leaving the College with eyes wide open more motivated to make a difference than ever before. By bringing trade unionists and activists together from all corners of the world, the GLI Summer School provides people with an opportunity to express their views and share their wealth of knowledge gained from the cycle of injustice. It is an inspiring experience for anyone who participates, but without funding the opportunity may not be given to others. I ask that the GMB, please, supports and make a reasonable contribution to the GLI Summer School, thereby allowing others to experience the wonderful opportunity that some have been fortunate enough to have. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Holly. Secunder?

BRO. D. HAMBLIN (GMB Wales & South West): Congress, I second Motion 71 — Added Support for the GLI Summer School. The Global Labour Institute's Summer Schools facilitate young trade unionists from a number of different countries. We are proud, as trade unionists, that ours is a truly global Movement. The 2014 School saw over 80 delegates from 28 countries, some of whom may or may not have come from Yorkshire & North Derbyshire.

We have heard at this Congress of the danger of UKIP and the rise of xenophobia. At such a time, initiatives which encourage dialogue between young workers of different countries, different backgrounds and different working conditions is of paramount importance. Nye Bevan famously asserted that "Tories were lower than vermin". If Bevan was right in this, and my default position is that Bevan was always right, then UKIP are positively subterranean. In order to drive them back to the foetid, dank pools from whence they came young trade unionists must learn to bond with their brothers and sisters from across the world. Adding support for the GLI Summer School ensures that more young workers have this opportunity. Young workers of the world unite. Congress, we have nothing to lose but our chains. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David.

## **ULF PROJECTS FUNDING MOTION 73**

### **73. ULF PROJECTS FUNDING**

This Congress calls upon the GMB to ask the Government to continue to provide funding for Union Learn Projects which have helped thousands of workers to obtain the essential skills they need

ULR's provide a vital service to union members and employees. ULR's are desperately needed in workplaces in order to provide help for those workers who need numeracy, reading, writing and basic computer skills.

We are concerned that funding for 2015/16 has been cut which could undermine the good work and infrastructure established to date. Congress it is imperative that unions and ULF Projects have the funding the ULR's need to continue to provide the support and essential training employees require to help our economy grow and flourish. Many employers have given support to the good work carried out in helping develop their employee's skills. We ask the CEC and the GMB parliamentary group to work alongside TUC Unionlearn in lobbying the government to provide adequate funding to sustain and grow this training lifeline that has given so many workers a second chance in education and training.

N45 BRANCH  
North West & Irish Region

*(Carried)*

BRO. M. GILLOW (North West & Irish): Congress, I move Motion 73 — ULF Projects Funding. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* First, I would like to thank the General Secretary for stealing the thunder from our motion.

Colleagues, I gives me great pleasure to move this important motion about ULF Project funding. For those of you who many not know, the Union Learning Fund has provided an opportunity for many of our members and thousands of other workers across all our regions to gain access to essential skills, which include maths, English and information communication skills; in other words, computer skills.

The unique nature of the projects is that they have built partnerships between employers and trade unions thanks to the good work of many GMB union learning representatives.

Congress, our ULRs and project staff work tirelessly to ensure that our members and other employees receive proper training at work. ULRs support members with training needs in a way that enables them to progress both in industry and within their own communities. Union Learning-funded projects also give a platform upon which many family members in the wider community can gain access to quality skills training, even at times when they are unemployed or threatened with redundancy. The model of the GMB work clubs that have operated within the North West & Irish Region are a good example of how union learning is not just for the workplace but reaching out into communities that, more often than not, in times of economic recession, get left behind. Daily union learning reps across the GMB can give testimony to the important work that is carried out by regional ULF projects. ULRs and project workers witness how people are transformed thanks to access to proper training and guidance provided by these projects.

Across the country, on average, 25% of our workforce has difficulty with basic maths and English. That figure increases when you add IT skills. This, effectively, cuts them off from being able to progress in work or being able to secure good jobs if they are made redundant or unemployed, and also, as I am seeing at first hand, the difficulties in re-deploying people in ever-changing workplaces where traditional skills are disappearing. Colleagues, it gives me one of my greatest pleasures when we have managed to re-deploy people in the current market.

Union Learning has bridged the gap between the needs of the employer and the needs of the workers and ensures that we have a well-trained and confident workforce who are able to adapt to change. In other words, Union Learning is good for both the employer and the trade union. Good education and training helps to grow the economy. It is a win-win for everyone. It is on this basis that we argue that every penny spent on union learning training and funding is real value for money. It adds to the economy, it adds to the functioning of industry and it adds to the skills of the individuals. Furthermore, it helps to address the whole issue of poverty and exclusion in many of our communities.

In 2015-16 the funding to Union Learning has been cut, and we ask the Government to look carefully at how they support this important initiative, which has already demonstrated to the Department of Business, Innovation & Skills, which funds the work, that it is real value for money. On average, for every pound spent on union learning, there is a further £19 of added value. By any stretch of the imagination, this is good economic sense and adds value to the economy.

Congress, if there are more cuts to union learning, there is no way we can continue to achieve our same levels of success. I ask the CEC and the GMB Parliamentary Group to lobby hard to ensure that the good work of ULRs is rewarded by further funding for Union Learning Projects and initiatives across the country. Please support. Congress I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Michael. Seconder?

BRO. W. GOULDING (North West & Irish): Congress, I second Motion 73, ULF Projects Funding, from the North West & Irish Region. Congress, I think the easiest way I can second this motion is to give you two real cases, if we have time, of how Union Learning has supported and strengthened the abilities of some of our members.

I can tell you about Marik, a young Polish man, found in Lancashire, locked away in a caravan on a scrapyard after he had been exploited by his employer. For six years he was unknown, yet thanks to work of the Union Learning Project, in partnership with others, he was able to gain new skills to allow

him to take a full and active part within the wider community. Marik today works for a project operating in the North West & Irish Region that encourages people to come back to education and training. He is deeply grateful for the work that was done to support him and give him a new life. Education was part of his journey.

I can also tell you about Lisa. Lisa gave her story last year to the ULF fringe meeting held at Congress. She was a young woman who, before she had even left school, was having to cope in a family situation with the domestic violence that her mother had faced. Due to domestic violence, her mother suffered a disability. Lisa, in her teenage years, was unable to complete her schooling because she was already looking after her siblings to help support her mother. She undertook part-time work before she left school so she could help pay the family bills. Not surprisingly, she was unable to gain the basic qualifications and skills she needed. Some years ago, Lisa was brought to one of our joint-Union Learning Projects that works with the community in Accrington.

Colleagues, I have the red light so I shall finish up. I second this motion, and I am pleased to ask you to vote for and support the campaign for fair funding for Union Learning Projects. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Billy. I call the mover of Motion 74.

## **NATIONAL LEARNING COMMITTEE MOTION 74**

### **74. NATIONAL LEARNING COMMITTEE**

This Congress calls for the CEC to establish a National Union Learning Committee to drive the learning agenda forward with delegates nominated from each GMB region with the existence or otherwise of ULF funded projects. The CEC could look at best practice in Yorkshire and North Derbyshire region, who have a well-established Regional Learning Committee.

CHESTERFIELD NO. 1 BRANCH  
*Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region*

*(Referred)*

BRO. D. WALLACE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, this is my first time at Congress and I am a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I move Motion 74 — National Learning Committee.

President and Congress, to the ULRs in our union, this may be one of the most important issues we will debate this week. If the Government of the day stops funding for the ULF Projects, and they probably will, what will happen to the union learning agenda? In the GMB, I would hope that it will continue to grow from strength to strength.

Congress, our region provides itself on having a bespoke education department. Our Regional Union Learning Committee has been formed with the purpose of establishing priorities for the GMB's Regional Learning Agenda, and organising the union to meet the difficult times to come. We believe that learning is a core part of union business, and we have a responsibility to our members to ensure that it remains core business permanently.

During the past 15 years, ULRs have shown that they are an invaluable asset to the union. With the continuing uncertainty of funding from the ULF — the Union Learning Fund — to GMB projects, we need to have a permanent structure in our union. If the funding is withdrawn, we still need to be able to support our ULRs at national and regional level, so that ULRs have the opportunity to share best practice across the region. At the moment there is nothing at the national level to give this support. In

our region, the Learning Committee was set up with the full support of our Regional Secretary, and with a ULR representative from each branch in the region. Between them, our ULRs will have come across and dealt with most of the obstacles that a ULR may face. Now we have a permanent structure that provides leadership to the union and peer support to our ULRs. If this motion is passed, we will have a committee that can provide the same leadership and support at the highest levels on the union learning agenda, and cement union learning as a permanent part of GMB business. The National Learning Committee would then be able to establish the priorities of the GMB learning agenda and organise the union to meet these priorities.

From April 2010 to March 2015, ULRs have recruited 5,623 members and put 8,651 members on courses. These figures are taken from our own recruitment records. It is not bad, is it? Congress, the figures prove that cost should not be an issue in this decision. The National Learning Committee would pay for itself. This motion should be the first step in making ULRs not reliant on Government funding. Congress, education fits our purpose and it is what our union stands for. Education is simply the soul of a society as it passes from one generation to another.

The opening paragraph of our Rule Book says: “We work to improve the quality of life and provide new opportunities for all our members and their families. We aim to improve the lives of GMB members and make sure that their achievements lead the way for working people in Britain and across the world.” Congress, never forget that next to the importance of freedom and justice is education, without which neither freedom nor justice can be maintained.

Congress, this motion will be referred back to our CEC — we will accept that referral — but my region wishes to remind all that the union learning agenda and the ULRs are a core part of what we are and what we do. It is time to put our money where our mouth is and support this motion. Congress I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: While the seconder is coming to the rostrum, could the movers and seconders of Motions 76, 78, 79 and 80 please come to the front.

BRO. V. PIPER (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I second Motion 74. I’m from God’s own county. *(Cheers)* By passing this motion we will be showing that, as a union, the GMB is committed to providing 24-carat education to all our members. This opportunity should not be passed by. Education can prove life-changing for our members, not only by putting extra money into their pockets, but it gives people confidence and qualifications to progress up the employment ladder. I have had first-hand experience of the positive effects that this has on people. Our branch has successfully run English speaking courses for those who have other languages as their first language. The commitment our region has shown has helped our branch not only increase membership but also to enhance the GMB’s credibility with our employer. Our region has, successfully, over the years, run ULF projects. Unfortunately, with the election of a right-wing Tory Government, this funding stream may come to an end.

The projects will continue to promote the opening of new learning centres within our local authorities and communities in order to provide alternative ways of learning new skills. Should these projects end, education and learning have to continue. The model in our region works, and should the external funding gap stop we believe that the learning committee will fill the gap.

Finally, Congress, I believe the introduction of a national learning committee will give the GMB a significant advantage in the current political climate but, most important of all, an advantage to all of our members engaged in learning across the whole of the GMB. I second.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. I call the mover of Motion 76.

## **H.E. LEARNING FUND MOTION 76**

### **76. HE LEARNING FUND**

This Congress calls upon the CEC to set up a HE Learning Fund for activists.

Many of our activists are wanting to progress within the trade union movement, but are restricted in doing so by the prohibitive cost of HE courses.

GMB have a long and proud history of helping those in need, but also in supporting people who wish to better themselves. We feel that this support is needed more than ever in these hard times.

We therefore call upon Congress to:

- set up a National Learning Fund to support activists to undertake Trade Union related HE learning opportunities;
- have a clear, fair and concise application system;
- advertise the fund and the application process widely;
- consider each application on its own merits;
- accompany any rejected applications with a full explanation as to the reasons why.

GMB MID Lincs BRANCH  
Midland & East Coast Region

*(Referred)*

BRO. B. COOK (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I move Motion 76 — Higher Education Learning Fund. President and delegates, it is important to give people a chance to better themselves. Some people cannot afford higher education but I believe that everybody should have a fair crack in life, no matter who they are or where they come from. A higher education fund allows real working people a real chance to excel, and not just the rich and the privileged. My parents had to scrimp and scrape and go without to give me the tools and resources that I needed to further my education. For people who want to experience higher education but cannot afford it, this gives them a chance. The GMB champions itself on the training and support it gives others. I know because if the union had not given me the training and support that I needed, my working life would be a lot harder.

There are a lot of members who would give their life for this Movement, so it is nice to give something back to improve their working lives and the lives of their families around them. With this, we can give them at least a chance. However, there needs to be a clear and concise application system, a wide advertisement of the opportunities, the consideration of each application on its merits and reasons when applications are rejected must be fully explained. Congress I move. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ben. Secunder?

BRO. T. GREGORY (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I second Motion 76 – H.E. Learning Fund. I second this motion because I believe that this is important, and we need to call upon the CEC to set up a higher education fund for activists. Many of our activists want to progress within the trade union Movement but are restricted in doing so by the cost of higher education training. The GMB has a long and proud history of helping people in need in hard times, so this motion is to call for the setting up of

a National Learning Fund to support activists to undertake trade-union related higher education learning opportunities with a clear, fair and concise application system, the fund to be widely advertised and with easy access to the application process. Furthermore, each and every application must be considered on its own merits. Please support. I second. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jim. I call the mover of Motion 78.

## **MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS**

### **MOTION 78**

#### **78. MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS**

This Congress calls on the Government to campaign for mental health awareness in the workplace. GMB representatives need to be able to recognise, give guidance and to support their members.

A15 ASDA BRANCH  
*Birmingham & West Midlands Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. W. CARSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I move Motion 78 on Mental Health Awareness. President, I went to a local chemist last Saturday lunchtime for some indigestion tablets and it was shut! It was not closed down, just shut for lunch! “Good God!”, I thought to myself, “Drag yourselves into the 21<sup>st</sup> century”. Who shuts for lunch these days? I work for a giant supermarket, and that is open 24-hours a day, seven-days a week. That’s progress, or is it? Maybe the chemist was right. Maybe the qualified health professional knew something that the giant supermarket and I did not. Maybe they had figured out that working their staff too hard without a break was not very good for them. But this wasn’t some builders’ firm or factory. This is just a little local chemist where staff potter about, giving grannies their statins and dispensing indigestion for middle-aged men who eat too much bacon and drink too much beer. How could they be affected by overwork — bad backs, muscle strains, cuts and burns? I don’t think so. But what about the invisible illnesses? What about the illnesses that we can’t see and the illnesses that the non-professionals don’t recognise?

These days people are much less likely to be ill with bad backs and traumas. Improving healthcare and improving health and safety at work have seen to that, but they are much more likely to suffer from mental illness, stress, depression, bi-polar disorder, eating disorders and so on. These are the new blights on society, replacing sclerosis with psychosis and dermatitis with dementia. As we move from the industrial age to the information age, it should seem obvious that industrial illnesses of the body would be replaced by mental illnesses of the mind, but that is not the position. Most of us don’t know much about mental illness, but it is out *there*, everywhere. Modern life puts modern pressures on us. We don’t work longer hours than we used to, but the cliché of a 9 – 5 is a nonsense. Only a few office workers do that these days, but not industrial workers, not retail workers and not workers in the service sectors. They work mornings, evenings, nights, weekends and bank holidays. They often work irregular hours, different hours on different days, different days in different weeks and are unable to get into a rhythm. People start to feel stressed and get depressed. Management these days ask their staff to take on ownership, but it makes it harder to switch off when you leave work. “Go the extra mile”, you’re told. “Do more than you are paid for” I hear. Greater burdens and less genuine rest time. These used to be the burdens of management. Ulcers and heart attacks were their lot. Now these illnesses affect all of us, and more and more people are suffering from these modern illnesses, these mental illnesses. We can cope by getting a grip, we can cope by drinking, we can cope by taking drugs or we can see to regain control of our lives through controlling our weight and what we eat. We do what we can, lying to ourselves that we are managing.

We live in a country where each year more and more people suffer from mental illness. More and more people are finding it harder to keep their own thoughts under control. This is a concern for us all. Friends, family members, workmates or ourselves can find their mental health deteriorating without even realising it until something finally breaks. We, as a society, as shop stewards, as trade unionists and as human beings must learn to spot these hidden illnesses and treat them before it is too late. Let's help the man or woman while they are struggling in the water and not wait until he actually goes under. Congress, I implore you to support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Duncan. Secunder?

SIS. I-G WILKES (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I am speaking in support of Motion 78. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. (*Applause*)

As a sufferer of bipolar disorder, clinical depression and a chronic anxiety disorder, I would like to second this motion. Too often people with mental health issues are told, if not in so many words, to cheer up or relax. That is my person favourite when I am asked what am I on. This approach is no more helpful than telling someone with a broken leg that they could run a marathon if only they would put their mind to it. Just because your illness cannot be seen, they are no less distressing, debilitating and no more easily overcome than other forms of illness.

These issues arise due to a profound lack of information and understanding. Mental health conditions are often viewed with a taint of outdated and unhelpful stereotypes, rather than with any meaningful level of understanding. It is difficult for people to understand things which they have never experienced and cannot see. This lack of understanding is encountered by many people with mental health illnesses every day, and this needs to change. It can take a great deal of courage to discuss these issues with an employer. The reaction in the workplace to this courage is all too often judgment, stigmatisation and fading career prospects. I would like it to be noted that my general manager encapsulates all of the positive qualities and attributes that I have spoken about. I am 29 years old and I am currently employed in my 29<sup>th</sup> job. Many people I know tell me and speculate how lucky I am to have the support network that I do in the form of management, colleagues and comrades. Maybe I am. However, I find it sad that this should be seen as fortuitous. This should be the norm.

Compassion, empathy, understanding and social care are, surely, the foundations that the trade union Movement was built on. If I wasn't so lucky, I would be looking for job no. 30 by now. This level of support and basic human decency are what I want for everyone. The negative attitudes regarding mental health are something we must change, and people living with these illnesses and many other invisible conditions must be rewarded for their courage and, indeed, the crux of this motion be supported for it and not punished. Thank you. I second. (*A standing ovation*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Imogen. I call Motion 79.

## **YOUTH TRADE UNION EDUCATION MOTION 79**

### **79. YOUTH TRADE UNION EDUCATION**

This Congress notes that the attacks on Young Workers continue unabated with the cuts to Youth Services, continued implementation of Workfare, and the discriminatory disgrace of age differentials within the National Minimum Wage still a stain on the statute books.

Young workers within the Trade Union movement must be at the forefront of opposing and reversing such attacks. However, there exists a disproportionately low number of young workers involved within Trade Unions. Factors such as a lack of secure employment, zero hour contracts, and the ceaseless bile by many sectors of the media on Trade Unions all contribute to this lower density of Trade Union membership.

This Congress recognises that in order to stem the tide of reactionary misinformation, the younger generation must be informed of the history of the Trade Union movement and the role it plays today in defending young workers. In turn this Congress recognises that those best placed to engage with the younger members of society are young workers themselves. This will prime the next generation of Trade Unionist to join the fight opposing austerity and neo-liberalism.

Congress resolves:-

- In conjunction with the GMB Young Members Network incorporate and promote Youth Trade Union Education into the annual Young Workers Month.
- Commission and publish training materials for Youth GMB Members to deliver training on the history and role of Trade Unions to those in full time education.
- Assist Youth GMB Members in gaining access to education institutions in order that they may deliver this training

TRANSCO GAS BRANCH  
*Wales & South West Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. J. BRADY (GMB Wales and South West): Congress, I move Motion 79 — Youth Trade Union Education. Young people in society are entering a world of work which devalues those within. The increase in casualised employment, zero-hour contracts and low pay all contribute to a workplace which is hostile to workers as a whole and young people in particular. Today's workplace continues to devalue young people directly through on of the last relics of legalised age discrimination, by which I mean the shameful use of age differentials in the National Minimum Wage. If you are aged 21 or below you can be informed that your labour is, literally, worth less than that of your fellow workers. This is the job market that those currently in education will be entering, yet many young people are not informed of the organisations which are best suited to fight for their rights in the workplace. They may even be unaware that many of the rights at work are as a result of trade union action.

GMB young members are best suited to inform the youth of society about the trade union Movement. This is due to the fact that GMB young members are even now facing the very challenges previously mentioned. Congress, let us assist our young members in informing the next generation of workers of the value of the trade union Movement. Let us prime the minds of those who will follow us into the workplace. The GMB will be a beacon for other unions to follow in ensuring that the values of trade unionism are passed on.

Youth trade union education demonstrates the GMB's commitment to young members of society, the GMB Young Members' Network and the trade union Movement as a whole. Congress I move. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Julia. I call the seconder.

SIS. G. BRINKWORTH (GMB Wales and South West): Congress, I second Motion 79 on Youth Trade Union Education. Vice President and Congress, a charge is sometimes levelled at the trade union Movement that we are pre-occupied with the workplace. Congress, we were born from the

workplace and it is right that our attention be focused there. However, the trade union Movement is a living organism and we must adapt. In order that we may best fight for our members, we must be involved in every part of our communities.

The main purpose of this motion is to ensure that those who enter the workplace do so with the knowledge and tools both to defend themselves and fight for the rights of workers. More than that, this motion ensures that the trade unions as a whole, and the GMB in particular, are at the heart of our communities, for this is where the trade unions belong. We are not just on the picket lines, in the meeting rooms or in the conference halls, though all are vital. We are, with our brothers and sisters, in the community. I second. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gwylan. I call the mover of Motion 80.

## **BULLYING IN THE WORKPLACE MOTION 80**

### **80. BULLYING IN THE WORKPLACE**

This Congress calls upon the CEC Organisation Sub Group to work jointly with Education & Training Departments to draw up a training module, which trains Stewards not only how to recognise bullying in the Workplace, but also how to draw up and implement Zero Tolerance Policies.

B16 BRANCH  
*North West & Irish Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. M. DOCKERY (North West & Irish): Congress, I move Motion 80 — Bullying in the Workplace. Bullying in the workplace happens every day. While I am talking about bullying, it happened to me in the workplace, and I know how they feel: stressed! Although we might not always see it, it happens all around us. It happens to our friends and family members, to our work colleagues and in ordinary working people everywhere. It usually happens behind doors; yes, behind doors. Why? There are no witnesses to see what is happening or to do anything about it. Bullying destroys the confidence of our esteem and of all those who fall victim to it. It has corrosive effects. We have to stand up and protect ourselves and each other. It is not always easy, especially if you are a quiet person and you may be worried in case you answer back and lose your job. But this should not be the case. We should always stand up for each other and ourselves. We should tell management what is happening and make sure that they listen, as well as to our GMB reps, about what is going on. We have to do all we can to stop all forms of bullying in our workplaces. We need to get our Education Department to draw up a training module to train stewards to recognise the signs of bullying in and employ zero tolerance. Only by working together and standing up for each other will we stop bullying. Congress I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Margaret. Seconder?

BRO. D. MARCHBANK (North West & Irish): Congress, I second Motion 80. Bullying has no place in the workplace. It never has and it never will. It is vital that GMB workplace organisers have the skills required not only to recognise bullying but to deal with it and implement a zero tolerance attitude towards it. Bullying in the workplace can and must be challenged. This is best achieved through the quality training and skills provided by the GMB's Education Department. The GMB can and should be proud of the quality of the training it provides. This is needed more than ever after the recent election results. Congress I second. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David.

BRO. M. AKBAR (London): Congress, I support Motion 78. Ladies and gentlemen, this is a motion that we really need to support. This is nothing new to us. This has been going on for years and years. We have the Conservative Party coming into power. We are going to have people suffering. By working in the Ambulance Service, we see people with depression, anxiety, disorders and mental health issues. These are the people who need our help. However, the employers will simply say, “Let us have a capability on them.” They will want to get rid of them and put them on unemployment benefit. That is not the way we want to go. We want to protect these people, those who are with mental health issues, no matter where they are from. As long as they are working, we are there for them. I want you to support that. Thank you. *(Applause)*

SIS. C. CAMPBELL (GMB Scotland): Congress, I speak in support of Motion 78 — Mental Health Awareness. I am so nervous, I think I am going to faint. *(Pause)* This motion calls on the Government to campaign for mental health awareness in the workplace, and for our reps to be able to recognise, guide and support their members. I agree that there is a huge need to support mental health awareness in our workplaces. But what if it was you, the rep, who is suffering, walking around with your tail between your legs, having panic attacks, suffering anxiety and worried about being labelled as “incompetent”? Yes, your employer is responsible for your wellbeing and should refer you to the necessary bodies for employee counselling, thereby minimising the risks of stress if possible. The impact of mental health is not just for the individual. It affects your family, too. Oh boy! I just know the feeling of worthlessness and despair... *(The delegate left the stage in a distressed state)*  
*(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does anyone else wish to speak in the debate? *(No response)* I now call on Gordon Richardson to speak on behalf of the CEC.

BRO. G. RICHARDSON (CEC, Manufacturing): President and Congress, I speak on behalf of the CEC about education and the mental health of our members, which is something that is very passionate to me.

We are supporting Motions 71 and 78 with qualifications, and asking Congress to refer Motions 74 and 76. On Motion 71 our qualification is that while the experience of the GMB activists attending the GLI Summer School has been really good, further work is required to further embed this learning into both the GMB’s core training programme and all our international work. In addition, the cost implications of the motion need further consideration.

On Motion 78 the qualification is that identifying mental health issues in the workplace is a very sensitive task requiring specialist skills and medical knowledge, which most GMB workplace reps and organisers may not have. Further consideration and advice from experts in the field is needed to help the union assess how we can support our workplace organisers in identifying such important issues where they work.

We are asking Congress to refer Motion 74 for further consideration of the costs implications of the proposal for the motion. We are also asking Congress to refer Motion 76 to assess both the cost implications and how best to integrate such a Higher Education Learning Fund into existing regional arrangements.

But, Congress, let us be clear. The right to our members to have an education and gain high-level skills is a fundamental part of what we can campaign for. GMB members are about as aspirational as you can get, not just for themselves but for their families and communities. We know the impact that learning and education projects, that the GMB has run over recent years, have had on the lives of thousands of our members. Unfortunately, we can expect little support or understanding of our members' aspirations from the current Government, and we must continue to work to ensure that the union is seen as a place to turn for opportunities to learn and acquire skills.

Therefore, Congress, please support Motions 71 and 78 with the qualifications I have set out, and agree to refer Motions 74 and 76. Congratulations to the speakers on such an important subject. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gordon. Colleagues, before we take the vote, the last speaker would like to come back and finish her speech. (*Applause*)

SIS. C. CAMPBELL (GMB Scotland): It was my fault. I think last night I had too much drink. Let's finish. What I was saying was I know the feeling of worthlessness and despair, the sadness for your young family. Every year I have stood *here* and talked about mental health, and I have put myself into this vulnerable situation. The reason why I do this is because I think sometimes we ignore the terrible impact it has on your life, not to mention your family. If that can make you be positive in helping those who need you, then I am always going to stand *here* and get on with it. (*Applause*)

When I was at my worst, my nine-year old daughter took over and became the little mummy by taking my other two children to school. Although she has turned out to be a beautiful 25-year old girl, the effects of that time still show. She is very protective of her siblings, not to mention me. I was a black woman in a foreign country, with no friends and unable to speak the language. Also the language is still a problem. I was ignored. Maybe it is the culture. I was just another psycho. I was probably a pain in the arse when I couldn't even remember to put my bins out. But there were big problems when sometimes I forgot to collect my little girl from her nursery. People with mental health difficulties need help, not to be crucified for being unwell.

Whilst a lot of other medical problems are visible, mental health is usually not. It is a slow killer. If not helped, sufferers can turn to self harm, even suicide. It becomes a way out for the sufferers. We can only fight for equal pay, the end of poverty, the end of exploitation, etc if we are mentally healthy. That is why this motion is not a choice of whether to support. It is a need for this Movement. Please support. (*A standing ovation*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well done. Colleagues, we will now go to the vote. Does GMB Wales & South West agree the qualification on Motion 71? (*Agreed*) The mover of Motion 74 has already agreed to refer that back. Does the Midland & East Coast Region accept the reference on Motion 76? (*Agreed*) Finally, does the Birmingham & West Midlands Region accept the qualification on Motion 78? (*Agreed*)

Colleagues, the CEC is supporting Motions 71 with the qualification, Motion 74 with the reference back, Motion 76 with the reference back, Motion 78 with the qualification and Motions 79 and 80. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? Carried.

*Motion 71 was Carried.*

*Motion 73 was Carried.*

*Motion 74 was Referred.*

*Motion 76 was Referred.*

*Motion 78 was Carried.*

*Motion 79 was Carried.*

*Motion 80 was Carried.*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, can we now move to the next part of the business: Employment Policy: Pensions & Retirement. I call the movers of Motions 116, 119 and 120. Then I will be calling Motions 121, 122 and 124. I will then be calling George Fraser on behalf of the CEC to reply to the debate.

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

### **RETIREMENT AGE**

#### **MOTION 116**

##### **116. RETIREMENT AGE**

This Congress agrees to campaign throughout the Labour and trade union movement to lower the age of retirement to 65 years for both male and female workers.

GOOLE BRANCH  
*Midland & East Coast Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. P. McLAUGHLIN (Midland & East Coast): Good afternoon, President and Congress. I am moving Motion 116 — Retirement Age. In moving this motion today, the fact that the implementation of this dire legislation was started some considerable time ago, to see it increased is a national disgrace. The whole reasoning why our forefathers fought long and hard for, all those years ago, was to ensure that working people lived long enough to enjoy their retirement, and it proved successful, as we all know today. The longer this legislation remains in place, then our children and grandchildren will be the casualties. They will not live long enough to enjoy their retirement and their grandchildren. This is turning the clock back to Victorian times. The current situation has been caused because politicians failed to handle and invest the state pension properly. They have failed to ensure that sufficient monies were being raised to meet the demands of its success. The job of politicians has been to ensure that working people live as long as the wealthy and stay healthy for longer. The wealthy do not need the state pension to enjoy their retirement because it is the workers who have created their wealth to enable them to live long and well on those proceeds. So when the Tories say that they are the party of the workers, judge them on their actions, not their lies. Congress, let us ensure that a future Labour Government treats working people equally and fairly by ensuring that this motion becomes part of our next manifesto. Doing so may just ensure that we will win the next election. I support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder?

BRO. K. DUDDING (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I second Motion 116 — Retirement Age. President, like many of my age, I started work at 16 years old. I worked in a wholesalers for newsagent industry for more than five years. Everything in those days was manually handled; unloading and loading wagons, vans and even the trains. The only mechanical device we had was the hand-jack trolleys, and that was to pull fully-loaded pallets around the warehouse. After that I moved on to another job in a factory producing steel barrels, drums and metal containers. Again, this was a physical job. After 14 years there, I was made redundant. It was a Conservative Government that was in power

at the time. After that I started a job in the leisure industry as a lifeguard. As a lifeguard I had to train every week. As well as the theory work, I also had to train in the pool every week. This was because every two years you kept your job by taking a Lifeguard's Certificate. The reason for this brief working history of my life is simple. After 27 years as a lifeguard, the wear and tear and an industrial injury finally caught up with me. A year ago my lifeguard certificate ran out, and I knew I would not pass the speed test to regain it and I would be finished under capability. Because of my age — I was born in 1952 — the question was whether I could hold on until 65, or just retire early? As it happened, I was lucky. I managed to get another job within the council as a convenor for the GMB. *(Laughter)* I don't know how lucky that was, actually.

What with the last Government increasing the retirement age, and especially now that they are on their own, they will probably increase it even further. How many workers who work in industry, construction and manufacturing will be finished on capability because of the wear and tear on their bodies? That is another issue. I ask Congress to support this motion because I do not want to go back to the days when male life expectancy was three years after retirement and five years for a female. People should have the right to enjoy a life in retirement. I second this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I call Motion 119.

## **DEFINED CONTRIBUTION SCHEMES IN ENERGY & UTILITIES MOTION 119**

### **119. DEFINED CONTRIBUTION SCHEMES IN ENERGY & UTILITIES**

This Congress recognises that Defined Benefit (DB) pension schemes represent the best option in retirement for working people and further recognises that GMB remains committed to defending DB pension provision for members. Congress applauds the work that GMB has carried out for many years to resist employers' attempts to weaken DB pension provision and in campaigning for the retention of these schemes when they have been threatened with closure.

However, Congress also acknowledges that many DB pension schemes in the energy & utilities are now closed to new entrants and that pension provision via Defined Contribution (DC) pension schemes is the reality for most young or new employees within the energy and water companies. Whilst GMB's continuing defence of DB schemes remains necessary, the Union must put more of a focus in future on improving DC provision, in order to help recruit and protect the future interests of the wider workforce within the energy & utilities sector. Congress therefore calls upon the CEC to ensure that GMB develops a campaign strategy for improving DC pensions in energy & utilities, that GMB negotiators in energy & utilities give priority to this issue and that GMB uses this sharper focus on DC pensions to maximise our recruitment opportunities amongst energy and utility workers who are not members of their company DB schemes.

L30 LORD STREET BRANCH  
*Birmingham & West Midlands Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. D. CARSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I propose Motion 119 on Defined Contribution Pension Schemes.

When I was growing up in Ayrshire, Scotland, the big employer in the region was ICI. My dad worked there, my grandpa worked there and my uncles worked there. In fact, an awful lot of people worked there. They were good jobs. If a man and a woman worked hard and did a fair day's work, their management would pay them a fair day's wage after, to be fair, the union persuaded them that it was the right thing to do. They could have a decent standard of living, and raise a family secure in the

knowledge that the future was reasonably bright. The children would receive a good education, the NHS would look after their health and a final salary pension from the company would ensure a comfortable, if not luxurious, retirement. Happy days, you might think, and for me they were. I was a kid growing up in a seaside town, with long hot summers and deep snowy winters. I never knew the daily trials that my parents went through, but I knew this. No one was afraid of retirement. No one was afraid of poverty in old age. No one had to work until they dropped to ensure that they could eat and keep warm.

Then came Thatcher's boom years. Boom! Gone were employment rights. Boom! Gone were the manufacturing industries that provided millions of well-paid jobs. Boom! Gone was the belief that if you worked hard, your future was secure. All gone. All sacrificed on the alter of greed. No longer did the government think that companies existed to generate wealth, to put money into the pockets of ordinary people. No! Companies existed and only had one duty, and that was to put money into the pockets of shareholders and into the pockets of greedy owners. Workers, once again, became mere units of production, a return to good old Victorian values.

Now the media is littered with stories about the rich and the famous, and their luxurious lifestyles while the rest of us barely get by. To quote the character Judd from *Poldark*: "Tain't right, tain't fair, tain't fit and t'aint proper." Well, t'aint. But that is the world we live in. Much as we wish it was not, the unions cannot change it alone. It requires political will from our friends in the Labour Party. Isn't that what they are there for, to enact political change to stop the rich exploiting the poor, the strong exploiting the weak? Whilst we are waiting for them to get their act together, I will tell you an uncomfortable fact. Trade unions can only do so much, and we must deal with the world as it is, not as we wish it would be.

As a national steward, I hear my fellow workers and my own stewards in the region bemoaning the loss of final salary pension schemes, and we fight against their closure wherever it occurs, but we are swimming against the tide. They are closing and an increasing number of workers are not part of these schemes and never will be. We, as a union, must realise that and focus efforts on improving today's pension schemes for our members and our future members, not wistfully harking back to the good old days of long, hot summers and deep snowy winters. As time goes by, our membership replaces itself. New members for old. We must represent the expanding number of younger members with no final salary pensions, or we will cease to be relevant to the increasing proportion of workers in this country.

Comrades, we must look to the future. We might fight for our future and ensure a future for the young who, after all, are all of our futures. Congress, you know what you have to do. Support this motion.  
(Applause)

*(The motion was formally seconded from the floor)*

## **PENSION PASSPORTS MOTION 120**

### **120. PENSION PASSPORTS**

This Congress calls upon the government to back a pension passport or credit card, so that when workers change jobs their pension is pooled into one pot rather than having several small pots. This could be transferred wherever they work and would keep all savings together

ASDA STORES BRANCH  
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

*(Carried)*

SIS. M. O'NEILL (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I move Motion 120 — Pension Passports. Congress, I call upon the Government to back a pension passport or even a pension credit card, so that when workers change their job roles they can take their pensions with them instead of having different ones laying dormant, not gaining any financial benefit, only for the companies or the greedy pension brokers to take the lion's share. The pensions, really, are our money. It is what we have saved for. We should be able to carry it from employer to employer. Pension Passports would stop the so-called "Wake-up packs". These packs are 20 pages plus long and full of jargon that most of us might not understand. This Government is trying to confuse us yet again. The FCA there are a few proposals on the table and the pension passport is one of them. How long does it take them? They need to get their act in order. After all, it is our money. Even the pensions industry would like to see this issue resolved, so come on, FCA, make a decision, and we urge you to make it the pension passport. Please support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I call the seconder.

SIS. M. GRIFFITHS (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I support Motion 120. The average Briton has 11 different jobs in their lifetime. Even a financial expert would have trouble keeping track of 11 different pensions and understanding the retirement income they could expect from them, so what hope is there for the rest of us? A pension passport which consolidates this information is a welcome step. The passport would include information about how a retiree has saved into individual pensions, what company that pension is held with and whether they have any guarantees on the pension that would provide them with market-beating annuity rates or lump sums.

Congress, next year savers will be able to cash in their entire pension pots and will have more options for turning their pension pots into a retirement income. The City watchdog, the Financial Conduct Authority, is looking to introduce a new pension passport. It will provide retirees with essential information about their saving pots. They will be given a free session of guidance to help them decide what to do with their money. However, this advice must be independent and accurate. If not, the advice will be less than useless. Such confusion would be prevented if the safeguards are met before our pension passport is issued. This looks like good news for our members, and if advice is impartial a pension passport has the potential to stop people getting ripped off. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. I now ask Southern Region to move Motion 121.

## **DEFINED CONTRIBUTION PENSIONS AND ILL HEALTH RETIREMENT COVER MOTION 121**

### **121. DEFINED CONTRIBUTION PENSIONS AND ILL HEALTH RETIREMENT COVER**

Most companies have moved away from final salary pensions and taken up defined contribution pensions where the workers take to risk of their investments as opposed to the companies.

British Gas is an example of this, so any member of staff taken on after 2005 will have a defined contribution pension. So they still have the death in service benefit but no ill health retirement provision should they fall ill and be unable to work. This means the company will dismiss them under capability and leave them with nothing.

Under a recent TUPE transfer I came across a company who provides an insurance policy for anyone that is off sick exceeding 26 weeks, their current sick scheme covers full pay for six months and then the individual as a result of the insurance policy will get 75% of their salary up until their return to work, retirement or demise.

This means that not only does the individual not have to worry about their finances and can concentrate at getting well. But it also takes the pressure off the employer to get the individual back to work when a longer time period could be required for them to make a full recovery. As the insurance policy takes on the cost of the individuals wages this allows the company to take on temporary cover should the need arise.

The cost of the insurance for individuals is minimal and is cost effective for the employer.

We want congress to rule that companies with defined contribution schemes should take up policies for individuals to ensure that they are looked after if they become too ill to work which could be up until their retirement or their demise. It is important that even if the pension scheme they are in is not as comprehensive as the final salary pension schemes that some protection is in place should this situation arise.

P29 SOUTH COAST GAS AND UTILITIES BRANCH  
Southern Region

*(Carried)*

SIS. K. DICKINSON (Southern): Congress, I move Motion 121. I am a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* "We're in". We have seen the advert on the television so many times during the last year about workplace pensions. Everyone who is not in a pension scheme will automatically be opted in. Most companies today have moved away from final salary defined benefit pensions because, with defined benefit pension schemes, the employer takes the investment risk. With the defined contribution scheme, the employee takes all the risk, therefore not guaranteeing what your pension will be when you retire. British Gas is a prime example of this, so any member of staff taken on after 2005 will be on a defined contribution pension. As the final salary pension was closed to new entrants, all opted in will also be in the defined contribution pension scheme. Although all pension members have a death-in-service benefit, only the final salary members can have ill-health retirement provision. This, therefore, means that a company will dismiss them under capability, leaving them with no guaranteed future income.

Under a recent TUPE transfer, I discovered an insurance policy that a company called Cognizant use. It works like this. When an employee has been sick for six months, the insurance policy comes into play. This pays 75% of the employee's salary. It is administered by the employer until the employee returns to work, retires or dies. This means that the employee does not have any worry about their financial position or providing for their family. This also stops the employee from feeling pressured into returning to work too early when this could prove detrimental to their recovery. The plus side for the employer is that they can backfill the position with a temporary contract until the employee is able to return to work. This, therefore, removes the pressure from the employee, the employer and colleagues, who may otherwise be working with a diminished workforce.

Congress, let me give you an example. If I was to become too ill to work, I would be considered for ill-health retirement, and that is what my pension provides. But my colleague, who has a defined contribution pension, has no provision and, therefore, would be finished under capability. This cannot be right. It doesn't matter what age you are. Good health can be taken away at any time. Parkinson's, MS and motor neurone disease are all degenerative diseases and can strike at any time. They do age-discriminate Therefore, if there is no provision for ill health, these employees will not be taken care of when they can no longer work.

Congress, I ask for your support in ensuring that all employees can have defined contribution schemes which provide this policy to cover ill health until retirement or, sadly, death. Why should the person sitting next to me have any less benefit when they have been responsible enough to join the pension scheme. Congress Please support, I move. Thank you. *(Applause)p*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Well done. Secunder?

BRO. S.H. RAZA (Southern): Congress, I second Motion 121. Defined contribution pensions are the reality for millions of workers, as we know. Defined contribution pensions are inferior to final salary pensions, and this includes benefits. We have fought hard over the defined benefit pension, but increasingly we must focus on improving on defined contribution pensions. It is vital that we seek improvements to benefits like ill-health retirement. We should be examining all the defined contribution schemes that we have dealt with to see what benefits they offer and seek to improve them through our claims about pay, conditions and pensions. Pensions, excluding defined contribution pensions, are, after all, deferred pay, and it is our duty to fight for better defined contribution pensions. If we campaign on defined contribution pensions, we will organise and build GMB, too. Congress please support, I second. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Well done. I call Motion 122.

### **ADVICE FOR MEMBERS WITH DC PENSIONS MOTION 122**

#### **122. ADVICE FOR MEMBERS WITH DC PENSIONS**

This Congress notes that George Osborne's freedom and choice agenda for Defined Contribution Pension savings comes into effect in April 2015; this radical change in pension legislation being implemented with only 13 months' notice. The impact of these reforms is potentially huge for members who have Defined Contribution Pension savings, and now offers a vast array of options for how to use these savings.

Whilst increased choice might be viewed as a positive for members, Congress is concerned that the range of options may make retirement bewildering to many; leading to potential confusion, poor decision making and the possibility of products being miss-sold and members losing out. Whilst Government has promised access to guidance, we remain concerned that this is untested and may be rushed and incomprehensive.

GMB has long fought to ensure that decent pension savings can be built up by members, but GMB cannot directly advise members on how to use those savings. Congress reaffirms that GMB has advocated members with Defined Contribution savings seek independent financial advice when they approach their retirement.

It is noted that different Regions may have different approaches to offering member access to IFAs. In recognition of Freedom and Choice, Congress asks GMB to devise and implement a strategy for offering members who are approaching retirement access to specialised independent financial advice through a preferential, fixed rate fee. This would supplement the Government's guidance and would be a valuable provision for members.

DEVONPORT BRANCH  
Wales & South West Region

*(Referred)*

BRO. N. WARN (GMB Wales and South West): Congress, I move Motion 122. President and delegates, the text of the motion is, hopefully, clear to all delegates in highlighting the live issues of the world of pensions and making suggestions for the union to adopt in order to help members. The motion refers to defined contribution pension schemes. These are pensions which work, really, like a saving scheme, to which the employees and employer pay in. The savings are used to help people fund their retirement. Until recently, the options at retirement were pretty limited with people having a choice of a tax-free lump sum, and then having to buy an annuity with the remainder of the savings. These rules were thrown out in April and George Osborne has given savers the opportunity to do what

they want with their pension savings. People don't have to buy an annuity but can take their whole pension savings as one lump sum or as a series of lump sums.

However, the new freedoms bring new dangers. Retirees may not appreciate the tax liabilities that they will have to meet. Financial advice is the key to helping people make the right decision. The impact of spending all their savings and facing a future of poverty, or the danger of ploughing their money into scams, can be catastrophic. The Government are falling short of funding this advice. Rather than ensuring guidance, it has given through the Citizens' Advice Bureau or through the Pensions Advisory Service over the phone. Whilst these would be useful to help people think about options, they will not give any tailored advice.

The importance of the decisions faced at retirement mean that advice is crucial. The prospect of getting that advice is likely to be terrifying for many members. So it is important that our union is there to help. We cannot give that advice, but the GMB can work with financial advisers to ensure that they are consumer focused, with a discount given to GMB members. I believe that many regions provide this service already.

The motion asks the CEC to explore the possibility of ensuring that such a facility is available across the entirety of the union's regions. I understand that the CEC will seek reference back to this matter and will confirm that such reference will be accepted. Congress I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder?

BRO. P. HUNT (GMB Wales and South West): Congress, I second Motion 122. President and Congress, Nigel has, quite rightly, drawn the attention of Congress to not only the new freedoms of choice available for members paying into defined contribution schemes, but also to the risks and dangers associated with them. As a union, we, naturally, favour and support schemes of a defined benefit kind, where what you get when you retire depends on what you have earned rather than the vagaries of the financial market. However, the escalating trend in the industry is away from final salary schemes and to defined contribution ones. Therefore, it is necessary as a union to respond to that shift and the consequences of it.

Defined contribution schemes present considerable risks, given the fact that there may be insufficient funds available to provide an adequate retirement pension. Also, pension funds' values are volatile, so the timing of retirement can significantly affect retirement incomes. The investment risk in this type of scheme falls upon the employee and the certainty of income insufficiency in retirement is removed. The risk element can only increase given the flexibility built into the new arrangements of pension accessing. The range of options available now, at the age when you can exercise them, necessitates that even greater care is exercised when making an informed and responsible decision about how best to become financially secure in the years after retirement.

It is vital, therefore, that our members obtain advice from an independent financial adviser. Very few of us are seasoned investors or able to understand the complexities associated with pension income, having to fund an adequate lifestyle in retirement, tax liabilities and so on. Running out of money by making the wrong choice and living longer than expected is a real and obvious danger, particularly by following the draw-down route. The market is awash with firms about to provide advice.

As the motion claims, having some form of co-ordinated and standardised approach to provide external advice facility would be helpful to members when the time comes to elect how best to use

these pension savings. This possibility is worthy of serious exploration, and we call upon the CEC to initiate it. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I call Motion 124.

## **PENSION RIGHTS FOR ALL MOTION 124**

### **124. PENSION RIGHTS FOR ALL**

This Congress deplores the actions of some scheming employers, who are manipulating the rules. Some employers will only employ people through an agency, and they must be registered as self-employed. This way, they do not have to contribute anything into an employee's pension. We call on the GMB union to put pressure on this government and future governments to stop this injustice to our members.

Stockton No 3 BRANCH  
NORTHERN REGION

*(Carried)*

BRO. J. LANGAN (Northern): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Congress, I am moving Motion 124 — Pension Rights for All.

Bogus self-employment and the use of bogus agency labour by subcontractors is a scandal. It has been going on for years. We know that across our region and the UK the use of these practices is one of the many reasons why terms and conditions have been cut. Household incomes have been cut, and there is no pension available. Cowboy employers get away with daylight robbery. Such employers don't value their workers. They don't believe in ensuring that their workers have a decent pension. Employers are ripping taxpayers off, and are leaving to the state and future taxpayers to foot the bill for keeping people in a poverty-stricken, old age pension as their only source of income. These are practices that should have been banned when Labour was in office. Perhaps one of the reasons why people voted the way they did in May was because they did not trust that things would change. What we need is decent company pension schemes back. After all, when workers put into the pension pot, they are just saving their pay for a rainy day. Employers who take on staff should be making a contribution to worker pension schemes.

We are waiting to see who the next Labour leader is and in what direction they want to take party. Whoever it is must understand the realities that we face every day of the week. Our people understand the world of work as it is today. They don't think that it is radical or left-wing to get rid of bogus contracts. They don't think it is radical or left-wing to ask for a decent company pension when they are prepared to put into the pot for it. Let us see if Labour is up for committing to getting rid of bogus practices and helping people to get a decent pension from work. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I call the seconder.

SIS. Y. MORRIS (Northern): Congress, I second Motion 124 on Pension Rights for All. Our experience in the Northern Region, and I am sure that this situation is shared across the union, is that bogus self-employment is cutting terms and conditions. It is a scandal. It is also happening in the service sector where jobs are already on the minimum wage. Congress, bogus self-employment by agencies means that workers have no chance of a decent pension, saddling future pensioners with a life based on poverty. A decent job, paid well with a decent pension in retirement should be at the heart of

industrial policies. The old-age pension should be something you get, anyway, on top of all that. The failure of governments to understand the world of work is a sign of how bad things have got. Employers should not be salting their money offshore and denying their workers a decent company pension. Employers should be made to contribute to a decent pension scheme, and not some half-baked schemes that the last Government brought in. Contributions by employees and workers are needed in company pension schemes to ensure that people in retirement are not left to a life of poverty when they retire. That is not left wing. Those are common sense values. I second.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I call George Fraser.

BRO. G. FRASER (CEC, Public Services): Congress, I speak on behalf of the CEC to motions in the pensions debate. President, the CEC is supporting Motions 116 and 119 with qualifications, seeking reference back for Motion 122 and fully supporting all the others in the debate.

Motion 116 calls for the age of retirement to be lowered to 65. Our current position is that pension-age rises should be deferred until we see equality in life expectancies. The current variations in longevity linked to profession, income and location are, quite simply, unacceptable. It was agreed by Congress last year in Nottingham that we would call for a greater flexibility of pension age. This is an important an emotive issue but the GMB position must remain the same. No one — no one, colleagues — should have to work until they drop, and everyone has the right to expect a decent income in retirement after a lifetime of working or caring.

However, Congress, in striving to achieve this goal we are very aware that there is no longer a one-size fits all to retirement in the UK. This means that greater flexibility of our retirement system is needed, a flexibility that allows different people to play a retirement that suits them.

With regard to Motion 119, the qualification is brief. This motion, rightly, calls for strategic campaigns to deliver improvements in defined contribution pensions where they exist in the energy and utility sectors. The CEC would wish to extend this to all GMB members in defined contribution schemes in any sector, not just the sectors mentioned in the motion.

Moving on now, colleagues, to Motion 122, this motion asks GMB to devise and implement the strategy for offering access to financial advice on retirement. At present, there is no common approach to this across the union, with different regions having different arrangements for the provision of financial advice. The CEC would like the opportunity to look into this situation further to see if the appetite for, and availability of, such a service exists. Accordingly, the CEC is asking that this motion be referred back for further consideration.

Colleagues, we hope that Midland & East Coast Region and Birmingham & West Midlands Region will accept the qualifications, and also that GMB Wales and South West Region will agree to refer. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Will Midland & East Coast Region accept the qualification to Motion 116? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Will Birmingham & West Midlands Region accept the qualification on Motion 119? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Will GMB Wales and South West Region accept the reference on Motion 122? (*Agreed*) I now put all the motions to Congress; that is 116, 119, 120, 121, 122 and 124. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? They are carried.

*Motion 116 was Carried.*

*Motion 119 was Carried.*

*Motion 120 was Carried.*  
*Motion 121 was Carried.*  
*Motion 122 was Referred*  
*Motion 124 was Carried..*

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to agenda item 9. I now call the mover of Composite 6.

## **INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: TAXATION & GENERAL**

### **TAX AVOIDANCE AND CUTS TO CORPORATE WELFARE COMPOSITE 6**

*(Covering Motions 223 and 225)*

223. TAX AVOIDANCE *(London Region)*

225. CUTS TO CORPORATE WELFARE *(London Region)*

### **TAX AVOIDANCE AND CUTS TO CORPORATE WELFARE**

This Congress notes the recent report in the Guardian Newspaper that Peter Mandelson avoided paying Income Tax by covert means.

It was reported he borrowed £400,000 from a company of which he is the sole owner thus avoiding the Income Tax had would have been liable for had that sum been paid to him as income, thus depriving HMRC.

This, at a time of austerity when our members receive few if any pay rises and a rising cost of living.

This Congress agrees to campaign for cuts to Corporate Welfare for private and public sector businesses and a reduction in the tax allowances for individuals of high net worth and not cut the welfare budget for those who have a low income or no income. Congress therefore supports the Labour Party's proposals to bring an end to all forms of tax evasion and avoidance practices.

<b>London Region</b>	<b>to Move</b>
<b>London Region</b>	<b>to Second</b>

*(Carried)*

SIS. L. MANN (London): Congress, I move Composite 6. Tax avoidance by both wealthy individuals and big corporate companies is a scandal of our times. These people and companies are paying armies of accountants and consultants to find every way possible to avoid paying tax, whether it is Income Tax or Corporation Tax. The real scandal is that many of these companies are paying their staff at the minimum wage, so whilst the fat-cat executives are avoiding tax, the workers have to rely on benefits to survive. Whilst the state is subsidising these tax avoiders, the press and media are very quick to claim moral outrage about so-called "benefit scroungers", but we do not hear the same cries of anguish about tax avoidance. Tax avoidance may be legal but it is certainly immoral. By using loopholes in the law and an army of accounts and complicated banking arrangements in tax havens, individuals and corporations are not paying their way.

Meanwhile, politicians of all parties do little to close the loopholes or tighten the laws to give the HMRC real powers to pursue tax avoiders. They take the easy option. They go seeking the easy sound bite and the favourable newspaper headlines by talking about lowering benefit caps or demonising so-called scroungers. It has been reported that HMRC has been sitting on a list of a thousand UK-tax evaders for five years. If they had been benefit claimants, they would have been prosecuted a long time ago. According to the HMRC's official statistics, in 2012-13 £1.2 million was

lost in benefit fraud, but £4 billion — yes, £4 billion — is lost in tax evasion. In reality, the law on tax avoidance is weak. Tax evasion is illegal but tax avoidance, whilst exploiting the rules and loopholes, is legal.

Banks like HSBC have used accounts in Switzerland to provide their rich customers havens to avoid tax. Congress, politicians need to take action. They need to stop demonising benefit claimants and start exposing tax evaders. Congress I move. *(Applause)*

SIS. M. BARTLETT (London): Congress, I second Composite 6 — Tax Avoidance and Cuts to Corporate Welfare. In the past few years we have seen an outrageous attack on social welfare. The Tories have cut wherever they can and the press take every opportunity to present welfare claimants as lazy scroungers, yet we never hear a thing about corporate welfare.

Corporate welfare is grants, subsidies, contracts and cut-price loans that are handed out to businesses from the Government. Although the Government, conveniently, does not keep figures on corporate welfare, independent research has shown that it is worth over £84 billion a year. This does not even include the £25 billion the Government pay in in-work benefits to people whose employers don't pay them enough to live on. It is one thing if they were going to help small businesses or keep failing business afloat to save jobs but, in reality, it is going to massive corporations like Amazon and Tesco. The Government even gave £50 million to Disney in one year to shoot a film in the UK. Talk about taking the Mickey. *(Laughter)* These companies take from the state however they can with no regard for the rest of society. Of the 44 companies that received more than £1 billion in corporate welfare in the past few years, 13 of them didn't even pay any Corporation Tax. To top it all off, many of these corporations don't even pay their staff a living wage, have staff on zero-hours contracts and cost the Government billions in social welfare payments.

If the Tories are looking for an area by which to fund their £12 billion of welfare cuts, I suggest they start here. Congress I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. I call Motion 224.

## **EMPLOYERS' NATIONAL INSURANCE CONTRIBUTIONS — AVOIDANCE SCHEMES MOTION 224**

### **224. EMPLOYERS' NATIONAL INSURANCE CONTRIBUTIONS – AVOIDANCE SCHEME**

This Congress calls upon the Union to campaign against Employers who are using complex or minimum employment contracts arrangements to avoid their responsibilities in paying National Insurance contributions for their Employees. This will place their Employees at risk in the future in relation to the payment of benefits or pensions as these are based on the National Insurance payments made.

The actions of these employers are similar to tax avoidance schemes for which employers and the wider community are paying the price. No Employer should be able to avoid their moral responsibility and duty to the common good of society by using these avoidance techniques or complex employment contracts. Their actions are denying much needed revenue into the National Insurance fund and are damaging employees' entitlement in the future. These actions by employers are pushing responsibility onto the state or its benefit system to support their employees in future from whom they are profiting.

We call upon the GMB to campaign to have an enquiry by HMRC and the Department of Work & Pensions into these practices and contracts to ensure that legislation is sufficient to ensure payments are met. Also, to ensure

active enforcement by the relevant authorities is undertaken to prevent such contracts or avoidance schemes being used in the future.

Q22 BRANCH  
North West & Irish Region

*(Carried)*

BRO. K. FLANAGAN (North West & Irish): Worthy President, just to put the record straight. I was going to put up a point of order. I heard somebody say from Yorkshire that it was God's own county. Well, I've just checked, just in case, and actually in the story of creation, the Lord created Lancashire first on the Thursday — *(Jeering)* — and after he had finished creating Lancashire first with the spoil he created Yorkshire. *(Jeering)*

THE PRESIDENT: The Wars of the Roses are over. Get on with it, Kevin. *(Laughter)*

BRO. FLANAGAN: They know how much I love them. Congress, I don't want to detract from what is a very important motion. A certain man at this point might have done *this*, because he stood strongly for many of the things that deeply move us in this room. I will not even copy him, but I merely pay my tribute to a good man, and to John Toomey, who stuck to their principles. I hope you will allow me an extra second for that. *(Applause)* This may be my last contribution to this particular Congress, but I do feel strongly about this motion, and I hope you just bear with me for a second.

President and Congress, I move Motion 224 — Employers' National Insurance Contributions — Avoidance Scheme. The Anderson Group is one of the UK's leading providers of support to the recruitment industry. The Anderson Group advises and supports hundreds of agencies and thousands of contractors across this country. I ask you: are they giving good advice? Are they advising on the dignity of work and how to treat your workers well? Are they giving advice on the importance of human labour and the just rewards they deserve, so eloquently given and expressed by the Irish President a few days ago in this very hall? No, Congress. They are helping employers to avoid their moral responsibilities and obligations to pay National Insurance. They are not just robbing their workers, Congress, but they are robbing you. The BBC recently recorded a sales manager of the Anderson Group encouraging an agency that employs 300 workers to exploit the Government's Employment Allowance Scheme. This scheme was to encourage job creation and allowed them to knock £2,000 off their National Insurance payments if they created those jobs. Anderson's advice to one of the employment agencies caught on tape was to break up that organisation that employed 300 people, and to create a hundred limited companies and move the 300 workers into those new companies. Why? So that they could claim the £2,000 allowance. Ah ha! But not once, but 10 times or 100 times because they created a hundred companies. In other words, it cut £200,000 off their National Insurance bill, but not one job was created. It was just aggressive greed by the aggressive avoidance of National Insurance. Anderson's advisers stated that they thought their company's annual National Insurance bill of £300,000 could be made to come to zero. To add insult to injury, they then advised them how they might want to spend that money, with Bentleys, chalets in the Swiss Alps and holidays. In other words, greed built on the backs of workers and the exploitation of workers, and giving to the few that which has been earned by the many!

Not only that, many employees will be on temporary employment contracts. They will not need to pay National Insurance, neither will the employer. Why? Because they are insecure work, and that is because of the greed of the employers. Let me make it clear. Just because it is legal, it does not make it morally right, and we need to say that loud and clear. An inquiry is needed to investigate Andersons and employers who want to have the benefits of human labour but exploit others. I will be blunt, Congress. These organisations and these people are robbing resources from our country and in so

doing are sucking justice from our workers. The vile virus of injustice they spread causes in-work poverty, insecure work and family misery. They are sowers of social division and inequality that does so much damage to our communities and to the true pure purpose of human work. This failed economic model and distortions to our welfare system has to stop. Human beings have blood in their veins, not oil.

We are called in our beauty to be able to enjoy the benefits of our labour. We are called to be able to enjoy the benefits in the future because we have paid National Insurance, but even that now is being denied from them. The common good demands that these schemes must be investigated, these practices must be ended and the common good of our society must be served. The end is the end, and people matter most, not profit and not greed. Congress I move. Thank you.

BRO. D. FLANAGAN (North West & Irish): Congress, I second Motion 224. President, let me use the technology that we have, seeing I am the last speaker today. Let me give a big hellow to Ella, my daughter, and Joseph, who are watching at home. Ella is going in for an operation tomorrow. Love you. *(Applause)*

Congress, the scandal of tax avoidance and National Insurance avoidance has gone on for too long. Employers and the rich manipulate the rules and procedures on National Insurance and other taxation to take from the pot that which they are not entitled. At the same time, these advisers and companies have taken what they have not earned and live lavish lifestyles, while their employees rely on food banks, insecure work and low pay. They do not just rob the workers, they rob the community by not paying their fair share to the National Insurance fund that pays the pensions of millions. In the future, due to insecure work and reduced National Insurance contributions that they are making, many workers will be denied even their basic entitlement under pension rules. Congress, this is immoral and wrong. While others are greedy, you and I — the taxpayers — have to pay for their greed through benefits to support the low paid or subsidised work.

Back in 2008 the TUC produced a report on tax avoidance, which included the avoidance of National Insurance payments. The total loss by companies and personal tax was then estimated at £25 billion. Congress, the situation, as we have heard from the mover, is getting worse. More than a hundred more tax and National Insurance avoidance schemes are in place than in 2008, not discouraged by this Government. At a time when the Government is cutting £12 billion from benefits and our most needy in society, the greedy, immoral and heartless employers using these schemes go free. Why? Enough is enough. We have seen HMRC tax avoidance investigation teams cut and staff made redundant. We see too few HMRC prosecutions that make an impact to deter the chiefs and prolific tax-avoidance companies. We know that for every one pound invested, at least £9 million gets recouped, yet the Government are reluctant to act. Please support this motion I move *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, let me move to the vote. The CEC is supporting Composite 6 and Motion 224. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? They are carried.

*Composite 6 was Carried.  
Motion 224 was Carried.*

## **ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT**

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now speak to the delegate in the London Region from Nepal. Please stand up. We have collected a total sum, with the £2,500 that we gave from National, of £8,500 altogether. *(Applause)* The regions were North West & Irish Region, Midland & East Coast Region and

Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region. (*Cheers*) Other regions have, before we came here, already contributed to the Nepal appeal, which was quite a lot of money. I hope everything goes well and it brings them peace and safety. (*Applause*)

## CONGRESS LOCAL GIFT

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, the local gift of £2,000 this year is from Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region and it is for a really serious issue. It goes to the Real Junk Food Project. The project is a registered charity, run by GMB members, who are tackling supermarket waste by using “best before” products thrown out by supermarkets for use in their restaurants. Customers pay what they feel they can afford and profits are used for public benefit. Can we wish them good luck in the work they are doing. (*Applause*) There is no cheque to present as Paul Kenny lost the cheque book. (*Laughter*) National Office and the other regions will send their contributions to Yorkshire Region for a presentation to be made by the Region.

Tim Roache will say a few words about the charity while slides are shown.

BRO. T. ROACHE (Regional Secretary, Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Thank you, very much, President. It is with great pride that I accept the Congress Local Gift which, as you have heard from Mary, will be going to the Real Junk Food Project. The project covers so many areas, including energy, waste the environment and, for its users, it is totally inclusive, regardless of race, gender, age, work status, sexuality and religion.

The project started in 2013 with the opening as a “Pay-as-you-feel café” in the Armley area of Leeds. It is part of a charitable foundation. The project intercepts waste produce from supermarkets and markets, which they would be throwing out, and uses it to feed those who need it most. They produce daily menus using the waste produce they intercepted earlier that day. There are no pricelists in their cafés and customers pay what they can afford at the end of their meal. One of our region’s branches — Leeds Civil Branch — has been supporting the project as their chosen community charity for a year now and, through their £100 per month contributions, this has enabled the project to fuel a van, the one and only van that they have, that, in the last 12 months alone, has diverted 23 tonnes of food and has fed 12,000 people. (*Applause and cheers*) This café and this project has inspired another 110 Pay-as-you-feel cafés to open up nationally and worldwide, with the last two openings being in Australia and South Africa. There are six directors in the project in all, all of whom are volunteers and, as you have seen on the screen, all of whom are GMB members. The project has just opened its first city-centre café in Leeds called City Junction, and the directors are, of course, especially proud because Leeds is where it all began. So the £2,000 that you have given us, Congress, will be used to fund their second van, so that will fuel that van to feed another 12,000 people in the next 12 months, so I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Thank you very much, indeed. (*Applause and cheers*)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, a member of Congress has had to go home — I do not know his name — but he lost his laptop. He has now been made aware by the hotel, who found it, that it is safe and they are going to ask the office if they will take it back to London for him. So the laptop is safe and it is in good hands. I would like to thank the staff in the hotel for their sheer honesty. (*Applause*)

Congress, thank you for hanging on. Have a good evening. Congress resumes tomorrow morning at 9.30.

*Congress adjourned.*